

## STUDY PACK 22

### THE RISE OF THE STATE CHURCH

“In exact proportion as Paganism has disappeared from without the church, in the very same proportion it appears within it.”  
~ Alexander Hislop, *The Two Babylons*, p.251 ~

#### I. TWO SCHOOLS OF CHRISTIANITY: ALEXANDRIA VS. ANTIOCH

Two main centers for Christian study and the training of preachers were developing during this time. One was in the city of Alexandria, the other in the city of Antioch. At first the two schools had only one major difference – their teaching about how to interpret the Scriptures. At the school of Antioch they believed in the literal-grammatical interpretation of Scripture. They simply \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_. The school of Alexandria taught the allegorical method of Bible interpretation – \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

The allegorical method of interpretation opened the door for all kinds of pagan teaching to infiltrate the churches. As the generations passed, more and more of the Alexandrian teachers doubted the deity of Christ. They began to teach salvation by human works. They began to collect “alternative texts” of Scripture. These alternative texts had different readings than the text normally accepted by the churches. Some have accused these Alexandrian teachers of consciously producing these variant texts. Contradictory texts \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_. They became the authority, rather than the Scripture. People became blind followers of these teachers rather than practicing the “priesthood of all believers.”

There were now two different “types” of Christianity, even though both approaches were called Christianity. The school at Antioch had a standard text of Scripture which they accepted at face value. Everyone was expected to study and understand the Scriptures for himself. The deity of Christ was clearly recognized, and salvation by grace was taught.

The school at Alexandria had many contradictory texts, understood Scripture subjectively, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_,” questioned \_\_\_\_\_  
and \_\_\_\_\_. That both groups were called Christians has created great confusion that has lasted into our own day.

#### II. CONSTANTINE AND THE STATE CHURCH

Shortly before his death, Diocletian issued an “edict of toleration” ending the formal persecution of Christians. After his death, four rivals fought for control of the empire. One of them, Constantine, made a public profession of converting to Christianity in 312 A.D. He rallied the Christians to his aid in securing the Empire. He issued the Edict of Milan in 313 A.D. making Christianity the favored religion of the empire.

However, Constantine cared little (if at all) for Biblical Christianity. Just as the Roman Empire had controlled the pagan religions, \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_. Just as he had the title Pontifex Maximus (high priest) of the Babylonian Mystery Religion, he intended to be the pontiff (head of Christianity). Pagans were encouraged to “convert” to Christianity, but they

were allowed to bring their pagan doctrines and wicked practices with them. Many pagan priests simply began to use Christian terms for their pagan doctrines and practices.

Many Christians protested and refused to become part of the state church. Of course it was easier for “Alexandrians Christians” to join the new state church than “Antiochian Christians,” but some Alexandrians resisted. Some followers of the school of Antioch, wearied by decades of persecution, compromised and became part of the state church.

### III. ARIUS AND ATHANASIUS

Arius, a preacher from Alexandria, became an important force in professing Christianity. He taught that Christ was a created being, not the eternal Son of God. The Germanic tribes adopted Arian Christianity and many preachers throughout the Roman Empire followed him. Athanasius, a faithful Bible teacher, devoted himself to opposing the false views of Arius. He wrote “Against the Heathen” and “The Incarnation of the Word.”

Constantine called the leaders of the church together to settle this controversy. He personally favored Arius, but he insisted that the church have one official doctrine. A minority of preachers refused to compromise the doctrine of Christ. This meeting is called the Council of Nicea. The meeting went on for two years, but Athanasius and his supporters refused to compromise. Finally, the state church officially adopted their position.

The debate was not over. Arius and Athanasius continued to teach and influence people. Several church councils were held to determine doctrine. Independent churches continued to develop throughout the Empire. At times they were tolerated, other times they were persecuted. The state church came more and more under the control of the Roman Emperor.

Emperor Julian (360-363 A.D.) renounced Christianity and \_\_\_\_\_ . He failed and died shortly thereafter.

In 385 A.D., Theodosius I made Christianity \_\_\_\_\_. Soon pagans, Jews and independent Bible believing churches were persecuted in the name of state Christianity. Theodosius also canceled the Olympic games, which were devoted to the pagan god Zeus.

### IV. THE RISE OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

During most of the Middle Ages the Roman Catholic Church was easily the most powerful institution on the European continent. As the Roman Empire gradually collapsed, people began to look more and more to the Roman Catholic Church as the central unifying factor of society. Strong popes took steps to increase the power of the church.

One of the most significant popes was Gregory I (also remembered as Gregory the Great). He served as pope from 590-604 A.D. Gregory \_\_\_\_\_. A desperate population accepted this power grab by the Roman Catholic Church because they did not see any other source of government available.

Gregory also sent missionaries and then armies to force the English churches to come into the Roman Catholic Church. There had long been independent churches in the British Isles and

resistance to the Roman Catholic takeover was strong. Eventually the might of Roman Catholic military strength prevailed and most of the British churches came under Catholic control.

Gregory also took another very important step in increasing the power of Catholicism and incorporating heresy in the church. Gregory formally recognized Catholic Church tradition as being of equal authority. No longer did the Catholic Church even pretend that the Bible was their primary authority.

Christianity was established in Ireland by the famous missionary Patrick. He is referred to as St. Patrick by Roman Catholicism, which falsely takes credit for his efforts. In reality Patrick never acknowledged the Roman Church and he was an independent preacher. Patrick was born in Scotland. As a youth he was kidnapped by Irish pirates and sold as a slave in Ireland. Ireland was still pagan.

Patrick eventually escaped and returned to Scotland. There the Lord burdened his heart about the pagan people of Ireland. He returned as a preacher and missionary. Many people were saved and many churches were started. There was \_\_\_\_\_ . These churches existed independently for almost two centuries. Eventually, force was used to bring them into the Roman Church.

Another important pope was Gregory VII. Gregory claimed absolute power over the rulers of civil government. He insisted that civil rulers force all preachers under the fierce control of the church. He threatened to excommunicate any civil ruler who defied his authority. When Henry VII (of Germany) challenged Gregory, he was excommunicated. Henry's people were so upset that they threatened to overthrow him. Gregory forced him to stand in the snow barefoot for three days and ask for forgiveness. Henry never forgot this humiliation and when he had consolidated his power in Germany, he invaded Italy \_\_\_\_\_. Gregory was forced to flee for his life to the mountains. He died in exile but he left behind the claim of absolute power for the Catholic Church.

## V. THE ZENITH OF CATHOLIC POWER

Undoubtedly the Catholic Church reached its greatest power under Pope Innocent III (1198-1216). Innocent III repeated the claim of absolute control for the church. He threatened to doom any ruler who challenged the church to eternity in hell. He further threatened to condemn any nation that did not overthrow an excommunicated ruler and doom all the inhabitants of such a nation to hell. This was called “\_\_\_\_\_.”

Innocent III threatened “interdict” 85 times. All 85 times the kings he threatened gave in and did his will. He forced King Philip of France to remarry the wife he had divorced. He forced King John of England to sign over all the royal lands of England to the Catholic Church.

Innocent III \_\_\_\_\_. Priests were told to get their interpretation of the Scriptures solely from church councils. Innocent III also threatened interdict of nations that allowed independent churches to remain open. As a result, independent groups like the Albigenses and the Cathari in France were persecuted and thousands of men, women, and children were killed. During Innocent III's lifetime the power of the pope was never successfully challenged by any king.

## VI. SCHOLASTICISM

Education largely came under control of the Roman Catholic Church. Universities were either owned or controlled by the Roman Church. Wisdom was sought by comparing the Bible and church tradition with classical Greek scholars like Plato and Aristotle.

Scholars debated over the difference between Realism ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) and Nominalism ( \_\_\_\_\_ ). This was a meaningless debate for Bible believing Christians. The Bible provides absolute concepts that are in perfect harmony with individual examples. However, the Catholic scholars spent centuries debating this issue. Men began to deny that faith and reason were compatible. For many humans, knowledge was separated from religious authority.

## VII. MEDIEVAL SCIENCE

Many concepts were copied from the work of Arab scholars. The Arabic numeral system was found to be much easier to use than the old Roman system. Many disciplines of natural science were developed but only within the guidelines given by the Catholic Church.

## VIII. CHURCH POWER DEMONSTRATES ITSELF

Many people were forced to sign over property to the Roman Catholic Church. By the thirteenth century, the Catholic Church owned \_\_\_\_\_. This made the church a land-owning power in every nation in Europe. Church officials known as abbots were appointed to rule over church owned land. In nation after nation there was debate over whether or not the abbots were in subjection to the king or whether they answered directly to the pope.

The Catholic Church sponsored inquisitions to stop heresy and persecute Jews and independent Christians. These inquisitions \_\_\_\_\_. With the aid of civil authorities they imprisoned and even executed nonconformists.

New orders of Roman Catholic priests were formed to deal with the problems of heresy and nonconformism. The Dominicans were formed to aid in using teaching and force to control heresy. The Franciscans were formed by priests who took vows of poverty. Their job was to deal directly with the people, helping them with social challenges and persuading them to remain loyal to the church.

**Acts 1:8:** But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

**Psalm 75:6-7:** For promotion *cometh* neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south. <sup>7</sup>But God *is* the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.