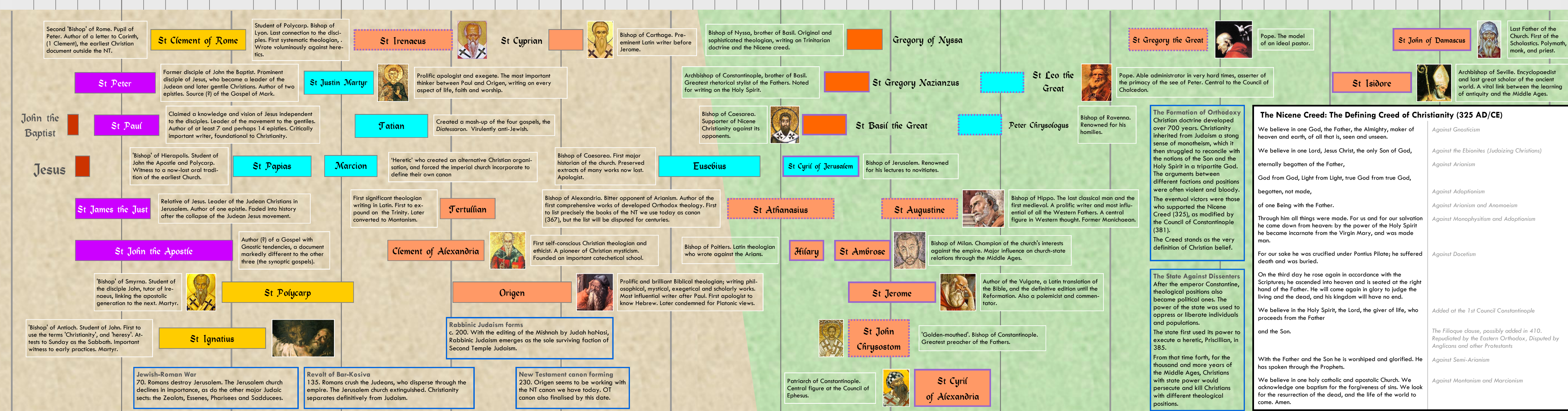


EARLY CHRISTIANITY

1 AD 100 200 300 400 500 600 700

PAGAN EMPIRE CHRISTIAN EMPIRE



The Nicene Creed: The Defining Creed of Christianity (325 AD/CE)

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father.

Through him all things were made: For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man.

The Creed stands as the very definition of Christian belief.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Against Gnosticism
Against the Ebionites (Judaizing Christians)
Against Arianism
Against Adoptionism
Against Arianism and Anomoeism
Against Monophysitism and Adoptionism
Against Docetism
Added at the 1st Council Constantinople
The Filioque clause, possibly added in 410. Repudiated by the Eastern Orthodox, Disputed by Anglicans and other Protestants
Against Semi-Arianism
Against Monophysitism

Manichaeism

and to India and China; a syncretistic fusion of all the religions it encountered: Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, and many others. Possible influence on many medieval movements such as the Cathars, Albigensians, and Bogomils.

Manichaeism
Good and evil are equally powerful, and material things are evil.
An important non-Christian religion spreading from Iran to the Roman Empire, Mormons.

Gnosticism

material world. They were to be found throughout mainstream Christian churches and communities, regarding themselves as elites with a hidden knowledge (gnosis) not available to their fellow worshippers. Bitterly opposed by many of the Church Fathers, going as far back as the Book of Acts.

Gnosticism
Valentinians, Sethians, Elkesai, Barbelognostics
Rooted in Jewish apocalyptic thought and middle Platonism. A collection of diverse, syncretistic beliefs holding that humans are divine souls trapped in a material world created by an imperfect or false god, the Demiurge, frequently identified with the Old Testament God. Gnostics rejected and vilified the material world. They were to be found throughout mainstream Christian churches and communities, regarding themselves as elites with a hidden knowledge (gnosis) not available to their fellow worshippers. Bitterly opposed by many of the Church Fathers, going as far back as the Book of Acts.

Marcionism

Christ had one Nature, the Divine. Christ had a human body and human emotions, but his human rational mind was replaced by the Logos. Against Nestorianism.

Marcionism
Marcion of Sinope c. 144
A widespread anti-Jewish variant of Christianity, operating parallel to and outside the Church. It rejected the Old Testament as the work of a lower god, who it characterised as legalistic, judgemental, and impulsive. Affirming Jesus as the saviour, who it characterised as a separate and all-forgiving entity, proclaimed to us by Paul. Similar to Gnosticism in its acceptance of opposing gods or forces (dualism), and its denigration of the OT God; but unlike Gnosticism, Marcionism has no secret gnosis: its teachings are open to all. Marcion is critical in being the first to differentiate the Old Testament from the New, and the first to establish a canon; in his case, much of Luke, and 10 letters of Paul.

Docetism

Jesus only seemed to have a physical body and to physically die, but in reality he was incorporeal, a pure spirit. Common strand in Gnosticism. Repudiated as early as the Council of Jerusalem.

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Novatianism and Donatism

The church must be a church of saints, not sinners. Sacraments administered by those who opposed under state persecution are invalid. Martyrdom is the supreme virtue. Schismatic rather than heretical groups, arising after the persecutions of Decius and, 50 years later, Diocletian. Outlawed in 408 but a major force in Africa until the Arab conquest.

Novatianism and Donatism
Circumcellionism
'Antipope' Novatian c. 250, Donatus Magnus 310-355
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Adoptionism

Jesus was a supremely virtuous man who was adopted by and granted divinity by God; at either Jesus' baptism, death, or ascension; when the Holy Spirit descended upon him. Jesus derives no personality from God.

Adoptionism
Pantetransmission, Dynamic Monarchianism
Theodotus of Byzantium c. 190, Paul of Samosata 200-275
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Montanism

The Church is the repository of knowledge. In time, Montanism's self-destructive practices would have led to Christianity's own extinction. More a difference of practices than doctrinal disagreement. Suppressed by Justinian.

Montanism
Montanus, c. 160
An early ecstatic, prophetic, and ascetic movement encouraging celibacy and martyrdom; asserting the primacy of individual prophetic utterances over the authority of the Church and scripture.

Adoptionism

Cult of Sol Invictus 270. Emperor Aurelian promotes the cult of the Unconquered Sun, a monotheistic alternative to classical polytheism that unintentionally paves the way for Christianity.

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Sabellianism

Father, Son and Holy Spirit are of one identical substance (consubstantial, homoousios). The Son is generated eternally of the Father's own being, from which the Spirit also eternally proceeds. All are equal.

Sabellianism
Sabellianism, Pneumatomachy, Homoiousianism
Macedonian, Patriarch of Constantinople 342
Basil, Bishop of Ancyra 358
The Son is similar in substance to the Father (homoiousios), but not identical. Moreover, the Holy Spirit is not divine, it is a minister or servant, on a level with the angels. This is the position of the conservative majority in the East.

Founders

Cappadocian Father, Apostolic Father, Father of the Church, Cypriot Father, Doctor of the Catholic Church

Founders
Cappadocian Father
Apostolic Father
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Cypriot Father
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1st Council of Nicaea 325
Resolves the Trinitarian controversy. Condemns Arianism and Macedonianism. Adds clause on the Holy Spirit to the Nicene Creed.

1st Council of Constantinople 381
Condemns Arianism and Macedonianism. Adds clause on the Holy Spirit to the Nicene Creed.

Council of Ephesus 431
Not recognised by Assyrian Church of the East (ACE). Condemns Nestorianism.

Council of Chalcedon 451
Resolves the Christological controversy. Condemns monophysitism. Chalcedonian creed.

2nd Council of Constantinople 553
Not recognised by Anglicans, ACE or OO. Condemns Nestorianism again.

Fall of the Patriarchates
Rome and Constantinople remained as the only surviving Patriarchates after the Arab conquests of Jerusalem, Alexandria and Antioch. Non-Nicene theological positions common in Egypt and much of the East were extinguished, leaving only Catholic and Orthodox Christianity.

3rd Council of Constantinople 680-681
Not recognised by Anglicans, ACE or OO. Condemns monothelism and monoenergism.