

# SUNDAY SESSIONS

## Church History 1

WEEK 2  
THE IMPERIAL CHURCH  
313 A.D. → 590 A.D.

### The Imperial Church

#### I. Welcome

1. Introduction
2. Approach
  - A. *The Story of* \_\_\_\_\_  
“History necessarily entails some attention to names, external events, and the sequence of development, *but the student should look beyond these things to the religious life of the people involved and grasp the perspective that this is the story of people.*”
  - B. *In order to pass on the* \_\_\_\_\_  
“You have heard me teach things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Now teach these truths to other trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others.” (2 Tim 2:2)
3. Goals
  - A. \_\_\_\_\_: Together we gain new understanding of the past people whom God redeemed and how they worked through or influenced the events of their time
  - B. \_\_\_\_\_: Together we wrestle with the issues they faced and along the way find truth-filled insights that we can bring home into our lives.
  - C. \_\_\_\_\_: See God’s faithfulness and give Him glory!

#### II. How Our Story Begins

- The Great \_\_\_\_\_
- The year was 303, and it lasted nine long years.
- Until... our first key figure rises to the fore:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

#### **DISCUSSION POINT:**

*Do you think of Constantine’s policy toward Christians as more positive or more negative? Is a state sponsored Christian faith more advantageous or disadvantageous to Christ’s followers? Should we be seeking it today?*

2. \_\_\_\_\_ of Caesarea

He wrote the first \_\_\_\_\_ of the Church!  
In his view, the Church and State are meant to be intertwined.

While some Christians embraced the new favor and involvement of the State, others decried it. This gave rise to a reaction called \_\_\_\_\_.

### **DISCUSSION POINT**

*Are there times when the Monastic life sounds attractive to you? Do you think there are modern day Monastics? Do you think it is wise and /or in keeping with the mission of the Church?*

### III. The “Imperial” A Team

#### 1. Athanasius (296-373)

Background:

#### ***The Council of Nicea (325)***

What was on the table:

ARIUS

Stressed the unity of the Godhead

Followed what might be called “the logic of monotheism”

Emphasized Scriptures that appeared to make his case:

- Col 1:15 – the Son is called the firstborn of all creation
- Prov 8:22 – personifies wisdom in which they saw the person of Christ: “the Lord created me at the beginning”
- Heb 1:2 - ... “in these last days he has spoken to us by His Son, whom he has made heir of all things through whom he also created the world..”

#### THE NICENE CREED (of 325)

*We believe in one God, the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten, begotten of the Father before all ages. Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not made, of one essence with the Father by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became man.*

*And He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried. And the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead; whose Kingdom shall have no end.*

*And in the Holy Spirit.*

### **DISCUSSION POINT:**

*How are the affirmations of Nicea still relevant and helpful for Christians like you and I today?*

#### 2. Ambrose (339-397)

Background:

Contribution:

- A. Set the precedent for the Middle Ages where the \_\_\_\_\_ had authority over the State.
- B. He left a powerful \_\_\_\_\_ for ministers.

His answer to his critics when the Vandals demanded ransoms:

*“It is better to preserve for the Lord souls rather than gold. He who sent the apostles without gold also gathered the churches without gold. The church has gold, not to store it, but to give it up, to use it for those who are in need... It is better to keep the living vessels, than the golden ones.”*

- C. His faithful preaching led to the conversion of \_\_\_\_\_.

### 3. Augustine (354-430)

Background:

From *Confessions*:

“So was I speaking and weeping in the most bitter contrition of my heart, when, lo! I heard from a neighboring house a voice, as of a boy or girl, I know not, chanting, and oft repeating, “Take up and read; Take up and read.” Instantly, my countenance altered . . . I arose; interpreting it to be no other than a command from God to open the Book {The New Testament}, and read the first chapter I should find . . . I seized, opened, and in silence read that section on which my eyes first fell: “Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh” . . . instantly at the end of this sentence, by a light . . . infused into my heart, all the darkness of doubt vanished away.”

Contribution:

- A. Articulated the doctrine of \_\_\_\_\_ sin
- B. Furthered the thought that the Church should be \_\_\_\_\_ the State.
- C. Influenced the Great Reformers: \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_

#### IV. How Our Story Ends

“Augustine’s work was, in a way, the last glimmer of a dying age.” Justo Gonzalez

*What’s one thing that spoke to you today from the stories of the people we learned about?*