FLASHFEED STUDY GUIDE

Christianity: A Complete History

Study guide by FlashFeed

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Christianity: A Complete History: study guide

From a small Jewish sect in Roman Judea to the world's largest religion: the life of Jesus, the apostolic age, the councils and creeds, the medieval church, the Reformation, global mission and Pentecostalism, core doctrine, and the modern church. A religious-studies pack.

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How to use this guide

Take one lesson at a time: read the study guide, then go over any key facts. Where a lesson has a self-test, try it from memory before you check the answer key at the back. Follow the Go deeper links when you want more.

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LESSON 1 OF 15

The World Into Which Christianity Was Born

Judea Under Rome · The Hebrew Bible Foundation

WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

- Distinguish the four major Jewish movements of first-century Judea — Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes, and Zealots.
- Define the messianic hope shared across the rival Jewish groups.
- Explain how Roman peace, a common Greek language, and crucifixion shaped Christianity's spread and scandalous identity.
- Identify the Hebrew scriptures Christianity inherited — the TaNaK, its covenant thread, and its canon size.
- Explain how the covenant and the prophets (Isaiah's Suffering Servant, Jeremiah's New Covenant) were read as pointing to Jesus.

Judea Under Rome

Christianity was born in a land already crackling with political tension and competing religious visions. Understanding 1st-century Roman Judea is the unavoidable starting point.

Born Under Occupation

Roman Judea — roughly modern-day Israel and Palestine — was absorbed into the empire as a client kingdom and then a formal province. By the time of Jesus, Rome appointed prefects (Pontius Pilate being the most notorious) to keep order and extract taxes. The Jewish population retained its religious institutions, including the Temple in Jerusalem, but chafed under foreign rule. That combination of permitted religion and political subjugation made the province a pressure cooker for messianic expectation — widespread longing for a **Messiah**, a divinely anointed leader who would deliver Israel.

A Society of Factions

First-century Jewish society fractured into at least four distinct movements. The **Pharisees** were rigorous keepers of the **Torah** and its vast body of oral tradition; they held enormous popular authority and believed in resurrection. The **Sadducees** were temple-centered aristocrats who controlled the priesthood, rejected oral tradition, and collaborated cautiously with Rome. The **Essenes** were ascetic desert communalists who withdrew to places like Qumran and are now credited with producing the **Dead Sea Scrolls**, discovered in 1947. The **Zealots** were nationalist revolutionaries committed to overthrowing Roman rule by force — a position that eventually led to the catastrophic Jewish-Roman War of 66–70 CE.

The Roman Highway for a New Faith

Rome was oppressor and incidental benefactor simultaneously. The empire had knit the Mediterranean world together with **Roman roads** that allowed rapid travel, a shared trade language in **Koine Greek** that crossed ethnic lines, and the **Pax Romana** — a long span of relative political stability that made long-distance movement comparatively safe. When the Christian message eventually began moving outward from Judea, it traveled along routes Rome had built, in a language Rome had spread. The same infrastructure that enforced imperial control enabled an upstart religion to go global within two centuries.

Rome's Instrument of Death

Crucifixion was not a generic form of Roman execution — it was reserved specifically for slaves and rebels, designed to be public, prolonged, and degrading. Roman citizens were exempt by law. That Jesus died by crucifixion placed him, in Roman eyes, in the same legal category as a seditious slave. The early Christian claim that this executed rebel was the **Son of God** was deliberately scandalous in that cultural context. The cross, Rome's instrument of imperial terror, became Christianity's defining symbol — an irony embedded at the faith's origins and never resolved away.

The Hebrew Bible Foundation

Christianity did not invent its own scriptures from nothing — it inherited a large, ancient library and reread it through a new lens. That reinterpretation is the theological engine of the New Testament.

An Inherited Library

What Christians call the **Old Testament**, Jews call the **TaNaK** — an acronym for its three divisions: *Torah* (Law), *Nevi'im* (Prophets), and *Ketuvim* (Writings). In the **Protestant count**, the canon contains **39 books**, accumulated over roughly a thousand years of Israelite and Jewish history. The **Covenant** — a binding relationship God enters into with his people, first with Abraham and renewed through Moses and David — is the central thread running through the entire collection. Early Christians did not discard this library; they claimed to be its rightful heirs and read it as pointing forward to Jesus.

Stories That Shaped a People

The Hebrew Bible's defining narratives became essential background for the New Testament's argument. The **Creation** of Adam and Eve established humanity's original dignity; the **Fall** introduced sin and the need for redemption. **Noah and the Flood** prefigured themes of judgment and rescue; the **Tower of Babel** explained human fragmentation. The **Covenant with Abraham** (c. 18th century BCE in traditional dating) promised a people and a land. **Moses and the Exodus** became the paradigmatic story of liberation. **David and Goliath** installed a royal lineage, and **Daniel** in the lions' den modeled faithfulness under foreign empire — precisely the situation early Christians faced under Rome. Christians read all of these as foreshadowing or typologically anticipating the work of Jesus.

Isaiah's Coming Servant

The prophetic tradition supplied the sharpest language for Christian interpretation. **Isaiah**, writing in the 8th century BCE (with a likely later section beginning at chapter 40), describes a **Suffering Servant** who

"bore our griefs and carried our sorrows," who was "wounded for our transgressions." These **Servant Songs** (Isaiah 52–53 in particular) became the primary Old Testament text early Christians used to explain why the Messiah had to suffer and die rather than conquer militarily. The prophet **Jeremiah** added a related promise: a **New Covenant** written not on stone tablets but on the human heart — a promise the New Testament explicitly identifies as fulfilled in Jesus.

Key terms

Messiah
A divinely anointed leader expected to deliver Israel; a hope shared across the rival Jewish groups.

Pax Romana
The "Roman Peace" — a long span of relative stability across the Mediterranean that eased travel and communication.

TaNaK
The Jewish name for the Hebrew Bible, which Christians call the Old Testament.

Covenant
A binding relationship God enters into with his people; the central thread linking the Hebrew Bible to Christian interpretation.

Key concepts

Pharisees

- One of the four movements that split first-century Jewish society under Roman rule.
- This group believed in the resurrection of the dead and held enormous popular authority among ordinary Jews.
- They were the rigorous keepers of the Torah and its vast body of oral tradition.

Sadducees

- An aristocratic faction of first-century Judaism, centered on the Jerusalem Temple.
- They controlled the priesthood and collaborated cautiously with Rome.
- Unlike the Torah-focused party that prized oral tradition, they rejected that oral tradition entirely.

Essenes

- An ascetic, communal branch of first-century Judaism that withdrew from society.
- These desert communalists settled in remote places like Qumran.
- They are now credited with producing the Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered in 1947.

Zealots

- A first-century Jewish faction defined by militant politics rather than temple or text.
- Nationalist revolutionaries, they were committed to overthrowing Roman rule by force.
- Their armed resistance helped trigger the catastrophic Jewish-Roman War of 66-70 CE.

Key facts

Born Under Occupation

Christianity did not emerge in a vacuum. It began in **Roman Judea** — roughly modern-day Israel and Palestine — a province of intense religious ferment in the 1st century CE. The Jewish people lived under **Roman occupation** but kept their own religion and customs, and many longed for deliverance.

A Society of Factions

First-century Jewish society was fragmented into competing religious groups. The **Pharisees** were rigorous keepers of the Torah and oral tradition; the **Sadducees** were temple-centered aristocrats; the **Essenes** were ascetic desert communalists; and the **Zealots** were nationalist revolutionaries who sought to overthrow Rome by force.

The Roman Highway for a New Faith

Rome was both the threat and the infrastructure. **Roman roads**, a common trade language in **Koine Greek**, and the relative peace across the Mediterranean known as the *Pax Romana* would later allow the Christian message to spread with remarkable speed. The same empire that executed the faith's founder helped carry his teaching outward.

Rome's Instrument of Death

In the immediate term, Rome was the instrument of **crucifixion** — an execution method reserved for slaves and rebels. The cross, a tool of imperial terror, would become Christianity's central symbol, an irony at the heart of the faith's origins.

The Essenes' Dead Sea Scrolls

The Essenes were an ascetic Jewish sect who withdrew into desert communities like Qumran. Modern scholars credit them with producing the Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered in 1947.

An Inherited Library

Christianity inherited the entire library of Jewish Scripture, which Christians call the **Old Testament** and Jews call the *TaNaK*. This canon of **39 books** (in the Protestant count) forms the theological and narrative foundation on which the New Testament builds. Early Christians did not start from scratch; they reread an ancient text.

Stories That Shaped a People

The Hebrew Bible's key narratives became essential reading for early Christians: the **Creation** of Adam and Eve, the **Fall** (original sin), **Noah and the Flood**, the **Tower of Babel**, the **Covenant with Abraham**, **Moses and the Exodus**, **David and Goliath**, and **Daniel** in the lions' den. Christians reread these stories as pointing toward Jesus.

> **Isaiah's Coming Servant**
> Among the prophetic books, **Isaiah** describes a suffering Servant who would bear the people's afflictions. Early Christians read these passages as foreshadowing Jesus — one of many places where they saw the Hebrew Scriptures pointing forward to a figure yet to come.

> **TaNaK: Torah, Prophets, Writings**
> TaNaK, the Jewish name for the Hebrew Bible, is an acronym for its three divisions: Torah (Law), Nevi'im (Prophets), and Ketuvim (Writings).

> **39 Old Testament Books**
> The Old Testament, in the Protestant count, contains 39 books — the Hebrew Bible that Christians inherited as scripture.

By the numbers

Number of books in the Old Testament (Protestant count)
39 books

Matched pairs

Each item on the left goes with the one on the right.

Pharisees → Rigorous keepers of the Torah and its oral tradition

Sadducees → Temple-centered aristocrats

Essenes → Ascetic desert communalists who produced the Dead Sea Scrolls

Zealots → Nationalist revolutionaries who sought to overthrow Rome by force

Self-test

Answer each question from memory, then check your work against the answer key.

1. Which group were ascetic desert communalists now credited with producing the Dead Sea Scrolls?

A Zealots
B Sadducees
C Pharisees
D Essenes

2. Which movement was made up of temple-centered aristocrats who controlled the priesthood?

A Pharisees
B Sadducees
C Zealots
D Essenes

3. Which faction was committed to overthrowing Roman rule by force?

A Pharisees
B Essenes
C Zealots
D Sadducees

4. Which statement about the Pharisees is NOT accurate?

A They controlled the temple priesthood
B They rigorously kept the Torah
C They upheld the oral tradition
D They believed in resurrection

5. Rigorous keepers of the Torah and its oral tradition who held enormous popular authority describes which group?

A Pharisees
B Essenes
C Zealots
D Sadducees

6. In first-century Jewish expectation, what was a 'Messiah'?

A A prophet who authored the Servant Songs
B A Roman prefect appointed to govern Judea
C A high priest who controlled the Temple
D A divinely anointed leader expected to deliver Israel

7. What made the messianic hope significant across first-century Judea?

A It was held only by the Zealots
B It was unique to the Essenes at Qumran
C It was shared across the rival Jewish groups
D It was rejected by every major faction

8. What did the hoped-for Messiah promise to bring Israel?

A The rebuilding of Babylon
B Deliverance from foreign rule
C A newly written Torah
D Permanent withdrawal to the desert

9. Why is first-century Judea described as a 'pressure cooker' for messianic expectation?

A Permitted religion combined with political subjugation under Rome
B The complete absence of any Temple worship
C Roman citizenship granted to the whole Jewish population
D Total religious freedom and widespread prosperity

10. Which statement about the messianic hope is NOT true?

A It anticipated deliverance for Israel
B It looked for a divinely anointed deliverer
C It was confined to a single small sect
D It was widespread across the province

11. Which common language across the Roman Mediterranean later helped spread Christianity?

A Biblical Aramaic
B Koine Greek
C Coptic Egyptian
D Classical Latin

12. What does the term 'Pax Romana' refer to?

A. A tax levied on every imperial province
B. A network of paved Roman military roads
C. The treaty that ended the Jewish-Roman War
D. A long span of relative political stability across the Mediterranean

13. Crucifixion was a Roman execution reserved specifically for which category of person?

A. Foreign kings
B. Roman citizens
C. Temple priests
D. Slaves and rebels

14. Which of the following was NOT one of the Roman assets that later helped Christianity spread?

A. Koine Greek
B. A universal written legal code
C. The Pax Romana
D. Roman roads

15. Why was the early Christian claim that a crucified man was the Son of God deliberately scandalous?

A. Crucifixion was reserved for Roman nobility
B. The cross was a recognized symbol of Roman honor
C. Crucifixion marked him, in Roman eyes, as a seditious slave or rebel
D. Crucifixion was the standard Roman punishment for soldiers who deserted

16. The word TaNaK is an acronym for the three divisions of the Hebrew Bible. Which three?

A. Torah (Law), Nevi'im (Prophets), Ketuvim (Writings)
B. Torah (Law), Nevi'im (Prophets), Gemara (Commentary)
C. Torah (Law), Mishnah (Oral Law), Midrash (Commentary)
D. Torah (Law), Talmud (Teaching), Mishnah (Oral Law)

17. How many books does the Old Testament contain in the Protestant count?

A. 27
B. 46
C. 39
D. 24

18. What do Jews call the Hebrew Bible that Christians refer to as the Old Testament?

A. The Mishnah
B. The Septuagint
C. The Talmud
D. The TaNaK

19. What is the central thread that runs through the Hebrew Bible and links it to Christian interpretation?

A. The Diaspora
B. The Covenant
C. The Temple
D. The Exodus

20. A 'covenant' in the Hebrew Bible is best defined as which of the following?

A. A binding relationship God enters into with his people
B. A collection of prophetic writings
C. A prescribed list of Temple sacrifices
D. A census of the twelve tribes

21. Isaiah describes a figure who 'bore our griefs' and was 'wounded for our transgressions.' What is this figure called?

A The Son of Man
B The Righteous Judge
C The Suffering Servant
D The Anointed King

22. Early Christians used Isaiah's Servant Songs primarily to explain what?

A Why the Jerusalem Temple was destroyed
B How the world was created in six days
C The exact date the Messiah would return
D Why the Messiah had to suffer and die rather than conquer militarily

23. The New Covenant that the New Testament sees fulfilled in Jesus was promised to be written where?

A On the human heart
B On stone tablets
C On the temple walls
D In the Dead Sea Scrolls

24. Which prophet promised a New Covenant that the New Testament identifies as fulfilled in Jesus?

A Isaiah
B Jeremiah
C Moses
D Daniel

25. How did early Christians read the Hebrew Scriptures in relation to Jesus?

A As foreshadowing or typologically anticipating his work
B As texts unrelated to the Messiah
C As a body of law he came to abolish
D As myths with no bearing on him

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LESSON 2 OF 15

The Life of Jesus

Birth and Ministry · Sermon on the Mount and the Parables · Crucifixion and Resurrection

WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

- Describe the start of Jesus's ministry — his baptism by John the Baptist and the calling of the Twelve.
- Explain the Kingdom of God that Jesus proclaimed.
- Identify the Beatitudes and the ethical vision of the Sermon on the Mount.
- Match Jesus's parables to the central meaning each teaches.
- Explain Jesus's crucifixion at Golgotha, the handoff to Pilate, and the centrality of the resurrection.

Birth and Ministry

Jesus's life began in obscurity — a disputed birthplace, a province of no great consequence, and a calendar that turns out to be wrong about his own birth year.

Born in Bethlehem

The Gospels of **Matthew** and **Luke** place Jesus's birth in **Bethlehem**, the ancestral city of King David, while situating his upbringing in **Nazareth** in Galilee. His mother was **Mary**; his legal father, **Joseph**, was a carpenter. The birth accounts include Magi following a star, a massacre ordered by **King Herod**, and a flight to Egypt — narratives that echo Moses and the Exodus. The tradition of Bethlehem anchored Jesus in the messianic lineage of David that Jewish expectation required.

An Off-by-a-Few-Years Calendar

The year-numbering system most of the world now uses was designed in the **6th century** by a monk named **Dionysius Exiguus**, who intended to count years from Christ's birth. His calculation was off. Because **King Herod the Great** — whose role in the birth narrative is central — died in **4 BCE**, Jesus must have been born *before* that date. Historians generally place the Nativity somewhere between **6 and 4 BCE**, meaning the Common Era begins several years after the event it was meant to mark.

Baptized in the Jordan

Jesus began his public ministry around age 30, initiating it with baptism in the **Jordan River** at the hands of **John the Baptist**. John was an **apocalyptic preacher** who called Israel to repentance in anticipation of God's imminent judgment — the **Kingdom of God** about to break into the world. Jesus endorsed John's movement by submitting to his rite, then built on it: dining with tax collectors and others judged unclean became characteristic of his own ministry, a deliberate inversion of purity norms.

The Twelve Disciples

Jesus gathered twelve core followers: **Peter**, **Andrew**, **James**, **John**, **Matthew**, **Thomas**, **Judas Iscariot**, and five others. Several were working fishermen from Galilee. The choice of exactly **twelve** was not

incidental — it mirrored the **twelve tribes of Israel** and implied that Jesus was reconstituting the covenant people around himself. Judas's later betrayal made the number both symbolically complete and tragically ironic.

A Nobody from Nazareth

Nazareth was a small Galilean village with no mention in the Hebrew scriptures and no notable history. The Gospel of **John** preserves a contemporary jibe: *"Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"* (John 1:46). The question was rhetorical and dismissive. That the founder of one of the world's largest religions came from such an unremarkable place was, for his early followers, itself a theological point — divine significance need not arrive through conventional channels of power or prestige.

Sermon on the Mount and the Parables

Jesus taught in two modes: concentrated ethical address and short narrative fiction. Both survive in the Gospels with remarkable specificity.

The Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 5–7 preserves the longest single block of Jesus's teaching, delivered on a hillside to crowds in Galilee. It opens with the **Beatitudes** — a series of blessings that invert social hierarchy, declaring the poor in spirit, the meek, the merciful, and the peacemakers to be fortunate. The sermon then covers love of enemies, non-retaliation, prayer in secret (including the **Lord's Prayer**), fasting without public display, and the impossibility of serving both God and money. The ethical vision is demanding: internal motivation matters as much as outward action. It had no close parallel in ancient Mediterranean moral philosophy.

The Two Great Commandments

When pressed by a legal scholar to name the supreme commandment, Jesus answered by fusing two passages from the Hebrew scriptures: **love God** with all your heart, soul, and mind (Deuteronomy 6:5), and **love your neighbor as yourself** (Leviticus 19:18). On these two commandments, he said, the entire Law and the Prophets depend. The pairing compressed a vast legal tradition into a single ethical principle and became the foundation of Christian moral teaching ever since.

Parables and their meanings:

- **The Good Samaritan** — Neighborly love transcends ethnic and religious divisions.
- **The Prodigal Son** — God's radical forgiveness and welcome of the repentant. The father's joyful reception of a son who squandered his inheritance is the central image.
- **The Sower and the Soils** — Four types of reception to God's word.
- **The Lost Sheep** — God's pursuit of every single individual.
- **The Mustard Seed** — The Kingdom begins small but grows to encompass all.
- **The Pharisee and the Tax Collector** — Humility before God is greater than religious pride.
- **The Rich Man and Lazarus** — The moral danger of wealth and indifference to the poor.

The parables were not allegories with locked one-to-one meanings but open stories designed to provoke re-examination. A **Samaritan** — despised by Jewish audiences — was cast as the moral hero; a pious **Pharisee** was cast as the cautionary example. The reversals were intentional and unsettling.

Crucifixion and Resurrection

The final week of Jesus's life concentrated centuries of Jewish expectation and Roman political anxiety into a sequence of events that his followers came to regard as the pivot of all history.

Passover in Jerusalem

Around **30–33 CE**, Jesus traveled to **Jerusalem** for **Passover** — the annual festival commemorating Israel's liberation from Egypt, drawing enormous crowds and heightening Roman anxiety about unrest. His entry into the city, his disruption of commerce in the Temple, and his public confrontations with religious authorities created the crisis. **Judas Iscariot**, one of the twelve, accepted payment from the priestly leadership and led guards to Jesus in the **Garden of Gethsemane**, enabling the arrest.

Tried and Crucified

Jesus was brought before the **Sanhedrin**, the supreme Jewish court in Jerusalem, on a charge of **blasphemy**. The Sanhedrin lacked authority to carry out capital punishment under Roman occupation, so the case went to **Pontius Pilate**, the Roman prefect of Judea (governed **26–36 CE**). Pilate sentenced Jesus to crucifixion — a Roman execution reserved for traitors, insurrectionists, and slaves. He was crucified at **Golgotha**, meaning "the place of the skull," outside Jerusalem's walls; the site is also called **Calvary** (from the Latin).

The Resurrection

Three days after the crucifixion, his disciples reported the tomb empty and Jesus alive. The **Resurrection** became the non-negotiable center of Christian faith — without it, in Paul's framing, the entire enterprise collapses. Writing around **54 CE**, Paul transmitted what he described as a creed he had *received* (the Greek implies formal handing-down): appearances to **Peter**, to **the Twelve**, to more than **five hundred** at once, to James, and finally to Paul himself. The disciples' willingness to die for this claim is the movement's founding sociological fact.

Ascension and the Great Commission

The Gospels and Acts describe a **40-day** period of appearances after the Resurrection, followed by the **Ascension** — Jesus rising to heaven in the presence of his disciples. His final instruction, recorded in **Matthew 28:19–20**, became the programmatic text for Christian mission: make disciples of "all the nations," baptizing and teaching. This **Great Commission** provided the mandate for every subsequent wave of missionary expansion, from Paul's travels in the first century to global missions in the nineteenth and twentieth.

Key terms

John the Baptist
An apocalyptic preacher who baptized Jesus in the Jordan and called Israel to repentance ahead of the coming Kingdom.

The Kingdom of God
The new social and spiritual reality Jesus proclaimed as breaking into the world — the central theme of his preaching.

The Beatitudes
A set of blessings opening the Sermon on the Mount that invert social hierarchy — blessing the poor in spirit, the meek, the merciful, and the peacemakers.

Golgotha
"The place of the skull" — the site outside Jerusalem where Jesus was crucified; also called Calvary.

Key concepts

The Good Samaritan

- A parable of Jesus teaching that neighborly love transcends ethnic and religious divisions.
- Its moral hero belongs to a group that Jewish audiences of the day openly despised.

The Prodigal Son

- A parable about God's radical forgiveness and welcome of the repentant.
- Its central image is a father's joyful reception of a child who had squandered his inheritance.

The Mustard Seed

- A parable describing how the Kingdom of God grows over time.
- It teaches that the Kingdom begins small but grows to encompass all.

The Pharisee and the Tax Collector

- A parable teaching that humility before God matters more than religious pride.
- It casts a pious, self-satisfied religious insider as the cautionary example rather than the hero.

The Sower and the Soils

- A parable about the different ways people receive God's word.
- It sorts those responses into four distinct types of reception.

Key facts

Born in Bethlehem

Jesus was born in **Bethlehem**, likely between **6 and 4 BCE**, to **Mary** and her husband **Joseph**, a carpenter from **Nazareth** in Galilee. The Gospels record a miraculous birth, a visit by Magi following a star, and a flight to Egypt to escape King Herod. He grew up in Nazareth, far from any center of power.

An Off-by-a-Few-Years Calendar

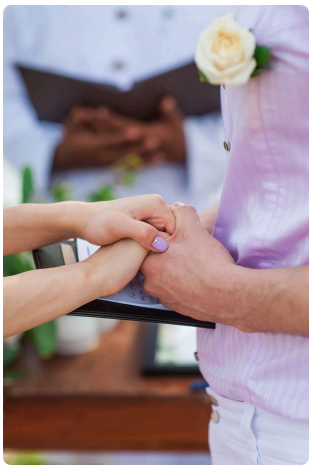
Our calendar counts years from the supposed birth of Jesus — yet it is almost certainly wrong by **four to eight years**. The 6th-century monk **Dionysius Exiguus**, who devised the system, miscalculated. King Herod, who appears in the birth narratives, died in **4 BCE**, so Jesus was likely born *before* the year his own era begins.

The Twelve Disciples

Jesus gathered twelve core followers, among them **Peter**, **Andrew**, **James**, **John**, **Matthew**, **Thomas**, and **Judas Iscariot**. Several were Galilean fishermen. The number twelve deliberately echoed the **twelve tribes of Israel**, signaling a renewed people of God.

A Nobody from Nazareth

Nazareth was an obscure Galilean village — so unremarkable that the Gospel of John records the jibe "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Jesus's origin there underscored a recurring theme of his ministry: the unexpected and the lowly carry divine significance.



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The Two Great Commandments

Asked to name the greatest commandment, Jesus summarized the entire Law in two: **love God** with all your heart, and **love your neighbor as yourself**. This pairing became the ethical heart of Christian teaching.

The Prodigal Son

In the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15), a father joyfully welcomes home the son who squandered his inheritance, dramatizing God's radical forgiveness for the repentant.

The Good Samaritan

The parable of the Good Samaritan casts a despised Samaritan as the moral hero, teaching that neighborly love crosses ethnic and religious boundaries.

Pharisee And Tax Collector

In the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector, the humble tax collector — not the proud Pharisee — is the one justified before God, showing that humility outranks religious pride.

Tried and Crucified

Jesus was tried before the **Sanhedrin**, the Jewish high court, on a charge of blasphemy, then handed to the Roman governor **Pontius Pilate**, who sentenced him to death. He was crucified at **Golgotha** ("the place of the skull") outside Jerusalem — an execution Rome reserved for traitors and slaves.

The Resurrection

Three days later, according to his disciples, Jesus rose from the dead. The **Resurrection** became the absolute center of Christian faith — the claim that turned grieving followers into bold preachers. The apostle Paul later wrote: *"If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile"* (1 Corinthians 15:17).

Ascension and the Great Commission

After **40 days**, Jesus is said to have ascended to heaven, instructing his disciples to take his teachings to "all the nations" — the **Great Commission** (Matthew 28:19–20). This charge framed the missionary expansion that followed.

The Place of the Skull

Golgotha, the site outside Jerusalem's walls where Jesus was crucified, means "the place of the skull."

Matched pairs

Each item on the left goes with the one on the right.

The Good Samaritan → Neighborly love transcends ethnic and religious divisions

The Prodigal Son → God's radical forgiveness and welcome of the repentant

The Sower and the Soils → Four types of reception to God's word

The Lost Sheep → God's pursuit of every single individual

The Mustard Seed → The Kingdom begins small but grows to encompass all

The Pharisee and the Tax Collector → Humility before God is greater than religious pride

The Rich Man and Lazarus → The moral danger of wealth and indifference to the poor

Self-test

Answer each question from memory, then check your work against the answer key.

1. Which behavior was characteristic of Jesus's public ministry?

- A Leading armed revolt against Rome
- B Serving as a temple priest in Jerusalem
- C Withdrawing into desert isolation
- D Dining with tax collectors and others judged unclean

2. Who baptized Jesus, marking the traditional start of his public ministry?

- A Peter the fisherman
- B Judas Iscariot
- C John the Baptist
- D Pontius Pilate

3. In which body of water was Jesus baptized?

- A The Dead Sea
- B The Jordan River
- C The Nile River
- D The Euphrates River

4. The choice of exactly twelve core disciples was meant to echo what?

- A The twelve tribes of Israel
- B The twelve books of the Law
- C The twelve months of the calendar
- D The twelve gates of Jerusalem

5. Which of these was NOT one of Jesus's twelve disciples?

- A Simon Peter
- B Pontius Pilate
- C Doubting Thomas
- D Andrew the Fisherman

6. What was the central theme of Jesus's preaching?

- A The abolition of the Sabbath
- B The rebuilding of the Temple
- C The Kingdom of God
- D The overthrow of Roman rule

7. How is the Kingdom of God defined?

- A A strict code of dietary and purity laws
- B An afterlife reserved only for temple priests
- C A literal army that would drive Rome from Judea
- D The new social and spiritual reality Jesus proclaimed as breaking into the world

8. John the Baptist called Israel to repentance in anticipation of what?

- A The coming Kingdom of God
- B The return of King David
- C The rebuilding of Nazareth
- D A new Roman emperor

9. Which statement MISrepresents the Kingdom of God?

A. It was primarily a military campaign to expel Rome from Judea
B. John the Baptist anticipated its imminent arrival
C. It was the central theme of Jesus's preaching
D. It was a new social and spiritual reality breaking into the world

10. According to John's preaching, the Kingdom of God was about to do what?

A. Arrive only after Rome collapsed
B. Be built up by human effort over generations
C. Remain hidden for many centuries
D. Break into the world imminently

11. In which section of Scripture is the Sermon on the Mount preserved?

A. Luke 1 through 3
B. Matthew 5 through 7
C. John 14 through 17
D. Mark 8 through 10

12. The Beatitudes are best described as?

A. Curses pronounced on the wealthy
B. A list of temple sacrifice rules
C. Blessings that invert social hierarchy
D. A schedule of Jewish feast days

13. "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the ___." What word completes the Beatitude?

A. Heavens
B. Earth
C. Temple
D. Crown

14. Which teaching is NOT part of the Sermon on the Mount?

A. Offering ritual animal sacrifice at the Temple
B. The impossibility of serving both God and money
C. Praying in secret rather than for show
D. Love of enemies and non-retaliation

15. Which groups are among those the Beatitudes call blessed?

A. Temple priests and scribes
B. The rich and the powerful
C. Roman officials and soldiers
D. The poor in spirit and the peacemakers

16. Which parable centers on a father's joyful welcome of a son who squandered his inheritance?

A. The Good Samaritan
B. The Talents
C. The Prodigal Son
D. The Mustard Seed

17. Which parable teaches that neighborly love transcends ethnic and religious divisions?

A. The Good Samaritan
B. The Mustard Seed
C. The Sower and the Soils
D. The Lost Sheep

18. The Pharisee and the Tax Collector teaches which central lesson?

A Wealth endangers the indifferent
B The Kingdom begins small but grows large
C God pursues every single individual
D Humility before God is greater than religious pride

19. Which parable illustrates "four types of reception to God's word"?

A The Mustard Seed
B The Sower and the Soils
C The Lost Sheep
D The Good Samaritan

20. The Rich Man and Lazarus warns primarily against what?

A Marrying outside the faith
B Neglect of temple worship
C The moral danger of wealth and indifference to the poor
D The temptation of political power

21. After the Sanhedrin found Jesus guilty of blasphemy, why was the case handed to the Roman prefect Pontius Pilate?

A Roman courts only tried cases where the accused held Roman citizenship
B Pilate had summoned Jesus to answer for disrupting the Temple markets
C Roman law required every blasphemy charge to be judged personally by the emperor's prefect
D Under Roman occupation only Rome held authority to carry out capital punishment

22. What does the name "Golgotha" mean?

A The Garden of Gethsemane
B The city of David
C The place of the skull
D The upper room

23. Golgotha is also known by which other name, derived from Latin?

A Gethsemane
B Calvary
C Bethlehem
D Nazareth

24. How did the apostle Paul describe the stakes of the Resurrection for Christian faith?

A Faith stands or falls with it, and so does the whole enterprise
B It merely confirmed an existing Roman prophecy
C It formally ended the Passover festival
D It replaced the authority of the Sanhedrin

25. Before which body was Jesus tried on a charge of blasphemy?

A The Roman Senate
B The court of King Herod
C The Sanhedrin
D The Council of Nicaea

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LESSON 3 OF 15

The Apostolic Age

Pentecost and the Pentarchy · Paul and the Gentile Mission · Persecution and the Canon

WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

- Explain Pentecost as the Spirit-driven birth of the Church.
- Identify the five patriarchal cities of the Pentarchy and their distinctive roles.
- Trace Paul's conversion on the Damascus road, his missionary journeys, and the Council of Jerusalem's decision.
- Define Paul's signature concepts — justification by faith, the Body of Christ, and kenosis.
- Describe the early imperial persecutions and the formation of the New Testament canon.

Pentecost and the Pentarchy

The weeks after the Resurrection left the disciples in hiding; fifty days later they were preaching publicly to thousands. The two facts in this part cover the explosive birth of the Church and the five cities that anchored it.

The Birth of the Church

Pentecost was a Jewish harvest festival, fifty days after Passover, when devout Jews from across the empire gathered in Jerusalem. According to Acts 2, the disciples were together when the **Holy Spirit** arrived as wind and fire. **Peter** immediately addressed the crowd, and that single day saw roughly **3,000 people** baptized — a number Acts records with precision, marking it as a founding moment rather than a gradual process. The event is conventionally dated to **30–33 CE**, placing it within the reign of **Tiberius**. For Christians ever since, this is the moment a private circle of mourners became a public, Spirit-driven community: the formal birth of the Church.

The Mother Church

The first congregation in **Jerusalem** practiced a radical common life: members sold property, held proceeds in common, met daily in the **Temple courts**, and broke bread house to house. Their communal intensity was driven by **eschatological expectation** — they believed Jesus would return within their lifetimes, making long-range planning irrelevant. Tradition names **James, the brother of Jesus**, as the leader of this Jerusalem community until his execution around **62 CE**. As the faith spread, it organized around five great episcopal cities: **Jerusalem**, **Antioch**, **Alexandria**, **Rome**, and **Constantinople** — collectively called the **Pentarchy**. It was in **Antioch**, according to Acts 11:26, that followers of Jesus were **first called "Christians."** Each city would eventually develop a distinct theological culture; keeping them straight is foundational to reading later church history.

Paul and the Gentile Mission

One man's reversal on the road to Damascus reoriented the entire trajectory of Christianity. Paul transformed a Jerusalem-centered Jewish movement into a religion that could take root in any city in the empire.

From Persecutor to Apostle

Saul of Tarsus was educated as a **Pharisee** — a strict interpreter of Jewish law — and he regarded the early Jesus movement as a dangerous aberration. He was present at the stoning of Stephen and, by his own account, actively "persecuted the church of God." Around **36 CE**, on the road to **Damascus**, he reported a blinding vision of the risen Jesus that left him temporarily blind and permanently changed. He took the name **Paul** and spent years in Arabia and Damascus before re-entering the public mission. Christianity's most consequential convert was also once its most dedicated persecutor — a biographical fact Paul himself never glossed over.

Three Missionary Journeys

Between roughly **42 and 62 CE**, Paul made **three major missionary journeys** through Asia Minor (modern Turkey), Macedonia, Greece, and eventually Rome — covering thousands of miles, mostly on foot and by sea. He founded churches in Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, Thessalonica, and dozens of other cities. His **letters** to those communities — addressing disputes over ethics, theology, and community order — preceded the Gospels in composition and became Scripture. Tradition attributes **13 of the New Testament's 27 books** to Paul, making him its single most prolific contributor.

The Council of Jerusalem

Paul's central and most contested claim was that **Gentiles** could become fully Christian **without first converting to Judaism** — no circumcision, no full Torah observance. This was not a minor procedural point; it determined whether Christianity was a Jewish sect or a universal religion. Around **49 CE**, the **Council of Jerusalem** — involving Paul, Barnabas, Peter, and James — confirmed Paul's position. The council's decision opened the mission to the entire non-Jewish world. His theology gave the new movement durable concepts: **justification by faith** (right standing with God through grace, not moral performance); the **Body of Christ** (the church as a single interdependent organism); and **kenosis** (Philippians 2 — Christ "emptied himself" of divine prerogative in taking human form).

Persecution and the Canon

The early church grew under periodic threat of state violence while simultaneously producing the texts that defined its belief. Both pressures — external and internal — forged a more durable institution than the one that survived Pentecost.

Nero and the Great Fire

In **64 CE**, fire destroyed much of Rome. Emperor **Nero** blamed Christians — a minority unpopular enough to make a plausible scapegoat — and launched the first empire-wide **persecution**. Tradition links this period to the **martyrdom of both Peter and Paul** in Rome: Peter by crucifixion (inverted, by his own request), Paul by beheading as a Roman citizen. Later emperors repeated the pattern. **Domitian**

targeted Christians in the 90s CE. **Decius** in **250 CE** required empire-wide sacrifice to the Roman gods, directly targeting Christians. **Diocletian** intensified suppression from around **303 CE** onward in what became the longest and bloodiest persecution. Each wave, paradoxically, tended to sharpen Christian identity and produce martyrs whose stories spread the faith.

The New Testament Takes Shape

The **New Testament** comprises **27 books**, all written in **Greek**, composed roughly between **50 and 150 CE**. Paul's letters came first, predating the Gospels. **Mark** is the earliest Gospel, dated around **70 CE** — shortly after the destruction of Jerusalem. **Matthew** followed around **85 CE**; **Luke and Acts** around **95 CE**; **John** around **90–100 CE**. For generations the precise list of authoritative texts varied by region. The clearest early snapshot of a settled consensus is the Easter letter of **367 CE** by **Athanasius of Alexandria**, which named exactly these **27 books** — the first surviving list matching the canon as it exists today. The canon was not legislated into existence by a single council but recognized gradually, with Athanasius's letter marking the point of crystallization.

Key terms

Pentecost

The Jewish feast, fifty days after Passover, when the disciples reported the outpouring of the Holy Spirit; traditionally the birth of the Church.

Pentarchy

The five patriarchal centers of early Christianity: Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Rome, and Constantinople.

Justification by faith

Paul's teaching that people are made right with God by grace through faith, not by earning it: "By grace you have been saved through faith."

The Body of Christ

Paul's image of the church as a single living organism whose members have diverse but interdependent roles.

Kenosis

From Philippians 2: Christ "emptied himself" of divine prerogative in the Incarnation, taking the form of a servant.

Key concepts

Nero

- The first Roman emperor to launch an empire-wide persecution of Christians.
- After the great fire of 64 CE, he pinned the blame on Christians as a convenient scapegoat.
- Tradition places the martyrdoms of both Peter and Paul in Rome during his reign.

Domitian

- A Roman emperor who revived the persecution of Christians a generation after the first great wave.
- He targeted Christians during the 90s CE.

Decius

- A Roman emperor whose anti-Christian policy took the form of a universal religious command.
- In 250 CE he required everyone in the empire to sacrifice to the Roman gods, directly targeting Christians.

Diocletian

- The emperor behind the longest and bloodiest persecution the early church endured.
- From around 303 CE onward he intensified the suppression of Christianity across the empire.

Key facts

> **The Mother Church**
> The early community in **Jerusalem** — the "mother church" — **shared its goods in common**, met daily in the Temple courts, and broke bread together in homes. They believed Jesus would return imminently, which shaped their radical communal lifestyle. Tradition holds it was led by **James, the brother of Jesus**.

> **One Sermon, Thousands Baptized**
> Acts 2 records that after Peter's sermon at Pentecost, about 3,000 people were baptized in a single day, a number marking Pentecost as a founding moment rather than a gradual process.

> **Antioch: Birthplace of Christians**
> Acts 11:26 says followers of Jesus were first called "Christians" in the city of Antioch, which also became a key hub for the mission to Gentiles.

> **Mark's City of Learning**
> Tradition holds that Alexandria was founded by the apostle Mark and grew into Egypt's great center of Christian scholarship and philosophy, one of the five patriarchal seats of the early church.

> **From Persecutor to Apostle**
> No figure shaped early Christianity more decisively than **Saul of Tarsus**, who became the Apostle **Paul**. A **Pharisee** who initially persecuted Christians, he reported a dramatic conversion on the road to **Damascus** around **36 CE**, which he described as a direct encounter with the risen Jesus. He became Christianity's first and greatest theologian.

> **Three Missionary Journeys**
> Between roughly **42 and 62 CE**, Paul undertook **three major missionary journeys** across Asia Minor (modern Turkey), Greece, and eventually Rome. He planted churches in city after city and stayed connected to them through letters — many of which became Scripture.

The Council of Jerusalem

Paul's revolutionary contribution was arguing that **Gentiles** (non-Jews) could become fully Christian **without first converting to Judaism** — no circumcision, no full Torah observance. This position was confirmed at the **Council of Jerusalem** around **49 CE**, transforming Christianity from a Jewish sect into a universal religion.

Paul's Prolific Pen

Tradition credits the apostle Paul with writing 13 of the New Testament's 27 books, making him its single most prolific contributor.

Justification by Faith

Paul taught that people are made right with God through grace and faith rather than by earning it through moral performance, a concept known as justification by faith.

The New Testament Takes Shape

The **New Testament** — **27 books** written in **Greek** — was composed roughly between **50 and 150 CE**. The Gospels were written after Paul's letters: **Mark** (~70 CE), **Matthew** (~85 CE), **Luke and Acts** (~95 CE), and **John** (~90–100 CE). The list of 27 was largely settled when **Athanasius of Alexandria** named them in his Easter letter of **367 CE**.

Two Apostles, Two Deaths

Tradition holds that Peter, not a Roman citizen, was crucified upside down at his own request, while Paul, who held Roman citizenship, was beheaded instead, the death Rome granted to its citizens.

The Earliest Gospel

Mark is considered the earliest of the four Gospels, written around 70 CE not long after Jerusalem's destruction, followed later by Matthew, Luke, and John.

Athanasius's Easter Letter

In a 367 CE Easter letter, Athanasius of Alexandria became the first to list exactly the 27 books that make up today's New Testament.

By the numbers

People reportedly baptized after Peter's sermon at Pentecost (Acts 2)

3000 people

New Testament books traditionally attributed to Paul (of 27)

13 books

Books in the New Testament

27 books

Matched pairs

Each item on the left goes with the one on the right.

Jerusalem → The original "Mother Church"; destroyed by Rome in 70 CE

Antioch → Where followers were first called "Christians"; hub for the Gentile mission

Alexandria → Traditionally founded by Mark; center of Christian philosophy and learning in Egypt

Rome → Where Peter and Paul were martyred; its bishop gradually claimed primacy

Constantinople
→ Founded by Constantine in 330 CE as the "New Rome"; later seat of the Eastern Church

Self-test

Answer each question from memory, then check your work against the answer key.

1. Before it became the day the Church was born, what was Pentecost in the Jewish calendar?

(A) A harvest festival held fifty days after Passover
(B) The feast commemorating the Exodus from Egypt
(C) A new-year festival marking the start of the religious calendar
(D) A festival of atonement marked by fasting and repentance

2. According to Acts 2, roughly how many people were baptized after Peter's sermon at Pentecost?

(A) About 120
(B) About 3,000
(C) About 500
(D) About 8,000

3. Which disciple addressed the Pentecost crowd, after which thousands were baptized?

(A) Stephen
(B) James
(C) Paul
(D) Peter

4. According to Acts 2, in what form did the Holy Spirit arrive at Pentecost?

(A) As a descending dove
(B) As a violent earthquake
(C) As wind and fire
(D) As a pillar of cloud

5. In Acts 2, what event turned the disciples' hidden circle into a public community, marking the formal birth of the Church?

(A) The Holy Spirit arriving as wind and fire
(B) The Council of Jerusalem admitting Gentiles
(C) Jesus ascending into heaven after Easter
(D) The risen Jesus appearing behind locked doors

6. Which set of cities correctly names the five patriarchal centers of the Pentarchy?

A Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Rome, Carthage
B Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Rome, Constantinople
C Jerusalem, Antioch, Corinth, Rome, Constantinople
D Jerusalem, Ephesus, Alexandria, Rome, Carthage

7. In which Pentarchy city were followers of Jesus first called 'Christians' (Acts 11:26)?

A Jerusalem
B Alexandria
C Antioch
D Rome

8. Which Pentarchy city was traditionally founded by Mark and became a center of Christian philosophy and learning in Egypt?

A Constantinople
B Rome
C Antioch
D Alexandria

9. Which of these cities was NOT one of the five patriarchal seats of the Pentarchy?

A Corinth
B Alexandria
C Antioch
D Constantinople

10. Which Pentarchy city was founded by Constantine as the 'New Rome' and became the seat of the Eastern Church?

A Alexandria
B Antioch
C Constantinople
D Rome

11. What did the Council of Jerusalem (~49 CE) decide?

A The Son is "of the same substance" as the Father
B Gentile converts were spared circumcision and the full Torah
C Christians must observe the full Jewish Law
D The 27 books of the New Testament were finalized

12. On the road to which city did Saul of Tarsus report his conversion vision of the risen Jesus, around 36 CE?

A Tarsus
B Antioch
C Jerusalem
D Damascus

13. Tradition attributes how many of the New Testament's 27 books to Paul?

A 27
B 13
C 4
D 66

14. Paul's three missionary journeys took him through which region, corresponding to modern Turkey?

A The Iberian Peninsula
B The Mesopotamian Region
C North Africa
D Asia Minor

15. Which of the following is NOT true of Saul of Tarsus before his conversion?

A He was present at the stoning of Stephen
B He was educated as a Pharisee
C He had been baptized by Peter in Jerusalem
D He actively persecuted the early church

16. Which Pauline concept holds that people are made right with God by grace through faith, not by earning it?

A Justification by faith
B The Body of Christ
C Divine Predestination
D The Kenosis Doctrine

17. Paul's image of the church as a single living organism with diverse but interdependent members is called what?

A Kenosis
B The Body of Christ
C The Pentarchy
D Justification by faith

18. Which Pauline concept teaches that Christ 'emptied himself' of divine prerogative in taking human form?

A The Body of Christ
B Justification by faith
C Kenosis
D Eschatology

19. Paul's concept of kenosis is drawn from which New Testament passage?

A Acts 2
B John 1
C Romans 8
D Philippians 2

20. Which statement about Paul's signature concepts is FALSE?

A Kenosis teaches that Christ kept full use of his divine power on earth
B Kenosis is drawn from Philippians 2
C The Body of Christ has diverse but interdependent members
D Justification comes by grace through faith

21. Tradition holds that Peter and Paul were martyred by different methods in Nero's Rome. Which pairing is correct?

A Peter was beheaded as a Roman citizen; Paul was crucified upside down
B Peter was crucified (upside down, at his own request); Paul was beheaded as a Roman citizen
C Both were crucified side by side on the Vatican hill
D Peter was stoned by a mob; Paul was thrown to the beasts in the arena

22. How many books make up the New Testament?

A 39
B 13
C 66
D 27

23. Which of the four Gospels is the earliest, dated around 70 CE?

A Mark
B John
C Matthew
D Luke

24. Which emperor blamed Christians for the Great Fire of Rome in 64 CE and launched the first empire-wide persecution?

A Domitian
B Decius
C Nero
D Diocletian

25. Whose Easter letter of 367 CE gave the first surviving list matching the New Testament's 27 books?

A Constantine the Great
B Eusebius of Caesarea
C Jerome of Stridon
D Athanasius of Alexandria

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LESSON 4 OF 15

The Imperial Church

Constantine and Nicaea · The Seven Ecumenical Councils · Augustine and the Desert

WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

- Explain how Christianity went from tolerated (Edict of Milan) to the empire's official religion under Theodosius.
- Explain the First Council of Nicaea and the term homoousios that settled the Arian controversy.
- Match each of the seven ecumenical councils to the doctrine it defined.
- Explain the Christological rulings — Mary as Theotokos, Chalcedon's two natures, and the veneration of icons.
- Distinguish Augustine's doctrine of Original Sin (against Pelagius) from cenobitic monasticism.

Constantine and Nicaea

For most of its first three centuries, Christianity was an illegal sect. In a single generation it became the empire's favored faith — and then, within living memory of that, its official religion.

The Edict of Milan

In **313 CE** the emperor **Constantine I** and his co-emperor **Licinius** issued the **Edict of Milan**, formally granting religious toleration to Christians across the Roman Empire. Confiscated church property was ordered returned. The proclamation did not make Christianity the state religion — it simply stopped the persecution — but the practical effect was transformative. After nearly three centuries as an underground sect whose members faced intermittent execution, the church could gather, own land, and build in the open.

In This Sign, Conquer

Constantine reportedly converted after a vision on the eve of the **Battle of the Milvian Bridge** (312 CE), encapsulated in the Latin phrase *"In hoc signo vinces"* — **"In this sign, conquer."** The sign in question was the **Chi-Rho**, the first two letters of the Greek *Christos*, which soldiers reputedly painted on their shields. Whether the experience was a genuine conversion or a calculated political move remains genuinely disputed; contemporaries debated it, and modern historians have not settled it. What is clear is that Constantine acted like a Christian patron for the rest of his reign.

The First Council of Nicaea

In **325 CE** Constantine summoned the **First Council of Nicaea** — the largest gathering of bishops in the church's history to that point. By tradition **318 bishops** attended (historical estimates run from about 250 to 318). The council was called primarily to resolve the **Arian controversy**: a sharp disagreement about the nature of Christ that had split the eastern church and threatened imperial unity.

Arius and the Controversy

Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria, taught that the Son of God was a **created being** — that the Father had brought the Son into existence at a point in time, so the Son was neither eternal nor of the same divine substance as the Father. His slogan: *"There was once when he was not."* His opponent **Athanasius**, also of Alexandria, argued that a created Son could not be the savior of creation. Arianism's appeal lay partly in its clarity — it preserved a strict monotheism by keeping the Son clearly subordinate to the Father. The controversy outlasted Nicaea; Arianism spread among Germanic tribes for generations after.

The Nicene Creed

The council condemned Arianism and produced the **Nicene Creed**, declaring the Son ***homoousios*** — Greek for **"of the same substance"** as the Father. That single word, *homoousios*, became the doctrinal hinge of Christian orthodoxy. The creed was later expanded at the **Council of Constantinople (381 CE)** to address the Holy Spirit. In that final form it remains the central statement of Christian faith, recited weekly in Catholic, Orthodox, and many Protestant liturgies.

The State Religion

In **380 CE** the emperor **Theodosius I** issued the **Edict of Thessalonica**, declaring **Nicene Christianity** the official state religion of the Roman Empire. The arc was complete: within three centuries, the sect that Rome had crucified its founder for leading had become the compulsory faith of the empire itself. Theodosius banned pagan sacrifices and closed temples, beginning the legal marginalization of the old religion.

The Seven Ecumenical Councils

Nicaea was the beginning, not the end. Over the next four and a half centuries, **seven councils** worked through a cascade of doctrinal disputes — each one answering a specific question the previous generation had left unresolved.

The Seven Ecumenical Councils

Between **325 and 787 CE**, seven **ecumenical** (universal) councils defined the central architecture of Christian doctrine. The Eastern Orthodox Church regards these **7 councils** as its supreme doctrinal authority; the Roman Catholic Church counts them among its binding councils as well.

Each council addressed a focused controversy:

Nicaea I (325) condemned Arianism and affirmed the Son as *homoousios* — of the same substance as the Father.

Constantinople I (381) affirmed the full divinity of the **Holy Spirit**, completing the doctrine of the Trinity and producing the final form of the Nicene Creed.

Ephesus (431) declared Mary to be **Theotokos** — Greek for **"God-bearer"** — against Nestorius, who preferred "Christ-bearer." The point was Christological: if the one she bore was truly God from

conception, then she is rightly called God-bearer. The council condemned **Nestorianism**, which was read as dividing Christ into two persons.

Chalcedon (451) defined that Christ has **two natures**, divine and human, united in one Person — rejecting the Monophysite view that the incarnation merged the two natures into a single divine-human blend. Chalcedon's formula ("fully God, fully human, in one Person") is the standard orthodox answer to "was Jesus God or man?" Most of global Christianity accepts it; the Oriental Orthodox churches (Coptic, Ethiopian, Armenian) do not.

Constantinople II (553) condemned Nestorian-leaning writings in the so-called Three Chapters controversy, reinforcing Ephesus.

Constantinople III (680) affirmed that Christ has **two wills**, divine and human — not one composite will as the Monothelite heresy held. Christ's human will was real, and it freely submitted to the divine will.

Nicaea II (787) ended the first **iconoclasm** by permitting the **veneration of icons** — carefully distinguishing *veneration* of an image from *worship* due only to God. Icons flooded back into Orthodox churches; the theology of the image has shaped Eastern Christianity ever since.

The **Theotokos** title and the **Chalcedonian** two-natures formula remain the two most practically important rulings: one explains why Mary holds the place she does in Orthodox and Catholic devotion; the other is the load-bearing Christological statement of every mainstream creed.

Augustine and the Desert

While bishops argued at councils, two other forces reshaped the church from below: a single towering theologian in North Africa, and a movement of thousands fleeing into the Egyptian wilderness.

Augustine's Garden Conversion

Augustine of Hippo (354–430 CE), born in Thagaste in Roman North Africa, spent his youth moving between careers and philosophies — Manichaean for nine years, then a rhetoric teacher in Carthage, Rome, and Milan. His own wry prayer captured the tension: *"Lord, make me chaste, but not yet."* The break came in a Milan garden in **386 CE**: he heard a child chanting *"take up and read,"* opened **Paul's letter to the Romans**, and the restlessness ended. He was baptized by **Ambrose of Milan** at Easter 387, returned to Africa, and within a few years was bishop of Hippo. He is claimed as a forefather by both Catholics and Protestants.

Grace and Predestination

Augustine taught that **Original Sin** — Adam's rebellion — corrupted all of human nature, passing guilt and a disordered will to every human being. Salvation is therefore entirely **God's gracious gift**, not something humans can earn or contribute to by their own effort. He went further: God **predestines** those who will be saved. These positions were hammered out in a long controversy with the British monk **Pelagius**, who held that humans retain the natural capacity to choose good. The Pelagian controversy was settled against Pelagius, but the underlying debate resurfaced at the Reformation: **Luther** and **Calvin** drew directly on Augustine's framework.

The City of God and the Confessions

Augustine's ***Confessions*** (c. 397–400 CE) is widely regarded as the first great **autobiography** of the Western world — a book-length prayer addressed to God, tracing his path from Thagaste to Milan to baptism. His ***City of God*** (413–426 CE) was written in the aftermath of the Visigoths' sack of Rome in 410 — pagans blamed Christianity for weakening the empire. Augustine's reply: Rome's fall changes nothing, because history moves toward the eternal **"City of God,"** not toward any earthly empire. These two works alone would have secured his place in intellectual history.

Anthony and the Desert

Beginning in the **3rd century**, a movement of radical withdrawal spread through the Egyptian desert. **Anthony the Great** (c. 251–356 CE) is regarded as the **father of Christian monasticism** — not because he invented the solitary life, but because his example became definitive. He retreated alone into the desert for decades of prayer and ascetic discipline. His biography, written by **Athanasius**, circulated throughout the empire and became a runaway bestseller, inspiring thousands to follow. Anthony's was the *eremitic* (solitary hermit) life.

Pachomius and Benedict

Pachomius (c. 290–346 CE) organized the first **cenobitic** (communal) monasteries — monastic life lived together under a shared written rule, as opposed to the solitary hermit's life. Multiple houses followed his rule, and the model spread rapidly. Two centuries later **Benedict of Nursia** (c. 480–547 CE) wrote the ***Rule of Saint Benedict***, which became the template for Western monasticism: a humane, sustainable balance of communal prayer, physical work, and study. **Benedictine** houses became the libraries, hospitals, and schools of medieval Europe, preserving classical and Christian learning through the post-Roman centuries.

Key terms

Edict of Milan

The 313 CE proclamation by Constantine and Licinius granting religious toleration to Christians throughout the Roman Empire.

Homoousios

Greek for "of the same substance" — the Nicene term declaring the Son to be the same substance as the Father, against Arius.

Theotokos

Greek for "God-bearer" — the title for Mary affirmed at Ephesus (431), asserting that the one she bore was truly God.

Original Sin

Augustine's doctrine that Adam's sin corrupted all human nature, passing guilt and a bent toward sin to every human being.

Cenobitic monasticism

Monastic life lived in community under a shared rule, as opposed to the solitary (eremitic) life of a hermit.

Key concepts

The First Council of Constantinople

- An ecumenical council of 381 that completed the doctrine of the Trinity.
- It affirmed the full divinity of the Holy Spirit.
- It produced the final, expanded form of the Nicene Creed, addressing the Spirit left unresolved in 325.

The Third Council of Constantinople

- An ecumenical council of 680 that resolved a subtle question about Christ's inner life.
- It rejected the Monothelite heresy, which held that Christ had only one composite will.
- It affirmed that Christ has two wills, divine and human, his human will freely submitting to the divine.

Key facts

> **The Edict of Milan**
>
> In **313 CE**, the emperor **Constantine I** issued the **Edict of Milan** together with his co-emperor **Licinius**, granting toleration to Christians across the Roman Empire. After roughly three centuries as a persecuted sect, Christianity could now be practiced openly; confiscated property was returned to the churches.

> **The First Council of Nicaea**
>
> In **325 CE** Constantine summoned the **First Council of Nicaea**, the largest gathering of bishops the church had yet seen — by tradition some **318 bishops** (estimates range from about 250 to 318). It met chiefly to settle the **Arian controversy** over the nature of the Son.

> **Arius and the Controversy**
>
> **Arius**, a presbyter of Alexandria, taught that the Son of God was a **created being** — not eternal, and not of the same substance as the Father. His slogan was *"There was once when he was not."* Against him stood **Athanasius**, who insisted on the full and eternal divinity of the Son.

> **The Nicene Creed**
>
> The council condemned Arianism and produced the **Nicene Creed**, declaring the Son to be ***homoousios*** — "of the same substance" as the Father. Later expanded at the Council of Constantinople (381 CE), the creed remains the central statement of Christian orthodoxy, still recited in Catholic, Orthodox, and many Protestant services.

The State Religion

In **380 CE**, the emperor **Theodosius I** declared **Nicene Christianity** the official state religion of the Roman Empire. In under three centuries the faith had completed an astonishing journey — from a persecuted sect to the established religion of the empire that had once crucified its founder.

The Seven Ecumenical Councils

Between **325 and 787 CE**, seven **ecumenical** (universal) councils defined Christian doctrine: **Nicaea I**, **Constantinople I**, **Ephesus**, **Chalcedon**, **Constantinople II**, **Constantinople III**, and **Nicaea II**. Together they hammered out the Trinity, the person of Christ, and the place of icons. The Eastern Orthodox Church treats these seven as its supreme doctrinal authority.

Completing the Trinity

The Council of Constantinople I in 381 affirmed the Holy Spirit's full divinity and produced the final version of the Nicene Creed, completing the doctrine of the Trinity.

Mary, Declared God-Bearer

The Council of Ephesus in 431 declared Mary to be the Theotokos, or "God-bearer," against the teaching of Nestorius, which the council held divided Christ's divine and human identity.

A Split That Still Stands

The Council of Chalcedon defined Christ in 451 as one Person with two natures, divine and human. The Oriental Orthodox churches, Coptic, Ethiopian, and Armenian, rejected that formula and remain separate over it to this day.

Ending the Icon Ban

The Council of Nicaea II in 787, the last of the seven ecumenical councils, ended the first period of iconoclasm by permitting the veneration of icons, distinct from worship reserved for God alone.

Augustine's Garden Conversion

Augustine of Hippo (354–430 CE), born in North Africa, led a restless youth — famously praying *"Lord, make me chaste, but not yet."* His dramatic conversion came in a garden in Milan in 386 CE, when he heard a child chant *"take up and read"* and opened **Paul's letter to the Romans**. He became the most influential theologian of the Western church.

Grace and Predestination

Augustine taught that salvation is entirely **God's gracious gift** — humans cannot earn it by their own effort — and that God **predestines** those who will be saved. These ideas, worked out against the monk Pelagius, would later shape **Luther** and **Calvin** and the whole Reformation debate over grace.

The City of God and the Confessions

Augustine's ***Confessions*** (c. 397–400) is the first great **autobiography** of the Western world — a book-length prayer addressed to God. His ***City of God*** (413–426), written after the Visigoths sacked Rome in 410, argued that history moves toward the eternal "City of God" rather than any earthly empire.

> **Pachomius and Benedict**
>
> **Pachomius** (c. 290–346 CE) organized the first **communal (cenobitic) monasteries**, with written rules of life. Two centuries later **Benedict of Nursia** (c. 480–547 CE) codified Western monasticism in his ***Rule*** — a humane balance of prayer, work, and study. Benedictine houses became the libraries, schools, and hospitals of medieval Europe.

By the numbers

Year of the First Council of Nicaea
325 CE

Year Theodosius made Nicene Christianity the state religion
380 CE

Number of ecumenical councils recognized between 325 and 787 CE
7 councils

Matched pairs

Each item on the left goes with the one on the right.

Nicaea I (325) → Condemned Arianism; the Son is "of the same substance" as the Father

Constantinople I (381) → Affirmed the full divinity of the Holy Spirit; finalized the Nicene Creed

Ephesus (431) → Declared Mary to be Theotokos ("God-bearer"), against Nestorianism

Chalcedon (451) → Christ has two natures, divine and human, united in one Person

Constantinople III (680) → Affirmed that Christ has two wills, divine and human, not one

Nicaea II (787) → Permitted the veneration of icons, ending the first iconoclasm

Self-test

Answer each question from memory, then check your work against the answer key.

1. What did the Edict of Milan (313 CE) actually do for Christians in the Roman Empire?

- A) Condemned the teachings of Arius as heresy
- B) Banned pagan sacrifices and closed the temples
- C) Granted them religious toleration and ended the persecution
- D) Made Christianity the empire's official state religion

2. In what year did Constantine and Licinius issue the Edict of Milan?

- A) 325 CE
- B) 313 CE
- C) 380 CE
- D) 312 CE

3. Which co-emperor issued the Edict of Milan together with Constantine I?

A Licinius
B Diocletian
C Theodosius I
D Maxentius

4. Which emperor made Nicene Christianity the official state religion of the Roman Empire in 380 CE?

A Emperor Diocletian
B Emperor Licinius
C Constantine I
D Theodosius I

5. Which statement about the Edict of Milan is NOT accurate?

A It ordered confiscated church property returned
B It made Christianity the empire's official state religion
C It granted Christians religious toleration
D It was issued jointly by Constantine and Licinius

6. What did the Nicene term *homoousios* affirm about the Son?

A He is of a similar but lesser substance
B He is a created being
C He is of the same substance as the Father
D He is purely human

7. In what year did the First Council of Nicaea meet?

A 313 CE
B 381 CE
C 380 CE
D 325 CE

8. Who summoned the First Council of Nicaea?

A Constantine I
B Theodosius I
C Athanasius of Alexandria
D Emperor Licinius

9. What did Arius of Alexandria teach about the Son of God?

A He possessed two wills, divine and human
B He was of the same substance as the Father
C He had two natures united in one Person
D He was a created being, not eternal or of the Father's substance

10. Who was Arius's chief opponent, insisting on the full and eternal divinity of the Son?

A Pelagius
B Nestorius
C Athanasius
D Constantine I

11. Chalcedon (451) defined that Christ has two natures, divine and human, in one Person. Which family of churches rejected this formula and remains separate over it?

A The Oriental Orthodox churches (Coptic, Ethiopian, Armenian)
B The Nestorian Church of the East (Assyrian, Persian)
C The Eastern Orthodox churches (Greek, Russian, Serbian)
D The Roman Catholic Church and its Latin rite

12. Which council affirmed the full divinity of the Holy Spirit and finalized the Nicene Creed?

A Ephesus (431)
B Constantinople I (381)
C Nicaea I (325)
D Chalcedon (451)

13. For which ruling is the Council of Ephesus (431) best known?

A Declaring Mary the Theotokos, against Nestorianism
B Permitting the veneration of icons
C Affirming that Christ has two wills
D Defining Christ's two natures in one Person

14. Which council ended the first iconoclasm by permitting the veneration of icons?

A Chalcedon (451)
B Constantinople III (680)
C Nicaea II (787)
D Nicaea I (325)

15. Constantinople III (680) settled which question about Christ?

A That Mary is rightly called God-bearer
B That Christ has two wills, divine and human
C That Christ has two natures in one Person
D That the Son is of the same substance as the Father

16. The title Theotokos, affirmed for Mary at Ephesus, translates as what?

A Mother of the Church
B Christ-bearer
C Ever-Virgin
D God-bearer

17. At which council was Mary declared Theotokos?

A Constantinople I (381)
B Chalcedon (451)
C Nicaea II (787)
D Ephesus (431)

18. How did the Council of Chalcedon (451) define the person of Christ?

A Two natures, divine and human, united in one Person
B One blended divine-human nature
C One purely divine nature
D Two wills but a single nature

19. Nicaea II (787) permitted the veneration of icons, ending which controversy?

A Arianism
B Iconoclasm
C Nestorianism
D Monophysitism

20. Chalcedon's two-natures formula was framed against which rejected view?

A Pelagianism — humans can choose good unaided
B Arianism — the Son is a created being
C Monophysitism — the two natures merged into one
D Nestorianism — Mary is only Christ-bearer

21. Augustine's doctrine of grace was hammered out against the British monk Pelagius. What did Pelagius teach?

A Humans retain the natural capacity to choose good and contribute to their own salvation

B Only a predestined elect can be saved, regardless of their efforts

C Salvation comes through ascetic withdrawal into the desert, not through grace

D Adam's sin so corrupted humanity that no one can will anything good

22. What is Augustine's doctrine of Original Sin?

A Humans are born moral blank slates who freely choose good or evil

B Each person sins only by freely imitating Adam's bad example

C The material body is inherently evil and traps a pure soul

D Adam's sin corrupted all human nature, passing guilt to every person

23. What defines cenobitic monasticism?

A Monastic life bound by no rule at all

B The solitary hermit (eremitic) life in the desert

C Monastic life in community under a shared common rule

D The life of a wandering, homeless preacher

24. Who organized the first communal (cenobitic) monasteries with written rules?

A Benedict of Nursia

B Pachomius

C Athanasius of Alexandria

D Anthony the Great

25. Anthony the Great, called the father of Christian monasticism, practiced which form of monastic life?

A The eremitic (solitary hermit) life

B The mendicant (wandering friar) life

C The cenobitic (communal) life under a rule

D The canonical (cathedral clergy) life

26. Which monk did Augustine's doctrine of grace and Original Sin argue against, teaching humans could choose good unaided by grace?

A Nestorius

B Arius

C Pelagius

D Pachomius

27. How did the church ultimately resolve the long dispute between Augustine and Pelagius over grace and human nature?

A Resolved by splitting into Eastern and Western churches

B Settled against Pelagius, affirming grace as God's gift

C Left formally unresolved until the Reformation

D Settled in favor of Pelagius's view of free will

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LESSON 5 OF 15

The Middle Ages

Papacy and the Great Schism · Scholasticism and the Friars · Crusades and Crisis

WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

- Explain the papacy's rise after Rome's fall and its clash with kings in the Investiture Controversy.
- Explain the causes of the 1054 Great Schism — the Filioque and the dispute over papal primacy.
- Explain Scholasticism and Aquinas's synthesis of faith and reason (natural law, the Five Ways).
- Describe Francis of Assisi and the Franciscan Order of friars.
- Identify the Crusades and the Black Death as the medieval church's era of crisis.

Papacy and the Great Schism

The medieval church's story is one of expanding authority — and then a fracture that has never fully healed.

When the Empire Fell, the Pope Stood

The fall of the **Western Roman Empire** in **476 CE** left a power vacuum across Europe. No single secular ruler commanded the continent, but the **Bishop of Rome** — the Pope — commanded the church, and the church had the administrative infrastructure Rome left behind: literate clergy, established hierarchies, and centuries of institutional continuity. Medieval popes wielded this inheritance deliberately, claiming not just spiritual but political primacy. Charlemagne's coronation by Pope Leo III in 800 CE illustrated the arrangement: even the greatest king needed papal blessing to rule.

Barefoot in the Snow at Canossa

The collision between papal and royal authority peaked in the **Investiture Controversy** (1076–1122), a dispute over who held the right to appoint — "invest" — bishops and abbots. Control of church offices meant control of vast lands and revenues, so the stakes were high for both sides. Pope **Gregory VII** excommunicated Emperor **Henry IV** in 1076, which released Henry's subjects from their oaths of loyalty. Henry's only way back was humiliation: he stood barefoot in winter snow at the castle of **Canossa** in northern Italy for three days until Gregory lifted the ban. The episode became the defining image of papal authority over secular rulers. The controversy formally ended with the **Concordat of Worms** (1122), splitting the appointment power between pope and emperor.

The Great Schism of 1054

The rift between Eastern and Western Christianity had been building for centuries — different liturgical languages (Greek versus Latin), competing claims of **papal primacy** (Rome's claim to lead all churches versus the Eastern model of five equal patriarchs), and the **Filioque** dispute. The Filioque ("and from the Son") was a phrase the Western church added to the **Nicene Creed** affirming that the Holy Spirit proceeds from both Father and Son — the East rejected this as an unauthorized alteration of a council-ratified text. In **1054**, legates from Rome and the **Patriarch of Constantinople** issued mutual

excommunications, formalizing the split into what became the **Roman Catholic** and **Eastern Orthodox** churches. Neither side at the time expected the break to be permanent.

Scholasticism and the Friars

The 13th century produced the most ambitious intellectual synthesis of the medieval church and a radical reform movement that took Christianity into the streets.

Thomas Aquinas and the Summa

The movement called **Scholasticism** applied rigorous Aristotelian logic to Christian theology — the systematic method of posing objections, counterarguments, and solutions that structured university learning. Its greatest practitioner was **Thomas Aquinas** (1225–1274), an Italian Dominican friar who produced the *Summa Theologica*, a cathedral of argument covering God, creation, ethics, and the sacraments. Aquinas's central claim was that **faith and reason** are complementary: **natural law** — a moral order embedded in creation — is accessible to human reason without recourse to Scripture, while revealed truths (the Trinity, the Incarnation) go beyond but do not contradict reason. The church ultimately canonized Aquinas and named him a Doctor of the Church; his synthesis dominated Catholic intellectual life for centuries and still shapes its moral theology.

Saint Francis of Assisi

Where Aquinas worked in libraries, **Francis of Assisi** (1181–1226) worked in ditches and doorways. The son of a wealthy Italian cloth merchant, he heard in a damaged chapel the gospel command to "sell all you have and give to the poor" and took it literally: he abandoned his inheritance, stripped off his fine clothes before the Bishop of Assisi, and began caring for lepers and preaching repentance in the open air. The movement he founded — the **Franciscan Order** (formally the Friars Minor, "lesser brothers") — was built on a vow of corporate as well as individual poverty. The friars owned nothing, begged their food, and carried Christianity into the rapidly growing cities of medieval Europe that monastic orders, anchored to their rural lands, could not reach. The order grew explosively; by 1300 it numbered in the thousands. In 2013, Pope Francis took his papal name in explicit honor of the saint's example of humility and care for the poor.

Crusades and Crisis

Two centuries of crusading, a continent-wide plague, and two dissident preachers combined to push medieval Christianity toward its breaking point.

The Crusades Begin

Pope **Urban II** launched the First Crusade at the Council of **Clermont** in **1095**, calling knights to reclaim the Holy Land from Muslim rule. The campaign succeeded beyond expectation: Crusaders captured **Jerusalem in 1099**, massacring much of its population and establishing the Kingdom of Jerusalem. Between 1095 and 1291, **8 major Crusades** were launched, varying wildly in scope, command, and outcome.

Saladin, and a Crusade Gone Wrong

The high-water mark did not last. By **1187**, the Kurdish Muslim commander **Saladin** had defeated the Crusader army at the Battle of Hattin and retaken Jerusalem. Efforts to recover it faltered, and worse followed: the **Fourth Crusade** (1202–04), financed by Venice and diverted from its original target, ended in the sack of **Constantinople** — the Christian city the Crusaders were supposed to protect. The looting of its treasures and installation of a Latin emperor poisoned Catholic–Orthodox relations for generations. The last Crusader stronghold, **Acre**, fell in **1291**, ending the Latin presence in the Holy Land.

The Black Death

The **Black Death** struck Europe in 1347 and burned through the continent until roughly 1353, killing an estimated **one-third to one-half** of the population. The scale defied explanation within the church's existing frameworks of sin and punishment. Flagellant movements arose, with bands of men publicly whipping themselves as collective penance. Jewish communities were massacred across Germany and France, accused without basis of poisoning wells. Clergy died in enormous numbers, leaving parishes empty and accelerating a crisis of institutional confidence that would not fully resolve until the Reformation.

Cracks Before the Reformation

The church's credibility cracked before Luther was born. **John Wycliffe** (c. 1320–1384) in England challenged papal authority and argued that Scripture, translated into the language ordinary people spoke, was the Christian's final authority. His ideas traveled to Bohemia, where **Jan Hus** (c. 1369–1415) built a reform movement on similar ground. Summoned to the **Council of Constance** with a guarantee of safe conduct, Hus was tried for heresy and **burned at the stake in 1415** — the promised protection voided. The betrayal inflamed Czech nationalism and produced the Hussite wars. His execution demonstrated that the institutional church would not reform itself peacefully.

Key terms

Papacy

The office and authority of the Pope, the Bishop of Rome, who claimed leadership over the Western church.

Investiture Controversy

An 11th–12th century conflict over whether the Pope or secular rulers had the right to appoint bishops and other church officials.

Filioque

Latin for "and from the Son" — words the West added to the Nicene Creed about the Holy Spirit, which the East rejected as an unauthorized change.

Papal Primacy

Rome's claim to supreme authority over the whole church; the East held instead to a collegial model of five equal patriarchs.

Scholasticism

The medieval method of using rigorous logic and Greek philosophy to systematize Christian theology, exemplified by Aquinas.

Natural Law

Aquinas's idea that a moral order is built into creation and accessible to human reason apart from revelation.

Key concepts

The Great Schism of 1054

- An 11th-century rupture that split Christianity into two branches never fully reunited.
- It grew from disputes over papal primacy, Greek-versus-Latin liturgy, and the Filioque clause added to the Nicene Creed.
- Legates from Rome and the Patriarch of Constantinople traded mutual excommunications, dividing the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches.

The Investiture Controversy

- A decades-long medieval clash over who had the right to appoint bishops and abbots.
- Because those offices controlled vast lands and revenues, popes and emperors fought fiercely to hold the appointment power.
- It produced the barefoot humiliation at Canossa and ended with the Concordat of Worms in 1122.

The First Crusade

- The opening campaign of two centuries of holy war, set in motion in 1095.
- Pope Urban II called it at the Council of Clermont, urging knights to reclaim the Holy Land from Muslim rule.
- Its armies captured Jerusalem in 1099 and established a Latin kingdom there.

The Fourth Crusade

- A holy-war campaign of 1202-04 that veered catastrophically off its intended course.
- Financed by Venice and diverted from its target, it turned its swords on fellow Christians.
- It ended in the sack of Constantinople, poisoning Catholic-Orthodox relations for generations.

The Black Death

- A mid-14th-century catastrophe that overwhelmed the church's frameworks of sin and punishment.
- Striking in 1347, it killed an estimated one-third to one-half of Europe's population.
- It spawned flagellant processions and massacres of Jewish communities falsely blamed for poisoning wells.

Key facts

The Great Schism of 1054

The Greek-speaking **Eastern** church (centered on Constantinople) and the Latin-speaking **Western** church (centered on Rome) had been drifting apart for centuries over theology, politics, culture, and language. The formal break came in **1054**, splitting Christianity into what became the **Roman Catholic** and **Eastern Orthodox** churches.

The Compromise at Worms

The decades-long Investiture Controversy between pope and emperor formally ended with the Concordat of Worms in 1122, splitting the power to appoint bishops: the emperor granted their lands, the church their spiritual office.



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And From the Son

Filioque is Latin for "and from the Son," words the Western church added to the Nicene Creed to affirm the Spirit proceeds from Father and Son. The East rejected altering a council-ratified text.

Saint Francis of Assisi

Francis of Assisi (1181–1226) was a wealthy young man who, hearing Christ's call to live in poverty, abandoned everything to care for lepers, preach in the streets, and live as a beggar. He founded the **Franciscan Order** (the Friars Minor), which grew into one of the largest religious orders in the world.

Logic Meets Theology

Scholasticism applied rigorous Aristotelian logic, raising objections, counterarguments, and resolutions, to systematize Christian theology, embracing Greek philosophy rather than rejecting it.

A Moral Order in Creation

Aquinas's idea of natural law holds that a moral order is built into creation itself and can be known through reason alone, apart from scripture or revelation.

Five Roads to God

Aquinas's "Five Ways" are five separate rational arguments for the existence of God, meant to show that reason alone can establish real truths about the divine.

The Crusades Begin

The **Crusades** (1095–1291) were military campaigns by Western Christians to seize the Holy Land from Muslim rule. Pope **Urban II** launched the First Crusade in **1095** at the Council of **Clermont**, calling knights to "liberate" Jerusalem. The Crusaders captured **Jerusalem in 1099**, founding the Kingdom of Jerusalem and a chain of Crusader states.

Saladin, and a Crusade Gone Wrong

By **1187**, the Muslim leader **Saladin** had retaken Jerusalem. Worse for Christian unity, the **Fourth Crusade** (1202–04) was diverted to sack **Constantinople** — the Christian city it was meant to protect — permanently deepening the Catholic–Orthodox rift. The Crusader presence ended with the fall of **Acre in 1291**.

The Black Death

The **Black Death** (1347–1353) killed an estimated **one-third to one-half** of Europe's population, triggering a deep crisis of faith. Why had God allowed such catastrophe? Survivors questioned the church's answers, flagellant movements spread, and mobs massacred Jewish communities as scapegoats.

Cracks Before the Reformation

Pre-Reformation critics challenged the church long before Luther. **John Wycliffe** (England, c. 1320–1384) and **Jan Hus** (Bohemia, c. 1369–1415) attacked papal authority and called for Scripture in the people's own languages. Hus was **burned at the Council of Constance in 1415** despite a promise of safe conduct — a betrayal that inflamed Czech nationalism for generations.

A Crusade Against Christians

The Fourth Crusade of 1202-04 was diverted from its goal and instead sacked Constantinople, the Christian city it was meant to protect, deepening the Catholic-Orthodox rift for generations.

By the numbers

Year of the Great Schism that split the Catholic and Orthodox churches

1054 CE

Year the Western Roman Empire collapsed, leaving the Pope as Western Europe's leading figure

476 CE

Number of major Crusades launched between 1095 and 1291

8 Crusades

Matched pairs

Each item on the left goes with the one on the right.

Thomas Aquinas → Wrote the Summa Theologica; synthesized faith and reason

Francis of Assisi → Founded the Franciscan Order; patron saint of ecology

Self-test

Answer each question from memory, then check your work against the answer key.

1. How did the Investiture Controversy between pope and emperor formally end?

- A The coronation of Charlemagne in 800, which subordinated kings to the papacy
- B The Concordat of Worms (1122), which split the power to appoint bishops between pope and emperor
- C Henry IV's penance at Canossa, which permanently ceded all appointments to the pope
- D The Great Schism of 1054, which excommunicated the emperor from the church

2. In what year did the Western Roman Empire collapse, leaving the Pope as Western Europe's leading figure?

- A 410 CE
- B 1054 CE
- C 476 CE
- D 800 CE

3. After Rome's fall, which figure filled the political vacuum and became the organizing authority of medieval Europe?

- A The Bishop of Rome, the Pope
- B The Archbishop of Canterbury
- C The Patriarch of Constantinople
- D The Holy Roman Emperor

4. What was disputed in the Investiture Controversy (1076–1122)?

- A Whether the Filioque belonged in the Nicene Creed
- B Whether Scripture should be translated into common languages
- C Which patriarch held primacy over the Eastern church
- D Who had the right to appoint bishops and abbots — pope or secular rulers

5. At Canossa, how did Pope Gregory VII force Emperor Henry IV to submit?

- A Burning him at a church council
- B Diverting a Crusade against his lands
- C Excommunicating him, then making him stand barefoot in the snow for three days
- D Crowning a rival emperor in his place

6. What does the disputed term 'Filioque' mean, and why did the East reject it?

- A 'And from the Father' — a phrase the West deleted from the Creed
- B 'Bishop of Rome' — a title the East refused to grant the Pope
- C 'Five patriarchs' — a governing model Rome would not accept
- D 'And from the Son' — added to the Nicene Creed as an unauthorized change

7. How did the Eastern church's model of authority differ from the Western claim of papal primacy?

A. The East held to five equal patriarchs; Rome claimed supreme authority over all
B. The East recognized the Emperor, not any bishop, as church head
C. Both East and West recognized the Pope as sole supreme head
D. The East gave the Pope even greater power than Rome claimed

8. In what year did the Great Schism formally split Eastern and Western Christianity?

A. 1122
B. 1054
C. 800
D. 1095

9. The 1054 Great Schism split Christianity into which two churches?

A. Eastern Orthodox and Coptic
B. Lutheran and Reformed
C. Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox
D. Roman Catholic and Protestant

10. Which of these was NOT a cause of the growing rift that led to the 1054 Great Schism?

A. Different liturgical languages, Greek versus Latin
B. Rome's claim to papal primacy over all churches
C. The Filioque added to the Nicene Creed
D. A dispute over whether pope or emperor could appoint bishops in the West

11. What was the central claim of Thomas Aquinas's synthesis in the Summa Theologica?

A. Faith and reason are complementary — revealed truths surpass reason but never contradict it
B. Scripture alone, apart from reason or tradition, yields all theological truth
C. Reason must be rejected wherever it conflicts with revealed faith
D. Human reason is too corrupted by sin to grasp any moral truth

12. How is Scholasticism best defined?

A. Abandoning reason in favor of mystical revelation
B. Using rigorous logic and Greek philosophy to systematize Christian theology
C. Rejecting Greek philosophy as incompatible with faith
D. Preaching poverty and repentance in the open streets

13. What is Aquinas's concept of natural law?

A. A moral order built into creation, knowable by reason apart from revelation
B. The canon law governing appointment of bishops
C. The rejection of reason wherever it meets faith
D. A set of laws revealed only through Scripture

14. What kind of friar was Thomas Aquinas, the greatest Scholastic theologian?

A. A German Augustinian
B. An Italian Dominican
C. A Spanish Franciscan
D. A French Carmelite

15. Whose logic did Scholastic theologians like Aquinas apply to Christian theology?

A Socrates
B Augustine
C Aristotle
D Plato

16. What subjects did Aquinas's Summa Theologica cover?

A Only monastic vows and daily prayer schedules
B Only the canon law for appointing bishops and abbots
C Only the liturgical calendar of the Eastern church
D God, creation, ethics, and the sacraments

17. What title did the church give Thomas Aquinas for his theological synthesis?

A Patriarch of the West
B Doctor of the Church
C Servant of the Poor
D Vicar of Christ

18. The Franciscan Order founded by Francis of Assisi was also known by what name?

A Friars Minor
B Society of Jesus
C Order of Preachers
D Order of Saint Benedict

19. How did Francis of Assisi live out his conversion?

A Retreated to a rural monastery to farm the land
B Led knights on a crusade to reclaim Jerusalem
C Abandoned his wealth to care for lepers and preach in the streets
D Rose through the church hierarchy to become a bishop

20. What was Francis of Assisi's background before his conversion?

A An Italian Dominican professor
B A patriarch of the Eastern church
C A Kurdish military commander
D The son of a wealthy cloth merchant

21. On what vow was the Franciscan Order distinctively built?

A Scholarly mastery of Aristotle
B Lifelong silence and seclusion
C Armed defense of the Holy Land
D Corporate as well as individual poverty

22. Which modern pope took his name in explicit honor of Francis of Assisi?

A Pope Francis, in 2013
B Pope Gregory VII
C Pope Urban II
D Pope Leo III

23. Which pope called the First Crusade at the Council of Clermont in 1095?

A Gregory VII
B Leo IX
C Urban II
D Leo X

24. How many major Crusades were launched between 1095 and 1291?

A 12
B 8
C 5
D 3

25. Roughly what share of Europe's population did the Black Death kill?

A One-third to one-half
B Nearly everyone
C One-tenth to one-fifth
D Two-thirds to three-quarters

26. The Fourth Crusade was notoriously diverted to sack which Christian city?

A Acre
B Rome
C Jerusalem
D Constantinople

27. Which Muslim commander defeated the Crusaders and retook Jerusalem in 1187?

A Shirkuh
B Nur ad-Din Zangi
C Saladin
D Baibars

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LESSON 6 OF 15

The Reformation

Luther · Reformed and Radical · The Counter-Reformation

WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

- Describe Luther's protest — the indulgence trade, the Ninety-Five Theses, and his stand at Worms.
- Explain Luther's solas — Scripture alone and faith alone.
- Contrast Luther's and Zwingli's views of the Lord's Supper.
- Define the Reformed and Anabaptist distinctives — predestination, total depravity, and believer's baptism.
- Explain the Catholic Counter-Reformation and the rulings of the Council of Trent.

Luther

The Protestant Reformation began not as a plan to split the church but as an academic argument about penance — one that the printing press turned into a continental crisis within months.

The Ninety-Five Theses

On **October 31, 1517**, the **Augustinian** monk **Martin Luther** circulated his **Ninety-Five Theses** — whether by nailing them to the door of the **Castle Church in Wittenberg** or by post is genuinely debated. The theses were written in Latin for scholarly dispute, not mass agitation, yet within weeks they were translated into German and circulating across Europe. Luther was not the first church critic, but he arrived at the perfect moment — right when print could amplify dissent at a speed Rome could not match.

When the Coin in the Coffer Rings

Luther's immediate provocation was the **indulgence** campaign run near Wittenberg by the Dominican friar **Johann Tetzel**. An indulgence was a church certificate claiming to remit time owed in purgatory — their sale was the abuse that triggered Luther's protest. Tetzel's marketing jingle — *"When the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs"* — made salvation sound transactional. Luther's counter-argument was pastoral and theological: **genuine repentance**, not a purchased certificate, was what Scripture required.

The Press Did the Rest

The **printing press**, developed by Gutenberg around 1450, transformed a theological dispute into a mass movement. Luther's pamphlets and theses reproduced across Europe in **weeks**, outrunning any papal suppression effort. The Reformation was arguably the first political and religious crisis shaped by print media — cheap, fast, vernacular, and nearly impossible to control. Without the press, Luther's protest would likely have joined the long list of suppressed medieval reform efforts.

The Solas

Luther's doctrinal core is summarized in three Latin phrases. **Sola Scriptura** ("Scripture alone") holds that the **Bible, not papal tradition**, is the supreme authority for Christian doctrine. **Sola Fide** ("faith alone") teaches that **salvation is received through faith**, not earned through works or sacraments. **Sola Gratia** ("grace alone") insists that God's grace is the sole cause of salvation. He paired these with the **priesthood of all believers**: no ordained mediator stands between the Christian and God. These principles became the defining marks of Protestantism.

Excommunicated, Then Worms

Pope **Leo X** excommunicated Luther in **1521** after he refused to recant. Summoned to the **Diet of Worms** before Emperor **Charles V**, Luther again refused and reportedly declared *"Here I stand. I can do no other."* German princes loyal to Luther sheltered him at **Wartburg Castle**, where he translated the **New Testament into German** in roughly eleven weeks — putting Scripture in the hands of ordinary readers and bypassing clerical Latin.

Reformed and Radical

Luther's break from Rome quickly produced further breaks within Protestantism itself — between reformers who differed on worship, sacraments, and the church's relationship to the state.

Zwingli in Zurich

Ulrich Zwingli (1484–1531) ran a parallel Reformation in **Zurich**, Switzerland, more radical than Luther's on visible worship: he stripped churches of art, statues, and instrumental music. The key break between the two came over the **Lord's Supper**. Luther insisted Christ is **really, physically present** in the bread and wine. Zwingli read the same words as **purely symbolic** — the elements are a memorial, not a vehicle of presence. At the **Marburg Colloquy** of 1529 the two men met, agreed on fourteen points, and split permanently on this fifteenth.

Calvin in Geneva

John Calvin (1509–1564) arrived in **Geneva** in 1536 largely by accident and was persuaded by the reformer William Farel to remain. His *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (first edition 1536, definitive 1559) became the theological textbook of the **Reformed tradition**. Two doctrines Calvin systematized were **predestination** — God eternally elects some to salvation by divine choice, not by foreseen merit — and **total depravity** — human nature is wholly corrupted by sin, with no natural inclination toward God. Geneva became a model Protestant city under his influence.

How Calvinism Spread

Calvin's theology proved remarkably portable. **John Knox** carried it to Scotland, where it became **Presbyterianism**. It took root in the Netherlands as the **Dutch Reformed** church, in France among the **Huguenots**, in England among the **Puritans**, and through the Puritans on to New England. The Reformed tradition ultimately shaped law, politics, and social organization across the Atlantic world — a legacy far exceeding Luther's geographic reach.

The Radical Reformation

The **Anabaptists** ("re-baptizers") emerged in **Zurich in 1525** when Conrad Grebel, **Felix Manz**, and others concluded that infant baptism had no scriptural basis and re-baptized one another as adults on a personal profession of faith — **believer's baptism**. This was the Anabaptist hallmark. They demanded complete **separation of church and state**, refused military service and oaths, and envisioned a voluntary gathered church — not a Christendom fused with government.

Persecution and Descendants

Catholics and Protestants alike hunted Anabaptists. **Felix Manz was drowned** in Zurich's Limmat River in **1527** by order of the city council — executed by the method that mimicked a third baptism. Survivors scattered. The **Mennonites**, following Menno Simons, and later the **Amish** descend directly from this tradition. Their insistence on a state-free church planted seeds of religious liberty that later bore fruit in colonial America.

The Counter-Reformation

Rome's response to Protestantism was neither purely defensive nor merely reactionary — it combined genuine internal reform with a sharp doctrinal restatement against Protestant positions.

The Jesuits

The most energetic instrument of Catholic renewal was the **Society of Jesus** (the **Jesuits**), founded by the Spanish ex-soldier **Ignatius of Loyola in 1540**. Ignatius designed the order for mobility and discipline: Jesuits took a special vow of obedience to the pope and were deployed wherever the church needed them. Their emphasis on **education** produced a network of universities and schools across Europe. As **overseas missionaries** they reached Japan, China, India, and the Americas, producing both remarkable cultural engagement and significant controversy over how far to accommodate local practice.

The Council of Trent

The **Council of Trent** (1545–1563) was Rome's systematic doctrinal response to Protestantism — eighteen years of deliberation across 25 sessions in three phases. Against *Sola Scriptura*, Trent affirmed that **both Scripture and church tradition** are binding authorities. It reaffirmed **seven sacraments** (not Luther's two), the **real presence** of Christ in the Eucharist (called **transubstantiation**), **purgatory**, and the **Latin Vulgate** as the authoritative biblical text. The council also launched internal reforms: it tightened discipline on clergy, prohibited the sale of offices, and mandated **seminaries** in every diocese to ensure trained, resident priests. The **Counter-Reformation** — the Catholic Church's reforming and defensive response to Protestantism — is defined by these two engines: the Jesuits and Trent.

Key terms

Indulgence

A church certificate claiming to remit time owed in purgatory; their sale was the abuse that triggered Luther's protest.

Sola Scriptura
"Scripture alone" — the Protestant principle that the Bible, not church tradition or the pope, is the supreme authority for doctrine.

Sola Fide
"Faith alone" — the principle that salvation is received through faith, not earned through works or sacraments.

Predestination
Calvin's teaching that God eternally elects some to salvation and passes over others, entirely by divine choice and not by foreseen merit.

Total depravity
The Calvinist view that human nature is wholly corrupted by sin, with no natural inclination toward God.

Believer's baptism
Baptism given only to those old enough to profess faith for themselves, rather than to infants — the Anabaptist hallmark.

Counter-Reformation
The Roman Catholic Church's reforming and defensive response to the Protestant Reformation, driven chiefly by the Jesuits and the Council of Trent.

Key concepts

Johann Tetzel

- A Dominican friar whose indulgence campaign near Wittenberg provoked a famous 1517 protest.
- He sold church certificates that claimed to remit time a soul owed in purgatory.
- His jingle boasted, "When the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs."

Ulrich Zwingli

- A Swiss reformer who ran a Reformation parallel to Luther's, but more radical on visible worship.
- Based in Zurich, he stripped churches of art, statues, and instrumental music.
- He read the Lord's Supper as purely symbolic and split from Luther over it at the 1529 Marburg Colloquy.

Felix Manz

- An early Anabaptist leader in Zurich who rejected infant baptism as unscriptural.
- In 1525 he and others re-baptized one another as adults on a personal profession of faith.
- By order of the city council he was drowned in the Limmat River in 1527, a death mimicking a third baptism.

John Knox

- A reformer who carried Calvin's theology out of Geneva to a new nation.
- He planted the Reformed tradition in Scotland.
- The church he founded there became known as Presbyterianism.

Key facts

When the Coin in the Coffer Rings

Luther's immediate target was the sale of **indulgences**, marketed by the Dominican friar **Johann Tetzel** with the jingle: *"When the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs."* To Luther this reduced salvation to a cash transaction. He argued that **genuine repentance** — not a mechanical purchase — was what God required.

The Press Did the Rest

What began as an academic dispute became a revolution because of the **printing press**, invented by Gutenberg around 1450. Luther's ideas spread across Europe within **weeks** — pamphlets reproduced faster than the church could suppress them. The Reformation was arguably the first mass movement powered by print media.

The Solas

Luther's core rediscoveries are captured in the Latin *solas*: **Sola Scriptura** ("Scripture alone" — the Bible, not papal tradition, is supreme authority), **Sola Fide** ("faith alone" — salvation is received by faith, not earned by works), and **Sola Gratia** ("grace alone" — God's grace is the sole cause of salvation). He added the **priesthood of all believers**: every Christian has direct access to God, no priestly mediator required.



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Excommunicated, Then Worms

When Pope Leo X demanded Luther recant, he refused and was **excommunicated in 1521**. Summoned before the **Diet of Worms** to answer to Emperor Charles V, he again refused — *"Here I stand. I can do no other."* German princes spirited him away to **Wartburg Castle**, where he translated the entire **New Testament into German** in about eleven weeks.

Zwingli in Zurich

Ulrich Zwingli (1484–1531) led a parallel but distinct Reformation in **Zurich**, Switzerland. More radical than Luther on worship — stripping churches of art and music — he split with Luther over the **Lord's Supper**: where Luther held to Christ's **real physical presence** in the bread and wine, Zwingli read it as **purely symbolic**, a memorial. The two movements never unified.

Calvin in Geneva

John Calvin (1509–1564) became the second great Reformation theologian. He arrived in **Geneva** in 1536 almost by accident and was pressed by the reformer William Farel to stay. His *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536, revised 1559) became the systematic textbook of the **Reformed tradition** — turning Geneva into a model Protestant city.

How Calvinism Spread

Calvin's theology fanned out across Europe through reformers and refugees: **John Knox** carried it to Scotland (**Presbyterianism**), it took root in the Netherlands (the **Dutch Reformed**), in France (the **Huguenots**), in England (the **Puritans**), and on to New England. Few thinkers shaped the map of Protestantism as widely as Calvin did.

The Radical Reformation

The **Anabaptists** ("re-baptizers") emerged in **Zurich in 1525** when Conrad Grebel, **Felix Manz**, and others judged infant baptism unbiblical and re-baptized one another as adults on profession of faith. They demanded a complete **separation of church and state**, refused military service and oaths, and envisioned a wholly voluntary church of committed disciples.

Persecution and Descendants

Anabaptists were hunted by Catholics and Protestants alike — **Felix Manz was drowned** in Zurich's Limmat River in **1527**. Survivors scattered across Europe. The **Mennonites** (following Menno Simons) and later the **Amish** descend from this tradition, and their vision of a gathered, state-free church deeply shaped later ideas of religious freedom in America.

The Jesuits

Rome's response was both defensive and genuinely reforming. One major instrument was the **Society of Jesus** (the **Jesuits**), founded by **Ignatius of Loyola in 1540** — a disciplined, highly educated order devoted to scholarship, **education**, and **overseas mission**. Jesuits founded universities across Europe and became the leading Catholic missionaries in Asia, Africa, and the Americas.

The Council of Trent

The **Council of Trent** (1545–1563) — eighteen years of deliberation across 25 sessions — defined Catholic doctrine point by point against Protestant challenges. Trent affirmed both **Scripture and tradition** as authority (against *Sola Scriptura*), **seven sacraments**, the **real presence** of Christ in the Eucharist, **purgatory**, and the **Latin Vulgate** as the authoritative Bible. It also reformed clerical discipline and founded **seminaries** to train priests.

Scripture Plus Tradition

Against Luther's doctrine of Sola Scriptura, the Council of Trent deliberately affirmed both Scripture and church tradition as sources of religious authority.

Seven, Not Two

The Council of Trent reaffirmed all seven sacraments, deliberately rejecting the reduction to two that Martin Luther and other reformers had adopted.

Naming the Real Presence

The Council of Trent used the term transubstantiation for Christ's real presence in the Eucharist, a position distinct from the views reformers like Luther and Zwingli held.

By the numbers

How many theses did Luther post against indulgences?
95 theses

Year Luther posted the Ninety-Five Theses
1517 CE

How many sacraments did the Council of Trent affirm?
7 sacraments

Year Ignatius of Loyola founded the Jesuits
1540 CE

Matched pairs

Each item on the left goes with the one on the right.

Zwingli on the Lord's Supper
→ A symbolic memorial — the bread and wine represent Christ, not his physical body

Luther on the Lord's Supper → Christ is really, physically present in the bread and wine

Self-test

Answer each question from memory, then check your work against the answer key.

1. What was an indulgence, the abuse that triggered Luther's protest?

- (A) A monastic vow of poverty taken by an Augustinian monk
- (B) A formal decree excommunicating a heretic from the church
- (C) A papal license permitting a priest to marry
- (D) A church certificate claiming to remit time owed in purgatory

2. Which friar ran the indulgence sales campaign near Wittenberg that provoked Luther?

- (A) Johann Tetzel
- (B) Menno Simons
- (C) Ignatius of Loyola
- (D) Johann Gutenberg

3. In what year did Luther circulate his Ninety-Five Theses?

- (A) 1521
- (B) 1517
- (C) 1540
- (D) 1563

4. Refusing to recant at the Diet of Worms, Luther reportedly declared: 'Here I ___. I can do no other.'

A repent
B believe
C stand
D kneel

5. Who excommunicated Luther in 1521 after he refused to recant?

A Johann Tetzel
B Pope Leo X
C Ulrich Zwingli
D Emperor Charles V

6. Sola Gratia, the third of Luther's three solas, teaches that ___.

A God's grace is the sole cause of salvation
B salvation is received through faith alone
C Scripture alone is the supreme authority for doctrine
D the church alone may rightly interpret the Bible

7. What does Sola Scriptura affirm about religious authority?

A God's grace is the sole cause of a person's salvation
B Every believer shares equally in a common priesthood
C The Bible, not church tradition, is the supreme authority for doctrine
D Salvation is received through faith rather than works

8. According to Sola Fide, how is salvation received?

A By purchasing an indulgence to shorten purgatory
B Through obedience to the pope and church tradition
C By performing the seven sacraments faithfully
D Through faith alone in Christ, as a free gift of grace

9. What does Luther's 'priesthood of all believers' assert?

A The pope alone holds supreme spiritual authority
B Salvation requires the mediation of the sacraments
C Only ordained priests may interpret Scripture correctly
D No ordained mediator stands between the Christian and God

10. Which of Luther's principles teaches that salvation is received by faith, not earned by works?

A Sola Gratia
B Sola Fide
C Priesthood of all believers
D Sola Scriptura

11. How did Luther understand Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper?

A Christ is really, physically present in the bread and wine
B The elements are transformed into a wholly new substance
C The bread and wine are only a symbolic memorial
D The supper is unnecessary and should be abolished

12. How did Zwingli interpret the bread and wine of the Lord's Supper?

A. As a sacrifice repeated at every Mass
B. As transformed into a new substance by the priest
C. As a purely symbolic memorial of Christ
D. As the literal physical body and blood of Christ

13. At which 1529 meeting did Luther and Zwingli fail to reconcile on the Lord's Supper?

A. The Diet of Worms
B. The Marburg Colloquy
C. The Council of Nicaea
D. The Council of Trent

14. The key doctrinal break between Luther and Zwingli centered on which issue?

A. The nature of the Lord's Supper
B. The authority of the Latin Vulgate
C. The doctrine of predestination
D. The practice of believer's baptism

15. Which statement about Zwingli's Reformation is NOT true?

A. He ran a parallel Reformation in Zurich, Switzerland
B. He stripped churches of art, statues, and instrumental music
C. He read the Lord's Supper as a symbolic memorial
D. He held that Christ is physically present in the bread and wine

16. What does Calvin's doctrine of predestination teach?

A. Human nature is wholly corrupted by sin with no inclination toward God
B. Baptism is given only to those old enough to profess faith
C. God eternally elects some to salvation by his own sovereign choice
D. Salvation can be earned through faithful good works

17. According to total depravity, what is the condition of human nature?

A. Wholly corrupted by sin, with no natural inclination toward God
B. Basically good but in need of moral guidance
C. Corrupted only in part, with the will still free to seek God
D. Perfectible through the sacraments of the church

18. What is believer's baptism, the Anabaptist hallmark?

A. Baptism of infants shortly after birth into a state church
B. Baptism performed only by an ordained bishop
C. A second baptism required before ordination to ministry
D. Baptism given only to those old enough to profess faith for themselves

19. Which group emerged in Zurich in 1525 and practiced believer's baptism?

A. The Jesuits
B. The Anabaptists
C. The Puritans
D. The Huguenots

20. The Anabaptists practiced believer's baptism because they rejected which established practice?

A The sale of indulgences
B Catholic Transubstantiation
C Infant baptism
D Calvinist Predestination

21. On the question of religious authority, the Council of Trent affirmed which position?

A Scripture alone (Sola Scriptura)
B Tradition alone, with no scriptural authority
C The personal conscience of each believer
D Both Scripture and church tradition

22. Which Bible text did the Council of Trent declare authoritative?

A Luther's German translation
B The Latin Vulgate
C The original Greek New Testament

23. How many sacraments did the Council of Trent reaffirm against Protestant reformers?

A Twelve sacraments
B Three sacraments
C Seven sacraments
D Two sacraments

24. What term did Trent use for the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist?

A Transubstantiation
B Symbolic memorial
C Predestination
D Consubstantiation

25. Who founded the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits) in 1540?

A Johann Tetzel
B Ignatius of Loyola
C John Calvin
D John Knox

Go deeper

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LESSON 7 OF 15

Mission, Revival & Pentecostalism

Mission and Empire · The Great Awakenings · Azusa Street and Pentecostalism

WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

- Explain how Christian mission spread with colonialism and the meaning of the Sublimis Deus bull.
- Match the three Great Awakenings to their leaders and movements.
- Identify the key figures and effects of the Awakenings — Edwards's sermon, the Second Awakening's reforms, and the Holiness seedbed.
- Describe the Azusa Street revival and the birth of Pentecostalism.
- Define glossolalia (speaking in tongues) as the Pentecostal hallmark.

Mission and Empire

Christian expansion after the Reformation was inseparable from European colonialism, producing a global church whose reach came at a profound and contested cost.

The Cross Followed the Crown

After the Reformation, Christian expansion accelerated through European colonialism. **Spain** and **Portugal** carried Catholicism to **Latin America**, the **Philippines**, and parts of Africa, often hand in hand with conquest. The 1494 **Treaty of Tordesillas** divided the non-Christian world between the two Iberian crowns, and the church followed the sword. Later, **Protestant** missionaries followed colonial expansion to North America, the Caribbean, and eventually sub-Saharan Africa and Asia — the British Empire and Dutch trading networks serving as conduits in the 17th and 18th centuries.

A Genuinely Complex Legacy

The relationship between Christianity and colonialism resists a simple verdict. Missionaries often brought **schools, hospitals, medicine, and literacy** — sometimes the first written form of a local language, giving oral traditions a permanent record. Figures such as Bartolomé de las Casas advocated fiercely for indigenous rights. At the same time, missions frequently **participated in or enabled the cultural destruction and exploitation** of indigenous peoples — suppressing languages, enforcing European dress and gender norms, and legitimizing dispossession. Both things were true, often in the same place at the same time.

Sublimis Deus (1537)

In **1537**, Pope **Paul III** issued the bull *Sublimis Deus*, declaring that the indigenous peoples of the Americas were **rational human beings** with the right to liberty and property, and must not be enslaved. It was among the earliest formal European legal statements of indigenous dignity. The document directly contradicted the theological arguments used to justify conquest. Yet it was **frequently ignored** by the colonial powers on the ground — Spain's *encomienda* system of forced indigenous labor continued

for generations afterward, and the Vatican lacked the coercive power to enforce its own decree across an ocean.

The Great Awakenings

American Christianity has been reshaped not by slow evolution but by periodic explosions of revival — waves that remade both church and society.

The First Great Awakening

Christianity in America has been periodically transformed by waves of revival. The **First Great Awakening** of the **1730s–1740s** swept the Thirteen Colonies through the fiery preaching of **Jonathan Edwards** — author of the sermon *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God* — and the itinerant English evangelist **George Whitefield**, who drew crowds of thousands in open fields. It democratized faith, weakened deference to established clergy, and helped shape a distinctly American religious culture that valued personal conversion over inherited church membership.

The Second Great Awakening

The **Second Great Awakening** of the **early 1800s** spread across the American frontier through outdoor **camp meetings** and traveling **circuit riders** who covered vast distances on horseback. Its best-known preacher, **Charles Finney**, treated revival not as a sovereign act of God beyond human planning but as a deliberate technique — "new measures" that could be applied systematically to produce conversions. Crucially, this awakening fueled social reform: **abolitionism, temperance, prison reform, and the early women's rights movement** all drew energy from it, though opposition to women's suffrage was notably not among its causes.

The Third Awakening and Holiness

The **Third Great Awakening** of the **1880s–1900s** gave rise to the **Holiness movement**, which emphasized **sanctification** — a deeper work of the Holy Spirit purifying the believer after conversion, building on John Wesley's earlier doctrine of "entire sanctification." Holiness camp meetings and denominations (including early forms of what became the Church of the Nazarene) spread across the United States and abroad. This emphasis on direct, experiential encounter with the Spirit became the **seedbed of Pentecostalism**, which would erupt in 1906 — not out of nowhere, but from this prepared soil.

Azusa Street and Pentecostalism

In a downtown Los Angeles warehouse in 1906, a revival ignited that would become the fastest-growing religious movement in Christian history.

Azusa Street, 1906

In **1906**, an interracial revival broke out at **312 Azusa Street** in **Los Angeles** under **William J. Seymour**, an African American preacher and son of former slaves who had studied under Holiness teacher Charles Parham. At a time of strict legal segregation — just eleven years after *Plessy v. Ferguson* — Black, white,

Latino, and Asian worshippers prayed together, wept together, and fell under what participants described as the power of the Spirit. This was itself a startling social fact, remarked upon by observers and hostile critics alike. The revival ran continuously for roughly three years and became the launching point of modern **Pentecostalism**.

A New Pentecost

The hallmark of the Azusa Street revival was **speaking in tongues** (*glossolalia*), which participants interpreted as a re-enactment of the first **Pentecost** described in the Acts of the Apostles, when the Holy Spirit fell on Jesus' followers and they "spoke in other tongues." Pentecostals teach a **baptism of the Holy Spirit** — a second experience after conversion — often marked by tongues, healing, and prophecy. The theological claim was not merely emotional; it was that the miraculous gifts of the early church had been restored, ending what many Protestants assumed was a permanent cessation of such phenomena after the apostolic age.

The Fastest-Growing Movement

Pentecostalism spread with astonishing speed. By the end of **1906** missionaries had already carried it to Norway; within a year it reached Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands. From essentially **zero adherents in 1901** — when Parham's Bethel Bible School in Topeka, Kansas first documented tongues-speaking — to **approximately 644 million** by the early 21st century, it is the **fastest-growing movement in the history of Christianity**. Its center of gravity is emphatically not Europe or North America but the **Global South** — sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia, where Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity is now the dominant form of the faith.

Key terms

Missionary

A person sent to spread a religious faith, typically in a new region or culture; central to Christianity's global expansion.

Sublimis Deus

Pope Paul III's 1537 papal bull affirming the rational nature and human dignity of indigenous Americans and condemning their enslavement.

Glossolalia

"Speaking in tongues" — utterance of unintelligible or unknown speech understood as a gift of the Holy Spirit; the signature practice of Pentecostalism.

Pentecostalism

A renewal movement born at Azusa Street (1906) emphasizing baptism of the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, divine healing, and direct spiritual experience.

Key concepts

Jonathan Edwards

- A leading preacher of the First Great Awakening that swept the 1730s–40s Thirteen Colonies.
- His revival valued personal conversion over inherited church membership.
- He wrote the fiery sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God."

George Whitefield

- An itinerant evangelist of the First Great Awakening.
- English-born, he preached to crowds in open fields rather than inside churches.
- He drew outdoor audiences of thousands across the colonies alongside Jonathan Edwards.

Charles Finney

- The best-known preacher of the Second Great Awakening in the early 1800s.
- He treated revival as a deliberate technique, not a sovereign act of God beyond human planning.
- His systematic "new measures" were designed to produce conversions on the American frontier.

William J. Seymour

- An African American preacher, the son of former slaves, who led a landmark 1906 revival.
- He had studied under the Holiness teacher Charles Parham.
- His interracial revival at 312 Azusa Street in Los Angeles launched modern Pentecostalism.

Charles Parham

- A Holiness movement teacher active in the American Midwest in the early 1900s.
- At his Bethel Bible School in Topeka, Kansas, tongues-speaking was first documented in 1901.
- He mentored William J. Seymour, who went on to lead the 1906 Azusa Street revival.

Key facts

> **The Cross Followed the Crown**
>
> After the Reformation, Christian expansion accelerated through European colonialism. **Spain** and **Portugal** carried Catholicism to **Latin America**, the **Philippines**, and parts of Africa, often hand in hand with conquest. Later, **Protestant** missionaries followed colonial expansion to North America, the Caribbean, and eventually sub-Saharan Africa and Asia.

> **A Genuinely Complex Legacy**
>
> The relationship between Christianity and colonialism resists a simple verdict. Missionaries often brought **schools, hospitals, medicine, and literacy** — sometimes the first written form of a local language. At the same time, missions frequently **participated in or enabled the cultural destruction and exploitation** of indigenous peoples. Both things were true, often in the same place at the same time.

Sublimis Deus (1537)

In **1537**, Pope **Paul III** issued the bull *Sublimis Deus*, declaring that the indigenous peoples of the Americas were **rational human beings** with the right to liberty and property, and must not be enslaved. It was one of the church's clearest statements of indigenous dignity — and it was **frequently ignored** by the colonial powers on the ground.

Dividing a New World

In 1494 the Treaty of Tordesillas divided the entire non-Christian world between the two Iberian crowns of Spain and Portugal, the framework Catholic missions would follow into the colonial era.

Two Kingdoms, One Faith

Spain and Portugal were the two colonial powers that carried Catholicism to Latin America, the Philippines, and parts of Africa, distinct from Protestant powers like England and the Netherlands, which expanded later.

The First Great Awakening

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The Second Great Awakening

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The Third Awakening and Holiness

The **Third Great Awakening** of the **1880s–1900s** gave rise to the **Holiness movement**, which emphasized **sanctification** — a deeper work of the Holy Spirit purifying the believer after conversion. This emphasis on direct, experiential encounter with the Spirit became the **seedbed of Pentecostalism**, which would erupt in 1906.

Edwards and Whitefield

The First Great Awakening spread through the preaching of Jonathan Edwards and the itinerant English evangelist George Whitefield, who together drew huge crowds across the American colonies.

Revival on Horseback

The Second Great Awakening spread across the American frontier through outdoor camp meetings and traveling circuit riders who preached on horseback from settlement to settlement.

A New Pentecost

The hallmark of the Azusa Street revival was **speaking in tongues** (*glossolalia*), which participants interpreted as a re-enactment of the first **Pentecost** described in the Acts of the Apostles, when the Holy Spirit fell on Jesus' followers. Pentecostals teach a **baptism of the Holy Spirit** — a second experience after conversion — often marked by tongues, healing, and prophecy.

Led by William Seymour

The Azusa Street revival was led by William J. Seymour, an African American preacher and son of former slaves who had studied under Charles Parham.

Speaking in Tongues

Glossolalia, the technical term for speaking in tongues, refers to unintelligible or unknown speech understood as a gift of the Holy Spirit, the signature practice of Pentecostalism.

By the numbers

Year the Azusa Street revival began

1906 CE

Approximate Pentecostal adherents worldwide by the early 21st century

644 million

Matched pairs

Each item on the left goes with the one on the right.

First Great Awakening (1730s–40s) → Jonathan Edwards & George Whitefield

Second Great Awakening (early 1800s) → Charles Finney, camp meetings & circuit riders

Third Great Awakening (1880s–1900s) → The Holiness movement

Self-test

Answer each question from memory, then check your work against the answer key.

1. What did the 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas do?

(A) Split newly claimed lands between Catholic and Protestant powers

(B) Banned European missionaries from the Americas

(C) Divided the non-Christian world between Spain and Portugal

(D) Freed indigenous Americans from all forced labor

2. In the 1537 bull Sublimis Deus, Pope Paul III declared that indigenous Americans were which of the following?

A. Rational human beings with rights to liberty and property
B. Souls to be converted but with no legal rights
C. Property of the Spanish and Portuguese crowns
D. Subjects rightly bound to labor under the encomienda

3. Which pope issued the papal bull Sublimis Deus?

A. Pope Leo X
B. Pope Alexander VI
C. Pope Julius II
D. Pope Paul III

4. Which two colonial powers carried Catholicism to Latin America and the Philippines after the Reformation?

A. Italy and Germany
B. Spain and Portugal
C. England and the Netherlands
D. France and Belgium

5. Despite Sublimis Deus, why did forced indigenous labor continue for generations?

A. The bull explicitly authorized the encomienda system
B. Protestant powers overruled the papal decree
C. The bull was frequently ignored and the Vatican could not enforce it
D. Pope Paul III secretly revoked the bull

6. Which two European powers carried Catholic missions to Latin America, the Philippines, and Africa, often alongside conquest?

A. England and Portugal
B. France and the Netherlands
C. Spain and Italy
D. Spain and Portugal

7. Besides schools, hospitals, and literacy, what did the lesson say Christian missions frequently did to indigenous cultures under colonialism?

A. Preserved every indigenous language unchanged
B. Enabled the destruction and exploitation of native cultures
C. Had no lasting effect on indigenous cultures
D. Actively opposed all colonial conquest

8. The First Great Awakening (1730s–40s) is most associated with which preachers?

A. Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield
B. John Wesley and George Fox
C. Charles Finney and Dwight Moody
D. William Seymour and Charles Parham

9. Outdoor camp meetings and horseback circuit riders were hallmarks of which revival?

A. The Third Great Awakening
B. The Second Great Awakening
C. The First Great Awakening
D. The Azusa Street revival

10. The Third Great Awakening (1880s–1900s) gave rise to which movement?

A. The abolitionist movement
B. The temperance movement
C. The Holiness movement
D. The Oxford Movement

11. During which decades did the First Great Awakening take place?

A. early 1800s
B. 1660s–1670s
C. 1880s–1900s
D. 1730s–1740s

12. Which pairing of an awakening with its leader is INCORRECT?

A. Third Great Awakening paired with Jonathan Edwards
B. Second Great Awakening paired with Charles Finney
C. First Great Awakening paired with Jonathan Edwards
D. First Great Awakening paired with George Whitefield

13. Which social reform movement was NOT notably fueled by the Second Great Awakening?

A. Prison reform
B. Opposition to women's suffrage
C. The Temperance Movement
D. The Abolitionist Movement

14. What is the title of Jonathan Edwards's most famous First Great Awakening sermon?

A. The Bondage of the Will
B. A Model of Christian Charity
C. The Freedom of a Christian
D. Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God

15. The Holiness movement's emphasis on direct, experiential encounter with the Spirit became the seedbed of what?

A. The Oxford Movement
B. The Social Gospel
C. Pentecostalism
D. Fundamentalism

16. The Holiness movement emphasized sanctification, which it understood as what?

A. A deeper work of the Spirit purifying the believer after conversion
B. The baptism of infants into the church
C. The moment of initial conversion to Christ
D. Speaking in tongues as the proof of salvation

17. How did Charles Finney treat revival, unlike earlier preachers?

A. As a ritual reserved for ordained clergy
B. As a private experience unsuited to public meetings
C. As a deliberate technique that could be applied to produce conversions
D. As a sovereign act of God beyond all human planning

18. Who led the 1906 Azusa Street revival that launched modern Pentecostalism?

A. William J. Seymour
B. Charles Finney
C. Dwight L. Moody
D. Charles Parham

19. Where did the 1906 revival that launched modern Pentecostalism take place?

A Bethel Bible School, Topeka
B 312 Azusa Street, Los Angeles
C Northampton, Massachusetts
D Cane Ridge, Kentucky

20. In what year did the Azusa Street revival begin?

A 1919
B 1886
C 1901
D 1906

21. What made the Azusa Street revival socially striking in 1906?

A It was the first revival led entirely by women
B It was formally endorsed by the U.S. government
C Black, white, Latino, and Asian worshippers prayed together amid legal segregation
D It legally abolished denominational differences

22. Where is the center of gravity of Pentecostal and charismatic Christianity today?

A Western Europe
B The Global South
C the Middle East
D North America

23. What does the term glossolalia refer to?

A Washing one another's feet
B Anointing the sick with oil
C Fasting during Lent
D Speaking in tongues

24. Participants interpreted speaking in tongues as a re-enactment of which biblical event?

A The first Pentecost in the Acts of the Apostles
B The Transfiguration of Jesus
C The Last Supper
D The baptism of Jesus in the Jordan

25. In Pentecostal teaching, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is understood as what?

A A second experience after conversion, often marked by tongues
B The final judgment at the end of time
C A rite performed only by bishops
D The water baptism that begins conversion

26. Pentecostals teach a baptism of the Holy Spirit as a second experience after conversion. Besides speaking in tongues, which two signs are said to mark it?

A Fasting and footwashing
B Confession and absolution
C Anointing and the laying on of hands
D Healing and prophecy

27. Glossolalia is the signature practice of which movement?

A Lutheranism
B Jansenism
C Pentecostalism
D Puritanism

Go deeper

ONLINE This lesson on the web flashfeedlearningapp.com/study-guides/christianity/mission-revival-and-pentecostalism

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LESSON 8 OF 15

Core Theology & Doctrine

Trinity and Incarnation · Sin, Grace and Salvation · The Sacraments

WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

- Define the Trinity and distinguish it from the heresies of Tritheism and Modalism.
- Explain the Incarnation and Chalcedon's definition of Christ's two natures.
- Define the human problem and its cure — Original Sin, salvation, and redemption.
- Compare how the Catholic, Lutheran/Calvinist, Arminian, and Pentecostal traditions understand salvation and grace.
- Explain the sacraments and the range of Eucharistic views from transubstantiation to memorial.

Trinity and Incarnation

The two most technically demanding doctrines in Christian theology — the Trinity and the Incarnation — were hammered out over four centuries of council debates, not handed down complete from the apostles.

One God, Three Persons

The **Trinity** holds that the one God exists as **three co-equal, co-eternal persons**: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Two heresies bracket orthodoxy: **Tritheism** treats the three as separate gods, while **Modalism** collapses the distinction and says the one God merely appears in three successive masks. The councils rejected both. The Greek word **homoousios** ("same substance") was the crux at Nicaea (325 CE) — the Son is not a lesser being created by the Father but fully shares the divine nature. The **Nicene Creed** (381 CE), finalizing Trinitarian language, remains the shared confession of Catholic, Orthodox, and most Protestant churches.

The Word Became Flesh

Christians believe Jesus was **fully God and fully human** — not partly each, and not alternating between the two. The Gospel of John frames it memorably: *"the Word became flesh and dwelt among us"* (John 1:14). Getting the formula precise took more debate. The **Council of Chalcedon (451 CE)** defined Christ as having **two natures, divine and human, united in one person**, without confusion, mixture, separation, or division. This "Chalcedonian Definition" remains binding for Catholics, Orthodox, and most Protestants; non-Chalcedonian churches (Oriental Orthodox, including the Coptic and Armenian churches) hold a subtly different position called Miaphysitism. The **Incarnation** matters practically as well as doctrinally: because God took on flesh, bodily existence and the material world carry theological dignity in mainstream Christianity.

Sin, Grace and Salvation

If the Trinity defines what God is, the doctrines of sin and salvation define the human problem and God's answer to it — and no area of Christian theology generates more internal disagreement.

The Fall and Original Sin

Augustine of Hippo (354–430 CE) gave Western Christianity its dominant account of human wrongness. Drawing on Genesis 3, he argued that **Adam and Eve's disobedience** in the Garden was not merely a bad example but a catastrophic rupture: it introduced death and suffering into creation and left all subsequent humanity in a state of **Original Sin** — a corrupted nature, inclined away from God, that no individual willpower can fully repair. Eastern Orthodoxy agrees on the fall's seriousness but traditionally emphasizes inherited mortality more than inherited guilt; the Western Catholic/Protestant debate largely works within Augustine's framework. The doctrine serves a structural role: it explains why humanity needs a savior rather than just better instruction.

How Is One Saved?

Salvation is the restoration of a right relationship with God — the cure for sin applied to the individual. **Redemption** names the mechanism: Christ's atoning work on the cross "buys back" humanity from bondage to sin and death. Where traditions sharply diverge is on *how* that redemption is received.

Catholics teach that salvation involves baptism, ongoing faith, cooperation with grace, and the sacraments; it can be lost through unrepented mortal sin. **Lutherans and Calvinists** insist on *Sola Gratia* (grace alone) and *Sola Fide* (faith alone) — good works are the fruit of salvation, not its cause or contribution. **Arminians and Wesleyans** hold that God's grace is genuinely universal but can be freely resisted, preserving human choice. **Pentecostals** typically affirm one of the above Protestant frameworks but add a distinct "**second blessing**" — a post-conversion baptism of the Holy Spirit, often evidenced by speaking in tongues.

The Sacraments

How does divine grace reach ordinary human beings? For most of Christian history, the answer has run through physical rituals — water, bread, wine, oil — that the tradition calls **sacraments**.

What Is a Sacrament?

A **sacrament** is a physical rite believed to convey spiritual **grace**. The **Catholic and Orthodox** churches recognize **seven**: Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation, Confession (Reconciliation), Anointing of the Sick, Marriage, and Holy Orders. Most **Protestant** churches recognize only **two** — Baptism and Communion — because only those two are explicitly commanded by Christ with a physical element attached. Many Protestants prefer the term **ordinances**: acts of obedience that *symbolically recall* Christ's work rather than channels of grace in themselves, so they are not identical to the Catholic view.

The sharpest internal debate concerns the **Eucharist** — the sacrament of bread and wine recalling Christ's Last Supper, also called Communion, the Lord's Supper, or the Mass. Catholics teach **transubstantiation**: the bread and wine become the actual body and blood of Christ, though

appearances remain unchanged. Lutherans hold that Christ is present "in, with, and under" the elements — **real presence** without the Thomistic metaphysics. Reformed (Calvinist) churches teach a **spiritual presence** received in faith. Baptists and many evangelicals hold a **purely memorial** view: the rite is a remembrance, nothing more. These differences are not minor: they drove some of the bitterest sixteenth-century splits, and full eucharistic fellowship between Catholic and Protestant denominations remains officially prohibited to this day.

Key terms

Trinity
The doctrine that the one God exists as three co-equal, co-eternal persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Tritheism
The error of treating Father, Son, and Spirit as three separate gods — rejected by Trinitarian orthodoxy.

Modalism
The error that the one God merely appears in three successive modes or masks, rather than existing as three distinct persons.

The Incarnation
The belief that God took on human flesh in Jesus, who is fully God and fully human — two natures in one person.

Original Sin
The doctrine that Adam's first disobedience corrupted human nature, passing a fallen condition to all of humanity.

Salvation
The restoration of a right relationship with God — the cure for sin, applied to the individual.

Redemption
Christ's atoning work on the cross — "buying back" humanity from bondage to sin and death. Salvation applies it to the individual.

Sacrament
A physical rite believed to convey spiritual grace, such as Baptism or the Eucharist.

Eucharist
The sacrament of bread and wine recalling Christ's Last Supper; also called Communion, the Lord's Supper, or the Mass.

Key concepts

Tritheism

- One of two errors that bracket orthodox teaching on the one God in three persons.
- The church councils rejected it as a misreading of the Trinity.
- It wrongly treats Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as three separate gods.

Modalism

- One of two heresies that bracket orthodox Trinitarian doctrine.
- It collapses the distinction between the three persons of God.
- It claims the one God merely appears in three successive masks, not three real persons.

Miaphysitism

- A minority position on how the divine and human relate in Christ.
- It differs subtly from the mainstream Chalcedonian definition of two natures in one person.
- It is held by non-Chalcedonian churches such as the Coptic and Armenian Orthodox.

Original Sin

- A doctrine that explains why humanity needs a savior rather than just better instruction.
- Augustine of Hippo gave the West its dominant account of it, drawing on Genesis 3.
- It holds that Adam and Eve's disobedience left every human with a corrupted nature turned away from God.

Transubstantiation

- The Roman Catholic teaching about what happens in the Eucharist.
- It was reaffirmed at the Council of Trent against Protestant views.
- It holds the bread and wine become the actual body and blood of Christ, though their appearance is unchanged.

Key facts

> **One God, Three Persons**
>
> The most distinctive Christian doctrine is the **Trinity**: the belief that the one God exists in **three co-equal, co-eternal persons** — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It was defined progressively across the first four ecumenical councils, culminating in the **Nicene Creed** (381 CE). The Trinity is not three gods, but it is also not one God appearing in three temporary modes — it is held as a mysterious unity-in-diversity.

> **The Word Became Flesh**
>
> Christians believe Jesus was **fully God and fully human** — two natures united in one person. The Gospel of John puts it: *"the Word became flesh and dwelt among us"* (John 1:14). The precise formula — two natures, divine and human, in one person, without confusion or division — was defined at the **Council of Chalcedon (451 CE)**. This Incarnation underwrites Christianity's high view of the body and the physical world.

> **The Tritheism Heresy**
>
> Tritheism is the heresy of treating the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as three separate gods.

The Modalism Heresy

Modalism claims the one God doesn't exist as three distinct persons, but merely appears in three successive modes, or masks.

Homoousios at Nicaea

The Greek term homoousios ('same substance'), central at the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE, affirmed that the Son fully shares the divine nature rather than being a lesser being created by the Father.

The Fall and Original Sin

Following **Augustine of Hippo**, mainstream Christianity teaches that humanity fell from original goodness through **Adam and Eve's disobedience** in the Garden of Eden — the doctrine of **Original Sin**. This "fall" is held to have introduced death, suffering, and a fundamental alienation from God into human experience, a condition no human effort can fully repair on its own.

How Is One Saved?

How salvation works is the most contested question in Christian theology. **Catholics** hold it involves baptism, faith, cooperation with grace, and the sacraments — and can be lost through mortal sin. **Lutherans and Calvinists** hold salvation is entirely by grace (*Sola Gratia*) through faith alone (*Sola Fide*), with good works the *fruit*, not the cause. **Arminians and Wesleyans** hold grace is universal but resistible. **Pentecostals** often add a "second blessing" of Spirit baptism.



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Orthodoxy: Mortality Over Guilt

Eastern Orthodoxy agrees the fall was serious, but its traditional view emphasizes inherited mortality more than inherited guilt, unlike Augustine's Western framework.

Catholic Salvation: Not Guaranteed

Catholic teaching ties salvation to baptism, ongoing faith, cooperation with grace, and the sacraments, and holds that it can be lost through unrepented mortal sin.

Grace You Can Refuse

The Arminian and Wesleyan view holds that God's grace is offered universally to everyone, but it can be freely resisted rather than being irresistible.

What Is a Sacrament?

A **sacrament** is a physical rite that Christians believe conveys spiritual **grace**. The **Catholic and Orthodox** churches recognize **seven**: Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation, Confession, Anointing of the Sick, Marriage, and Holy Orders. Most **Protestant** churches recognize only **two** — Baptism and Communion — and tend to call them **ordinances**: acts of obedience that symbolically recall Christ's work rather than channels of grace in themselves.

Why Protestants Keep Two

Most Protestant churches recognize only Baptism and Communion as sacraments, since Christ explicitly commanded both and attached a physical sign to each: water, and bread and wine.

The Catholic Seven

The Catholic and Orthodox churches recognize seven sacraments: Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation, Confession, Anointing of the Sick, Marriage, and Holy Orders.

The Miracle of Transubstantiation

Catholic transubstantiation teaches that in the Eucharist, the bread and wine become the actual body and blood of Christ, even though their appearances stay exactly the same.

Only a Remembrance

Baptists and many evangelicals hold that the Eucharist is purely a memorial — a remembrance of Christ with no real presence.

By the numbers

Number of sacraments recognized by the Catholic and Orthodox churches

7 sacraments

Number of sacraments most Protestant churches recognize

2 sacraments

Matched pairs

Each item on the left goes with the one on the right.

Catholic view of salvation
→ Faith plus cooperation with grace and the sacraments; losable by mortal sin

Lutheran / Calvinist view of salvation
→ By grace alone through faith alone; works are the fruit, not the cause

Arminian / Wesleyan view of grace
→ Grace is offered universally but can be resisted; humans must freely cooperate

Pentecostal emphasis → A "second blessing" of Spirit baptism, often evidenced by speaking in tongues

Transubstantiation → Catholic view: bread and wine truly become Christ's body and blood

Christ present "in, with, and under" the elements
→ Lutheran view: Christ truly present alongside the bread and wine

Spiritual presence, received in faith
→ Calvinist view: Christ is spiritually present to those who receive in faith

Purely memorial → Zwinglian view: a symbolic re-enactment, with no real presence

Self-test

Answer each question from memory, then check your work against the answer key.

1. What does the doctrine of the Trinity hold about God?

- A Three separate gods sharing a common purpose
- B One God appearing in three successive modes over time
- C One supreme God with two lesser created spirits
- D One God existing as three co-equal, co-eternal persons

2. Which term names the heresy that treats Father, Son, and Spirit as three separate gods?

- A Miaphysitism
- B Homoousios
- C Tritheism
- D Modalism

3. What does Modalism claim about the one God?

- A The Son is a created being lesser than the Father
- B He merely appears in three successive modes or masks
- C He blends a divine and a human nature in Christ
- D He is three genuinely separate divine beings

4. Which statement is NOT part of Trinitarian orthodoxy?

- A The three persons are three separate gods
- B The three persons are co-equal
- C The one God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- D The three persons are co-eternal

5. The Greek word homoousios ("same substance"), central at Nicaea in 325 CE, affirmed what about the Son?

- A He was adopted as God's Son at his baptism
- B He fully shares the divine nature, not a lesser created being
- C He is a separate god standing alongside the Father
- D He appears as one of God's temporary successive modes

6. What did the Council of Chalcedon (451 CE) define about Jesus?

A Two natures, divine and human, in one person
B That he had one nature, blending divine and human
C That he was a created being, not eternal
D That he was human only, adopted as God's Son

7. What does the doctrine of the Incarnation claim about Jesus?

A Jesus was fully human and later adopted as God's Son
B Jesus was fully divine and only appeared to be human
C God took on human flesh; Jesus is fully God and fully human
D Jesus was part God and part human, a blend of the two

8. What does the Chalcedonian Definition explicitly reject about Christ's two natures?

A That Christ has a fully divine nature
B That Christ has a fully human nature
C That Christ is one person
D Blending them into a single mixed nature

9. Which phrase from the Gospel of John frames the Incarnation?

A "the Word was with God"
B "God so loved the world"
C "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us"
D "In the beginning was the Word"

10. Non-Chalcedonian churches such as the Coptic and Armenian Orthodox hold which position on Christ's nature?

A Miaphysitism
B Transubstantiation
C Modalism
D Tritheism

11. Which theologian gave Western Christianity its dominant account of Original Sin — that Adam's disobedience corrupted all human nature?

A Martin Luther
B Thomas Aquinas
C John Calvin
D Augustine of Hippo

12. What does the doctrine of Original Sin teach?

A A grave sin so serious it can never be forgiven
B Adam's first disobedience corrupted human nature, passed to all humanity
C The temptation of Christ in the wilderness
D The first sin each individual personally commits in life

13. How do Redemption and Salvation differ?

A Redemption is an Orthodox term and salvation a Catholic one
B Salvation is Christ's work on the cross; redemption applies it to the individual
C Both refer only to the forgiveness of an individual's personal sins
D Redemption is Christ's work on the cross; salvation applies it to the individual

14. In Christian theology, Redemption names what?

A. The individual's restored right relationship with God
B. The corrupted nature inherited from Adam
C. Christ's atoning work "buying back" humanity from bondage to sin and death
D. A physical rite that conveys spiritual grace

15. How does Eastern Orthodoxy's traditional view of the fall differ from Augustine's?

A. It denies that the fall of Adam and Eve happened at all
B. It emphasizes inherited mortality more than inherited guilt
C. It teaches humans can fully repair their nature by willpower
D. It rejects the idea that humanity needs a savior

16. In the Christian account of the human problem's cure, what does 'salvation' specifically mean?

A. The restoration of a right relationship with God
B. Christ's atoning work of buying humanity back from sin
C. A post-conversion baptism of the Holy Spirit
D. The corrupted nature inherited from Adam's disobedience

17. How does the lesson distinguish salvation from redemption in curing the human problem?

A. Both terms describe only the doctrine of Original Sin
B. Redemption is the mechanism, salvation the personal result
C. Salvation is the mechanism, redemption the personal result
D. Redemption means guilt inherited from Adam's fall

18. Which tradition teaches salvation involves baptism, faith, cooperation with grace, and the sacraments, and can be lost through unrepented mortal sin?

A. Pentecostal
B. Calvinist
C. Lutheran
D. Catholic

19. Which belief about salvation would a Catholic affirm but a Lutheran or Calvinist reject?

A. That cooperation with grace and the sacraments contribute to salvation
B. That Christ's death on the cross redeems humanity
C. That humanity is fallen and needs a savior
D. That salvation ultimately rests on God's grace

20. The Arminian and Wesleyan view of grace holds what?

A. Grace reaches people only through the seven sacraments
B. Grace is irresistible and cannot be refused once given
C. Grace is offered universally but can be freely resisted
D. Grace is unnecessary because good works alone save

21. What distinctive teaching do Pentecostals typically add to a Protestant framework?

A. That only two sacraments should ever be recognized
B. A "second blessing" of Spirit baptism, often shown by speaking in tongues
C. That bread and wine become Christ's literal body and blood
D. That salvation is earned by good works alone

22. Which tradition insists that good works are the fruit of salvation, not its cause or contribution?

A. Catholics
B. Eastern Orthodox
C. Arminians and Wesleyans
D. Lutherans and Calvinists

23. Why do most Protestant churches recognize only two sacraments, Baptism and Communion?

A. Only those two were explicitly commanded by Christ with a physical element attached
B. Only those two are mentioned anywhere in the New Testament
C. The other five require an ordained priesthood that Protestants abolished
D. The other five were invented by the medieval papacy

24. What is a sacrament?

A. A creed recited by the congregation in worship
B. A symbolic story that recalls a Bible event
C. A physical rite believed to convey spiritual grace
D. An ordained office held within the church

25. How many sacraments do the Catholic and Orthodox churches recognize?

A. Seven
B. Twelve
C. Two
D. Three

26. Catholic transubstantiation teaches what about the Eucharist?

A. Christ is present alongside the unchanged bread and wine
B. The bread and wine are a purely symbolic remembrance
C. Bread and wine become Christ's actual body and blood, though appearances stay the same
D. Christ is spiritually present only to those who receive in faith

27. Which view holds the Eucharist is purely memorial — a remembrance and nothing more?

A. Reformed churches
B. Lutherans
C. Roman Catholics
D. Baptists and many evangelicals

Go deeper

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LESSON 9 OF 15

Branches of the Modern Church

Catholic and Orthodox · The Protestant Traditions

WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

- Describe the Roman Catholic Church — papal infallibility, Sacred Tradition, and its size as the largest church.
- Explain Eastern Orthodox distinctives — autocephaly, theosis, the Divine Liturgy, and icons.
- Match the major Protestant traditions to their distinctive marks.
- Identify the origins and scale of key Protestant traditions — Anglican under Henry VIII and Pentecostal at Azusa.
- Recognize the major Protestant denominations by name.

Catholic and Orthodox

The two oldest continuous streams of Christianity — Rome and Constantinople — diverged in 1054 and have maintained distinct structures, theologies, and worship forms ever since.

The Largest Church

With roughly **1.3 billion members**, the **Roman Catholic Church** is the largest Christian body and the largest single religious organization on Earth. Its governance is formally hierarchical: the **Pope** leads, supported by the College of Cardinals and a worldwide episcopate. This centralized authority is one of the defining structural features that separates Catholicism from both Orthodoxy and Protestantism, which reject a single universal bishop with binding jurisdiction.

The Bishop of Rome

Catholics understand the **Pope** not merely as an administrative head but as the successor of Peter, the first apostle — a claim rooted in Matthew 16:18. **Pope Francis**, elected in **2013**, broke several precedents: the first Jesuit pope, the first from the Americas, and the first to take the name Francis. His pastoral emphasis on mercy, poverty, and environmental concern has shaped global Catholic discourse. Catholic doctrine draws equally from **Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition** — the living transmission of faith from the apostles — rather than Scripture alone.

Vatican II

Ex cathedra infallibility — the teaching that the Pope's formal doctrinal pronouncements are preserved from error — had been defined at Vatican I (1870). A century later, **Pope John XXIII** called the **Second Vatican Council (1962–1965)** to renew the Church for the modern world. Its practical reforms were sweeping: the **Mass moved from Latin to vernacular languages**, **priests turned to face the congregation**, the **laity** were given a more active liturgical role, and **dialogue with other religions** — including Judaism and Islam — was formally encouraged. One line of resistance still celebrates the older Tridentine Mass; the council's legacy remains contested in some quarters.

The Eastern Orthodox Church

The **Eastern Orthodox** communion numbers approximately **270 million members** across a family of **autocephalous** — literally "self-headed" — national churches. Each church governs itself under its own patriarch; none is subordinate to Rome. The **Ecumenical Patriarch** of Constantinople holds an honorary primacy as "first among equals," but no jurisdictional authority over the others. The **Russian Orthodox Church** is by far the largest single body. Orthodox theology treats the **seven Ecumenical Councils** as the supreme doctrinal authority. Its ancient **Divine Liturgy** — attributed to **John Chrysostom or Basil the Great** — structures worship, and **iconography** provides sacred images venerated as "windows into heaven." The Orthodox vision of salvation is **theosis**: actual participation in the divine nature, not merely legal forgiveness.

The Protestant Traditions

The Reformation fractured Western Christianity into a proliferating landscape of denominations — and the 20th century added entirely new streams rooted in the Global South.

The Protestant Family

Protestantism holds roughly 900 million adherents across hundreds of denominations. The shared foundation is **Sola Scriptura** — Scripture alone as the supreme authority — the priesthood of all believers, and justification by faith. Beyond those pillars, the traditions diverge sharply.

- **Lutheran**: the original Reformation stream; emphasizes grace, word and sacrament, and the two-kingdoms doctrine.
- **Reformed / Presbyterian**: follows Calvin; stresses God's sovereignty, covenant theology, and elder-led governance.
- **Anglican / Episcopal**: traces its origin to **Henry VIII**'s break with Rome in **1534**; occupies a deliberate middle position ("via media") between Catholic structure and Protestant theology.
- **Baptist**: practices **believer's baptism** (adults on profession of faith) and insists on **local church autonomy** — no binding denominational hierarchy above the congregation. Global Baptist membership stands near **100 million**.
- **Methodist**: Wesley's 18th-century revival movement; emphasizes sanctification, personal holiness, and social concern.
- **Pentecostal / Charismatic**: the fastest-growing wing; centers on the Holy Spirit's direct gifts — tongues, healing, prophecy. Worldwide adherents number approximately **644 million**, making it one of the largest movements in global Christianity.
- **Evangelical**: a transdenominational identity, not a denomination — marked by biblical authority, a **born-again** conversion experience, and active evangelism. It cuts across Lutheran, Baptist, Anglican, and Pentecostal lines.

Independent and Indigenous Churches

A major development of the 20th–21st centuries is the explosive growth of **independent churches** outside the historic Western denominations. The thousands of **African Independent Churches (AICs)**

blend Christian doctrine with indigenous African music, healing, and spiritual practice, typically emphasizing the **Holy Spirit's direct work**. These churches have no organizational link to Rome, Wittenberg, or Geneva — they represent a genuinely postcolonial form of Christianity, shaped by African cultural categories and often by charismatic founders who built followings outside existing institutional structures. Similar independent movements have emerged across Latin America and East Asia.

Key terms

Ex cathedra infallibility

The Catholic teaching that the Pope's formal doctrinal pronouncements, made "from the chair" of Peter, are preserved from error.

Sacred Tradition

The body of teaching handed down from the apostles alongside Scripture; Catholics and Orthodox treat it as a source of doctrine, not Scripture alone.

Autocephalous

Literally "self-headed"; an Orthodox national church that governs itself under its own patriarch rather than a central authority.

Theosis

"Deification" — the Orthodox vision of salvation as actual participation in the divine nature, not merely the forgiveness of sins.

Key concepts

Baptist

- A Protestant tradition with no binding denominational hierarchy above the local congregation.
- It stresses the autonomy of each local church and numbers near 100 million worldwide.
- It admits members only as consenting adults who profess faith, refusing the infant rite.

Methodist

- A Protestant tradition born from an 18th-century revival movement.
- It emphasizes sanctification, personal holiness, and social concern.
- It grew out of the movement led by John Wesley.

Anglican / Episcopal

- A Protestant tradition occupying a deliberate middle way between Catholic structure and Reformation theology.
- Its "via media" balances Catholic form with Protestant belief.
- It traces its origin to Henry VIII's 1534 break with Rome.

Lutheran

- The original Reformation stream among the Protestant traditions.
- It emphasizes grace, word and sacrament, and the two-kingdoms doctrine.
- It descends directly from the German monk who launched the Reformation in 1517.

Presbyterian

- A Protestant tradition shaped by the theology of John Calvin.
- It stresses God's sovereignty and covenant theology.
- Its distinctive elder-led church governance gives the tradition its name.

Key facts

The Bishop of Rome

The **Pope** is the Bishop of Rome and the visible head of the Roman Catholic Church. **Pope Francis**, elected in **2013**, took his name from Francis of Assisi to signal a priority on poverty and humility. Catholics teach through both **Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition**.

Vatican II

Called by Pope John XXIII, the **Second Vatican Council** (**1962–1965**) was the most significant Catholic reform council in centuries. Its changes included the **Mass in vernacular languages** instead of Latin, **priests facing the congregation**, an elevated role for the **laity**, and the opening of **dialogue with other religions**.

The Eastern Orthodox Church

The **Eastern Orthodox** communion (**~270 million members**) is a family of **autocephalous** — self-governing — national churches. The **Ecumenical Patriarch** of Constantinople holds an honorary primacy as "first among equals." The largest single body is the **Russian Orthodox Church**.

Scripture Plus Sacred Tradition

Catholic doctrine draws on Sacred Scripture together with Sacred Tradition, the teaching handed down from the apostles, rather than Scripture alone.

The Protestant Family

Protestantism covers the hundreds of denominations born from the Reformation and later revivals. It is unified by **Sola Scriptura** (Scripture alone), the priesthood of all believers, and justification by faith — and divided on nearly everything else, from baptism to church government.

Independent and Indigenous Churches

A major development of the 20th–21st centuries is the explosive growth of **independent churches** with no ties to historic Western denominations. The thousands of **African Independent Churches (AICs)** blend Christian doctrine with indigenous African music, healing, and spiritual practice, often emphasizing the Holy Spirit's direct work.

> **The Baptist Distinctives**
> Baptists practice believer's baptism — baptizing on a personal profession of faith — and insist on local church autonomy, with no binding hierarchy above the congregation.

> **Calvin's Reformed Legacy**
> The Reformed and Presbyterian tradition follows Calvin, emphasizing God's sovereignty, covenant theology, and church governance led by elders.

> **Born on Azusa Street**
> The Pentecostal movement traces its birth to the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles in 1906.

By the numbers

Approximate membership of the Roman Catholic Church
1.3 billion

Approximate membership of the Eastern Orthodox communion
270 million

Approximate worldwide Pentecostal / Charismatic adherents
644 million

Approximate global Baptist membership
100 million

Matched pairs

Each item on the left goes with the one on the right.

Divine Liturgy
→ The ancient Eastern Orthodox worship service, traditionally of John Chrysostom or Basil the Great.

Iconography → Sacred images venerated in Orthodoxy as "windows into heaven."

Lutheran
→ Founded by Luther in Germany (1517); teaches the real presence in the Eucharist and the Law/Gospel distinction.

Reformed / Presbyterian
→ Rooted in Calvin's Geneva (1536); known for predestination, covenant theology, and simple worship.

Anglican / Episcopal
→ Began with Henry VIII in England (1534); a "via media" between Catholic and Reformed, with the Book of Common Prayer.

Baptist → Practices believer's baptism (adults on profession of faith) and local church autonomy.

Methodist → Founded by John Wesley in England (1738); stresses sanctification and social holiness.

Pentecostal / Charismatic
→ Began at Azusa Street, Los Angeles (1906); emphasizes Spirit baptism, speaking in tongues, and healing.

Evangelical
→ A transdenominational movement marked by biblical authority, a born-again experience, and active evangelism.

Self-test

Answer each question from memory, then check your work against the answer key.

1. What does the Catholic teaching of 'ex cathedra' infallibility hold?

- A The Pope's formal doctrinal pronouncements are preserved from error
- B Every statement the Pope makes on any subject is free from error
- C Church councils are infallible only when the Pope is absent
- D The College of Cardinals cannot err when electing a new Pope

2. Roughly how many members does the Roman Catholic Church have, making it the largest Christian body?

- A 270 million
- B 1.3 billion
- C 644 million
- D 900 million

3. Catholic doctrine draws from Sacred Scripture together with what second source?

- A The rulings of secular monarchs
- B Scripture alone, with no other source
- C Sacred Tradition, the teaching handed down from the apostles
- D The private revelations of individual saints

4. Which statement about the Roman Catholic Church is NOT true?

- A It draws doctrine from both Scripture and Sacred Tradition
- B It is led by the Pope, understood as the successor of Peter
- C It is the largest single religious organization on Earth
- D It rejects any single universal bishop with binding authority

5. In Catholic teaching, the Pope is understood as the successor of which apostle?

- A Paul
- B Andrew
- C James
- D Peter

6. Within Eastern Orthodoxy, what kind of authority does the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople hold?

A. Supreme universal jurisdiction over all Orthodox churches, like the Catholic Pope
B. The power to define doctrine infallibly for all Orthodox believers
C. An honorary primacy as 'first among equals,' with no binding jurisdiction over other churches
D. Direct governance of every autocephalous church from Constantinople

7. What does it mean that Eastern Orthodox churches are 'autocephalous'?

A. All are ruled centrally from Constantinople
B. Each governs itself under its own patriarch, self-headed
C. They reject bishops in favor of congregational voting
D. They submit jointly to the authority of Rome

8. In Orthodox theology, 'theosis' describes salvation as what?

A. Actual participation in the divine nature, or deification
B. A purely legal forgiveness of sins
C. Justification by faith alone apart from works
D. Predestination of the elect before creation

9. The Orthodox Divine Liturgy is traditionally attributed to which two figures?

A. John Chrysostom and Basil the Great
B. Cyril and Methodius
C. The apostles Peter and Paul
D. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas

10. How does Orthodoxy regard the sacred images, or icons, used in worship?

A. As mere decorative art with no spiritual role
B. As forbidden idols to be destroyed
C. As objects worshiped in place of God
D. As venerated 'windows into heaven'

11. What is the traditional name for the ancient Eastern Orthodox worship service?

A. Book of Common Prayer
B. Eucharistic Adoration
C. Divine Liturgy
D. Tridentine Mass

12. Orthodox tradition attributes authorship of the ancient Divine Liturgy to whom?

A. Cyril and Methodius
B. John Chrysostom or Basil the Great
C. Athanasius and Basil the Great
D. John Chrysostom and Origen

13. In Orthodox theology, sacred images called icons are traditionally described as what?

A. Teaching aids banned by councils
B. Historical portraits only
C. Idols to be worshipped directly
D. Windows into heaven

14. What is the term for the Orthodox practice of venerating sacred images as windows into heaven?

A. Iconoclasm
B. Iconography
C. Hagiography
D. Theosis

15. Which Protestant tradition practices believer's baptism and insists on local church autonomy?

A Anglican
B Lutheran
C Baptist
D Methodist

16. Which tradition centers on the Holy Spirit's direct gifts — tongues, healing, and prophecy?

A Pentecostal / Charismatic
B Anglican
C Lutheran
D Reformed / Presbyterian

17. Which tradition deliberately occupies a 'via media' between Catholic structure and Protestant theology?

A Baptist / Free Church
B Methodist / Wesleyan
C Anglican / Episcopal
D Pentecostal / Charismatic

18. Which tradition follows Calvin and stresses God's sovereignty, covenant theology, and elder-led governance?

A Baptist / Free Church
B Reformed / Presbyterian
C Lutheran / Evangelical
D Methodist / Wesleyan

19. Which mark is NOT associated with the Lutheran tradition?

A Origin as the first Reformation stream
B Emphasis on grace, word, and sacrament
C The two-kingdoms doctrine
D Local church autonomy with no denominational hierarchy

20. Which English monarch's break with Rome in 1534 gave rise to the Anglican tradition?

A Henry VIII
B Charles I
C Edward VI
D Elizabeth I

21. The Pentecostal movement traces its birth to which 1906 revival in Los Angeles?

A Azusa Street Revival
B The Great Awakening
C Cane Ridge Revival
D The Welsh Revival

22. Approximately how many worldwide Pentecostal / Charismatic adherents are there?

A 900 million
B 100 million
C 270 million
D 644 million

23. Global Baptist membership stands near what figure?

A 1.3 billion
B 100 million
C 270 million
D 644 million

24. Which pairing of a tradition to its origin is correct?

A Anglican — Azusa Street, 1906
B Pentecostal — Henry VIII's England, 1534
C Pentecostal — Azusa Street, 1906
D Anglican — Wesley's revival, 1738

25. In what year did Henry VIII's break with Rome give rise to the Anglican tradition?

A 1534
B 1517
C 1738
D 1620

26. Anglicanism, arising from Henry VIII's break with Rome, is often described as occupying which position?

A Corpus Christi
B Imago Dei
C Via media
D Sola fide

27. In what year did the Azusa Street Revival that launched the Pentecostal movement begin?

A 1517
B 1930
C 1901
D 1906

28. In which city did the Azusa Street Revival that launched Pentecostalism take place?

A Topeka
B Los Angeles
C Chicago
D San Francisco

29. Which denomination grew out of John Wesley's 18th-century revival movement?

A Lutheran
B Baptist
C Presbyterian
D Methodist

30. In the United States, the Anglican tradition is commonly known by which name?

A Congregationalist
B Baptist
C Episcopal
D Presbyterian

31. Which denomination follows Calvin's Reformed theology and is governed by a body of elected elders?

A Presbyterian
B Baptist
C Methodist
D Lutheran

32. Which denomination is the original Reformation stream, known for the two-kingdoms doctrine?

A Baptist
B Lutheran
C Pentecostal
D Methodist

33. Which of the following is NOT a major Protestant denomination?

A The Lutheran Confession
B Eastern Orthodox
C The Presbyterian Tradition
D The Methodist Movement

Go deeper

ONLINE This lesson on the web flashfeedlearningapp.com/study-guides/christianity/branches-of-the-modern-church

STUDY Christianity: A Complete History in the FlashFeed app flashfeedlearningapp.com/packs/christianity

LESSON 10 OF 15

Christianity in the Modern World

The Global South Shift · Ecumenism and Fragmentation · Contemporary Currents

WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

- Explain the shift of Christianity's center of gravity to the Global South.
- Define ecumenism and the milestones of Catholic-Orthodox-Protestant reconciliation.
- Describe the founding of the World Council of Churches and the explosion of denominations.
- Define the major contemporary movements — Pentecostalism, Liberation Theology, the Prosperity Gospel, and the 'nones'.
- Recognize contemporary theological movements and social debates.

The Global South Shift

The center of gravity for world Christianity has moved decisively out of Europe and North America over the past century, reshaping the faith's demographics, leadership, and theological agenda.

A Faith Moves South

In **1900**, roughly **95% of the world's Christians** lived in Europe or North America, and Christianity was widely seen as a "Western religion." That picture has nearly reversed. By **2025**, the **Global South** — Africa, Latin America, and Asia — is home to about **69% of all Christians**, a share projected to reach **78% by 2050**. The reversal is one of the most consequential shifts in religious history, driven by missionary expansion, indigenous church movements, and dramatic population growth in the southern hemisphere.

Africa's Transformation

Africa has undergone the most dramatic shift of all: from **fewer than 10 million Christians** at the start of the 20th century to roughly **734 million today**, growing at about **2.64% a year**. By 2050, Africa is projected to host more Christians than Asia and Latin America combined. The growth is not merely numerical — African churches have developed distinctive theological voices, liturgical forms, and ecclesial structures. Countries such as Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Ethiopia now rank among the most populous Christian nations on earth.

New Questions for a New Center

The demographic shift carries a theological one. The questions pressing on Global South Christians — **poverty**, **healing**, **spiritual warfare**, **indigenous culture**, corruption, and land rights — differ sharply from those that preoccupied European theologians for centuries. Western Christianity wrestled with Enlightenment skepticism and biblical criticism; the new majority navigates traditions where ancestors, spirits, and material suffering are live realities. The faith's intellectual agenda is being reset by its new majority, with African and Latin American scholars increasingly driving debates in missiology,

biblical hermeneutics, and ethics. Seminary enrollment in sub-Saharan Africa now exceeds that of Western Europe.

Ecumenism and Fragmentation

Modern Christianity has pursued unity with one hand while fracturing with the other — producing both landmark reconciliation agreements and an unprecedented explosion of new denominations.

The World Council of Churches

Responding to two thousand years of division, the **World Council of Churches** (**WCC**) was founded in **1948** in **Amsterdam**, bringing together most major Protestant and Orthodox churches in pursuit of visible Christian unity. The founding assembly drew representatives from 147 churches across 44 countries. The Roman Catholic Church is not a member but has engaged in significant ecumenical dialogue since **Vatican II** (1962–1965), participating in joint commissions on baptism, Eucharist, and ministry. The WCC's headquarters in Geneva has coordinated relief work and human-rights advocacy alongside its theological dialogue.

A Thaw Between East and West

Several milestones eased the ancient Catholic–Orthodox rift. In **1964**, Pope **Paul VI** and Patriarch **Athenagoras** of Constantinople met in Jerusalem — the first papal-patriarchal meeting since **1439**, itself the Council of Florence. In **1965**, the mutual **excommunications of 1054** — the documents that formally opened the **Great Schism** — were lifted simultaneously in Rome and Constantinople, a symbolic gesture that cleared ground for dialogue without yet restoring communion.

Resolving a 500-Year Dispute

In **1999**, the Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church signed the **Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification**, declaring substantial agreement on the doctrine — salvation by **faith and grace** — that had helped split Western Christianity in the Reformation. Reformed, Methodist, and Anglican bodies later affirmed the declaration. Real differences in church governance, papal authority, and sacramental theology, however, still keep the branches structurally apart.

Unity and Splintering at Once

While ecumenism pursues unity, fragmentation races ahead in parallel. In **1900** there were an estimated **2,000 Christian denominations** worldwide; by **2025** there are roughly **50,000**. The explosion reflects Pentecostal splintering, indigenous church movements, and cultures where founding a new congregation requires little institutional overhead. Some scholars read this as the faith's vitality and adaptability; others read it as a standing scandal against Jesus's prayer in John 17 "that they may be one."

Contemporary Currents

Several distinct movements define Christianity's theological landscape in the early 21st century, from explosive Pentecostal growth to contested social questions to American demographic shifts.

The Fastest-Growing Currents

Christianity's fastest-growing segments are **Evangelicals** (**420+ million**) and **Pentecostals and Charismatics** (**660+ million**, with significant overlap). **Pentecostalism**, rooted in the 1906 Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles, emphasizes **baptism of the Holy Spirit**, **speaking in tongues**, and **miraculous healing** — features that resonate amid poverty and suffering across the Global South. Roughly **one in four Christians worldwide is Pentecostal**. The **Prosperity Gospel**, a teaching prominent in some Pentecostal contexts that frames faith as yielding material wealth and physical health, has spread widely in Africa and Latin America but is widely criticized by mainstream theologians as a distortion of the tradition.

Liberation Theology, associated with Peruvian theologian **Gustavo Gutiérrez** and his 1971 work *A Theology of Liberation*, emerged from 1970s Latin America stressing God's **"preferential option for the poor"** and naming structural injustice as sin. **Feminist theology** — which rereads Scripture through women's experience — has accompanied women's ordination in most mainline Protestant denominations, including Episcopal, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Methodist churches.

Christianity in the United States Today

The U.S. remains more Christian than most of Western Europe even as affiliation declines. The **"nones"** — Americans claiming no religious affiliation, often describing themselves as "spiritual but not religious" — now constitute about **28%** of the population, up from roughly 16% in 2007. **Megachurches** (congregations of 2,000 or more) have proliferated, emphasizing contemporary worship and media production. **Black churches** (Baptist, AME, COGIC) retain enduring civic significance, and **Latino Catholics and Pentecostals** represent the fastest-growing demographic slice. On **LGBTQ+ inclusion and sexuality**, traditions are deeply divided: mainline Protestants and the Anglican Communion are internally split, while Catholics, Orthodox, and most Evangelicals hold traditional teaching.

Key terms

The Global South

Africa, Latin America, and Asia — now home to the majority of the world's Christians, reversing the faith's earlier Western center of gravity.

Ecumenism

The movement seeking greater cooperation and eventual unity among Christianity's divided churches and denominations.

Pentecostalism

A movement emphasizing baptism of the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, and miraculous healing; one in four Christians worldwide is Pentecostal.

The "nones"

People who claim no religious affiliation — "spiritual but not religious" — now about 28% of Americans and a growing share.

Liberation Theology

A movement from 1970s Latin America (Gustavo Gutiérrez) stressing God's "preferential option for the poor" and naming structural injustice as sin.

Prosperity Gospel

A teaching, prominent in some Pentecostal contexts, that faith yields material wealth and physical health; widely criticized by mainstream theologians.

Key concepts

Prosperity Gospel

- A modern Christian teaching that has spread widely in Africa and Latin America.
- Prominent in some Pentecostal contexts, it is widely criticized by mainstream theologians as a distortion.
- It frames faith as yielding material wealth and physical health.

Liberation Theology

- A movement that emerged from 1970s Latin America.
- It is associated with the Peruvian thinker Gustavo Gutiérrez and his 1971 book.
- It names structural injustice as sin and stresses God's "preferential option for the poor."

Feminist Theology

- A modern approach that rereads Scripture through women's experience.
- It has accompanied the ordination of women in most mainline Protestant denominations.
- Episcopal, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Methodist churches admitting women clergy reflect its influence.

Key facts

> **A Faith Moves South**
>
> In **1900**, roughly **95% of the world's Christians** lived in Europe or North America, and Christianity was widely seen as a "Western religion." That picture has nearly reversed. By **2025**, the **Global South** — Africa, Latin America, and Asia — is home to about **69% of all Christians**, a share projected to reach **78% by 2050**.

> **New Questions for a New Center**
>
> The demographic shift carries a theological one. The questions pressing on Global South Christians — **poverty**, **healing**, **spiritual warfare**, **indigenous culture**, corruption, and land rights — differ sharply from those that preoccupied European theologians for centuries. The faith's intellectual agenda is being reset by its new majority.

Christianity's Western Peak

In 1900, roughly 95% of the world's Christians lived in Europe or North America, and the faith was widely seen as a Western religion.

Defining the Global South

The 'Global South' — Africa, Latin America, and Asia — is now home to about 69% of the world's Christians, reversing Christianity's earlier Western center of gravity.

The World Council of Churches

Responding to two thousand years of division, the **World Council of Churches** was founded in **1948** in **Amsterdam**, bringing together most major Protestant and Orthodox churches in pursuit of visible Christian unity. The Roman Catholic Church is not a member but has engaged in significant ecumenical dialogue since Vatican II.

A Thaw Between East and West

Several milestones eased the ancient Catholic–Orthodox rift. In **1964**, Pope **Paul VI** and Patriarch **Athenagoras** of Constantinople met in Jerusalem — the first papal-patriarchal meeting since 1439. In **1965**, the mutual excommunications of **1054** were formally lifted, a symbolic burying of the Great Schism's opening act.

Resolving a 500-Year Dispute

In **1999**, the Lutheran World Federation and the Catholic Church signed the **Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification**, declaring substantial agreement on the question — salvation by faith and grace — that had helped split Western Christianity in the Reformation. Real differences in church governance and sacramental theology, however, still keep the branches apart.

Unity and Splintering at Once

While ecumenism pursues unity, fragmentation races ahead in parallel. In **1900** there were an estimated **2,000 Christian denominations** worldwide; by **2025** there are roughly **50,000**. The explosion reflects Pentecostal splintering, indigenous church movements, and cultures where founding a new congregation is relatively simple. Some scholars read this as vitality; others, as a scandal to the prayer "that they may be one."

What Ecumenism Means

Ecumenism is the movement seeking greater cooperation and eventual unity among Christianity's divided churches and denominations — the opposite of fragmentation.

The Fastest-Growing Currents

Christianity's fastest-growing segments are **Evangelicals** (**420+ million**) and **Pentecostals and Charismatics** (**660+ million**, with overlap between the two). Pentecostalism's appeal lies in direct, experiential encounter with God, miraculous healing, and vibrant worship — features that resonate amid poverty and suffering. As the saying goes, "one in four Christians around the globe is Pentecostal."

Christianity in the United States Today

The U.S. is an officially secular state that remains more Christian than most of Western Europe, even as affiliation declines. Key trends: the rise of the **"nones,"** now about **28%** of Americans, who claim no religious affiliation; the spread of **megachurches** (congregations of 2,000+); the enduring vitality of **Black churches** (Baptist, AME, COGIC) in civic life; and rapid growth among **Latino Catholics and Pentecostals**.

Split Over Sexuality

Christian traditions are deeply divided on LGBTQ+ inclusion and sexuality: mainline Protestants and the Anglican Communion are internally split, while Catholics, Orthodox, and most Evangelicals hold to traditional teaching.

Liberation Theology's Core Claim

Liberation Theology, associated with Gustavo Gutiérrez, is best known for stressing God's 'preferential option for the poor.'

Feminist Theology's Approach

Feminist theology is characterized by rereading Scripture through women's experience, and has accompanied women's ordination in most mainline Protestant denominations.

By the numbers

Share of the world's Christians who lived in Europe or North America in 1900

95 %

Share of the world's Christians living in the Global South by 2025

69 %

Approximate number of Christians in Africa today

734 million

Year the World Council of Churches was founded

1948 CE

Approximate number of Christian denominations worldwide by 2025

50000 denominations

Matched pairs

Each item on the left goes with the one on the right.

1964 → Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras meet in Jerusalem

1965 → The mutual excommunications of 1054 are formally lifted

1999 → Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification signed

Self-test

Answer each question from memory, then check your work against the answer key.

1. The Global South's share of the world's Christians (about 69% in 2025) is projected to keep rising. What share is it expected to reach by 2050?

A 85%
B 73%
C 92%
D 78%

2. Which three regions make up the 'Global South' that now holds most of the world's Christians?

A Africa, Europe, and the Middle East
B Africa, Latin America, and Asia
C Europe, North America, and Australia
D Asia, North America, and Latin America

3. In 1900, about what share of the world's Christians lived in Europe or North America?

A 95%
B 69%
C 50%
D 40%

4. Africa's Christian population grew from fewer than 10 million in 1900 to roughly how many today?

A 460 million
B 210 million
C 734 million
D 1.2 billion

5. Which concern is NOT among the questions that press most on Global South Christians?

A Indigenous culture and land rights
B Enlightenment skepticism and biblical criticism
C Poverty and material suffering
D Healing and spiritual warfare

6. What does 'ecumenism' refer to in modern Christianity?

A The movement seeking greater cooperation and eventual unity among divided churches
B The splitting of churches into new denominations
C The spread of Christianity into the Global South
D The translation of the Bible into local languages

7. In 1964 Patriarch Athenagoras met, in the first papal-patriarchal meeting since 1439, with which pope?

A John Paul II
B Pius XII
C Paul VI
D John XXIII

8. What symbolic step in 1965 addressed the Great Schism between Rome and Constantinople?

A The Roman Catholic Church joined the World Council of Churches
B The Joint Declaration on Justification was signed
C The Council of Florence reunited the churches
D The mutual excommunications of 1054 were lifted

9. The 1999 Joint Declaration by the Catholic Church and Lutheran World Federation resolved a long dispute over which doctrine?

A Papal infallibility
B Justification
C Transubstantiation
D The Trinity

10. Salvation by faith and grace — the doctrine at the heart of the 1999 Joint Declaration — had helped split Western Christianity during which movement?

A Vatican II
B The Great Schism
C The Reformation
D The Enlightenment

11. The World Council of Churches unites most major Protestant and Orthodox bodies. Which major church is notably NOT a member?

A The Lutheran churches
B The Anglican Communion
C The Eastern Orthodox Church
D The Roman Catholic Church

12. In what year was the World Council of Churches founded?

A 1948
B 1962
C 1054
D 1999

13. In which city was the World Council of Churches founded in 1948?

A Jerusalem
B Amsterdam
C Rome
D Geneva

14. About how many Christian denominations existed worldwide in 1900?

A 2,000
B 500
C 50,000
D 12,000

15. By 2025, roughly how many Christian denominations are there worldwide?

A 150,000
B 2,000
C 50,000
D 5,000

16. Roughly what share of the world's Christians is Pentecostal?

A One in two
B One in twenty
C One in a hundred
D One in four

17. Which three features especially define Pentecostalism?

A Biblical criticism, higher education, and social reform
B Baptism of the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, and miraculous healing
C Infant baptism, Latin liturgy, and papal authority
D Icon veneration, monasticism, and fasting

18. Liberation Theology, associated with Gustavo Gutiérrez, is best known for stressing what?

A The baptism of the Holy Spirit
B Faith as a path to material wealth
C God's 'preferential option for the poor'
D Visible unity among all churches

19. Which teaching frames faith as yielding material wealth and physical health, and is widely criticized as a distortion?

A Liberation Theology
B Ecumenism
C Feminist Theology
D The Prosperity Gospel

20. Who are the 'nones,' now about 28% of Americans?

A People who claim no religious affiliation
B Christians living in the Global South
C People who left Catholicism for Protestantism
D Members of churches with no denomination

21. How do Christian traditions currently relate on questions of LGBTQ+ inclusion and sexuality?

A Traditions are deeply divided — mainline Protestants and the Anglican Communion are split, while Catholics, Orthodox, and most Evangelicals hold traditional teaching
B Resolved by ecumenical consensus in the 1990s, with only isolated congregations still dissenting
C Unified against inclusion — every tradition from Catholic to Evangelical upholds the same traditional teaching
D Split by governance, not theology — hierarchical traditions allow local variation; congregational ones stay uniform

22. Feminist theology is characterized by what approach?

A Emphasizing speaking in tongues and healing
B Restricting ordination to men
C Rereading Scripture through women's experience
D Framing faith as a source of material wealth

23. Women's ordination has accompanied feminist theology in most mainline Protestant denominations. Which body ordains women?

A The Eastern Orthodox Church
B The Coptic Church
C The Roman Catholic Church
D The Episcopal Church

24. Liberation Theology is notable for naming what as sin?

A Private doubt and skepticism
B Structural injustice
C Speaking in tongues
D Disunity among churches

25. How do mainstream theologians generally regard the Prosperity Gospel?

A As a distortion of the Christian tradition
B As the core of Liberation Theology
C As the official teaching of the World Council of Churches
D As a form of feminist theology

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LESSON 11 OF 15

Key Figures

Who's Who · Who Is It? — Christian Figures

WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

- Identify apostolic-age figures (Peter, Mary Magdalene) and the great defender of orthodoxy (Athanasius).
- Identify the medieval shapers of the church (Benedict, Gregory the Great).
- Match the modern reformers and revivalists to their achievements (Wilberforce, Carey, Spurgeon, Graham, John Paul II).
- Recognize the great theologians and reformers from clues (Paul, Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Ignatius, Wesley).
- Recognize the emperor, saint, and activist from clues (Constantine, Francis, Martin Luther King Jr.).

Two thousand years of Christianity is, at ground level, a story of people — apostles who carried a message out of Jerusalem, emperors who made it official, theologians who argued about what it meant, monks who preserved it, reformers who split it, and preachers who carried it to new continents. You can learn the doctrines and the dates, but the history only comes alive when you can put a face to each turning point. This lesson is the gallery.

Who's Who

Start with the apostolic generation. **Peter** was the chief of the twelve and the first leader of the Jerusalem church, traditionally martyred in Rome under Nero; the papacy traces its authority back to him. **Mary Magdalene** was a prominent disciple and, in all four Gospels, the first witness to the Resurrection — a striking fact in a patriarchal age.

The early church's survival owed much to its defenders and organizers. **Athanasius** of Alexandria, the "Father of Orthodoxy," fought for decades to uphold Christ's full divinity against Arius and was the first to list exactly the 27 books of the New Testament. **Benedict of Nursia** gave Western monasticism its enduring shape with his *Rule*, turning monasteries into the libraries, schools, and hospitals of medieval Europe. **Gregory the Great**, pope from 590, reorganized the medieval papacy and sent missionaries to England.

The modern era produced reformers and revivalists who reshaped the faith yet again. **William Wilberforce**, an evangelical member of Parliament, spent his career driving the abolition of the British slave trade. **William Carey** became the "father of modern missions," pioneering Protestant work in India. **Charles Spurgeon**, the Victorian "Prince of Preachers," filled a London tabernacle every week. **Billy Graham** preached in person to an estimated 215 million people and defined twentieth-century American evangelicalism. And **Pope John Paul II**, the Polish pope, helped bring down European communism while energizing a global Catholic Church.

These are only some of the cast. The "Who Is It?" round below tests a wider set — the figures whose individual decisions bent the whole arc of the story: the missionary who made it a universal religion, the emperor who legalized it, the theologians who defined its grace and its reason, the monk who broke it open, the reformer who systematized it, and the minister who turned the gospel into a movement for justice. As you read each clue, notice how the early hints could fit several people, and only the last clue pins the identity. That is how history actually feels from the inside: ambiguous until the decisive detail arrives.

Key concepts

Paul of Tarsus

- A 1st-century Pharisee from Tarsus who at first violently persecuted the new movement.
- He was transformed by a vision on the road to Damascus and became its boldest missionary.
- He argued Gentiles need not first become Jews, and wrote roughly half the New Testament.

Constantine I

- A 4th-century Roman emperor.
- He issued an edict of toleration after a battlefield vision of a Christian sign.
- He convened the first ecumenical council and founded a new eastern capital named for himself.

Augustine of Hippo

- A North African bishop of the 4th and 5th centuries, the most influential theologian of the Western church.
- His restless early life and dramatic garden conversion are told in his autobiography.
- He developed the doctrines of original sin and grace and wrote *The City of God*.

Thomas Aquinas

- A 13th-century Dominican friar and philosopher.
- He argued faith and reason are complementary, harmonizing Christian theology with Aristotle.
- His *Summa Theologica* and 'Five Ways' became the official framework of Catholic philosophy.

Francis of Assisi

- A wealthy 13th-century Italian youth who renounced everything to live in poverty.
- He cared for lepers, preached in the streets, and is the patron saint of ecology.
- He founded an order of friars; a 21st-century pope took his name.

Martin Luther

- A 16th-century German Augustinian monk and professor.
- He protested the sale of indulgences and taught salvation by faith and Scripture alone.
- His Ninety-Five Theses sparked the Protestant Reformation; he translated the Bible into German.

John Calvin

- A 16th-century French reformer who led the church in Geneva.
- His *Institutes of the Christian Religion* systematized Reformed theology.
- He is best known for the doctrines of predestination and total depravity.

Ignatius of Loyola

- A 16th-century Spanish soldier turned religious reformer.
- He wrote the *Spiritual Exercises* and founded a disciplined, education-focused order.
- His Society of Jesus — the Jesuits — drove the Catholic Counter-Reformation.

John Wesley

- An 18th-century English clergyman known for open-air field preaching.
- He emphasized universal grace, sanctification, and 'social holiness.'
- His revival movement grew into the Methodist church.

Martin Luther King Jr.

- A 20th-century American Baptist minister.
- He grounded a movement of nonviolent resistance in the Black church and the gospel.
- He led the American civil rights movement until his assassination in 1968.

Matched pairs

Each item on the left goes with the one on the right.

Peter → Chief apostle and first leader of the Jerusalem church; martyred in Rome under Nero

Mary Magdalene → Prominent female disciple; the first witness to the Resurrection

Athanasius
→ 'Father of Orthodoxy'; defended Christ's full divinity against Arius; named the 27-book NT canon

Benedict of Nursia → Father of Western monasticism; his Rule organized medieval monastic life

Gregory the Great
→ Pope (590–604) who shaped the medieval papacy and sent missionaries to England

William Wilberforce → Evangelical MP whose campaign drove the abolition of the British slave trade

William Carey → 'Father of modern missions'; pioneered Protestant missionary work in India

Charles Spurgeon → 'Prince of Preachers'; Baptist whose London Tabernacle drew thousands weekly

Billy Graham → Preached to ~215 million people; defined 20th-century American evangelicalism

Pope John Paul II
→ Polish pope (1978–2005) who helped end communism and energized world Catholicism

Self-test

Answer each question from memory, then check your work against the answer key.

1. Under which Roman emperor was Peter, the chief apostle and first leader of the Jerusalem church, traditionally martyred?

- A Trajan
- B Constantine
- C Nero
- D Diocletian

2. In all four Gospels, who is named as the first witness to the Resurrection?

- A Mary the mother of Jesus
- B Mary Magdalene
- C Simon Peter
- D John the Apostle

3. Athanasius of Alexandria earned which title for his defense of orthodox doctrine?

- A Father of Orthodoxy
- B Father of Western monasticism
- C Father of modern missions
- D Prince of Preachers

4. Athanasius was the first to list exactly which set of books as the New Testament canon?

- A The 39 books
- B The 66 books
- C The 46 books
- D The 27 books

5. Which accomplishment is NOT associated with Athanasius of Alexandria?

- A First listing the 27-book New Testament canon
- B Being called the Father of Orthodoxy
- C Writing a monastic Rule that organized medieval life
- D Defending Christ's full divinity against Arius

6. Benedict of Nursia is best known as the father of what?

- A Orthodoxy
- B Western monasticism
- C Modern missions
- D Scholastic theology

7. Which document by Benedict of Nursia organized medieval monastic life?

- A The Rule
- B The Ninety-Five Theses
- C The Summa Theologica
- D The Institutes of the Christian Religion

8. In Benedict's vision, medieval monasteries became the era's libraries, schools, and what else?

- A Courts
- B Barracks
- C Mints
- D Hospitals

9. Gregory the Great, who became pope in 590, is credited with sending missionaries to which land?

- A Poland
- B China
- C England
- D India

10. Which achievement belongs to Gregory the Great rather than to Benedict of Nursia?

A Turning monasteries into schools and hospitals
B Reorganizing the medieval papacy
C Founding Western monasticism
D Writing the Rule for monastic life

11. Which 20th-century figure preached in person to an estimated 215 million people and came to define American evangelicalism?

A Charles Spurgeon
B William Wilberforce
C William Carey
D Billy Graham

12. William Wilberforce, an evangelical member of Parliament, devoted his career to which cause?

A Abolishing the British slave trade
B Founding modern missions
C Translating the Bible into Indian languages
D Reorganizing the papacy

13. Who is remembered as the 'father of modern missions' for pioneering Protestant work in India?

A Billy Graham
B Charles Spurgeon
C William Wilberforce
D William Carey

14. The Victorian 'Prince of Preachers,' who filled a London tabernacle every week, was:

A William Wilberforce
B Charles Spurgeon
C William Carey
D Billy Graham

15. Pope John Paul II, the Polish pope, is credited with helping to bring down what in Europe?

A European communism
B Feudalism
C The British slave trade
D The Arian heresy

16. In the 'Who Is It?' gallery, which figure argued that Gentiles need not first become Jews — the move that made Christianity a universal religion?

A Peter
B Augustine
C Paul
D Constantine

17. Which theologian is remembered above all for defining the Christian understanding of grace?

A Thomas Aquinas
B Augustine of Hippo
C Ignatius of Loyola
D John Calvin

18. Which medieval theologian is associated with defining the role of reason in the faith, synthesizing Christianity with Aristotle?

A Thomas Aquinas
B John Wesley
C Martin Luther
D Augustine of Hippo

19. 'The monk who broke it open' — whose protest launched the Protestant Reformation?

A Ignatius of Loyola
B John Wesley
C John Calvin
D Martin Luther

20. Which reformer is remembered for systematizing Protestant theology in his Institutes and leading the church in Geneva?

A John Wesley
B Ignatius of Loyola
C John Calvin
D Martin Luther

21. Which Roman emperor is remembered as the one who legalized Christianity?

A Emperor Nero
B Emperor Diocletian
C Julian the Apostate
D Constantine I

22. Which figure-and-role pairing is correct?

A Francis of Assisi — a friar who embraced radical poverty
B Martin Luther King Jr. — a Roman emperor who legalized Christianity
C Constantine I — a minister who led the civil-rights movement
D Francis of Assisi — a Polish pope who helped end communism

23. Which figure founded the Franciscan order and embraced a life of poverty and care for creation?

A Thomas Aquinas
B Benedict of Nursia
C Francis of Assisi
D Ignatius of Loyola

24. Which phrase describes Constantine I's role in Christian history?

A The monk who broke it open
B The emperor who legalized it
C The reformer who systematized it
D The missionary who made it a universal religion

25. Which statement is NOT true of Constantine I?

A He founded a movement for civil rights
B He came before Julian the Apostate
C He was a Roman emperor
D He legalized Christianity

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LESSON 12 OF 15

Key Places

Holy Sites · Where Is It? — Christian Sites

WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

- Match the holy sites of Jesus's life to their significance (Nazareth, Galilee, the Jordan, Golgotha, Jerusalem).
- Identify the early church hubs of Rome and Alexandria.
- Recognize the founding-era places from clues (Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Rome, Antioch).
- Recognize the council and Reformation cities from clues (Constantinople, Nicaea, Wittenberg, Geneva).
- Recognize the modern-tradition sites from clues (Canterbury, Azusa Street).

Christianity is an unusually geographical religion. Its founding events are tied to specific, visitable places — a particular hill, a particular river, a particular upper room — and its later history can be traced as a migration of centers of gravity: from Jerusalem to Antioch and Rome, from Rome to Constantinople, from a German church door to a Swiss city to a street in Los Angeles. Learn the map and the history organizes itself.

Holy Sites

The story begins in a small strip of the eastern Mediterranean. **Bethlehem**, just south of Jerusalem, is revered as the birthplace of Jesus and the site of the Church of the Nativity. **Nazareth**, up north in **Galilee**, is where he grew up; Galilee — with its lake, the Sea of Galilee, and the Mount of Beatitudes — is the region of most of his ministry. He was baptized in the **Jordan River**, still a pilgrimage destination today. And he was crucified at **Golgotha** (Calvary), the "place of the skull" just outside Jerusalem's walls, where the Church of the Holy Sepulchre now stands. **Jerusalem** itself — site of the crucifixion, the resurrection, and Pentecost — remains the spiritual center of the faith.

As the movement spread, new hubs emerged. **Antioch**, in what is now southern Turkey, was the launchpad for the mission to non-Jews, and the place where believers were first called "Christians." **Alexandria** in Egypt became the great center of Christian scholarship, home to Origen and Athanasius and seat of the Coptic Church. And **Rome**, where Peter and Paul were martyred, grew into the capital of Western Catholicism, with the tiny walled enclave of Vatican City at its heart.

The later chapters each have an address too, and the "Where Is It?" round below works through them. **Constantinople** — the "New Rome," today's Istanbul — became the capital of the Eastern church and, at its great domed Hagia Sophia, the epicenter of the Great Schism. **Nicaea** (modern İznik) hosted the first and seventh ecumenical councils and gave its name to the foundational creed. **Wittenberg** in Germany is where Luther's Ninety-Five Theses lit the Reformation; **Geneva** in Switzerland, "the Protestant Rome," is where Calvin built his. **Canterbury** is the historic seat of Anglican Christianity. And

Azusa Street in Los Angeles, an unremarkable address, is where Pentecostalism — now the fastest-growing form of the faith — was born in 1906. Trace those points on a globe and you have drawn the history of Christianity.

Key concepts

Bethlehem

- A town in the West Bank, just south of Jerusalem.
- It is the site of the Church of the Nativity.
- Christians revere it as the birthplace of Jesus.

Jerusalem

- An ancient city held sacred by three major world religions.
- It contains the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.
- For Christians it is the site of the crucifixion, resurrection, and Pentecost.

Rome

- The capital of Italy, traditionally built on seven hills.
- The apostles Peter and Paul were martyred here.
- Its bishop became the Pope, and a tiny walled state within it governs the Catholic Church.

Antioch

- An ancient city in what is now southern Turkey.
- It was a major hub for the early mission to non-Jews.
- Here the followers of Jesus were first called 'Christians.'

Constantinople

- A city straddling Europe and Asia, today called Istanbul.
- Founded as a 'New Rome,' it became the capital of the Eastern church.
- Its great domed church Hagia Sophia was the epicenter of the East–West schism.

Nicaea

- A town in northwest Anatolia, modern İznik, Turkey.
- It hosted the first and the seventh ecumenical councils.
- The foundational creed of 325 was drafted here.

Wittenberg

- A town in eastern Germany on the river Elbe.
- Its Castle Church door was a customary place to post academic notices.
- Here Martin Luther's Ninety-Five Theses launched the Reformation.

Geneva

- A city in French-speaking Switzerland.
- It became known as the 'Protestant Rome.'
- John Calvin led his Reformation from here.

Canterbury

- A cathedral city in southeast England.
- Its archbishop is the spiritual head of a worldwide communion.
- It is the historic seat of Anglican Christianity.

Azusa Street

- A modest street address in Los Angeles, California.
- In 1906 an interracial revival led by William Seymour broke out there.
- It is regarded as the birthplace of Pentecostalism.

Matched pairs

Each item on the left goes with the one on the right.

Bethlehem → Birthplace of Jesus; site of the Church of the Nativity

Nazareth → Galilean town where Jesus grew up

Galilee
→ Northern region of Jesus' ministry; site of its namesake freshwater sea and the Mount of Beatitudes

The Jordan River → Where Jesus was baptized by John; a traditional pilgrimage destination

Golgotha (Calvary) → The hill of the crucifixion; the Church of the Holy Sepulchre stands on the site

Jerusalem → Site of the crucifixion, resurrection, and Pentecost; Christianity's spiritual center

Rome → Where Peter and Paul were martyred; center of Western Catholicism; contains Vatican City

Alexandria
→ Egyptian center of Christian learning; home of Origen and Athanasius; seat of the Coptic Church

Self-test

Answer each question from memory, then check your work against the answer key.

1. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre stands today on the site of which holy place?

(A) Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus
(B) Nazareth, where Jesus grew up
(C) Golgotha (Calvary), the hill of the crucifixion
(D) The Jordan River, the site of Jesus' baptism

2. In which body of water was Jesus baptized by John?

A The Nile River
B The Sea of Galilee
C The Dead Sea
D The Jordan River

3. Which town, just south of Jerusalem, is revered as the birthplace of Jesus?

A Bethlehem
B Golgotha
C Nazareth
D Galilee

4. In which Galilean town did Jesus grow up?

A Capernaum
B Nazareth
C Bethlehem
D Antioch

5. Which northern region — home to the Mount of Beatitudes and a namesake freshwater sea — hosted most of Jesus's ministry?

A Samaria
B Judea
C Galilee
D Galatia

6. Which city was the great center of Christian scholarship, home to Origen and Athanasius?

A Rome
B Alexandria
C Antioch
D Constantinople

7. In which city were the apostles Peter and Paul martyred?

A Antioch
B Alexandria
C Jerusalem
D Rome

8. Which city grew into the capital of Western Catholicism and contains the walled enclave of Vatican City?

A Rome
B Alexandria
C Constantinople
D Geneva

9. Which city is the seat of the Coptic Church?

A Alexandria
B Antioch
C Rome
D Bethlehem

10. Which statement about Rome is NOT true?

A Peter and Paul were martyred there
B It contains the walled enclave of Vatican City
C It was home to the Coptic Church and Athanasius
D It became the capital of Western Catholicism

11. In which city were believers first called "Christians"?

A Alexandria
B Rome
C Jerusalem
D Antioch

12. Which city in modern southern Turkey was the launchpad for the mission to non-Jews?

A Nicaea
B Antioch
C Constantinople
D Ephesus

13. Which city — site of the crucifixion, resurrection, and Pentecost — remains Christianity's spiritual center?

A Bethlehem
B Antioch
C Rome
D Jerusalem

14. Which founding-era town, just south of Jerusalem, is home to the Church of the Nativity?

A Jericho
B Galilee
C Bethlehem
D Nazareth

15. Which founding-era city became the capital of Western Catholicism?

A Rome
B Antioch
C Jerusalem
D Constantinople

16. Which town — modern İznik, Turkey — hosted the first ecumenical council in 325 and gave its name to Christianity's foundational creed?

A Antioch
B Nicaea
C Chalcedon
D Constantinople

17. Which city — the "New Rome," today's Istanbul — became the capital of the Eastern church?

A Geneva
B Antioch
C Nicaea
D Constantinople

18. In which German town did Luther's Ninety-Five Theses light the Reformation?

A Wittenberg
B Geneva
C Nicaea
D Canterbury

19. Which Swiss city, nicknamed "the Protestant Rome," is where Calvin built his church?

A Constantinople
B Wittenberg
C Geneva
D Zurich

20. Which pairing of a later-era city to what happened there is correct?

A Nicaea — the Great Schism
B Wittenberg — Luther's Ninety-Five Theses
C Constantinople — start of the Reformation
D Geneva — Luther's Ninety-Five Theses

21. Where was Pentecostalism born in a 1906 revival?

A Bethel Bible School, Topeka
B Cane Ridge, Kentucky
C Azusa Street, Los Angeles
D Northampton, Massachusetts

22. Which site is the historic seat of Anglican Christianity?

A Wittenberg
B Canterbury
C Azusa Street
D Geneva

23. Canterbury is the historic seat of which tradition?

A Anglican Christianity
B Pentecostalism
C Roman Catholicism
D Eastern Orthodoxy

24. Which movement, born on Azusa Street, is described as the fastest-growing form of the faith?

A Lutheranism
B Methodism
C Anglicanism
D Pentecostalism

25. Which pairing of a modern-tradition site to its role is correct?

A Canterbury — seat of Anglican Christianity
B Azusa Street — a historic English cathedral city
C Azusa Street — seat of Anglican Christianity
D Canterbury — birthplace of Pentecostalism

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LESSON 13 OF 15

Texts, Creeds & Numbers

Reading the Bible · What Is It? — Texts and Documents · Numbers and Key Terms

WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

- Define the biblical canon and hermeneutics — which books count and how they are read.
- Define eschatology and the Parousia (the Second Coming).
- Recognize the defining documents of Christianity — creeds, the Theses, the Summa, the Institutes, the City of God, the Confessions, and the Edict of Milan.
- Recall the key numbers of Christianity — adherents, canon sizes, councils, sacraments, Crusades, and denominations.
- Match Christianity's signature vocabulary (ecumenism, theosis, transubstantiation, glossolalia).

Christianity is a religion of the book — but *which* book, read *which* way, and summarized in *which* creed, are questions that have divided Christians for centuries. This closing lesson is the reference shelf: the canon and how it differs between traditions, the great creeds and documents, the methods of interpretation, and the handful of numbers that anchor the whole story.

Reading the Bible

The **biblical canon** is the authoritative list of books accepted as Scripture — and it is not identical across traditions. All Christians accept the same **27**-book New Testament. The Old Testament is where they differ: Protestants count **39** books, Catholics **46–49** (including the Deuterocanonical, or Apocryphal, books), and Orthodox churches more still. Behind the difference lie two ancient text traditions — the Greek **Septuagint** used by Eastern churches and the Hebrew **Masoretic** text behind Protestant Bibles.

How you read those books matters as much as which ones you include — the domain of **hermeneutics**, the principles of interpretation. Four broad approaches recur: **literal/inerrant** (the Bible is without error in all it affirms), **infallible** (authoritative on faith and practice, but possibly imprecise on history or science), **historical-critical** (read with the tools of history and archaeology in original context), and **allegorical/typological** (Old Testament events foreshadow New Testament realities — the dominant patristic and medieval method).

To distill all this, the church produced creeds. The **three creeds** — the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian — function as the doctrinal minimums of orthodoxy and make excellent study frameworks. Finally, Christianity is oriented toward the future, the domain of **eschatology**, the study of last things: the **Parousia** (Christ's Second Coming, affirmed by all), the bodily resurrection, heaven and hell, and the much-debated millennium of Revelation 20, which splits Christians into pre-, a-, and postmillennialists. The "What Is It?" round tests the great documents themselves — creeds, a list of theses, a *summa*, an autobiography, an imperial edict — each identifiable from its purpose and era.

Numbers and Key Terms

A few figures are worth knowing cold, because the rest of the story keeps referring to them. Christianity has roughly **2.63 billion** adherents — about a third of humanity — of whom about **1.3 billion** are Roman Catholic. The canon runs **39** Old Testament books (Protestant) plus **27** in the New. The early church held **7** ecumenical councils; the Catholic and Orthodox churches recognize **7** sacraments (most Protestants, two); there were **8** major Crusades; and the faith today is splintered into roughly **50,000** denominations.

A handful of terms round out the vocabulary. **Ecumenism** is the movement seeking visible unity among divided churches. **Theosis** is the Eastern Orthodox vision of salvation as deification — actual participation in the divine nature. **Transubstantiation** is the Catholic doctrine that the bread and wine *become* the body and blood of Christ. And **glossolalia** — speaking in tongues — is the hallmark of the Pentecostal experience that, from a single street in Los Angeles, became the fastest-growing movement in Christian history.

Key terms

Biblical Canon
The authoritative list of books accepted as Scripture. The New Testament's 27 books are accepted by all; the Old Testament count varies by tradition.

Hermeneutics
The principles and methods of interpreting Scripture — how one reads the Bible shapes one's whole theology.

Eschatology
The study of 'last things' — the end of history: Christ's return, resurrection, judgment, heaven and hell.

Parousia
The Second Coming — Christ's return in glory to judge the living and the dead, affirmed by all Christian traditions.

Key concepts

The Nicene Creed

- A formal statement of Christian belief produced by early church councils.
- It declares the Son to be 'of the same substance' (homoousios) as the Father.
- Drafted in 325 and expanded in 381, it is still recited in Catholic, Orthodox, and many Protestant services.

The Apostles' Creed

- A short, early baptismal statement of Christian faith.
- Tradition once imagined the twelve each contributing a clause.
- Simpler than its longer conciliar cousin, it is widely used in Western worship.

The Ninety-Five Theses

- A list of propositions posted for academic debate in 1517.
- It attacked the sale of indulgences.
- Spread by the printing press, it ignited the Protestant Reformation.

The Summa Theologica

- An unfinished 13th-century masterwork of systematic theology.
- It harmonizes Christian doctrine with the philosophy of Aristotle.
- Its Dominican author's 'Five Ways' argue for the existence of God.

The Institutes of the Christian Religion

- A systematic theology first published in 1536 and much expanded by 1559.
- It became the textbook of the Reformed tradition.
- Its Geneva-based author is famous for the doctrine of predestination.

The City of God

- A sprawling work written after the Visigoths sacked Rome in 410.
- It contrasts a transient earthly city with an eternal heavenly one.
- Its North African bishop author also wrote the *Confessions*.

Confessions

- Often called the first great autobiography of the Western world.
- Written around 397–400 as a prayer addressed directly to God.
- It recounts its author's wayward youth and conversion in a Milan garden.

The Edict of Milan

- A proclamation issued in 313 by two Roman co-emperors.
- It granted toleration to a once-persecuted faith.
- It ended official Roman persecution of Christians.

Key facts

> **Whose Bible?**
> Protestants count **39** Old Testament books; Catholics **46–49** (including the Deuterocanonical/Apocryphal books); Orthodox churches more still. The Greek **Septuagint** used by Eastern churches differs from the Hebrew **Masoretic** text behind Protestant Bibles. All agree on the **27**-book New Testament.

Four Ways to Read the Bible

Literal/Inerrant — without error in all it affirms (common among Evangelicals). **Infallible** — authoritative on faith and practice, but possibly imprecise on history or science. **Historical-Critical** — read with the tools of history and archaeology in original context. **Allegorical/Typological** — Old Testament events foreshadow New Testament realities (dominant in the patristic and medieval church).

The Three Creeds

Three ancient summaries serve as the doctrinal minimums of orthodox Christianity: the **Apostles' Creed** (a short, early baptismal statement), the **Nicene Creed** (325/381, the fullest conciliar statement on the Trinity), and the **Athanasian Creed** (5th century, a precise statement of Trinity and Incarnation).

Reading the Millennium

Revelation 20's 'thousand-year reign' generates three schools: **premillennialism** (Christ returns before the millennium), **amillennialism** (the millennium is symbolic of the present church age), and **postmillennialism** (Christ returns after a golden age). The differences carry real weight for how Christians engage politics and society.

The Study of Hermeneutics

Hermeneutics refers to the principles and methods of interpreting Scripture — the discipline of how the Bible is read, distinct from the canon or eschatology.

By the numbers

Approximate number of Christians worldwide (2024)
2.63 billion

Approximate membership of the Roman Catholic Church
1.3 billion

Number of Old Testament books in the Protestant canon
39 books

Number of New Testament books
27 books

Number of early ecumenical councils (325–787)
7 councils

Number of sacraments in the Catholic and Orthodox churches
7 sacraments

Number of major Crusades (1095–1270)
8 Crusades

Approximate number of Christian denominations today

50000 denominations

Matched pairs

Each item on the left goes with the one on the right.

Ecumenism → The movement seeking visible unity among divided Christian churches

Theosis → The Eastern Orthodox view of salvation as deification — participation in the divine nature

Transubstantiation → The Catholic doctrine that bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ

Glossolalia → Speaking in tongues — the hallmark of Pentecostal experience

Self-test

Answer each question from memory, then check your work against the answer key.

1. Of the four broad approaches to biblical interpretation, which was the dominant method in the patristic and medieval church?

A Historical-critical
B Literal/inerrant
C Allegorical/typological
D Infallible

2. The biblical canon is best defined as which of the following?

A The study of the end of history and last things
B The authoritative list of books accepted as Scripture
C The movement seeking visible unity among churches
D The principles and methods of interpreting Scripture

3. How many Old Testament books does the Protestant canon contain?

A Forty-six
B Sixty-six
C Twenty-seven
D Thirty-nine

4. In Christian theology, hermeneutics refers to which of the following?

A The principles and methods of interpreting Scripture
B The Orthodox vision of salvation as deification
C The study of last things and Christ's return
D The authoritative list of canonical books

5. Which of the following is NOT one of the four broad approaches to biblical interpretation?

A Ecumenical/liturgical
B Historical-critical
C Allegorical/typological
D Literal/inerrant

6. Eschatology is the branch of theology concerned with what?

A. The principles of interpreting the Bible
B. Last things — the end of history, resurrection, judgment, heaven and hell
C. The doctrine that bread and wine become Christ's body
D. The authoritative list of scriptural books

7. In Christian theology, the Parousia refers to what?

A. The symbolic thousand-year reign of Revelation 20
B. The deification of the believer in Orthodox thought
C. Christ's return in glory to judge the living and the dead
D. The bodily resurrection of all believers

8. Which school holds that Christ returns BEFORE the thousand-year reign of Revelation 20?

A. Postmillennialism
B. Amillennialism
C. Preterism
D. Premillennialism

9. Which element of eschatology is affirmed by ALL Christian traditions?

A. The Postmillennial Position
B. The Premillennial Position
C. A strictly symbolic reading of the millennium
D. The Parousia, Christ's Second Coming

10. Which of the following does eschatology, the study of 'last things,' NOT address?

A. The final judgment
B. Heaven and hell
C. The formation of the New Testament canon
D. The resurrection of the dead

11. Thomas Aquinas's Summa Theologica is famous for its "Five Ways." What do the Five Ways set out to prove?

A. The errors of the Arian heresy
B. The existence of God
C. The doctrine of the Trinity
D. That Scripture is without error

12. Which document is the fullest conciliar creed (325/381) stating the church's doctrine of the Trinity?

A. The Nicene Creed
B. The Ninety-Five Theses
C. The Apostles' Creed
D. The Athanasian Creed

13. By its purpose and form, the Ninety-Five Theses are best described as which kind of document?

A. An imperial edict of toleration
B. A comprehensive summary of theology, a summa
C. A short early baptismal creed
D. A list of propositions offered for debate

14. Which of these documents was an imperial edict that granted toleration to Christianity?

A. Decius's edict of universal sacrifice
B. Diocletian's persecution edict
C. The Edict of Milan
D. The Edict of Thessalonica

15. One of these documents is an autobiography. Which is it?

A. The Confessions
B. The Institutes of the Christian Religion
C. The Edict of Milan
D. The Nicene Creed

16. The Catholic and Orthodox churches recognize seven sacraments. How many do most Protestant churches recognize?

A. Seven
B. Two
C. Five
D. Three

17. Approximately how many adherents does Christianity have worldwide?

A. About 900 million
B. About 2.63 billion
C. About 3.9 billion
D. About 1.3 billion

18. How many early ecumenical councils did the church hold between 325 and 787?

A. Fourteen
B. Four
C. Twenty-one
D. Seven

19. How many major Crusades took place between 1095 and 1270?

A. Eight
B. Three
C. Twelve
D. Five

20. Christianity today is splintered into approximately how many denominations?

A. About 9,000
B. About 120,000
C. About 50,000
D. About 25,000

21. Which term names the movement seeking visible unity among divided Christian churches?

A. Theosis
B. Ecumenism
C. Transubstantiation
D. Glossolalia

22. The Eastern Orthodox vision of salvation as deification — participation in the divine nature — is called what?

A. Transubstantiation
B. Glossolalia
C. Theosis
D. Ecumenism

23. Which Catholic doctrine teaches that the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ?

A. Transubstantiation
B. Ecumenism
C. Glossolalia
D. Theosis

24. 'Speaking in tongues,' the hallmark of the Pentecostal experience, is known by which term?

A. Theosis
B. Ecumenism
C. Transubstantiation
D. Glossolalia

25. Which of these term-and-meaning pairings is INCORRECT?

A Glossolalia — speaking in tongues

B Transubstantiation — the study of last things

C Theosis — salvation as deification

D Ecumenism — the movement for church unity

Go deeper

ONLINE This lesson on the web flashfeedlearningapp.com/study-guides/christianity/texts-creeds-and-numbers

STUDY Christianity: A Complete History in the FlashFeed app flashfeedlearningapp.com/packs/christianity

LESSON 14 OF 15

Visual Reference & Challenges

At a Glance · Right or Wrong · Sequence It · Council Dates · Lightning Round · Term Drill

WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

- Read the pack's summary diagrams — the arc of Jesus's life and the seven ecumenical councils.
- Identify which view won at the councils and the sequence of Christianity's rise to imperial power.
- Recall the year of each of the seven ecumenical councils.
- Recognize the ecumenical councils by the doctrine each settled.
- Rapidly recall pack essentials — Jewish factions, parables, pentarchy cities, and core terms.

Two thousand years is a lot to hold in your head. This lesson compresses the essentials into a few diagrams, then tests whether they've stuck — sorting orthodoxy from heresy, putting the great turning points in order, and dating the councils that fixed the faith.

At a Glance

Three diagrams do most of the organizing. The **life of Jesus** runs in a clean line from birth at Bethlehem through baptism, ministry, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension — the spine of the Gospels. The **seven ecumenical councils** lay out four and a half centuries of doctrine-defining gatherings, each tagged with its central fight: Nicaea (325) over Arianism, Constantinople (381) completing the Trinity, Ephesus (431) over Mary's title, Chalcedon (451) over the two natures, and on to Nicaea II (787) over icons. And the **branches** diagram maps the family tree — the one faith splitting into Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and the sprawling Protestant family of Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, and Pentecostal. Keep these three pictures in mind and the rest of the pack has somewhere to hang.

Right or Wrong

The early councils were called precisely because the wrong answers were plausible and popular. Knowing the faith means knowing which view won — and why. Four of the great decisions: against **Arianism**, the Church affirmed at Nicaea that the Son is *homoousios*, of one substance with the Father, not a creature. Against **Monophysitism**, Chalcedon defined Christ as one Person in **two natures**, fully divine and fully human. Against **Nestorianism**, Ephesus upheld Mary as **Theotokos**, the God-bearer, because the one Person she bore is both God and man. And against **modalism**, orthodoxy holds the three Persons to be distinct and co-eternal — not one God cycling through three masks. In each pairing, the heresy is the tidy oversimplification; orthodoxy is the harder, stranger middle.

Sequence It

Finally, order and dates. The turning points of the story have a logic that only appears in sequence: how a persecuted sect became the imperial religion in under four centuries (persecution → the Edict of Milan in 313 → Nicaea in 325 → Theodosius in 380); how Saul the persecutor became Paul the apostle (the Damascus road → baptism → the first missionary journey → the Council of Jerusalem → the later missionary journeys); how Luther's local protest became a continental rupture (the Ninety-Five Theses in 1517 → the printing press → excommunication → the Diet of Worms → the German Bible). Pair that with the council dates — 325, 381, 431, 451, and on — and the abstractions of doctrine acquire a timeline you can actually walk.

Key terms

Messiah
A divinely anointed leader expected to deliver Israel; a hope shared across the rival Jewish groups.

Pax Romana
The "Roman Peace" — a long span of relative stability across the Mediterranean that eased travel and communication.

TaNaK
The Jewish name for the Hebrew Bible, which Christians call the Old Testament.

Covenant
A binding relationship God enters into with his people; the central thread linking the Hebrew Bible to Christian interpretation.

John the Baptist
An apocalyptic preacher who baptized Jesus in the Jordan and called Israel to repentance ahead of the coming Kingdom.

The Kingdom of God
The new social and spiritual reality Jesus proclaimed as breaking into the world — the central theme of his preaching.

The Beatitudes
A set of blessings opening the Sermon on the Mount that invert social hierarchy — blessing the poor in spirit, the meek, the merciful, and the peacemakers.

Golgotha
"The place of the skull" — the site outside Jerusalem where Jesus was crucified; also called Calvary.

Pentecost
The Jewish feast, fifty days after Passover, when the disciples reported the outpouring of the Holy Spirit; traditionally the birth of the Church.

Pentarchy

The five patriarchal centers of early Christianity: Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Rome, and Constantinople.

Justification by faith

Paul's teaching that people are made right with God by grace through faith, not by earning it: "By grace you have been saved through faith."

The Body of Christ

Paul's image of the church as a single living organism whose members have diverse but interdependent roles.

Key concepts

The Council of Constantinople

- The second of the seven ecumenical councils, meeting a little over half a century after the very first.
- Convened in 381, it built on the earlier gathering that had condemned Arianism.
- Its central achievement was completing the doctrine of the Trinity — the three distinct, co-eternal Persons.

The Council of Ephesus

- A fifth-century ecumenical council called to settle a dispute over Mary's proper title.
- Meeting in 431, it rejected Nestorianism, the view that split Christ into two.
- It upheld Mary as Theotokos, the God-bearer, because the one Person she bore is both God and man.

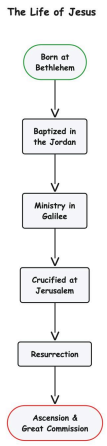
The Council of Chalcedon

- An ecumenical council of the mid-fifth century, called to define exactly who Christ is.
- Meeting in 451, it rejected Monophysitism, the claim that Christ had only one nature.
- It defined Christ as one Person in two natures, fully divine and fully human.

The Second Council of Nicaea

- The last of the seven ecumenical councils, held in the same city as the very first.
- Meeting in 787, more than four centuries after the council that had condemned Arianism.
- Its defining fight was over icons — religious images and their place in worship.

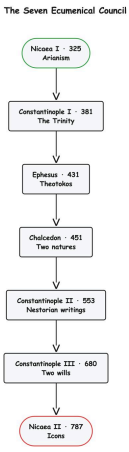
Key facts



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The Life of Jesus at a Glance

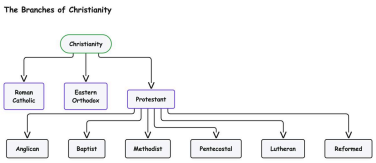
From **Bethlehem** to the **Ascension** — the arc the Gospels trace.



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The Seven Ecumenical Councils

Four centuries of doctrine-defining councils, from Nicaea (325) to Nicaea II (787).



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The Branches of Christianity

Catholic, Orthodox, and the Protestant family — one faith, many trees.

> **Where the Councils Began**
>
> The pack's councils diagram opens with the First Council of Nicaea in 325, called over Arianism, and closes with Nicaea II in 787, with Constantinople (381) and Chalcedon (451) falling in between.

By the numbers

Number of Ecumenical Councils shown in the diagram

7 councils

Year of the First Council of Nicaea
325 year

Year of Nicaea II, the last of the seven councils
787 year

Year (CE) of the First Council of Nicaea
325 CE

Year (CE) of the First Council of Constantinople
381 CE

Year (CE) of the Council of Ephesus
431 CE

Year (CE) of the Council of Chalcedon
451 CE

Year (CE) of the Second Council of Constantinople
553 CE

Year (CE) of the Third Council of Constantinople
680 CE

Year (CE) of the Second Council of Nicaea
787 CE

Matched pairs

Each item on the left goes with the one on the right.

Pharisees → Rigorous keepers of the Torah and its oral tradition

Sadducees → Temple-centered aristocrats

Essenes → Ascetic desert communalists who produced the Dead Sea Scrolls

Zealots → Nationalist revolutionaries who sought to overthrow Rome by force

The Good Samaritan → Neighborly love transcends ethnic and religious divisions

The Prodigal Son → God's radical forgiveness and welcome of the repentant

The Sower and the Soils → Four types of reception to God's word

The Lost Sheep → God's pursuit of every single individual

The Mustard Seed → The Kingdom begins small but grows to encompass all

The Pharisee and the Tax Collector → Humility before God is greater than religious pride

The Rich Man and Lazarus → The moral danger of wealth and indifference to the poor

Jerusalem → The original "Mother Church"; destroyed by Rome in 70 CE

Antioch → Where followers were first called "Christians"; hub for the Gentile mission

Alexandria → Traditionally founded by Mark; center of Christian philosophy and learning in Egypt

Step by step

The arc of Jesus of Nazareth's life

1. Born in Bethlehem
2. Baptized by John in the Jordan
3. Public ministry in Galilee
4. Crucified at Jerusalem under Pilate
5. Resurrection on the third day
6. Ascension and the Great Commission

From persecutor to apostle: the path of Paul

1. Persecutes the early Christians
2. Has a vision on the road to Damascus
3. Is baptized and begins to preach
4. The Council of Jerusalem opens the faith to Gentiles
5. Undertakes the missionary journeys

From persecuted sect to state religion

1. Waves of Roman persecution
2. Edict of Milan grants toleration (313)
3. Council of Nicaea settles doctrine (325)
4. Theodosius makes Nicene Christianity the state religion (380)

Under three centuries from persecution to empire.

Luther's break with Rome

1. Posts the Ninety-Five Theses (1517)
2. The printing press spreads them across Europe
3. Refuses to recant; is excommunicated (1521)
4. Defies the Emperor at the Diet of Worms
5. Translates the New Testament into German

The first four ecumenical councils, in order

1. Nicaea I (325)
2. Constantinople I (381)
3. Ephesus (431)
4. Chalcedon (451)

Self-test

Answer each question from memory, then check your work against the answer key.

1. From **___** to the **Ascension** — the arc the Gospels trace.

A Canterbury
B Geneva
C Bethlehem
D Rome

2. Four and a half centuries of doctrine-defining councils, from Nicaea (325) to ___ (787).

A Nicaea II
B Constantinople II
C Constantinople III
D Chalcedon

3. The pack's 'life of Jesus' diagram runs in a clean line. Which event does it place last, after the resurrection?

A The baptism in the Jordan
B The Ascension
C The birth at Bethlehem
D The Crucifixion

4. How many ecumenical councils does the pack's councils diagram lay out?

A Twelve
B Three
C Five
D Seven

5. The councils diagram spans the years 325 to 787. Which gathering opens the sequence, in 325?

A The Council of Chalcedon
B The Second Council of Nicaea
C The First Council of Nicaea
D The First Council of Constantinople

6. The Council of Ephesus (431) upheld Mary as Theotokos, the 'God-bearer.' Which heresy was it rejecting in doing so?

A Arianism
B Nestorianism
C Monophysitism
D Modalism

7. In Christianity's rise from persecuted sect to imperial faith, which step made Nicene Christianity the Roman Empire's official state religion?

A The Edict of Milan (313)
B The First Council of Nicaea (325)
C The First Council of Constantinople (381)
D Theodosius's decree (380)

8. At Nicaea (325) the Church rejected Arianism, declaring the Son co-equal with the Father rather than a creature. Which term did it adopt?

A Homoousios
B Theotokos
C Pentarchy
D Logos

9. Rejecting Monophysitism, the Council of Chalcedon (451) defined the person of Christ how?

A One Person with a single, merged divine nature
B One Person in two natures, fully divine and fully human
C Two separate persons, one divine and one human
D A created being subordinate to the Father

10. In Christianity's rise from persecuted sect to imperial faith, what did the Edict of Milan (313) accomplish?

A It condemned Arianism as heresy
B It fixed the books of the biblical canon
C It granted Christians toleration and freedom to worship
D It made Christianity the empire's official religion

11. Of the seven ecumenical councils, which met last — in 787, to settle the dispute over icons?

A The Third Council of Constantinople
B The First Council of Nicaea
C The Council of Chalcedon
D The Second Council of Nicaea

12. In what year (CE) did the First Council of Nicaea meet?

A 325
B 381
C 431
D 313

13. In what year (CE) was the Council of Ephesus held?

A 381
B 431
C 325
D 451

14. In what year (CE) did the Council of Chalcedon convene?

A 431
B 553
C 451
D 381

15. In what year (CE) did the First Council of Constantinople meet?

A 381
B 431
C 451
D 553

16. Which ecumenical council first declared the Son to be of one substance with the Father, condemning Arianism?

A The Council of Chalcedon
B The Council of Ephesus
C The First Council of Constantinople
D The First Council of Nicaea

17. Which council defined Christ as one Person in two natures, rejecting Monophysitism?

A The Second Council of Nicaea
B The First Council of Nicaea
C The Council of Chalcedon
D The Council of Ephesus

18. Which council, meeting in 381, completed the doctrine of the Trinity?

A The Council of Chalcedon
B The Council of Ephesus
C The First Council of Nicaea
D The First Council of Constantinople

19. Which council ended the iconoclast controversy by affirming the veneration of icons?

A The First Council of Nicaea
B The Second Council of Nicaea
C The Council of Ephesus
D The Council of Chalcedon

20. Which Jewish group of Jesus's era were ascetic desert communalists, traditionally credited with producing the Dead Sea Scrolls?

A The Essenes
B The Zealots
C The Pharisees
D The Sadducees

21. In early Christianity, the term 'Pentarchy' refers to what?

A The first five ecumenical councils
B The five books of Moses
C The five solas of the Reformation
D The five great patriarchal centers of the Church

22. The parable of the Prodigal Son most directly illustrates which theme?

A Humility before God over outward religious pride
B God's radical forgiveness and welcome of the repentant
C The moral danger of wealth and indifference to the poor
D Neighborly love that crosses ethnic divisions

23. What does the parable of the Mustard Seed teach about the Kingdom of God?

A It is reserved for the wealthy and powerful
B It arrives only at the very end of time
C It begins small but grows to encompass all
D It belongs to the ritually pure alone

24. In the pack's terms, what is Pentecost?

A The feast fifty days after Passover marking the Spirit's outpouring and the Church's birth
B The five patriarchal centers of the early Church
C The 'Roman Peace' that eased travel across the Mediterranean
D The Jewish name for the Hebrew Bible

Go deeper

ONLINE This lesson on the web flashfeedlearningapp.com/study-guides/christianity/visual-reference-and-challenges

STUDY Christianity: A Complete History in the FlashFeed app flashfeedlearningapp.com/packs/christianity

LESSON 15 OF 15

Key Concepts

Key People · Key Places · Key Things · Key Events

WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

- Recognize the pivotal people of Christian history from clues.
- Recognize the key places of Christian history from clues.
- Recognize the defining documents, creeds, and edict of Christianity.
- Recognize the pivotal events of early Christianity.
- Recognize the remaining review items — Francis, Wesley, and King; Geneva, Canterbury, and Azusa Street; and Augustine's Confessions.

Key People

A quick-recognition gallery of the figures who shaped Christianity — the apostle, emperors, theologians, and reformers whose names recur across two thousand years of the story.

Paul of Tarsus

A 1st-century **Pharisee** from Tarsus who at first violently persecuted the new movement. He was transformed by a vision on the **road to Damascus** and became its boldest missionary. He argued that **Gentiles need not first become Jews** to follow Christ, and wrote roughly half the books of the New Testament.

Constantine I

A 4th-century Roman emperor. After a battlefield vision of a Christian sign, he issued (with Licinius) the **Edict of Milan** granting toleration. He convened the **first ecumenical council** at Nicaea in 325 and founded a new eastern capital, **Constantinople**, named for himself.

Augustine of Hippo

A North African bishop of the 4th–5th centuries and the most influential theologian of the Western church. His restless early life and dramatic garden conversion are told in his autobiography, the *Confessions*. He developed the doctrines of **original sin** and **grace** and wrote *The City of God*.

Thomas Aquinas

A 13th-century **Dominican** friar and philosopher. He argued that faith and reason are complementary, harmonizing Christian theology with **Aristotle**. His *Summa Theologica* and its **"Five Ways"** (arguments for God's existence) became the official framework of Catholic philosophy.

Francis of Assisi

A wealthy 13th-century Italian youth who renounced everything to live in poverty. He cared for lepers, preached in the streets, and is the patron saint of ecology. He founded the **Franciscan** order of friars; in

2013 a pope took his name for the first time.

Martin Luther

A 16th-century German **Augustinian** monk and professor. He protested the sale of **indulgences** and taught salvation by **faith alone** and **Scripture alone**. His **Ninety-Five Theses** (1517) sparked the Protestant Reformation; from hiding at the Wartburg he translated the New Testament into German.

John Calvin

A 16th-century French reformer who led the church in **Geneva**, the "Protestant Rome." His *Institutes of the Christian Religion* systematized **Reformed** theology. He is best known for the doctrines of **predestination** and **total depravity**.

Ignatius of Loyola

A 16th-century Spanish soldier turned religious reformer. After a battlefield wound and conversion, he wrote the *Spiritual Exercises* and founded a disciplined, education-focused order. His **Society of Jesus** — the **Jesuits** — became the spearhead of the Catholic Counter-Reformation.

John Wesley

An 18th-century English clergyman known for open-air **field preaching**. He emphasized universal grace, sanctification, and "social holiness." His revival movement grew into the **Methodist** church.

Martin Luther King Jr.

A 20th-century American **Baptist** minister. He grounded a movement of **nonviolent resistance** in the Black church and the gospel. He led the American civil rights movement until his assassination in **1968**.

Key Places

A map of Christianity — the towns of its origin, the imperial capitals that shaped its institutions, and the cities where reformers and revivals remade it.

Bethlehem

A town in the West Bank, just south of Jerusalem, home to the **Church of the Nativity** (one of the oldest churches in continuous use). Christians revere it as the **birthplace of Jesus**.

Jerusalem

An ancient city held sacred by three major world religions. It contains the **Church of the Holy Sepulchre**. For Christians it is the site of the **crucifixion, resurrection, and Pentecost** — the events at the heart of the faith.

Rome

The capital of Italy, traditionally built on seven hills. The apostles **Peter and Paul** were martyred here. Its bishop became the **Pope**, and a tiny walled state within it — **Vatican City** — governs the Catholic Church.

Antioch

An ancient city in what is now southern Turkey and a major hub for the early **mission to non-Jews**. Here, the Book of Acts records, the followers of Jesus were **first called "Christians."**

Constantinople

A city straddling Europe and Asia, today called **Istanbul**. Founded as a "New Rome," it became the capital of the Eastern church. Its great domed church, **Hagia Sophia**, was the setting of the **1054 East–West Schism**.

Nicaea

A town in northwest Anatolia (modern İznik, Turkey). It hosted the **first** (325) and the **seventh** (787) ecumenical councils. The foundational **Nicene Creed** was drafted here.

Wittenberg

A town in eastern Germany on the river Elbe. Its **Castle Church** door was a customary place to post academic notices — and where Martin Luther's **Ninety-Five Theses** launched the Reformation in 1517.

Geneva

A city in French-speaking Switzerland known as the **"Protestant Rome." John Calvin** led his Reformation from here, turning the city into a model of Reformed church and civic discipline.

Canterbury

A cathedral city in southeast England. Its **archbishop** is the spiritual head of the worldwide **Anglican** Communion. It is the historic seat of Anglican Christianity, dating to Augustine of Canterbury in 597.

Azusa Street

A modest street address in Los Angeles, California. In **1906** an interracial revival led by **William Seymour** broke out there. It is regarded as the birthplace of **Pentecostalism**.

Key Things

The defining documents of Christianity — the creeds that fixed its beliefs, the theological masterworks that systematized them, and the edict and theses that changed its course.

The Nicene Creed

A formal statement of Christian belief produced by the early church councils. It declares the Son to be **"of the same substance"** (*homoousios*) as the Father, settling the Arian controversy. **Drafted in 325 and expanded in 381**, it is still recited in Catholic, Orthodox, and many Protestant services.

The Apostles' Creed

A short, early **baptismal** statement of Christian faith. Tradition once imagined the twelve apostles each contributing a clause. Simpler than its longer conciliar cousin (the Nicene Creed), it is widely used in Western worship.

The Ninety-Five Theses

A list of propositions posted for academic debate in **1517** by Martin Luther. It attacked the sale of **indulgences**. Spread rapidly by the new **printing press**, it ignited the Protestant Reformation.

The Summa Theologica

An unfinished 13th-century masterwork of systematic theology by **Thomas Aquinas**. It harmonizes Christian doctrine with the philosophy of **Aristotle**. Its **"Five Ways"** offer five arguments for the existence of God.

The Institutes of the Christian Religion

A systematic theology first published in **1536** and much expanded by 1559. It became the foundational textbook of the **Reformed** tradition. Its Geneva-based author, **John Calvin**, is famous for the doctrine of predestination.

The City of God

A sprawling work by **Augustine**, written after the Visigoths **sacked Rome in 410**. It contrasts a transient **earthly city** with an eternal **heavenly city**, defending Christianity against the charge that it had weakened the empire.

Confessions

Often called the first great **autobiography** of the Western world. Written by Augustine around **397–400** as a prayer addressed directly to God, it recounts his wayward youth and conversion in a Milan garden.

The Edict of Milan

A proclamation issued in **313** by the Roman co-emperors **Constantine and Licinius**. It granted toleration to a once-persecuted faith and restored confiscated church property, ending official Roman persecution of Christians.

Key Events

The turning points of Christian history — from the resurrection that started it and the persecutions that tested it to the imperial edict and councils that established it.

The Resurrection

The cornerstone of Christian faith: the belief that Jesus rose from the dead **three days after his crucifixion**. According to his followers, the event transformed grieving, frightened disciples into bold public preachers — the spark, the tradition holds, that set the whole movement in motion.

The Birth of the Church

Traditionally linked to **Pentecost**, a Jewish feast fifty days after Passover. The disciples reported a dramatic outpouring of the **Holy Spirit**, and after a sermon by **Peter** around **30–33 CE**, roughly **3,000 people were baptized** — the church's founding moment.

The Council of Jerusalem

Held around **49 CE**, this meeting decided the status of non-Jewish converts. It addressed whether **Gentiles** needed to follow Jewish law — including circumcision — and concluded that they could fully embrace the faith **without converting to Judaism**, opening Christianity to the wider Roman world.

Nero and the Great Fire

The first major persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire. In **64 CE**, Emperor **Nero** blamed a catastrophic fire in Rome on the Christians. Tradition links this persecution to the **martyrdom of the apostles Peter and Paul** in the city.

The Edict of Milan

Issued in **313 CE**, this proclamation marked a turning point in the treatment of Christians. A joint decree by **Constantine I and Licinius**, it allowed Christians to practice openly and restored confiscated church properties — ending state persecution.

The First Council of Nicaea

Convened in **325 CE** to settle the **Arian** controversy over the nature of Christ, it was one of the largest assemblies of bishops to that point. The council produced a creed affirming the Son to be **"of the same substance"** (*homoousios*) as the Father.

Key concepts

Paul of Tarsus

- A 1st-century Pharisee from Tarsus who at first violently persecuted the new movement.
- He was transformed by a vision on the road to Damascus and became its boldest missionary.
- He argued Gentiles need not first become Jews, and wrote roughly half the New Testament.

Constantine I

- A 4th-century Roman emperor.
- He issued an edict of toleration after a battlefield vision of a Christian sign.
- He convened the first ecumenical council and founded a new eastern capital named for himself.

Augustine of Hippo

- A North African bishop of the 4th and 5th centuries, the most influential theologian of the Western church.
- His restless early life and dramatic garden conversion are told in his autobiography.
- He developed the doctrines of original sin and grace and wrote *The City of God*.

Thomas Aquinas

- A 13th-century Dominican friar and philosopher.
- He argued faith and reason are complementary, harmonizing Christian theology with Aristotle.
- His *Summa Theologica* and 'Five Ways' became the official framework of Catholic philosophy.

Francis of Assisi

- A wealthy 13th-century Italian youth who renounced everything to live in poverty.
- He cared for lepers, preached in the streets, and is the patron saint of ecology.
- He founded an order of friars; a 21st-century pope took his name.

Martin Luther

- A 16th-century German Augustinian monk and professor.
- He protested the sale of indulgences and taught salvation by faith and Scripture alone.
- His Ninety-Five Theses sparked the Protestant Reformation; he translated the Bible into German.

John Calvin

- A 16th-century French reformer who led the church in Geneva.
- His *Institutes of the Christian Religion* systematized Reformed theology.
- He is best known for the doctrines of predestination and total depravity.

Ignatius of Loyola

- A 16th-century Spanish soldier turned religious reformer.
- He wrote the *Spiritual Exercises* and founded a disciplined, education-focused order.
- His Society of Jesus — the Jesuits — drove the Catholic Counter-Reformation.

John Wesley

- An 18th-century English clergyman known for open-air field preaching.
- He emphasized universal grace, sanctification, and 'social holiness.'
- His revival movement grew into the Methodist church.

Martin Luther King Jr.

- A 20th-century American Baptist minister.
- He grounded a movement of nonviolent resistance in the Black church and the gospel.
- He led the American civil rights movement until his assassination in 1968.

Bethlehem

- A town in the West Bank, just south of Jerusalem.
- It is the site of the Church of the Nativity.
- Christians revere it as the birthplace of Jesus.

Jerusalem

- An ancient city held sacred by three major world religions.
- It contains the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.
- For Christians it is the site of the crucifixion, resurrection, and Pentecost.

Rome

- The capital of Italy, traditionally built on seven hills.
- The apostles Peter and Paul were martyred here.
- Its bishop became the Pope, and a tiny walled state within it governs the Catholic Church.

Antioch

- An ancient city in what is now southern Turkey.
- It was a major hub for the early mission to non-Jews.
- Here the followers of Jesus were first called 'Christians.'

Constantinople

- A city straddling Europe and Asia, today called Istanbul.
- Founded as a 'New Rome,' it became the capital of the Eastern church.
- Its great domed church Hagia Sophia was the epicenter of the East–West schism.

Nicaea

- A town in northwest Anatolia, modern İznik, Turkey.
- It hosted the first and the seventh ecumenical councils.
- The foundational creed of 325 was drafted here.

Wittenberg

- A town in eastern Germany on the river Elbe.
- Its Castle Church door was a customary place to post academic notices.
- Here Martin Luther's Ninety-Five Theses launched the Reformation.

Geneva

- A city in French-speaking Switzerland.
- It became known as the 'Protestant Rome.'
- John Calvin led his Reformation from here.

Canterbury

- A cathedral city in southeast England.
- Its archbishop is the spiritual head of a worldwide communion.
- It is the historic seat of Anglican Christianity.

Azusa Street

- A modest street address in Los Angeles, California.
- In 1906 an interracial revival led by William Seymour broke out there.
- It is regarded as the birthplace of Pentecostalism.

The Nicene Creed

- A formal statement of Christian belief produced by early church councils.
- It declares the Son to be 'of the same substance' (homoousios) as the Father.
- Drafted in 325 and expanded in 381, it is still recited in Catholic, Orthodox, and many Protestant services.

The Apostles' Creed

- A short, early baptismal statement of Christian faith.
- Tradition once imagined the twelve each contributing a clause.
- Simpler than its longer conciliar cousin, it is widely used in Western worship.

The Ninety-Five Theses

- A list of propositions posted for academic debate in 1517.
- It attacked the sale of indulgences.
- Spread by the printing press, it ignited the Protestant Reformation.

The Summa Theologica

- An unfinished 13th-century masterwork of systematic theology.
- It harmonizes Christian doctrine with the philosophy of Aristotle.
- Its Dominican author's 'Five Ways' argue for the existence of God.

The Institutes of the Christian Religion

- A systematic theology first published in 1536 and much expanded by 1559.
- It became the textbook of the Reformed tradition.
- Its Geneva-based author is famous for the doctrine of predestination.

The City of God

- A sprawling work written after the Visigoths sacked Rome in 410.
- It contrasts a transient earthly city with an eternal heavenly one.
- Its North African bishop author also wrote the *Confessions*.

Confessions

- Often called the first great autobiography of the Western world.
- Written around 397–400 as a prayer addressed directly to God.
- It recounts its author's wayward youth and conversion in a Milan garden.

The Edict of Milan

- A proclamation issued in 313 by two Roman co-emperors.
- It granted toleration to a once-persecuted faith.
- It ended official Roman persecution of Christians.

The Birth of the Church

- This event is traditionally linked to a Jewish feast celebrated fifty days after Passover.
- It involved the disciples reporting a dramatic outpouring of a divine presence.
- Around 30-33 CE, approximately 3,000 people were baptized following a sermon by Peter.

The Edict of Milan

- This proclamation marked a significant shift in the treatment of Christians in the Roman Empire.
- Issued in 313 CE, it allowed Christians to practice their faith openly.
- It was a joint decree by Emperor Constantine I and Licinius, restoring confiscated church properties.

The First Council of Nicaea

- This gathering aimed to address a major theological controversy in early Christianity.
- Convened in 325 CE, it was one of the largest assemblies of bishops at the time.
- The council produced a creed affirming the nature of the Son as 'of the same substance' as the Father.

Nero and the Great Fire

- This event marked the beginning of the first major persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire.
- In 64 CE, Emperor Nero blamed a catastrophic fire on this religious group.
- Tradition links this persecution to the martyrdom of key apostles in Rome.

The Resurrection

- This event is considered the cornerstone of Christian faith and belief.
- It is said to have occurred three days after the death of a significant religious figure.
- According to followers, this miraculous event transformed grieving disciples into bold preachers.

The Council of Jerusalem

- This meeting was pivotal in determining the status of non-Jewish converts to Christianity.
- Held around 49 CE, it addressed whether Gentiles needed to follow Jewish law.
- The council concluded that they could fully embrace the faith without converting to Judaism.

Self-test

Answer each question from memory, then check your work against the answer key.

1. Which figure, a former Pharisee who at first violently persecuted the movement, was transformed by a roadside vision and argued that Gentiles need not first become Jews to follow Christ?

A Augustine of Hippo
B Thomas Aquinas
C Paul of Tarsus
D Ignatius of Loyola

2. Which Roman emperor convened the first ecumenical council at Nicaea in 325 and founded a new eastern capital named for himself?

A Constantine I
B Emperor Nero
C Emperor Licinius
D Emperor Justinian

3. Which 13th-century Dominican friar harmonized Christian theology with Aristotle in his Summa Theologica?

A John Calvin
B Thomas Aquinas
C Augustine of Hippo
D Francis of Assisi

4. Which of the following is NOT associated with John Calvin?

A Predestination
B Total depravity
C The city of Geneva
D The Ninety-Five Theses

5. Which religious order — the spearhead of the Catholic Counter-Reformation — did Ignatius of Loyola found?

A The Society of Jesus (the Jesuits)
B The Dominicans
C The Augustinians
D The Franciscans

6. Which town, home to the Church of the Nativity, do Christians revere as the birthplace of Jesus?

A Nazareth
B Antioch
C Jerusalem
D Bethlehem

7. Which city, today called Istanbul, was founded as a 'New Rome' and was the setting of the 1054 East–West Schism at Hagia Sophia?

A Nicaea
B Constantinople
C Geneva
D Rome

8. In which town, modern İznik in Turkey, were the first (325) and seventh (787) ecumenical councils held?

A Constantinople
B Antioch
C Nicaea
D Rome

9. On which town's Castle Church door did Martin Luther post the Ninety-Five Theses in 1517?

A Wittenberg
B Geneva
C Nicaea
D Rome

10. According to the Book of Acts, in which city were the followers of Jesus first called "Christians"?

A Constantinople
B Antioch
C Jerusalem
D Rome

11. Which creed declares the Son to be 'of the same substance' (homoousios) as the Father, settling the Arian controversy?

A The Apostles' Creed
B Confessions
C The Institutes of the Christian Religion
D The Nicene Creed

12. Which document, spread rapidly by the printing press, attacked the sale of indulgences in 1517?

A The Summa Theologica
B The Institutes of the Christian Religion
C The Ninety-Five Theses
D The Edict of Milan

13. Which theological masterwork, harmonizing Christian doctrine with Aristotle, contains the 'Five Ways' arguments for the existence of God?

A The Nicene Creed
B The Summa Theologica
C The City of God
D The Institutes of the Christian Religion

14. Which proclamation, issued in 313, granted toleration to Christians and restored confiscated church property?

A Diocletian's persecution edict
B The Edict of Thessalonica
C Decius's edict of universal sacrifice
D The Edict of Milan

15. Augustine wrote The City of God in response to which event?

A The Great Fire of Rome in 64
B The Edict of Milan in 313
C The Visigoths' sack of Rome in 410
D The fall of Constantinople in 1453

16. Which meeting, held around 49 CE, decided that Gentile converts could embrace the faith without converting to Judaism?

A The Council of Jerusalem
B The First Council of Nicaea
C The Resurrection
D The Edict of Milan

17. The first major Roman persecution of Christians, following the Great Fire in 64 CE, occurred under which emperor?

A Diocletian
B Nero
C Domitian
D Constantine

18. Which of these events occurred LAST?

A The Resurrection
B The Council of Jerusalem
C The First Council of Nicaea
D The Edict of Milan

19. In which year did Constantine and Licinius issue the Edict of Milan granting toleration to Christians?

A 313
B 410
C 380
D 325

20. At Pentecost — the Birth of the Church — roughly how many people were baptized after Peter's sermon?

A About 5,000
B About 120
C About 500
D About 3,000

21. Which wealthy 13th-century Italian youth renounced everything for poverty, cared for lepers, and founded an order of friars?

A Thomas Aquinas
B John Wesley
C Francis of Assisi
D Ignatius of Loyola

22. Which 18th-century English clergyman, known for open-air field preaching, led a revival that grew into the Methodist church?

A John Calvin
B John Wesley
C Francis of Assisi
D William Seymour

23. Which 20th-century American Baptist minister grounded nonviolent resistance in the Black church until his assassination in 1968?

A Ignatius of Loyola
B John Wesley
C William Seymour
D Martin Luther King Jr.

24. Which Los Angeles revival of 1906, led by William Seymour, is regarded as the birthplace of Pentecostalism?

A Azusa Street
B Northampton
C Bethel Bible School, Topeka
D Cane Ridge

25. Which work, often called the first great autobiography of the Western world, did Augustine write around 397–400 as a prayer to God?

A The Summa Theologica
B The City of God
C The Institutes of the Christian Religion
D Confessions

Go deeper

ONLINE This lesson on the web flashfeedlearningapp.com/study-guides/christianity/key-concepts

STUDY Christianity: A Complete History in the FlashFeed app flashfeedlearningapp.com/packs/christianity

Answer key

Lesson 1: The World Into Which Christianity Was Born

1. D Essenes

The Essenes withdrew to desert sites like Qumran and are credited with the Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered in 1947. The other three movements were not desert communalists.

2. B Sadducees

The Sadducees were temple-centered aristocrats who controlled the priesthood, rejected oral tradition, and cooperated cautiously with Rome. The Pharisees, by contrast, championed the oral tradition.

3. C Zealots

The Zealots were nationalist revolutionaries whose armed resistance helped ignite the Jewish-Roman War of 66-70 CE. The Sadducees instead collaborated cautiously with Rome.

4. A They controlled the temple priesthood

Controlling the temple priesthood describes the Sadducees, not the Pharisees. The Pharisees kept the Torah and oral tradition, held popular authority, and believed in resurrection.

5. A Pharisees

The Pharisees were rigorous keepers of the Torah and its oral tradition with wide popular authority. The Sadducees rejected the oral tradition, and the Essenes withdrew to the desert.

6. D A divinely anointed leader expected to deliver Israel

A Messiah was a divinely anointed leader expected to deliver Israel. A prefect was a Roman-appointed governor, a different role entirely.

7. C It was shared across the rival Jewish groups

The longing for a Messiah cut across the competing movements rather than belonging to just one, making it a broadly shared expectation.

8. B Deliverance from foreign rule

The Messiah was expected to deliver Israel from foreign (Roman) domination. The other options describe unrelated ideas not tied to messianic hope.

9. A Permitted religion combined with political subjugation under Rome

Jews kept their religion and Temple but chafed under Roman political rule; that mix of permitted faith and subjugation fueled intense longing for a deliverer.

10. C It was confined to a single small sect

The hope was widespread and shared across rival groups, not confined to one small sect. The other three statements accurately describe it.

11. B Koine Greek

Koine ("common") Greek was the everyday language of trade and communication across the eastern Roman world, and the New Testament was written in it.

12. D A long span of relative political stability across the Mediterranean

The Pax Romana, or 'Roman Peace,' was a long stretch of relative stability that eased travel and communication. Roads were a separate asset, not the Pax Romana itself.

13. D Slaves and rebels

Crucifixion was reserved for slaves and rebels and designed to be public and degrading. Roman citizens were exempt by law.

14. B A universal written legal code

Roads, the shared Koine Greek language, and the Pax Romana were the enabling infrastructure. A universal written legal code is not among them.

15. C Crucifixion marked him, in Roman eyes, as a seditious slave or rebel

Because crucifixion was for slaves and rebels, dying that way placed Jesus in the lowest legal category, making the 'Son of God' claim scandalous in Roman culture.

16. A Torah (Law), Nevi'im (Prophets), Ketuvim (Writings)

TaNaK is formed from the first letters of its three divisions: Torah (Law), Nevi'im (Prophets), and Ketuvim (Writings). The Talmud, Mishnah, and Midrash are later rabbinic works, not part of the Hebrew Bible itself.

17. C 39

The Protestant Old Testament contains 39 books. 27 is the number of New Testament books, so it is a tempting but wrong choice here.

18. D The TaNaK

TaNaK is the Jewish name for the Hebrew Bible. The Talmud and Mishnah are later rabbinic works, and the Septuagint is a Greek translation.

19. B The Covenant

The Covenant, God's binding relationship with his people renewed through Abraham, Moses, and David, is the central thread. The Exodus is one episode within that larger story.

20. A A binding relationship God enters into with his people

A covenant is a binding relationship God enters into with his people, first with Abraham and renewed through Moses and David.

21. C The Suffering Servant

Isaiah's Servant Songs describe a Suffering Servant, language early Christians applied to Jesus. The other titles are not the subject of these passages.

22. D Why the Messiah had to suffer and die rather than conquer militarily

The Servant Songs (Isaiah 52-53) gave early Christians the language to explain why the Messiah had to suffer and die instead of winning a military victory.

23. A On the human heart

The promised New Covenant was to be written on the human heart rather than on stone tablets, which the New Testament identifies as fulfilled in Jesus.

24. B Jeremiah

Jeremiah added the promise of a New Covenant written on the heart. Isaiah supplied the Suffering Servant imagery, a related but distinct contribution.

25. A As foreshadowing or typologically anticipating his work

Christians claimed to be the rightful heirs of the Hebrew Scriptures and read stories and prophecies as foreshadowing or typologically anticipating Jesus.

Lesson 2: The Life of Jesus

1. D Dining with tax collectors and others judged unclean

Jesus's ministry was marked by teaching in parables, healings, eating with social outcasts, and confronting the religious establishment.

2. C John the Baptist

Around age 30 Jesus was baptized in the Jordan by John the Baptist, an apocalyptic preacher who called Israel to repentance; this is traditionally treated as the start of his ministry.

3. B The Jordan River

Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River by John the Baptist, beginning a ministry conducted mainly in Galilee.

4. A The twelve tribes of Israel

Twelve deliberately mirrored the twelve tribes of Israel, signaling that Jesus was reconstituting the covenant people of God around himself.

5. B Pontius Pilate

Peter, Andrew, and Thomas were among the Twelve; Pontius Pilate was the Roman prefect who later sentenced Jesus, not a disciple.

6. C The Kingdom of God

The Kingdom of God — a new social and spiritual reality breaking into the world — was the central theme of Jesus's preaching, not political revolt or temple reform.

7. D The new social and spiritual reality Jesus proclaimed as breaking into the world

The Kingdom of God is the new social and spiritual reality Jesus proclaimed as breaking into the world — the core of his message, not a political or ritual program.

8. A The coming Kingdom of God

John was an apocalyptic preacher who called Israel to repentance ahead of the coming Kingdom of God and God's imminent judgment.

9. A It was primarily a military campaign to expel Rome from Judea

The Kingdom was a social and spiritual reality, the core of Jesus's message that John anticipated — not a military campaign against Rome, which is the misrepresentation.

10. D Break into the world imminently

John proclaimed the Kingdom as about to break imminently into the world, tied to God's coming judgment — an apocalyptic expectation Jesus built upon.

11. B Matthew 5 through 7

Matthew 5–7 preserves the Sermon on the Mount, the longest single block of Jesus's teaching, delivered on a hillside in Galilee.

12. C Blessings that invert social hierarchy

The Beatitudes open the Sermon on the Mount with blessings that invert social hierarchy — blessing the poor in spirit, the meek, the merciful, and the peacemakers.

13. B Earth

The Beatitude reads "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the Earth," one of the reversals that open the Sermon on the Mount.

14. A Offering ritual animal sacrifice at the Temple

The sermon covers love of enemies, non-retaliation, secret prayer, and not serving both God and money — but not temple animal sacrifice.

15. D The poor in spirit and the peacemakers

The Beatitudes bless the poor in spirit, the meek, the merciful, and the peacemakers — inverting the era's usual social hierarchy.

16. C The Prodigal Son

The Prodigal Son (Luke 15) dramatizes God's radical forgiveness and welcome of the repentant.

17. A The Good Samaritan

The Good Samaritan casts a despised Samaritan as the moral hero, teaching that neighborly love crosses ethnic and religious boundaries.

18. D Humility before God is greater than religious pride

The parable reverses expectations: the humble tax collector, not the proud Pharisee, is justified — humility before God outranks religious pride.

19. B The Sower and the Soils

The Sower and the Soils describes seed falling on four kinds of ground, representing four types of reception to God's word.

20. C The moral danger of wealth and indifference to the poor

The parable dramatizes the moral danger of wealth paired with indifference to the poor at one's gate.

21. D Under Roman occupation only Rome held authority to carry out capital punishment

Under Roman occupation the Sanhedrin could try Jesus for blasphemy but could not execute anyone; only Rome held capital authority. So the case went to Pilate, who sentenced him to crucifixion, a death Rome reserved for traitors and slaves.

22. C The place of the skull

Golgotha means "the place of the skull," the site outside Jerusalem's walls where Jesus was crucified.

23. B Calvary

Golgotha is also called Calvary, from the Latin word for skull. Gethsemane was the garden of the arrest, not the crucifixion site.

24. A Faith stands or falls with it, and so does the whole enterprise

Paul framed the Resurrection as non-negotiable: "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile" — without it the entire movement collapses.

25. C The Sanhedrin

Jesus was tried before the Sanhedrin, the supreme Jewish court, on a charge of blasphemy; lacking capital authority, it handed the case to Pilate.

Lesson 3: The Apostolic Age

1. A A harvest festival held fifty days after Passover

Pentecost was a Jewish harvest festival held fifty days after Passover, drawing devout Jews from across the empire to Jerusalem — the crowd Peter addressed. Passover itself, not Pentecost, commemorated the Exodus.

2. B About 3,000

Acts 2 records about 3,000 baptized in a single day — a precise number marking Pentecost as a founding moment, not a gradual process.

3. D Peter

Peter preached to the gathered crowd at Pentecost. Paul was not yet a Christian, James led the Jerusalem church later, and Stephen was an early martyr.

4. C As wind and fire

Acts 2 describes the Spirit arriving as wind and tongues of fire. The dove is associated with Jesus' baptism, not Pentecost.

5. A The Holy Spirit arriving as wind and fire

Acts 2 says the Holy Spirit arrived as wind and fire; that outpouring, followed by Peter's preaching, turned a hidden circle of mourners into a public community — the formal birth of the Church.

6. B Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Rome, Constantinople

The Pentarchy comprised Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Rome, and Constantinople. Corinth, Ephesus, and Carthage were important churches but not among the five seats.

7. C Antioch

Acts 11:26 says the disciples were first called 'Christians' at Antioch, which also served as a hub for the Gentile mission.

8. D Alexandria

Alexandria, tradition holds, was founded by Mark and became Egypt's great center of Christian scholarship. Antioch anchored the Gentile mission; Rome and Constantinople were the imperial seats.

9. A Corinth

The five seats were Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Rome, and Constantinople. Corinth had an important Pauline church but was never a Pentarchy seat.

10. C Constantinople

Constantinople was founded in 330 CE as the 'New Rome' and became the Eastern Church's seat. Rome was the old capital; Antioch and Alexandria were eastern learning centers.

11. B Gentile converts were spared circumcision and the full Torah

The council ruled that Gentile converts did not need to be circumcised or keep the full Torah, opening the faith to non-Jews.

12. D Damascus

Saul's blinding vision came on the road to Damascus around 36 CE. Tarsus was his birthplace; Jerusalem and Antioch figured later in his career.

13. B 13

Tradition credits Paul with 13 of the 27 NT books, its most prolific contributor. 27 is the whole New Testament, 4 the Gospels, and 66 the entire Protestant Bible.

14. D Asia Minor

Paul traveled through Asia Minor (modern Turkey), Macedonia, and Greece, and eventually to Rome — not Mesopotamia, North Africa, or Iberia.

15. C He had been baptized by Peter in Jerusalem

Saul was a Pharisee who persecuted the church and witnessed Stephen's stoning; he was never baptized by Peter — his conversion came through a vision on the Damascus road.

16. A Justification by faith

Justification by faith is Paul's teaching that right standing with God comes through grace and faith, not moral performance. Kenosis and the Body of Christ address other themes.

17. B The Body of Christ

The Body of Christ is Paul's metaphor for the church as one interdependent organism. Justification and kenosis concern salvation and the Incarnation; the Pentarchy names five cities.

18. C Kenosis

Kenosis, from Philippians 2, describes Christ emptying himself of divine prerogative to take the form of a servant — distinct from justification or the Body of Christ.

19. D Philippians 2

Kenosis comes from Philippians 2, where Christ 'emptied himself.' Acts 2 recounts Pentecost; Romans 8 and John 1 address other themes.

20. A Kenosis teaches that Christ kept full use of his divine power on earth

Kenosis means the opposite: Christ emptied himself of divine prerogative. The other three statements accurately state Paul's concepts.

21. B Peter was crucified (upside down, at his own request); Paul was beheaded as a Roman citizen

Tradition says Peter, not a Roman citizen, was crucified — inverted at his own request — while Paul, holding Roman citizenship, was beheaded, the death Rome granted citizens instead of crucifixion.

22. D 27

The New Testament comprises 27 books, all written in Greek. 39 is the Hebrew Bible count and 66 the whole Protestant Bible; 13 is Paul's traditional share.

23. A Mark

Mark is the earliest Gospel (~70 CE), shortly after Jerusalem's destruction. Matthew (~85), Luke (~95), and John (~90–100) followed.

24. C Nero

Nero scapegoated Christians for the 64 CE fire, starting the first empire-wide persecution. Domitian, Decius, and Diocletian led later waves.

25. D Athanasius of Alexandria

Athanasius of Alexandria's 367 CE Easter letter named exactly the 27 books, the first surviving list matching today's canon. The others shaped church history in other ways.

Lesson 4: The Imperial Church

1. C Granted them religious toleration and ended the persecution

The Edict of Milan granted toleration and returned confiscated property; it stopped persecution but did NOT make Christianity official. That came later under Theodosius in 380.

2. B 313 CE

The Edict of Milan was issued in 313 CE. 312 was the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, 325 was Nicaea, and 380 was Theodosius making Christianity the state religion.

3. A Licinius

Constantine issued the Edict of Milan jointly with his co-emperor Licinius in 313 CE. Diocletian's persecution from about 303 CE is what it ended; Maxentius was Constantine's rival, defeated at the Milvian Bridge in 312 CE; Theodosius I made Nicene Christianity the state religion in 380 CE.

4. D Theodosius I

Theodosius I issued the Edict of Thessalonica in 380, making Nicene Christianity the state religion. Constantine only legalized it in 313; Diocletian had persecuted it.

5. B It made Christianity the empire's official state religion

The Edict of Milan only granted toleration and returned property; it did NOT establish Christianity as official. Establishment waited until Theodosius in 380.

6. C He is of the same substance as the Father

Homoousios ("same substance") affirmed the Son's full divinity and equality with the Father, against the Arian claim that he was created.

7. D 325 CE

Nicaea I met in 325 CE. 313 was the Edict of Milan, 381 was Constantinople I, and 380 was Theodosius making Christianity the state religion.

8. A Constantine I

Emperor Constantine I summoned Nicaea in 325 to resolve the Arian controversy. Athanasius attended as a defender of orthodoxy but did not convene it.

9. D He was a created being, not eternal or of the Father's substance

Arius taught the Son was created — 'there was once when he was not' — subordinate to the Father. Nicaea rejected this, affirming the Son as homoousios with the Father.

10. C Athanasius

Athanasius of Alexandria argued a created Son could not save creation, defending the Son's full divinity. Nestorius and Pelagius belong to later controversies.

11. A The Oriental Orthodox churches (Coptic, Ethiopian, Armenian)

Most of global Christianity accepts Chalcedon, but the Oriental Orthodox churches — Coptic, Ethiopian, and Armenian — held the Monophysite view and never accepted the two-natures formula, remaining separate over it ever since.

12. B Constantinople I (381)

Constantinople I (381) affirmed the Holy Spirit's divinity, completing the Trinity and producing the final Nicene Creed. Nicaea I had addressed the Son; Ephesus and Chalcedon addressed Christ.

13. A Declaring Mary the Theotokos, against Nestorianism

Ephesus declared Mary Theotokos ('God-bearer') against Nestorius. Two natures was Chalcedon, two wills was Constantinople III, and icons was Nicaea II.

14. C Nicaea II (787)

Nicaea II (787), the last of the seven councils, permitted icon veneration while distinguishing it from worship due to God. Nicaea I addressed Arianism.

15. B That Christ has two wills, divine and human

Constantinople III affirmed Christ has two wills against Monothelitism. Two natures was Chalcedon, same substance was Nicaea I, and God-bearer was Ephesus.

16. D God-bearer

Theotokos means 'God-bearer', asserting the one Mary bore was truly God. Nestorius preferred 'Christ-bearer', which Ephesus rejected as dividing Christ.

17. D Ephesus (431)

Ephesus (431) declared Mary Theotokos against Nestorianism. Chalcedon defined Christ's two natures; Constantinople I addressed the Holy Spirit; Nicaea II addressed icons.

18. A Two natures, divine and human, united in one Person

Chalcedon defined Christ as fully God and fully human — two natures in one Person — rejecting the Monophysite view that the natures merged into one.

19. B Iconoclasm

Nicaea II ended the first iconoclasm (image-breaking) by permitting veneration of icons, distinguished from worship due to God alone. The others are earlier heresies.

20. C Monophysitism — the two natures merged into one

Chalcedon rejected Monophysitism, which held the incarnation blended the divine and human into a single nature. The Oriental Orthodox churches did not accept Chalcedon.

21. A Humans retain the natural capacity to choose good and contribute to their own salvation

Pelagius held that human nature is not fatally corrupted, so people can choose good and help earn salvation. Augustine countered that Original Sin makes salvation wholly God's gift; the church settled the dispute against Pelagius.

22. D Adam's sin corrupted all human nature, passing guilt to every person

Augustine taught Adam's rebellion corrupted human nature, passing guilt and a disordered will to all — so salvation is wholly God's gift. The other views resemble Pelagius or the Manichaeans.

23. C Monastic life in community under a shared common rule

Cenobitic monasticism is communal life under a shared rule, as opposed to the eremitic (solitary hermit) life. Pachomius organized the first cenobitic monasteries.

24. B Pachomius

Pachomius (c. 290–346) founded the first cenobitic monasteries. Anthony lived the solitary eremitic life; Benedict later codified Western monasticism two centuries on.

25. A The eremitic (solitary hermit) life

Anthony retreated alone into the desert — the eremitic (solitary) life. Communal cenobitic monasteries came later with Pachomius; his example, not invention, made him definitive.

26. C Pelagius

Augustine's doctrine of grace and Original Sin was hammered out against the British monk Pelagius, who taught humans retain a natural capacity to choose good.

27. B Settled against Pelagius, affirming grace as God's gift

The Pelagian controversy was settled against Pelagius: salvation is entirely God's gracious gift, not earned by human effort — a view Luther and Calvin later built on.

Lesson 5: The Middle Ages

1. B The Concordat of Worms (1122), which split the power to appoint bishops between pope and emperor

After decades of conflict the Concordat of Worms (1122) compromised: the emperor granted bishops their lands while the church invested their spiritual office. Henry IV's earlier penance at Canossa was only a temporary truce, not the end.

2. C 476 CE

The Western Roman Empire fell in 476 CE. The resulting power vacuum let the Bishop of Rome become the most powerful figure in Western Europe. 800 was Charlemagne's coronation; 1054 was the Great Schism.

3. A The Bishop of Rome, the Pope

With no emperor to govern the West, the Bishop of Rome — the Pope — inherited Rome's administrative infrastructure and became the leading figure. The Eastern patriarch led only the East.

4. D Who had the right to appoint bishops and abbots — pope or secular rulers

The Investiture Controversy was a struggle over who could 'invest' — appoint — church officials, since those offices controlled vast lands and revenues. The Filioque and Scripture translation were separate disputes.

5. C Excommunicating him, then making him stand barefoot in the snow for three days

Gregory VII excommunicated Henry IV in 1076, releasing his subjects from their oaths. Henry stood barefoot in winter snow at Canossa for three days until the ban was lifted — the defining image of papal power over kings.

6. D 'And from the Son' — added to the Nicene Creed as an unauthorized change

Filioque is Latin for 'and from the Son.' The West added it to the Nicene Creed to affirm the Spirit proceeds from Father and Son; the East rejected altering a council-ratified text.

7. A The East held to five equal patriarchs; Rome claimed supreme authority over all

Papal primacy was Rome's claim to supreme authority over the whole church. The East held a collegial model of five equal patriarchs, rejecting Rome's claim to lead them all.

8. B 1054

In 1054, legates from Rome and the Patriarch of Constantinople issued mutual excommunications, formalizing the split. 1095 was the First Crusade; 1122 the Concordat of Worms.

9. C Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox

The 1054 break formalized the division into the Roman Catholic (West) and Eastern Orthodox (East) churches. Protestant and Lutheran bodies arose only later, in the Reformation.

10. D A dispute over whether pope or emperor could appoint bishops in the West

The pope-versus-emperor fight over appointing bishops was the Investiture Controversy, a Western dispute — not a schism cause. The Filioque, papal primacy, and the Greek-Latin language divide all drove the East-West split.

11. A Faith and reason are complementary — revealed truths surpass reason but never contradict it

Aquinas held that faith and reason work together: natural law is knowable by reason alone, while revealed truths like the Trinity go beyond reason yet never contradict it. This synthesis shaped Catholic theology for centuries.

12. B Using rigorous logic and Greek philosophy to systematize Christian theology

Scholasticism applied rigorous Aristotelian logic — posing objections, counterarguments, and solutions — to systematize theology, exemplified by Aquinas. It embraced Greek philosophy rather than rejecting it.

13. A A moral order built into creation, knowable by reason apart from revelation

Natural law is Aquinas's idea that a moral order is embedded in creation and accessible to human reason without recourse to Scripture, while revealed truths go beyond but never contradict reason.

14. B An Italian Dominican

Aquinas (1225-1274) was an Italian Dominican friar whose Summa Theologica became Scholasticism's towering synthesis of faith and reason.

15. C Aristotle

Scholasticism applied rigorous Aristotelian logic to theology; Aquinas's Summa Theologica synthesized Christian doctrine with Aristotle's philosophy in particular.

16. D God, creation, ethics, and the sacraments

The Summa Theologica was "a cathedral of argument" spanning God, creation, ethics, and the sacraments -- the full scope of Aquinas's synthesis of faith and reason.

17. B Doctor of the Church

The church canonized Aquinas and named him a Doctor of the Church, cementing his synthesis of faith and reason as the standard of Catholic theology.

18. A Friars Minor

Francis's order was formally the Friars Minor — 'lesser brothers.' The Dominicans were a separate order (Aquinas's); Benedictines and Jesuits arose in different eras.

19. C Abandoned his wealth to care for lepers and preach in the streets

Francis took the gospel command to sell all and give to the poor literally: he gave up his inheritance, cared for lepers, and preached repentance in the open air, unlike rural monastic orders.

20. D The son of a wealthy cloth merchant

Francis was the son of a wealthy Italian cloth merchant; he stripped off his fine clothes before the Bishop of Assisi to renounce that inheritance. Aquinas, by contrast, was the Dominican professor.

21. D Corporate as well as individual poverty

The Friars Minor took a vow of corporate as well as individual poverty — they owned nothing and begged their food, letting them reach the growing cities that landed monastic orders could not.

22. A Pope Francis, in 2013

In 2013 Pope Francis chose his papal name to honor the saint's humility and care for the poor. Gregory VII, Urban II, and Leo III were all medieval popes.

23. C Urban II

Pope Urban II preached the First Crusade at Clermont in 1095, urging Western knights to recover Jerusalem from Muslim rule.

24. B 8

Eight major Crusades were launched between 1095 and 1291, varying widely in scope and outcome. The era closed with the fall of Acre in 1291.

25. A One-third to one-half

The Black Death (1347–1353) killed an estimated one-third to one-half of Europe's population, a scale that defied the church's frameworks of sin and punishment.

26. D Constantinople

The Fourth Crusade (1202–04) was diverted to sack Constantinople — the Christian city it was meant to protect — deepening the Catholic–Orthodox rift for generations.

27. C Saladin

By 1187 the Kurdish Muslim commander Saladin defeated the Crusader army at Hattin and retook Jerusalem. Nur ad-Din and Shirkuh were his predecessor and uncle, both dead before 1187; Baibars was a Mamluk sultan who fought Crusaders decades later.

Lesson 6: The Reformation

1. D A church certificate claiming to remit time owed in purgatory

An indulgence was a certificate claiming to remit time owed in purgatory. Their sale by figures like Tetzel made salvation sound transactional, which sparked Luther's protest.

2. A Johann Tetzel

The Dominican friar Johann Tetzel ran the indulgence campaign, marketing it with the jingle about the coin in the coffer. Loyola founded the Jesuits and Gutenberg built the press.

3. B 1517

Luther circulated the Ninety-Five Theses on October 31, 1517. He was excommunicated in 1521, the Jesuits were founded in 1540, and Trent closed in 1563.

4. C stand

Luther's famous defiance at the Diet of Worms was 'Here I stand. I can do no other.' — a refusal to recant before Emperor Charles V.

5. B Pope Leo X

Pope Leo X excommunicated Luther in 1521. Charles V was the emperor who summoned him to the Diet of Worms but did not excommunicate him; that was the pope's act.

6. A God's grace is the sole cause of salvation

Sola Gratia ('grace alone') insists God's grace is the only cause of salvation. It completes the trio alongside Sola Scriptura (Scripture alone) and Sola Fide (faith alone) that defined Protestant doctrine.

7. C The Bible, not church tradition, is the supreme authority for doctrine

Sola Scriptura ('Scripture alone') holds the Bible, not papal tradition, is the supreme doctrinal authority. The other options describe Sola Fide, Sola Gratia, and the priesthood of all believers.

8. D Through faith alone in Christ, as a free gift of grace

Sola Fide ('faith alone') teaches salvation is received through faith, not earned by works or sacraments — the very transactional view Luther rejected in the indulgence trade.

9. D No ordained mediator stands between the Christian and God

The priesthood of all believers holds that no ordained mediator stands between the Christian and God, pairing with the solas to reject clerical monopoly on grace and interpretation.

10. B Sola Fide

Sola Fide ('faith alone') names the faith-not-works principle. Sola Scriptura concerns authority and Sola Gratia stresses grace as the cause of salvation.

11. A Christ is really, physically present in the bread and wine

Luther insisted Christ is really, physically present in the bread and wine. Zwingli read the elements as symbolic; the wholesale change of substance is the Catholic view.

12. C As a purely symbolic memorial of Christ

Zwingli read the elements as a purely symbolic memorial — bread and wine that represent Christ but do not carry his physical presence, the opposite of Luther's real-presence view.

13. B The Marburg Colloquy

At the Marburg Colloquy of 1529 the two men agreed on fourteen points but split permanently on the fifteenth — Christ's presence in the Supper.

14. A The nature of the Lord's Supper

Their decisive split was over the Lord's Supper — real presence versus symbolic memorial. Predestination and baptism were Calvinist and Anabaptist concerns, not the Luther-Zwingli break.

15. D He held that Christ is physically present in the bread and wine

The false statement is physical presence — that was Luther's view. Zwingli led the Zurich Reformation, stripped churches of art and music, and read the Supper as symbolic.

16. C God eternally elects some to salvation by his own sovereign choice

Predestination holds that God eternally elects some to salvation by divine choice, not by foreseen merit. The corruption of nature is total depravity, a separate Calvinist doctrine.

17. A Wholly corrupted by sin, with no natural inclination toward God

Total depravity, systematized by Calvin, teaches human nature is wholly corrupted by sin with no natural inclination toward God — hence salvation depends entirely on divine election.

18. D Baptism given only to those old enough to profess faith for themselves

Believer's baptism restricts baptism to those old enough to profess faith personally, rejecting infant baptism. The Anabaptists re-baptized adults on a personal profession of faith.

19. B The Anabaptists

The Anabaptists ('re-baptizers') emerged in Zurich in 1525 under Grebel and Manz. The Huguenots and Puritans were Reformed/Calvinist, and the Jesuits were a Catholic order.

20. C Infant baptism

Anabaptists judged infant baptism unscriptural and baptized only adults who could profess faith — believer's baptism. Predestination and transubstantiation were doctrinal disputes, not the practice they rejected.

21. D Both Scripture and church tradition

Trent deliberately rejected Luther's Sola Scriptura, affirming both Scripture AND tradition as sources of authority.

22. B The Latin Vulgate

Trent named Jerome's Latin Vulgate the official text of the Catholic Church.

23. C Seven sacraments

Trent reaffirmed seven sacraments, deliberately rejecting the two that Luther retained. This was part of its point-by-point doctrinal reply to Protestantism.

24. A Transubstantiation

Trent affirmed the real presence under the term transubstantiation. Consubstantiation is associated with Lutheran thought, and the symbolic memorial was Zwingli's view.

25. B Ignatius of Loyola

The Spanish ex-soldier Ignatius of Loyola founded the Jesuits in 1540. They became a chief engine of the Counter-Reformation through education and overseas mission.

Lesson 7: Mission, Revival & Pentecostalism

1. C Divided the non-Christian world between Spain and Portugal

The 1494 Treaty of Tordesillas carved up the non-Christian world between the two Iberian crowns, Spain and Portugal. Catholic missions then followed the conquest — 'the church followed the sword.'

2. A Rational human beings with rights to liberty and property

Sublimis Deus affirmed the indigenous peoples as rational human beings with the right to liberty and property, who must not be enslaved — directly contradicting the theology used to justify conquest.

3. D Pope Paul III

Pope Paul III issued Sublimis Deus in 1537. Alexander VI, Julius II, and Leo X were earlier Renaissance popes not associated with this decree on indigenous dignity.

4. B Spain and Portugal

Spain and Portugal spread Catholicism to Latin America, the Philippines, and parts of Africa, often hand in hand with conquest. Protestant powers like England and the Netherlands came later and elsewhere.

5. C The bull was frequently ignored and the Vatican could not enforce it

The decree was frequently ignored on the ground; Spain's encomienda system of forced labor continued because the Vatican lacked the coercive power to enforce its bull across an ocean.

6. D Spain and Portugal

Spain and Portugal carried Catholicism to Latin America, the Philippines, and parts of Africa, often hand in hand with conquest, dividing lands by treaty.

7. B Enabled the destruction and exploitation of native cultures

Missions left a complex legacy: they brought schools and medicine but also enabled or participated in the destruction and exploitation of indigenous cultures.

8. A Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield

The First Great Awakening spread through Jonathan Edwards's preaching and the itinerant English evangelist George Whitefield. Finney belongs to the Second, and Seymour/Parham to Pentecostalism.

9. B The Second Great Awakening

The Second Great Awakening of the early 1800s spread across the frontier through camp meetings and traveling circuit riders on horseback.

10. C The Holiness movement

The Third Great Awakening produced the Holiness movement, emphasizing sanctification. Abolitionism and temperance drew from the Second Great Awakening; the Oxford Movement was English Anglican.

11. D 1730s–1740s

The First Great Awakening swept the Thirteen Colonies in the 1730s–1740s. The Second came in the early 1800s and the Third in the 1880s–1900s.

12. A Third Great Awakening paired with Jonathan Edwards

Jonathan Edwards led the First Great Awakening, not the Third — which produced the Holiness movement. Whitefield (First) and Finney (Second) are correctly matched.

13. B Opposition to women's suffrage

The Second Great Awakening energized abolition, temperance, prison reform, and the early women's rights movement — not opposition to it.

14. D Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God

Edwards preached 'Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.' 'A Model of Christian Charity' was Winthrop; the other two are works by Luther.

15. C Pentecostalism

The Holiness emphasis on experiential encounter with the Spirit prepared the soil for Pentecostalism, which erupted at Azusa Street in 1906.

16. A A deeper work of the Spirit purifying the believer after conversion

Sanctification meant a deeper work of the Holy Spirit purifying the believer after conversion, building on Wesley's doctrine of 'entire sanctification.'

17. C As a deliberate technique that could be applied to produce conversions

Finney treated revival not as a sovereign act of God but as a deliberate technique — 'new measures' applied systematically to produce conversions.

18. A William J. Seymour

William J. Seymour, an African American preacher and son of former slaves who had studied under Charles Parham, led the interracial Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles — a startling sight amid the legal segregation of 1906.

19. B 312 Azusa Street, Los Angeles

The revival broke out at 312 Azusa Street in Los Angeles. Topeka is where Parham first documented tongues in 1901; the others belong to earlier revivals.

20. D 1906

The Azusa Street revival began in 1906. Tongues-speaking was first documented at Parham's school in 1901, but the launching point of modern Pentecostalism was 1906.

21. C Black, white, Latino, and Asian worshippers prayed together amid legal segregation

Just eleven years after Plessy v. Ferguson, the interracial worship at Azusa Street — Black, white, Latino, and Asian together — was a startling social fact under strict legal segregation.

22. B The Global South

Pentecostalism's center of gravity is emphatically the Global South — sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia — not Europe or North America.

23. D Speaking in tongues

Glossolalia is 'speaking in tongues' — utterance of unintelligible or unknown speech understood as a gift of the Holy Spirit, the signature practice of Pentecostalism.

24. A The first Pentecost in the Acts of the Apostles

Participants saw tongues as re-enacting the first Pentecost in Acts, when the Holy Spirit fell on Jesus' followers and they 'spoke in other tongues.'

25. A A second experience after conversion, often marked by tongues

Pentecostals teach a baptism of the Holy Spirit as a second experience after conversion, often marked by tongues, healing, and prophecy.

26. D Healing and prophecy

Pentecostals describe the baptism of the Holy Spirit as often marked by tongues, healing and prophecy. The other options are Christian practices rather than signs of Spirit baptism.

27. C Pentecostalism

Speaking in tongues (glossolalia) is the signature practice of Pentecostalism, the movement born at Azusa Street in 1906.

Lesson 8: Core Theology & Doctrine

1. D One God existing as three co-equal, co-eternal persons

The Trinity holds that the one God exists as three co-equal, co-eternal persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Three separate gods is Tritheism; successive modes is Modalism.

2. C Tritheism

Tritheism is the error of treating the three persons as three separate gods. Modalism collapses them into masks; homoousios is the orthodox term for shared substance.

3. B He merely appears in three successive modes or masks

Modalism collapses the distinction of persons, saying God only appears in successive modes rather than existing as three distinct persons. Three separate beings is Tritheism.

4. A The three persons are three separate gods

Treating the persons as separate gods is the heresy of Tritheism, which the councils rejected. Co-equal, co-eternal, and one God in three persons are all orthodox.

5. B He fully shares the divine nature, not a lesser created being

Homoousios means the Son is of the same substance as the Father, fully sharing the divine nature rather than being a lesser being created by the Father.

6. A Two natures, divine and human, in one person

Chalcedon settled the question by holding the two natures together, without confusion or division, in one person.

7. C God took on human flesh; Jesus is fully God and fully human

The Incarnation holds God took on flesh in Jesus, who is fully God and fully human — not partly each, and not alternating between the two.

8. D Blending them into a single mixed nature

Chalcedon held the two natures together without confusion, mixture, separation, or division — so blending them into one mixed nature is rejected, while one person with both full natures is affirmed.

9. C "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us"

John 1:14 frames the Incarnation: the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. The other phrases are from John 1:1 and John 3:16 and do not describe the Word taking on flesh.

10. A Miaphysitism

The Oriental Orthodox (Coptic, Armenian) hold Miaphysitism, a subtly different position from Chalcedon. Modalism and Tritheism are Trinitarian heresies; transubstantiation is a Eucharistic view.

11. D Augustine of Hippo

Augustine of Hippo (354–430 CE), drawing on Genesis 3, taught that Adam and Eve's disobedience left all humanity in a corrupted state of Original Sin. The later Catholic and Protestant debate largely works within his framework.

12. B Adam's first disobedience corrupted human nature, passed to all humanity

Following Augustine, Original Sin holds that Adam's disobedience corrupted human nature and passed a fallen condition to all subsequent humanity — not a personal first sin or an unforgivable act.

13. D Redemption is Christ's work on the cross; salvation applies it to the individual

Redemption names Christ's atoning work on the cross that buys back humanity; salvation is that work applied to the individual as a restored relationship with God.

14. C Christ's atoning work "buying back" humanity from bondage to sin and death

Redemption is the mechanism — Christ's cross buying humanity back from sin and death. The restored relationship is salvation; the inherited corruption is Original Sin.

15. B It emphasizes inherited mortality more than inherited guilt

Eastern Orthodoxy agrees the fall was serious but traditionally stresses inherited mortality over inherited guilt, unlike Augustine's Western framework.

16. A The restoration of a right relationship with God

Salvation is the restoration of a right relationship with God — the cure for sin applied to the individual — distinct from redemption's atoning mechanism.

17. B Redemption is the mechanism, salvation the personal result

Redemption names the mechanism — Christ's atoning work 'buying back' humanity — while salvation is that cure for sin applied to the individual.

18. D Catholic

The Catholic view ties salvation to baptism, ongoing faith, cooperation with grace, and the sacraments, and holds it can be lost by mortal sin. Lutherans and Calvinists insist on grace and faith alone.

19. A That cooperation with grace and the sacraments contribute to salvation

Catholics hold cooperation with grace and the sacraments contribute to salvation; Lutherans and Calvinists reject any human contribution (Sola Gratia, Sola Fide). The other three are shared Christian beliefs.

20. C Grace is offered universally but can be freely resisted

Arminians and Wesleyans hold that God's grace is genuinely universal but can be freely resisted, preserving human choice.

21. B A "second blessing" of Spirit baptism, often shown by speaking in tongues

Pentecostals affirm a Protestant framework but add a post-conversion "second blessing" — a baptism of the Holy Spirit, often evidenced by speaking in tongues.

22. D Lutherans and Calvinists

Lutherans and Calvinists hold Sola Gratia and Sola Fide, so works are the fruit of salvation. Catholics see cooperation with grace as contributing; Arminians stress resistible grace.

23. A Only those two were explicitly commanded by Christ with a physical element attached

Protestants keep Baptism and Communion because Christ explicitly commanded both with a physical sign (water; bread and wine). Many even prefer 'ordinances' — symbolic acts of obedience rather than channels of grace, unlike the Catholic and Orthodox seven.

24. C A physical rite believed to convey spiritual grace

A sacrament is a physical rite — water, bread, wine, oil — believed to convey spiritual grace, such as Baptism or the Eucharist.

25. A Seven

Catholic and Orthodox churches recognize seven sacraments: Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation, Confession, Anointing of the Sick, Marriage, and Holy Orders. Most Protestants keep only two.

26. C Bread and wine become Christ's actual body and blood, though appearances stay the same

Transubstantiation holds the bread and wine become the actual body and blood of Christ while their appearances remain unchanged. Spiritual presence is Calvinist; memorial is Zwinglian; presence alongside is Lutheran.

27. D Baptists and many evangelicals

Baptists and many evangelicals hold the purely memorial (Zwinglian) view: the rite is a remembrance, with no real presence. The other three teach some form of Christ's presence.

Lesson 9: Branches of the Modern Church

1. A The Pope's formal doctrinal pronouncements are preserved from error

Ex cathedra infallibility applies only to the Pope's formal doctrinal pronouncements made 'from the chair' of Peter — not to his everyday statements or to cardinal elections.

2. B 1.3 billion

The Catholic Church has about 1.3 billion members. 270 million is Orthodoxy, 900 million is Protestantism, and 644 million is the Pentecostal/Charismatic wing.

3. C Sacred Tradition, the teaching handed down from the apostles

Catholicism treats Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition together as the source of doctrine — rejecting the Protestant principle of Scripture alone.

4. D It rejects any single universal bishop with binding authority

Rejecting a single universal bishop describes Orthodoxy and Protestantism. Catholicism is defined by centralized papal authority under the Pope.

5. D Peter

Catholics understand the Pope as the successor of Peter, the first apostle — a claim rooted in Matthew 16:18.

6. C An honorary primacy as 'first among equals,' with no binding jurisdiction over other churches

Orthodox churches are autocephalous — self-governing under their own patriarchs. The Ecumenical Patriarch is honored as 'first among equals' but, unlike the Catholic Pope, holds no binding jurisdiction over the others.

7. B Each governs itself under its own patriarch, self-headed

Autocephalous literally means 'self-headed' — each national church governs itself under its own patriarch, with none subordinate to Rome or Constantinople.

8. A Actual participation in the divine nature, or deification

Theosis ('deification') is the Orthodox vision of salvation as real participation in the divine nature — not merely a legal pardon or Protestant justification.

9. A John Chrysostom and Basil the Great

The ancient Divine Liturgy is attributed to John Chrysostom or Basil the Great. Augustine and Aquinas are Western theologians; Cyril and Methodius were missionary brothers.

10. D As venerated 'windows into heaven'

Orthodoxy venerates icons as 'windows into heaven' — honored, not worshiped, and never dismissed as mere decoration or condemned as idols.

11. C Divine Liturgy

The Divine Liturgy is the ancient Eastern Orthodox worship service that structures Orthodox worship.

12. B John Chrysostom or Basil the Great

Tradition credits the Divine Liturgy to John Chrysostom or Basil the Great, though the authorship is disputed.

13. D Windows into heaven

Orthodox iconography consists of sacred images venerated as "windows into heaven."

14. B Iconography

Iconography is the Orthodox practice of venerating sacred images as "windows into heaven,".

15. C Baptist

Baptists baptize adults on profession of faith and reject any binding denominational hierarchy above the congregation.

16. A Pentecostal / Charismatic

The Pentecostal / Charismatic wing is defined by the Holy Spirit's direct gifts. The Reformed and Lutheran streams emphasize doctrine, word, and sacrament instead.

17. C Anglican / Episcopal

The Anglican / Episcopal tradition intentionally takes a 'via media' or middle way between Catholic structure and Protestant theology.

18. B Reformed / Presbyterian

The Reformed / Presbyterian stream follows Calvin, emphasizing God's sovereignty, covenant theology, and government by elders.

19. D Local church autonomy with no denominational hierarchy

Local church autonomy is a Baptist distinctive. Lutheranism — the original Reformation stream — emphasizes grace, word and sacrament, and the two-kingdoms doctrine.

20. A Henry VIII

Henry VIII's 1534 break with the papacy established the Church of England, later described as a "via media" between Catholic and Reformed Christianity.

21. A Azusa Street Revival

The Pentecostal movement began at the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles in 1906. The other revivals are real but earlier or elsewhere.

22. D 644 million

Pentecostal/Charismatic adherents number about 644 million. 100 million is roughly global Baptist membership, 270 million is Orthodoxy, and 900 million is all Protestantism.

23. B 100 million

Global Baptist membership is near 100 million. 644 million is Pentecostal/Charismatic, 270 million is Orthodoxy, and 1.3 billion is the Roman Catholic Church.

24. C Pentecostal — Azusa Street, 1906

Pentecostalism began at Azusa Street in 1906; Anglicanism began with Henry VIII in 1534. The other pairings scramble those origins.

25. A 1534

Henry VIII's break with Rome, which founded the Anglican tradition, dates to 1534.

26. C Via media

Anglicanism is a deliberate "via media" — middle way — between Catholic structure and Protestant theology.

27. D 1906

The Pentecostal movement traces its birth to the Azusa Street Revival of 1906.

28. B Los Angeles

The Azusa Street Revival, the origin of the Pentecostal movement, took place in Los Angeles in 1906.

29. D Methodist

Methodism arose from John Wesley's 18th-century revival, emphasizing sanctification and social holiness.

30. C Episcopal

In the US the Anglican tradition is called Episcopal. Presbyterian, Congregationalist, and Baptist are distinct denominations.

31. A Presbyterian

Presbyterian churches follow Calvin's Reformed theology and are governed by elders; the name derives from 'presbyter,' meaning elder.

32. B Lutheran

The Lutheran church is the original Reformation stream, teaching grace, word and sacrament, and the two-kingdoms doctrine.

33. B Eastern Orthodox

Eastern Orthodoxy is one of Christianity's three main branches, not a Protestant denomination. Methodist, Presbyterian, and Lutheran churches all trace to the Protestant Reformation; Orthodoxy split from Rome in 1054, long before it.

Lesson 10: Christianity in the Modern World

1. D 78%

In 1900 about 95% of Christians were Western; by 2025 roughly 69% live in the Global South (Africa, Latin America, Asia), a share projected to reach about 78% by 2050 — a near-total reversal.

2. B Africa, Latin America, and Asia

The Global South — Africa, Latin America, and Asia — is home to about 69% of all Christians as of 2025, reversing the faith's earlier Western center of gravity.

3. A 95%

In 1900 roughly 95% of Christians were Western, and the faith was seen as a 'Western religion.' That picture has nearly reversed, with about 69% now in the Global South.

4. C 734 million

Africa saw the most dramatic shift of all — from under 10 million Christians in 1900 to about 734 million today, growing at about 2.64% a year.

5. B Enlightenment skepticism and biblical criticism

Enlightenment skepticism and biblical criticism preoccupied Western theologians. The Global South's live questions are poverty, healing, spiritual warfare, indigenous culture, corruption, and land rights.

6. A The movement seeking greater cooperation and eventual unity among divided churches

Ecumenism is the movement seeking greater cooperation and eventual unity among Christianity's divided churches and denominations — the opposite of fragmentation.

7. C Paul VI

In 1964 Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople met in Jerusalem — the first such meeting since the 1439 Council of Florence.

8. D The mutual excommunications of 1054 were lifted

In 1965 the mutual excommunications of 1054 that had opened the Great Schism were lifted simultaneously in Rome and Constantinople — a symbolic gesture that did not yet restore communion.

9. B Justification

The 1999 Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification declared substantial agreement on justification — salvation by faith and grace — a dispute central to the Reformation split.

10. C The Reformation

Justification by faith and grace was a defining dispute of the Reformation. The 1999 Joint Declaration found substantial agreement, though governance and papal authority still divide the churches.

11. D The Roman Catholic Church

Founded in 1948 in Amsterdam, the WCC gathers most Protestant and Orthodox churches. The Roman Catholic Church is not a member, though it has pursued significant ecumenical dialogue since Vatican II.

12. A 1948

The World Council of Churches was founded in 1948 in Amsterdam, gathering most major Protestant and Orthodox churches to pursue visible Christian unity.

13. B Amsterdam

The WCC was founded in Amsterdam in 1948. Geneva is a tempting distractor because the WCC's headquarters are there, but it was not the founding city.

14. A 2,000

In 1900 there were an estimated 2,000 Christian denominations. By 2025 that figure had exploded to roughly 50,000, driven by Pentecostal and indigenous church movements.

15. C 50,000

Denominations grew from about 2,000 in 1900 to roughly 50,000 by 2025 — read by some as vitality, by others as a scandal against Jesus's prayer 'that they may be one.'

16. D One in four

Pentecostal and Charismatic Christians number 660+ million — about one in four Christians globally.

17. B Baptism of the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, and miraculous healing

Pentecostalism, rooted in the 1906 Azusa Street Revival, emphasizes baptism of the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, and miraculous healing — one in four Christians worldwide is Pentecostal.

18. C God's 'preferential option for the poor'

Liberation Theology emerged from 1970s Latin America with Gustavo Gutiérrez, stressing God's 'preferential option for the poor' and naming structural injustice as sin.

19. D The Prosperity Gospel

The Prosperity Gospel, prominent in some Pentecostal contexts, teaches that faith yields wealth and health. It has spread in Africa and Latin America but is widely criticized by mainstream theologians.

20. A People who claim no religious affiliation

The 'nones' claim no religious affiliation — often 'spiritual but not religious' — and now make up about 28% of Americans, up from roughly 16% in 2007.

21. A Traditions are deeply divided — mainline Protestants and the Anglican Communion are split, while Catholics, Orthodox, and most Evangelicals hold traditional teaching

Sexuality is among the most fractious contemporary issues: mainline Protestants and Anglicans are internally divided, while Catholic, Orthodox, and most Evangelical bodies maintain traditional teaching.

22. C Rereading Scripture through women's experience

Feminist theology rereads Scripture through women's experience and has accompanied women's ordination in most mainline Protestant denominations.

23. D The Episcopal Church

Episcopal, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Methodist churches ordain women. Catholic, Orthodox, and Coptic churches maintain a male-only priesthood.

24. B Structural injustice

Liberation Theology names structural injustice — not merely individual wrongdoing — as sin, pairing this with God's 'preferential option for the poor.'

25. A As a distortion of the Christian tradition

Though it has spread widely in Africa and Latin America, the Prosperity Gospel is widely criticized by mainstream theologians as a distortion of the Christian tradition.

Lesson 11: Key Figures

1. C Nero

Peter was traditionally martyred in Rome under Nero. Constantine later legalized Christianity; Diocletian and Trajan persecuted it in other periods.

2. B Mary Magdalene

Mary Magdalene, a prominent disciple, is the first witness to the Resurrection in all four Gospels — striking in a patriarchal age. Peter and John came to the empty tomb afterward.

3. A Father of Orthodoxy

Athanasius is called the 'Father of Orthodoxy.' 'Prince of Preachers' is Spurgeon, 'father of modern missions' is Carey, and 'father of Western monasticism' is Benedict.

4. D The 27 books

Athanasius was the first to name exactly the 27 books of the New Testament. The other counts refer to different totals (e.g., 39 Old Testament books, 66 for the whole Protestant Bible).

5. C Writing a monastic Rule that organized medieval life

The monastic Rule was Benedict of Nursia's work. Athanasius defended Christ's divinity against Arius, was the Father of Orthodoxy, and named the 27-book canon.

6. B Western monasticism

Benedict gave Western monasticism its enduring shape. Modern missions traces to Carey, Orthodoxy to Athanasius, and scholastic theology to figures like Aquinas.

7. A The Rule

Benedict's Rule structured monastic life. The Ninety-Five Theses were Luther's, the Institutes were Calvin's, and the Summa was Aquinas's.

8. D Hospitals

Benedict turned monasteries into the libraries, schools, and hospitals of medieval Europe — centers of care and learning, not finance, law, or military.

9. C England

Gregory the Great reorganized the medieval papacy and sent missionaries to England. India is linked to Carey, and Poland to John Paul II.

10. B Reorganizing the medieval papacy

Gregory the Great reorganized the medieval papacy. Writing the Rule, founding Western monasticism, and shaping monastic institutions were all Benedict's contributions.

11. D Billy Graham

Billy Graham's mass crusades reached an estimated 215 million people in person, shaping 20th-century American evangelicalism. Spurgeon (19th c.), Carey, and Wilberforce were earlier Protestant figures.

12. A Abolishing the British slave trade

Wilberforce drove the abolition of the British slave trade. Missionary work in India belongs to Carey, papal reform to Gregory, and modern missions again to Carey.

13. D William Carey

William Carey pioneered Protestant missionary work in India, earning the title 'father of modern missions.' Spurgeon preached in London, Wilberforce fought slavery, and Graham led 20th-century crusades.

14. B Charles Spurgeon

Charles Spurgeon, the Victorian 'Prince of Preachers,' filled his London tabernacle weekly. Carey worked in India, Graham led 20th-century crusades, and Wilberforce was a politician.

15. A European communism

John Paul II helped bring down European communism while energizing global Catholicism. The slave trade fell to Wilberforce, Arianism was fought by Athanasius, and feudalism ended centuries earlier.

16. C Paul

Paul, the former Pharisee transformed on the road to Damascus, insisted Gentiles could join without adopting Jewish law — turning a Jewish sect into a universal faith. He wrote roughly half the New Testament.

17. B Augustine of Hippo

Augustine is the theologian who defined grace. Aquinas is associated with reason, Calvin with systematizing Reformed theology, and Ignatius with founding the Jesuits.

18. A Thomas Aquinas

Aquinas is the theologian of reason, synthesizing Christianity with Aristotle in his Summa. Augustine defined grace, Luther launched the Reformation, and Wesley founded Methodism.

19. D Martin Luther

Martin Luther, an Augustinian monk, broke the church open and launched the Reformation. Calvin systematized it later, Ignatius led a Catholic response, and Wesley came in the 18th century.

20. C John Calvin

John Calvin systematized Reformed theology in his Institutes and led Geneva. Luther began the Reformation, Wesley founded Methodism, and Ignatius founded the Jesuits.

21. D Constantine I

Constantine I legalized Christianity. Nero and Diocletian persecuted it, and Julian later tried to revive paganism.

22. A Francis of Assisi — a friar who embraced radical poverty

Francis of Assisi was the friar known for radical poverty. Constantine was the emperor who legalized Christianity, and Martin Luther King Jr. was the minister who led the civil-rights movement — the other pairings swap their identities.

23. C Francis of Assisi

Francis of Assisi founded the Franciscans and embraced radical poverty. Ignatius founded the Jesuits, Benedict shaped monasticism, and Aquinas was a scholastic theologian.

24. B The emperor who legalized it

Constantine I is the emperor who legalized Christianity. The other phrases describe other figures: the monk who broke it open, the reformer who systematized it, and the missionary who made it universal.

25. A He founded a movement for civil rights

The civil-rights movement belongs to Martin Luther King Jr., not Constantine. Constantine was the Roman emperor who legalized Christianity and reigned before Julian tried to revive paganism.

Lesson 12: Key Places

1. C Golgotha (Calvary), the hill of the crucifixion

Golgotha (Calvary), the 'place of the skull' just outside Jerusalem's walls, is where Jesus was crucified; the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was built over the site. Bethlehem's church is the Church of the Nativity.

2. D The Jordan River

Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River, still a pilgrimage destination today. The Sea of Galilee is the freshwater lake of his ministry region, not the site of his baptism.

3. A Bethlehem

Bethlehem is the birthplace of Jesus and the site of the Church of the Nativity. Nazareth is where he grew up; Golgotha is the hill of the crucifixion.

4. B Nazareth

Nazareth, up north in Galilee, is where Jesus grew up. Bethlehem was his birthplace, and Antioch was a later mission hub in Turkey.

5. C Galilee

Galilee, with its lake (the Sea of Galilee) and the Mount of Beatitudes, is the region of most of Jesus's ministry. Galatia is a separate region in Asia Minor tied to Paul's letters.

6. B Alexandria

Alexandria in Egypt became the great center of Christian scholarship, home to Origen and Athanasius. Antioch was the launchpad for the mission to Gentiles, not the scholarly center.

7. D Rome

Rome is where Peter and Paul were martyred; it grew into the capital of Western Catholicism. Jerusalem was the faith's spiritual center but not the site of their martyrdom.

8. A Rome

Rome became the capital of Western Catholicism, with the tiny walled enclave of Vatican City at its heart. Constantinople was the capital of the Eastern church.

9. A Alexandria

Alexandria in Egypt is the seat of the Coptic Church and the great center of Christian learning, home to Origen and Athanasius. Rome is the seat of Western Catholicism, not the Coptic Church.

10. C It was home to the Coptic Church and Athanasius

The Coptic Church and Athanasius belong to Alexandria, not Rome. The other three statements — the martyrdoms, Western Catholicism, and Vatican City — all describe Rome.

11. D Antioch

Antioch, in what is now southern Turkey, is where believers were first called "Christians" and was the launchpad for the mission to non-Jews. Jerusalem was the movement's original center.

12. B Antioch

Antioch was the launchpad for the mission to Gentiles. Nicaea and Constantinople in Turkey are later council cities, not the base of the early Gentile mission.

13. D Jerusalem

Jerusalem is the site of the crucifixion, resurrection, and Pentecost, and remains the spiritual center of the faith. Bethlehem was Jesus's birthplace, a distinct site.

14. C Bethlehem

Bethlehem, just south of Jerusalem, is the birthplace of Jesus and site of the Church of the Nativity. Nazareth, in the north, is where Jesus grew up.

15. A Rome

Rome, where Peter and Paul were martyred, grew into the capital of Western Catholicism. Constantinople became the capital of the Eastern church instead.

16. B Nicaea

Nicaea (modern İznik) hosted the first (325) and seventh ecumenical councils; the Nicene Creed takes its name from it. Chalcedon and Constantinople also hosted councils, and Antioch was an early mission hub.

17. D Constantinople

Constantinople, the "New Rome" and today's Istanbul, became the capital of the Eastern church and, at Hagia Sophia, the epicenter of the Great Schism. Nicaea was a council town nearby.

18. A Wittenberg

Wittenberg in Germany is where Luther's Ninety-Five Theses lit the Reformation. Geneva was Calvin's Swiss base, and Canterbury is the seat of Anglican Christianity.

19. C Geneva

Geneva in Switzerland, "the Protestant Rome," is where Calvin built his church. Wittenberg was Luther's German town; Zurich is a plausible but incorrect Swiss city.

20. B Wittenberg — Luther's Ninety-Five Theses

Wittenberg is where Luther's Ninety-Five Theses lit the Reformation. Geneva was Calvin's base, the Great Schism centered on Constantinople, and Nicaea gave its name to the creed — so the other pairings are wrong.

21. C Azusa Street, Los Angeles

Azusa Street in Los Angeles is where Pentecostalism was born in 1906. Canterbury, Wittenberg, and Geneva are older European centers tied to the Anglican, Lutheran, and Reformed traditions.

22. B Canterbury

Canterbury is the historic seat of Anglican Christianity. Azusa Street is the birthplace of Pentecostalism, Geneva was Calvin's Reformed base, and Wittenberg was Luther's town.

23. A Anglican Christianity

Canterbury is the historic seat of Anglican Christianity. Pentecostalism was born on Azusa Street, and Roman Catholicism is centered on Rome.

24. D Pentecostalism

Pentecostalism, born on Azusa Street in 1906, is now the fastest-growing form of Christianity. Anglicanism is centered on Canterbury, and Lutheranism traces to Wittenberg.

25. A Canterbury — seat of Anglican Christianity

Canterbury is the seat of Anglican Christianity, while Azusa Street in Los Angeles is the birthplace of Pentecostalism. The other pairings swap the two sites' roles.

Lesson 13: Texts, Creeds & Numbers

1. C Allegorical/typological

The allegorical/typological method — reading Old Testament events as foreshadowing New Testament realities — dominated patristic and medieval interpretation. The historical-critical approach, using history and archaeology, is a modern development.

2. B The authoritative list of books accepted as Scripture

The canon is the authoritative list of books accepted as Scripture. Interpreting those books is hermeneutics; the end of history is eschatology; church unity is ecumenism.

3. D Thirty-nine

Protestants count 39 Old Testament books. Twenty-seven is the New Testament; 46-49 is the Catholic Old Testament including the Deuterocanon; 66 is the whole Protestant Bible.

4. A The principles and methods of interpreting Scripture

Hermeneutics is the discipline of interpretation — how one reads the Bible. The list of books is the canon; last things is eschatology; deification is theosis.

5. A Ecumenical/liturgical

The four recurring approaches are literal/inerrant, infallible, historical-critical, and allegorical/typological. 'Ecumenical/liturgical' is not among them.

6. B Last things — the end of history, resurrection, judgment, heaven and hell

Eschatology studies 'last things': Christ's return, resurrection, judgment, heaven and hell. The other options describe canon, hermeneutics, and transubstantiation.

7. C Christ's return in glory to judge the living and the dead

The Parousia is the Second Coming — Christ's return in glory to judge the living and the dead, affirmed by all traditions. The millennium, resurrection, and theosis are distinct ideas.

8. D Premillennialism

Premillennialism holds Christ returns before the millennium. Amillennialism reads it as symbolic of the present age; postmillennialism places his return after a golden age.

9. D The Parousia, Christ's Second Coming

All traditions affirm the Parousia. The millennial positions (pre-, a-, post-) are precisely the points on which Christians divide.

10. C The formation of the New Testament canon

Eschatology treats last things — Christ's return, resurrection, judgment, heaven and hell. How the New Testament canon was formed is a matter of Scripture's history, not eschatology.

11. B The existence of God

The Summa Theologica, an unfinished 13th-century masterwork, harmonizes Christian doctrine with Aristotle; its "Five Ways" offer five distinct arguments for the existence of God.

12. A The Nicene Creed

The Nicene Creed (325/381) is the fullest conciliar statement on the Trinity. The Apostles' Creed is a short baptismal statement; the Athanasian is 5th-century; the Theses are Luther's.

13. D A list of propositions offered for debate

The Ninety-Five Theses are a list of theses — propositions for debate. An edict of toleration is the Edict of Milan; a summa is Aquinas's work; a baptismal creed is the Apostles' Creed.

14. C The Edict of Milan

The Edict of Milan (313) was the imperial edict granting toleration to Christians. The Edict of Thessalonica (380) instead made Nicene Christianity the state religion, while Diocletian's and Decius's edicts commanded persecution and sacrifice — not toleration.

15. A The Confessions

Augustine's Confessions is the autobiography. The Institutes is Calvin's systematic theology; the Nicene Creed is a creed; the Edict of Milan is an imperial edict.

16. B Two

While Catholic and Orthodox churches count seven sacraments, most Protestants recognize only two — a difference that reflects their focus on rites explicitly instituted by Christ.

17. B About 2.63 billion

Christianity has roughly 2.63 billion adherents. About 1.3 billion of them are Roman Catholic — a tempting distractor since it names only the largest single church.

18. D Seven

There were 7 early ecumenical councils (325-787). Twenty-one is the total number of councils the Catholic Church recognizes across all history, a common distractor.

19. A Eight

There were 8 major Crusades between 1095 and 1270. The other counts are plausible but incorrect.

20. C About 50,000

The faith today is estimated at roughly 50,000 denominations. The smaller and larger figures sound plausible but don't match this estimate.

21. B Ecumenism

Ecumenism is the movement for visible church unity. Theosis is deification; transubstantiation concerns the Eucharist; glossolalia is speaking in tongues.

22. C Theosis

Theosis is the Orthodox idea of salvation as deification. Ecumenism, transubstantiation, and glossolalia name a movement, a Eucharistic doctrine, and a Pentecostal phenomenon respectively.

23. A Transubstantiation

Transubstantiation is the Catholic doctrine that the elements become Christ's body and blood. Theosis is deification, glossolalia is tongues, and ecumenism is the unity movement.

24. D Glossolalia

Glossolalia is speaking in tongues, central to Pentecostalism. Theosis, ecumenism, and transubstantiation name deification, church unity, and a Eucharistic doctrine.

25. B Transubstantiation — the study of last things

Transubstantiation is the Catholic Eucharistic doctrine, not the study of last things (that is eschatology). The other three pairings are correct.

Lesson 14: Visual Reference & Challenges

1. C Bethlehem

Compare: Canterbury — A cathedral city in southeast England. Rome — The capital of Italy, traditionally built on seven hills.

2. A Nicaea II

3. B The Ascension

The diagram traces birth, baptism, ministry, crucifixion, resurrection, and finally the Ascension — the last event in the arc. The crucifixion, baptism, and birth all come earlier in the line.

4. D Seven

The diagram lays out the seven ecumenical councils, spanning four centuries from Nicaea (325) to Nicaea II (787).

5. C The First Council of Nicaea

The sequence opens with the First Council of Nicaea in 325 (over Arianism) and closes with Nicaea II in 787. Constantinople (381) and Chalcedon (451) fall in between.

6. B Nestorianism

Councils answered heresies: Ephesus rejected Nestorianism — which split Christ into two persons — and affirmed Mary as Theotokos, since the one Person she bore is both God and man.

7. D Theodosius's decree (380)

The Edict of Milan (313) only granted toleration and Nicaea (325) settled doctrine; it was Emperor Theodosius who, in 380, made Nicene Christianity the empire's official religion — under three centuries after the persecutions.

8. A Homoousios

Homoousios — 'of one substance' — was Nicaea's answer to Arianism, affirming the Son shares the Father's being. Theotokos was Ephesus's term for Mary; the others are unrelated.

9. B One Person in two natures, fully divine and fully human

Chalcedon defined Christ as one Person in two natures, fully divine and fully human. The single merged nature was the Monophysite error; two persons was Nestorianism; a creature was Arianism.

10. C It granted Christians toleration and freedom to worship

The Edict of Milan (313) only granted toleration. Making Christianity the official religion came later, under Theodosius in 380; condemning Arianism was Nicaea's work (325).

11. D The Second Council of Nicaea

The councils run from Nicaea I (325) to the Second Council of Nicaea in 787, the seventh and last, which ended the iconoclast controversy by affirming the veneration of icons.

12. A 325

The First Council of Nicaea met in 325 to condemn Arianism. 313 is the Edict of Milan; 381 is First Constantinople; 431 is Ephesus.

13. B 431

Ephesus met in 431 and upheld Mary as Theotokos. 451 is Chalcedon, 381 is First Constantinople, and 325 is First Nicaea.

14. C 451

Chalcedon convened in 451 and defined Christ's two natures. 431 is Ephesus, 553 is Second Constantinople, and 381 is First Constantinople.

15. A 381

First Constantinople met in 381 and completed the doctrine of the Trinity. 431 is Ephesus, 451 is Chalcedon, and 553 is Second Constantinople.

16. D The First Council of Nicaea

The First Council of Nicaea (325) settled the Arian dispute by affirming homoousios. Ephesus addressed Nestorianism, Chalcedon the two natures, and Constantinople completed the Trinity.

17. C The Council of Chalcedon

Chalcedon (451) defined the two natures against Monophysitism. Ephesus handled Nestorianism, First Nicaea handled Arianism, and Nicaea II handled icons.

18. D The First Council of Constantinople

The First Council of Constantinople (381) completed the Trinitarian doctrine begun at Nicaea. Ephesus and Chalcedon dealt with Christ's person and natures.

19. B The Second Council of Nicaea

The Second Council of Nicaea (787), the seventh and last, resolved the dispute over icons. First Nicaea, Chalcedon, and Ephesus each settled entirely different doctrinal questions.

20. A The Essenes

The Essenes withdrew into ascetic desert communities and are the group most scholars credit with the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Pharisees (Torah and oral tradition), Sadducees (Temple aristocrats), and Zealots (anti-Roman revolutionaries) were the other major groups.

21. D The five great patriarchal centers of the Church

The Pentarchy names the five patriarchal sees of the early Church — Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, Rome, and Constantinople. Don't confuse it with the Pentateuch (five books of Moses) or the Reformation's five solas.

22. B God's radical forgiveness and welcome of the repentant

The Prodigal Son dramatizes God's radical forgiveness of the repentant. The other themes belong to the Good Samaritan, the Rich Man and Lazarus, and the Pharisee and the Tax Collector.

23. C It begins small but grows to encompass all

The Mustard Seed teaches that the Kingdom begins tiny yet grows to encompass all — growth from small beginnings, not exclusivity or delay.

24. A The feast fifty days after Passover marking the Spirit's outpouring and the Church's birth

Pentecost is the feast fifty days after Passover when the disciples reported the Holy Spirit's outpouring — traditionally the birth of the Church. The distractors define Pax Romana, TaNaK, and the Pentarchy.

Lesson 15: Key Concepts

1. C Paul of Tarsus

Paul, a Pharisee from Tarsus who first persecuted the movement, was transformed on the road to Damascus, argued Gentiles need not become Jews, and wrote roughly half the New Testament.

2. A Constantine I

Constantine issued the Edict of Milan with Licinius, convened the first council at Nicaea in 325, and founded Constantinople. Licinius was his co-emperor, not the council's convener.

3. B Thomas Aquinas

Aquinas, a Dominican friar, argued faith and reason are complementary and wrote the Summa Theologica with its 'Five Ways.' Francis was a Franciscan; Augustine and Calvin predate/postdate this synthesis.

4. D The Ninety-Five Theses

Calvin led the Reformation in Geneva and taught predestination and total depravity. The Ninety-Five Theses were Martin Luther's, not Calvin's.

5. A The Society of Jesus (the Jesuits)

Ignatius of Loyola, a Spanish soldier turned reformer, wrote the Spiritual Exercises and founded the Society of Jesus — the Jesuits — a disciplined, education-focused order that led the Counter-Reformation.

6. D Bethlehem

Bethlehem, just south of Jerusalem, holds the Church of the Nativity and is revered as Jesus's birthplace. Jerusalem is the site of the crucifixion and resurrection, not the birth.

7. B Constantinople

Constantinople, now Istanbul, was the Eastern church's capital and home to Hagia Sophia, where the 1054 schism unfolded. Rome was the Western capital.

8. C Nicaea

Nicaea, modern İznik, hosted the first and seventh ecumenical councils and was where the Nicene Creed was drafted. Constantinople hosted other councils but not these two.

9. A Wittenberg

Wittenberg's Castle Church door was a customary place to post academic notices, and Luther's Theses there launched the Reformation. Geneva was Calvin's later base.

10. B Antioch

Antioch, in what is now southern Turkey, was a major hub for the early mission to non-Jews. Acts records that it was there that Jesus's followers were first called "Christians."

11. D The Nicene Creed

The Nicene Creed, drafted in 325 and expanded in 381, uses homoousios to affirm the Son's shared substance with the Father. The Apostles' Creed is a shorter baptismal statement.

12. C The Ninety-Five Theses

Luther's Ninety-Five Theses (1517) attacked indulgences and spread via the new printing press, igniting the Reformation. The Institutes came later, systematizing Reformed theology.

13. B The Summa Theologica

The Summa Theologica, Aquinas's unfinished masterwork, harmonizes doctrine with Aristotle and presents the 'Five Ways.' The City of God is Augustine's work.

14. D The Edict of Milan

The Edict of Milan (313), issued by Constantine and Licinius, granted toleration and restored church property, ending official Roman persecution.

15. C The Visigoths' sack of Rome in 410

After the Visigoths sacked Rome in 410, Augustine wrote The City of God, contrasting a transient earthly city with an eternal heavenly city and defending Christianity against the charge that it had weakened the empire.

16. A The Council of Jerusalem

The Council of Jerusalem (c. 49 CE) ruled Gentiles need not follow Jewish law such as circumcision, opening Christianity to the wider Roman world. Nicaea addressed Christ's divinity, not Gentile status.

17. B Nero

Nero blamed Christians for the Great Fire of 64 CE, launching the first major imperial persecution. Constantine later granted toleration; Diocletian persecuted much later.

18. C The First Council of Nicaea

The First Council of Nicaea (325) came after the Resurrection (c. 30–33), the Council of Jerusalem (c. 49), and the Edict of Milan (313).

19. A 313

The Edict of Milan was issued in 313. The first Council of Nicaea met in 325, and the Visigoths sacked Rome in 410.

20. D About 3,000

Acts describes a dramatic outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost; after Peter's sermon around 30–33 CE, roughly 3,000 people were baptized — traditionally the church's founding moment.

21. C Francis of Assisi

Francis of Assisi gave up his wealth, cared for lepers, founded the Franciscan order, and is the patron saint of ecology. Ignatius founded the Jesuits three centuries later.

22. B John Wesley

John Wesley emphasized universal grace and 'social holiness' and preached in the open air; his movement became the Methodist church. Calvin led the Reformed church in Geneva.

23. D Martin Luther King Jr.

Martin Luther King Jr., a Baptist minister, led the civil rights movement with nonviolent resistance rooted in the Black church until his assassination in 1968.

24. A Azusa Street

The interracial Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles (1906), led by William Seymour, is regarded as the birthplace of Pentecostalism. Canterbury is the seat of Anglicanism.

25. D Confessions

Augustine's Confessions, written c. 397–400 as a prayer addressed to God, recounts his youth and garden conversion. The City of God, also his, responded to the sack of Rome.

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