

## HISTORY of CHRISTIANITY

### Part II - The Quest for Order: Medieval Christendom (A.D. 410 - 1483)

#### Significant Events and Landmarks of the Era

<i>A.D.</i>			
345:	St. Jerome is born.	1115:	Bernard of Clairvaux found new house at Clairvaux.
354:	St. Augustine is born.	1153	Bernard of Clairvaux dies.
382 - 405:	Jerome works on Latin Vulgate.	1182:	Francis of Assisi is born.
391:	Augustine becomes priest at Hippo.	1198 - 1216:	Innocent III serves as pope.
396:	Augustine becomes Catholic bishop	1210:	Francis founds "Lesser Brothers."
410:	The city of Rome is sacked and burned by Alaric.	1215:	Innocent III calls the Fourth Lateran Council.
410:	Augustine writes City of God.	1225:	Thomas Aquinas is born
420:	St Jerome dies.	1226:	St. Francis of Assisi dies.
430:	Augustine dies.	1274:	Thomas Aquinas dies.
-- Middle Ages (A.D. 500 ~ 1500) --		1316 - 1334:	Pope John XXII serves as pope.
570:	Muhammad is born.	1329:	John Wycliffe is born.
610:	Muhammad receives religious call.	1374:	John Huss is born.
632:	Muhammad dies.	1377:	Wycliffe is condemned by pope.
732:	Charles Martel stops the armed forces of Muhammad.	1384:	Wycliffe dies.
742:	Charlemagne is born.	1414 - 1418:	Council of Constance.
800:	Charlemagne is crowned emperor.	1415:	John Huss dies.
814	Charlemagne dies.	1415:	Wycliffe condemned for heresy.
1090:	Bernard of Clairvaux is born	1427:	Wycliffe's body is removed from "holy ground"
		1453:	Fall of Constantinople.
		1483:	Martin Luther is born.

#### Who's Who of the Era

**St. Jerome** - Born in northeast Italy, Jerome (345-420) was a leading Bible scholar of his time. Baptized in Rome, he received a classical education and joined an ascetic community at Aquileia. In 374, after a disturbing vision, Jerome withdrew to the Syrian desert southeast of Antioch, where he studied Hebrew. He later studied with Gregory of Nazianzus in Constantinople, became secretary to Pope Damasus in Rome (382), and was commissioned by the pope to make an improved Latin Bible translation. Jerome worked on the Latin Scriptures for 23 years (382-405). His Bible, the Vulgate, gained affirmation at the Council of Trent in 1546. In 386, Jerome settled down in Bethlehem, spending the last 33 years of his life there in seclusion writing commentaries on books of the Bible and translating Scripture into Latin. At the fall of the Western Roman Empire, Jerome, in Bethlehem, exclaimed in tears: "The city which has taken the whole world is itself taken!"

**St. Augustine** - Augustine stood with one foot in the closing era of Latin Christianity and the other in the beginning era of Reformation. Born in Tagaste in 354, Augustine's spiritual search led him to Manicheism, Epicureanism, and Neoplatonism. His turning point came as he sat in a garden in Milan and read Romans 13:13-14: "Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature" (NIV). Augustine returned to Tagaste in 388 after his mother, Monica, died. By 391, he was a priest at Hippo, and by 396, he was the Catholic bishop. He wrote the Confessions early in his life, and The City of God as a mature man. He died in 430, as the Arian Vandal invaders were besieging Hippo. His influence on the future church reformers would be great.

**Muhammad** - With Muhammad of Mecca (about 570-632), a remarkable religious leader, the movement of Islam began. Islam (a word meaning "submission to the will of God") soon became medieval Christianity's greatest opponent. Islamic culture shared the same Jewish and Hellenistic background as early Christian thought. Muhammad received his religious call in 610, and by the time of his death, all of Arabia was committed to Islam. The teachings of Muhammad included the impending judgment of the world, with reward and punishment for each individual's actions, and the teaching of Allah, the creator and judge. In addition, the message of Muhammad imposed five main obligations upon Muslim believers: the confession of faith ("There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet"), prayer five times a day, charitable gifts, fasting in the holy month of Ramadan, and the pilgrimage to Mecca. The basic source of the divine revelation was the Qur'an.

**Charlemagne** - On Christmas Day, 800, Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne (742-814) as emperor. (Charlemagne's grandfather was Charles Martel [698? -741].) Alcuin, an Anglo-Saxon scholar, became head tutor at the court of Charlemagne. He greatly influenced the intellectual, cultural and religious direction of the Carolingian Empire or "Carolingian Renaissance." Alcuin upheld orthodox belief and the authority of the church, the eminence of the Holy Roman see and Charlemagne's sacred position as emperor.

**Thomas Aquinas** - Thomas (1225 - 1274) was nicknamed "the dumb ox" because of his momentous size and slowness. Born in Aquino, Italy, he is considered the greatest scholastic theologian of the Middle Ages. When he decided to enter the Dominican order, his family, wealthy and noble, tried hard to discourage him. A prolific writer, Aristotle greatly influenced his philosophy. His two most important works are the *Summa Theologiae* and the *Summa Contra Gentiles*.

**Francis of Assisi** - Francis (1182 - 1226) was born into a wealthy family and spent a carefree childhood and youth until he was converted to Christ (due to an illness, a pilgrimage to Rome, a vision, and the words of Jesus in Matthew 10:7-10). He left home (and an angry father) with few possessions, lived in poverty, begged from the rich, gave to the poor, and preached throughout the countryside. He founded the "Lesser Brothers" after receiving approval from Pope Innocent III in 1210. Toward the end of his life, ill and blind, he composed his *Canticle to the Sun*, his *Admonitions* and his *Testament*. Francis spent his life in preaching and missions, as well as in caring for the poor and sick.

**John Wycliffe** - We remember John Wycliffe (or Wyclif), c. 1329 - 1384, as an English reformer in the later Middle Ages. Born in England, he became a leading philosopher at Oxford University. His views on the Church, however, were condemned by the pope in 1377. He died in Lutterworth a sick man. His famous works included a *Summa Theologica*, and the Wyclif Bible, a new translation of the Latin Vulgate into English. His loyal followers were known as "Lollards." The Church condemned Wycliffe for heresy in 1415 at the Council of Constance (1414-1418), and his body was removed from holy ground in 1427.

**John Huss** - John Huss (or Jan Hus), 1374 - 1415, was ordained a priest in 1401. He taught at the Charles University in Prague and preached in the Bethlehem Chapel nearby. Influenced by Wycliffe, his primary work, *On the Church*, "defined the church as the body of Christ, with Christ its only head." Huss's statements against the authority, and on the corruptness, of popes and cardinals, led to his death. When burned at the stake, his death aroused the national feelings of the Czech people. They established the Hussite church in Bohemia and started a reform movement which would influence later leaders including Martin Luther.

## Reflection and Review Questions

1. What event took place in the year 410? How did this event change history? What was the response of St. Jerome? What answer came from St. Augustine?
2. What marked the Middle Ages? Why are they referred to as "the dark ages"?
3. Who was Thomas Aquinas? What impact did he have on Christianity?
4. Who are the following people, and what is their impact on Christianity? John Wycliffe in England, John Huss in Bohemia?

## Proslogion by St. Anselm (c. 1033 - 1109)

From *The Proslogion of St. Anselm of Canterbury*, chapter 26, "Whether this is the fullness of joy...." St. Anselm (c. 1033-1109) wrote his *Proslogion* between 1078 and 1079, some years before he reluctantly agreed, in 1093, to accept the appointment as Archbishop of Canterbury.

For I have discovered a joy that is complete and more than complete. Indeed, when the heart is filled with that joy, the mind is filled with it, the soul is filled with it, the whole man is filled with it, yet joy beyond measure will remain. The whole of that joy, then, will not enter into those who rejoice, but those who rejoice will enter wholly into that joy.

Speak, Lord, tell Your servant within his heart if this is the joy into which Your servants will enter who enter 'into the joy of the Lord' (Matt. 25:21). But surely that joy in which Your chosen ones will rejoice is that which 'neither eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man' (I Cor. 2:9). I have not yet said or thought, then, Lord, how greatly your blessed will rejoice. They will, no doubt, rejoice as much as they love, and they will love as much as they know. How much will they know You, then, Lord, and how much will they love You? In very truth, 'neither eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man' (ibid.) in this life how much they will know You and love You in that life.

I pray, O God, that I may know You and love You, so that I may rejoice in You. And if I cannot do so fully in this life may I progress gradually until it comes to fullness. Let the knowledge of You grow in me here, and there [in heaven] be made complete; let Your love grow in me here and there be made complete, so that here my joy may be great in hope, and there be complete in reality. Lord, by Your Son You command, or rather, counsel us to ask and you promise that we shall receive so that our 'joy may be complete' (John 16:24). I ask, Lord, as You counsel through our admirable counsellor. May I receive what You promise through Your truth so that my 'joy may be complete' (ibid.). God of truth, I ask that I may receive so that my 'joy may be complete' (ibid.). Until then let my mind meditate on it, let my tongue speak of it, let my heart love it, let my mouth preach it. Let my soul hunger for it, let my flesh thirst for it, my whole being desire it, until I enter into the 'joy of the Lord' (Matt. 25:21), who is God, Three in One, 'blessed forever. Amen' (Rom. 1:25).



Medieval monks copied and preserved the Scriptures.