

CHURCH HISTORY

Lesson 3 – Early "Church Fathers" and Early Divisions (100 to 200 A.D.)

In this lesson, we see what happened in the 2nd century immediately after the close of the New Testament.

A. Background

1. See if you can find a map of the Roman Empire at its greatest extent in the 2nd century. How would this influence the spread of early Christianity?
2. What does the term "Church Fathers" mean? Write at least one sentence about each of the following:
 - a. Clement of Rome (?? to 99 A.D.)
 - b. Ignatius of Antioch (35 to 115 A.D.)
 - c. Polycarp of Smyrna (69 to 155 A.D.)
 - d. Justin Martyr (100 to 165 A.D.)
 - e. Irenaeus (130 to 202 A.D.)

B. Major Events

1. What was the Bar Kokhba revolt around 135 A.D.? What impact did it have on Judaism?

C. Authority

1. What is the earliest surviving fragment of the New Testament and its date?
2. What does the term "biblical canon" or "canon of scripture" mean?
3. What does Irenaeus say about canonic NT books?
4. What is the significance of the Muratorian fragment (170 A.D.)?
5. How do the "Shepherd of Hermas", the "Gospel of Thomas", the "Infancy Gospel of Thomas" and similar books relate to the biblical canon?

D. Doctrines

1. Regarding church organization:
 - a. What is "apostolic succession"?
 - b. What did Ignatius teach regarding "monarchical bishops"?
2. Regarding the nature of deity:
 - a. What is "Christology"?
 - b. Who was Marcion of Sinope (85 to 160 A.D.) and what did he teach about the nature of God?
 - c. Who was Valentinus (100 to 160 A.D.) and what did his followers ("Valentinism") teach about the nature of Jesus?
3. Regarding salvation:
 - a. What is the earliest mention of infant baptism?
4. Regarding Jesus' Second Coming:
 - a. What is "chiliasm" or "millennialism"? When is its earliest mention?

E. Divisions/Conflicts

1. Who were the "Gnostics" (followers of "Gnosticism")?

2. Who were the "Montanists" (followers of Montanism)?
3. What was Emperor Trajan's policy toward Christians (98 to 117 A.D.)?
4. What was Emperor Marcus Aurelius' policy toward Christians (161 to 180 A.D.)?

F. Special Topics

1. What is the earliest mention of celebrating Easter?
2. What is the connection between the "ichthys", "ichthus", or the "sign of the fish" and Christianity?