

# SUNDAY SESSIONS

## Church History 1

---

WEEK 1 - THE EARLY CHURCH  
400 B.C. → 312 A.D.

### Why Study Church History?

- 1. Church history bring clarity to doctrinal questions**
- 2. Church history emboldens our current faith by sharing stories of historic faith.**
- 2. Church history tells our family story - and it's fascinating!**
- 3. Church history corrects our chronological snobbery**
- 4. Church history reminds us that truth matters**

## **Major Events**

### **70 A.D. Destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem**

### **Persecution of Christians**

### **The Spread of Gnosticism (100 - 200 A.D.)**

#### **3 Core Tenants**

1. Secret Knowledge (gnosis): Believed that they had the secret, inside track to true salvation and everyone else was in the dark.
2. Dualism: The world is divided into two realms - physical and spiritual. A lesser being (not God) created the physical world, so everything physical is inherently evil and corrupt - incapable of salvation. The soul (spark) is naturally divine, but is imprisoned in the physical world.
3. Pleroma of Aeons

### **Excommunication of Marcion (approx. 144 A.D.)**

### **Justin Martyr's Apology (150 A.D.)**

**Martyrdom of Polycarp (155 A.D.)**

## **Other notable Leaders and Martyrs**

**Vibia Perpetua (d. 203)**

**Irenaeus (130/40 - 198)**

**Tertullian (160 - 230)**

**Origen of Alexandria (185 - 254)**

**The Growth of Christianity**