**History & Theology – Church History**

**Class 3: Augustine & the Fall of The Roman Empire (303-430)**

## **Main Point:**

* During a period of political turmoil and instability, one of the most influential Christian thinkers would emerge.

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## **Class Goals:**

* Understand how Christians were viewed by their neighbors in the Late Roman Empire
* Summarize three of Augustine’s major works, *Confessions, The Trinity,* and *City of God* to show the breadth of his influence
* Summarize some of the controversies Augustine faced and understand his engagement with Pelagianism
* Contrast Augustine’s view on justification, baptism, and church catholicity with that of CHBC and other protestant churches today

# Introduction

Good morning! Welcome to week 3 of 13 in the Church History Core Seminar. Last week we discussed what happened when Christians went from persecuted minority to favored status in the Roman Empire. This week, we’ll pick up in the late 4th century with a declining Roman empire to observe what challenges this posed for Christians and in what ways Christian belief was clarified through a few controversies. We’ll consider how one North African bishop worked to clarify and defend the gospel in the face of opposition and how his contributions shaped western Christianity for years to come.

# (Optional) Church Matters in the Late 4th Century

## Influence of Bishops

As we discussed in week one, bishops arose relatively early in church history mostly by being pastors of a congregation in an influential city. As doctrinal disputes arose the status of bishops was elevated as they were looked to to help churches define matters of doctrine and practice. Bishops were meant to define doctrine carefully and through their correspondence with other bishops and church leaders help congregations think through challenges to church belief throughout the roman world.

As we’ve noted, settling matters of orthodoxy didn’t come easy in many churches. To help churches decide matters of orthodoxy there was often debate at which bishop should be believed. Recall Arius and Eusebius of Nicomedia. At times this led to feuds between bishops of different jurisdictions.

## Emerging Differences of East and West

Bishops often had outsized influence in particular geographic regions. We saw that with Arius’ work with Esebius of Nicomedia/Constantinople and Athanasius’ influence in exile. What further heightened conflict and started to fracture the foundation of a unified church were emerging differences among churches in the latin speaking west and the greek speaking east.

Many of the major ecumenical councils, debates, and subsequent confessions were had and written in Greek. The Desert Fathers (Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa) all wrote in Greek. So, for the first few centuries anyway, it’s safe to say that although the language of the empire was Latin, the language of many theologians was greek. It’s worth noting this as it helps explain some, but certainly not all, of the early distinctives in the east and west.

For our purposes it’s worth noting that the feuds between the east and west, to some, further weakened the Roman empire. But as had been the case Christians in various regions looked to trusted bishops to help through complicated theological issues and as we’ll soon see matters of crisis in the larger Roman world.

# (Optional) The Roman Empire in Late 4th Century

## A Time of Decline

The late Roman Empire faced a series of tumultuous events. In the second through fifth centuries, the empire would change hands many times. At times it was ruled as a tetrarcy and other times a sole emperor would exercise control over the entire empire as we saw with Constantine and Theodosius after him.

Like we discussed last week, unity in the empire often meant ecumenical councils could be summoned to clarify Christian belief. At times, these councils would be helpful and would affirm orthodoxy. Other times, councils would convene without the expressed authority of the emperor or be recognized by bishops.

However these matters of church and state were handled, one thing is clear by the fifth century Rome was a shadow of her former self. Valentinus in the fourth century sought to restore the city of Rome to her former glory by means of a pagan revival. If they could just get back to the founding ideas that made them great, perhaps then they could gain the prestige they desired.

But by the fifth century what was clear was that the division and feuds over the emperor’s purple amidst the ruling class had significantly weakened the Roman Empire.

## The Christian Problem

Theodosius made Christianity the favored of the Roman Empire in DATE. Although it was granted favored status by the emperor and his council, that didn’t mean Christian belief was favorable in all corners of the vast empire.[[1]](#footnote-0)

Amidst Rome’s decline and fall, Roman citizens and rulers grappled with explanations for their demise. One that gained some support in the fifth century was that Christians were to blame. It was their religion that caused the weakening of the Empire. Perhaps, Rome’s gods were punishing Roman citizens for abandoning them for the Christian God. Whatever the cause, an explanation was needed. What caused this once expansive empire to falter? What caused its cities to deteriorate? How was it that a ragtag group of rebels could sack its greatest city—the bastion of military might and republican rule? Why didn’t the *Pax Romana* endure?

# Crisis in the West

## Fall of Rome

In 410, the barbarian Visigoths invaded and captured Rome. The once great seat of so much power, now lies in the hands of invaders. Though there was much of the Roman Empire still intact, the capturing of its major city was symbolic as much as it was strategic. The city of Rome now lay in barbarian hands. If it could happen to Rome, how long until the rest of the empire falls?

Upon Rome’s siege many residents fled to North Africa. Perhaps aiming to flee to the furthest corners of the Roman empire in hopes that the rulers and officers could regroup and conquer the invaders. However, those that fled to North Africa would come under the influence of one North African Bishop who by this time had grown quite respected.

# Augustine (354 - 430)[[2]](#footnote-1)

No ancient Christian writer left a larger corpus than Augustine -- and perhaps the best known work is Confessions.[[3]](#footnote-2) And by the time of Rome’s fall, Augustine was a man of some consequence in the Roman world. He was a prolific writer. To understand the pivotal role he played and to help grasp his influence on later theology we’ll turn to consider Augustine’s life.

Timeline of His Life[[4]](#footnote-3)

Date Event

303-305 Diocletian Persecution

312 Conversion of Constantine

354 Augustine born in Thagaste

371 Studies in Carthage

372 Takes a concubine; Becomes a Manichee

373 Reads Cicero’s exhortation to seek wisdom

383 Moves to Rome to teach rhetoric

384 Moves to Milan, meets Ambrose

386 Converts to Christianity

387 Monica dies

388 Returns to Thagaste for life of philosophical contemplation

391 Forcibly ordained

395 Appointed bishop of Hippo Regius

397 Starts writing *Confessions*

399 Starts writing *On the Trinity*

410 Alaric’s Goth’s sack Rome

413 Starts writing *The City of God*

430 Dies in Hippo

## Overview of His Life

Augustine was born to a Christian mother and a pagan father in November 13, 354 in the City of Thagaste in North Africa (now Souk Ahras, Algeria). We learn from his *Confessions* that his mother Monica earnestly desired his conversion from an early age while his father, Patricius (Patrick) wanted his son to be well educated and established among the academic elite of the day.[[5]](#footnote-4) Augustine had at least one brother and two sisters.

Despite his mother’s godly example and influence, for the first 30 years of his life. Augustine ran from God and pursued the pagan dream. As his father desired, Augustine studied rhetoric and philosophy at Carthage in 371. As he pressed further into his studies, he began to self-consciously walk away from Christianity citing apparent contradictions in the gospels and what he perceived to be confusion on the origin of evil.[[6]](#footnote-5) He took a concubine in 372 who bore him a son, Adeodatus.[[7]](#footnote-6) We never learn the name of his concubine that he never married but lived with until 385.[[8]](#footnote-7) Augustine’s son, Adeodatus died tragically at age 16.[[9]](#footnote-8)

Amid his studies, Augustine would become influenced by Manichaeism—a new form of Platonism.[[10]](#footnote-9) He would identify as a follower of Manichaeism from 373 to 382.[[11]](#footnote-10) It was a dualistic religion that associated sin with the body and purity with the soul. It viewed sin as a necessary consequence of the soul’s enfleshment.[[12]](#footnote-11) Additionally, it disputed the idea that God would directly work in the world.[[13]](#footnote-12) But rather, God employed a “demiurge”—a less than divine creature to work in the world on his behalf. It emphasized cosmic combat between the good (spirit) and evil (matter).

Throughout his worldly pursuits, Augustine’s mother pleads with the Lord to save him.[[14]](#footnote-13) She shares her sorrow with a bishop who had once been a Maichae. The bishop tells her, “it cannot be that the son of these tears should perish” (*Confessions* 3.11.21).[[15]](#footnote-14)

In 383, Augustine sailed for Rome to become a teacher of rhetoric.[[16]](#footnote-15) Then, one year later, in 384 he was appointed a professor of Rhetoric at Milan.[[17]](#footnote-16) He reaches the pinnacle of his profession before he’s 30.[[18]](#footnote-17)

In Milan, he encounters Ambrose, Bishop of Milan.[[19]](#footnote-18) Ambrose was a well-known preacher. Unique, gifted, and unafraid of powerful people. Through his preaching and thoughtfulness, Ambrose gains the respect of Augustine. So much so that Augustine would regularly listen to Ambrose preach.

In the spring of 385, Monica (Augustine’s mother) came to Milan to help arrange the marriage of Augustine to a Catholic heiress.[[20]](#footnote-19) By this time Augustine had become a catechumen of the catholic church in Milan. An act of social conformity as much as anything else. Yet, through a series of events and circumstances, Augustine’s life would radically change in 386.[[21]](#footnote-20)

Augustine writes of it this way in *Confessions*,

…suddenly I heard the voice of a boy or a girl I know not which--coming from the neighboring house, chanting over and over again, "Pick it up, read it; pick it up, read it."…So I quickly returned to the bench… for there I had put down the apostle's book when I had left there. I snatched it up, opened it, and in silence read the paragraph on which my eyes first fell: "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in eroticism and indecency, not in strife and envying, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof." I wanted to read no further, nor did I need to. **For instantly, as the sentence ended, there was infused in my heart something like the light of full certainty and all the gloom of doubt vanished away** (*Confessions* 8.11.29).[[22]](#footnote-21)

 On April 24, 387, Augustine was baptized in Milan.[[23]](#footnote-22) Joining him in baptism was his son Adeodatus and his close friend Alypius.[[24]](#footnote-23) As was a common church practice then, they were all baptized on Easter Sunday.

Not long after his conversion, Augustine resigned his post in Milan and pursued a life of “cultured retirement.”[[25]](#footnote-24) A common practice at the time, Augustine, like many monks before him, idealized quiet and creative leisure as a means to be devoted to serious pursuits. A desire for such a life would lead him and a few others back to his hometown of Thagaste in 388.[[26]](#footnote-25) Reflecting on his time at Milan, Augustine writes,

The days were not long enough as I meditated and found wonderful delight in meditating upon the depth of Your design for the salvation of the human race. I wept at the beauty of Your hymns and canticles, and was powerfully moved at the sweet sound of Your Church’s singing. Those sounds flowed into my ears, and the truth streamed into my heart: so that my feeling of devotion overflowed, and the tears ran from my eyes, and I was happy in them.[[27]](#footnote-26)

After returning to North Africa in 388, Augustine moved to Hippo to start a monastery in 321, and shortly thereafter he was ordained a priest in Hippo.[[28]](#footnote-27) Then, in 395 Augustine was consecrated Bishop of Hippo. Describing these developments in a sermon, Augustine says,

I feared the office of a bishop to such an extent that, as soon as my reputation came to matter among the ‘servants of God,’ I would not go to any place where I knew there was no bishop. I was on my guard against this: I did what I could to seek salvation in a humble position rather than be in danger in high office. But, as I said, a slave may not contradict his Lord. I came to this city to see a friend, whom I thought I might gain for God, that he might live with us in the monastery. I felt secure, for the place already had a bishop. I was grabbed. I was made a priest…and from there, I became your bishop.[[29]](#footnote-28)

Augustine would remain bishop in Hippo until his death in 430. It’s reported that leading up to Augustine’s death he had his assistants write some texts of the penitential Psalms on the walls of his house around his bed. They were there to remind him of his continual need to confess, repent, and believe in the mercy of Christ to atone for his sins.[[30]](#footnote-29) Possidius, an early biographer writes, as Augustine lay dying,

He ordered those psalms of David which are especially penitential to be copied out [for example, “Have mercy on me according to thy steadfast love…For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me,” Psalm 51], and when he was very weak, he used to lie in bed facing the wall where the sheets of papers were put up, gazing at them and reading, and copiously and continually weeping as he read.[[31]](#footnote-30)

We’ll turn to consider a few of Augustine’s major works and his enduring contribution to Christian churches in a moment. But before doing so, are there any comments or questions?

## Some Major Works

### Confessions (397-400)

We’ve already discussed some of what Augustine writes in *Confessions.* It is perhaps his best-known work and the earliest surviving autobiography from antiquity.[[32]](#footnote-31) He wrote it sometime between 397-400.[[33]](#footnote-32) Augustine’s *Confessions* has God as the audience. [[34]](#footnote-33) There he lays out the details of his life from childhood to the death of his Mother in 387. He also provides some ruminations on memory, time, eternity, and creation as described in Genesis.[[35]](#footnote-34) Reflecting on his life’s work near the end of his life, Augustine wrote his purpose in composing *Confessions* was to move the mind toward God in love.[[36]](#footnote-35)

Like several writers before and after him, Augustine invited his readers to better understand life and this world. Augustine argues that to best understand our life and this world we must begin with God, his nature, and his works.[[37]](#footnote-36) Are there any other well-known Christian authors that argue the same thing? (Calvin’s *Institutes*)

In many ways, *Confessions* is true to its name. Augustine is brutally honest about his condition apart from God. He plainly presents his many sins and doesn’t attempt to justify himself. His offense is against God and it’s to God he looks for absolution. Augustine doesn’t dismiss the sins of his youth and mere youthful indiscretions or as necessary excursions of a boy becoming a man. No, Augustine is strictly honest about his condition. He writes, “my sins multiplied: and the woman with whom I used to sleep was torn from my side, as an obstacle to my marriage. That heart, to which she stuck fast, was cut and wounded in me, and oozed blood.”[[38]](#footnote-37) However, more than merely recounting outward forms of corruption and rebellion, Augustine perceptively diagnosed his underlying condition. “Witty and polished?” “I had not yet been in love and I was in love with loving…I set about finding an occasion to fall in love, so much in love was I with the idea of loving.”[[39]](#footnote-38) He maps the enigma that is man when he says,

 “Who can map out the various forces at play in one soul, the different kind of love…Man is a great depth, O Lord; You number his hairs…but the hairs of his head are easier by far to count than his feelings, the movements of his heart.”[[40]](#footnote-39)

Yet for all these stirrings and diagnosis of Augustine’s battle with sin. It’s in *Confessions* where Augustine recounts his conversion that we read earlier. And it’s there where he recounts the rest he found in Christ. He never lets the reader doubt his aim. He begins the book with that most famous and sweet line: “You stir man to take pleasure in praising you, because you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.” (*Confessions* 1.1)

### On the Trinity (399)

If *Confessions* is Augustine’s most well-known work, *De Trinitate* is what cemented Augustine as a premier western theologian. Athanasius and the Cappadocian Fathers had already written major works in the Trinity in Greek, but very few substantive works had been written in Latin. Augustine devoted nearly thirty years of his life to composing this work on the Trinity (400 to 428).[[41]](#footnote-40) As the book was written over such a broad period, Augustine does redirect his argument at times to engage with some of the rising issues of his day.

But most of Augustine's work focuses on the *opera ad intra* of the Trinity. That is the inner working and relations of the Trinity. Interestingly, he engages little with the Greek fathers who were the preeminent defenders of Nicene orthodoxy through his work substantially agrees with theirs.[[42]](#footnote-41) Two matters of Christian belief are pivotal for Augustine in understanding the Trinity. First, mankind is made in God’s image. Second, Christians are baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. For Augustine, these two realities hold that God as Trinity is uniquely knowable for Christians.[[43]](#footnote-42) This view allows Augustine to deploy several analogies to help Christians understand the relations of the Trinity. While it’s best to avoid this practice when explaining matters of doctrine as we saw last week, Augustine has a slightly different aim. He is interested in helping Christians understand how they relate to God. Augustine writes,

For to this His words come, “That they may be one, even as we are one;” namely, that as the Father and Son are one, not only in equality of substance, but also in will, so those also may be one, between whom and God the Son is mediator, not only in that they are of the same nature, but also through the same union of love. And then He goes on thus to intimate the truth itself, that He is the Mediator, through whom we are reconciled to God, by saying, “I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.[[44]](#footnote-43)

Summarizing the significance of this reality and Augustine’s contribution, William Shedd writes,

The doctrine of the Trinity is the most *immense* of all the doctrines of religion. It is the foundation of theology. Christianity, in the last analysis, is Trinitarianism. Take out of the New Testament the persons of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and there is no God left. Take out of the Christian consciousness the thoughts and affections that relate to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and there is no Christian consciousness left. The Trinity is the constitutive idea of the evangelical theology, and the formative idea of the evangelical experience. The immensity of the doctrine makes it of necessity a mystery; but a mystery which like night enfolds in its unfathomed depths the bright stars—points of light, compared with which there is no light so keen and so glittering. Mysterious as it is, the Trinity of Divine Revelation is the doctrine that holds in it all the hope of man; for it holds within it the infinite pity of the Incarnation and the infinite mercy of the Redemption.[[45]](#footnote-44)

As those made in God’s image and baptized into his name, Christians are invited to explore the wonderful relations of the Godhead. With such a work, Augustine opens the vistas of western engagement with the Doctrine of God. His influence on subsequent trinitarian reflection is hard to overstate. Yet, it would be the task of others who came after him to clarify and improve on the foundation laid by Augustine.

### City of God (413)

Widely considered his *magnum opus*, Augustine’s *City of God* was occasioned by an inquiry concerning the fall of Rome.[[46]](#footnote-45) He writes this nearly 900-page letter in response to an unknown inquire of Marcellinus. Here’s how he begins,

The glorious City of God is my theme in this work, which you, my dearest son Marcellinus, suggested, and which is due to you by my promise. I have undertaken its defense against those who prefer their own gods to the Founder of this city—a city surpassingly glorious, whether we view it as it still lives by faith in this fleeting course of time, and sojourns as a stranger in the midst of the ungodly, or as it shall dwell in the fixed stability of its eternal seat, which it now with patience waits for, expecting until “righteousness shall return unto judgment,” and obtain, by virtue of its excellence, final victory and perfect peace.[[47]](#footnote-46)

In this work, Augustine answers the question that we suggested in our introduction. Occasioned by questions concerning Rome’s fall Augustine took up his pen to describe that city which founder and builder is God.[[48]](#footnote-47) Here he counters the assertions that the Christians are to blame for the fall of the Roman Empire. Instead, Augustine goes on the offensive and challenges Roman belief and their Pantheon of Gods. He questions their founding myth, exposes Rome’s idolatry, and details Rome’s multiple failings prior to the Empire’s embrace of Christianity. Instead, Augustine asserts that any just success or peace Rome had was owing to the true God of the Christians. He shows how some of Rome’s virtues reflected the character of the true God, but in its power Rome became drunk with pride and violence and brought about its own demise.

Far from being a commentary on current events, Augustine situates the story of Rome in the arc of human history under the sovereignty of God. In doing so, he encourages Christians to see that Rome is but a bit player in God’s redemptive purposes and though Rome may fall and the world may seem to unravel. God is working in history to bring about his good purposes. God’s plans will not be thwarted. The earthly city will fall, but the city of God will remain.

For Augustine, the city of God is being built now but won’t be fully realized until Jesus returns. The earthly city is passing. But Christians occupy both cities. Those once and future residents of the city of God work for peace and justice in the city of man, but they know no earthly achievement will be lasting until their king comes. Robert Wilken summarizes, “When measured against the city of God, political authority is always provisional.”[[49]](#footnote-48)Here’s how Augustine puts it,

Since then, the supreme good of the city of God is perfect and eternal peace, not such as mortals pass into and out of by birth and death, but the peace of freedom of all evil, in which the immortals ever abide, who can deny that that future life is most blessed, or that, in comparison with it, this life which now we live is most wretched, be it filled with all blessings of body and soul and external things?[[50]](#footnote-49)

Romans need not fear Christians as they promote virtue where they find it, yet their hope is not fixed upon the conquests of the Roman empire or any empire for that matter. Rome’s problem was its hope in the city of man. Christians fix their hope in Jesus, the founder, builder, and perfecter of the City of God. Though Rome may fall, the City of God would continue to be built.

Any questions? (Suggested Reading - *Confessions*, Books XIX-XXI of *City of God, Enchiridion*)

## Controversies[[51]](#footnote-50)

As a priest and then a bishop, Augustine was pulled into the controversies and doctrinal disputes of his day. He addressed several in his writing and sermons. Like we observed last week, though a persistent issue in the church, the rise of false teaching affords churches the opportunity to clarify its teaching as its leaders aim to “teach what accords with sound doctrine.” There are two (three if Manicheism is considered) major controversies Augustine faced in his ministry at Hippo.

### Donatism

#### Background

During the great North African persecution of 303-305, many clergy apostatized in the face of trial. After the persecution cooled, many of the apostatized clergy sought to return to the church. But they were met with some controversy. Many of those who remained faithful asserted that the apostatized clergy were invalid members of the clergy along with all baptisms and ordinations these apostatized clergy performed.[[52]](#footnote-51)

The result of this controversy was two rival churches, complete with church hierarchies, in North Africa. The churches had the same Bible, the same creed, the same liturgy, yet they both considered each other false churches.[[53]](#footnote-52) Stressing the importance of a pure church, a Donatist bishop said the true church was like Noah’s Ark, meaning only the righteous are within[[54]](#footnote-53)

By the later part of the fourth century, Donatism represented a majority of Christians in North Africa.[[55]](#footnote-54) So as Augustine began to preside as a priest and later bishop in North Africa, Donatism presented a major challenge. So, between 399-415, Augustine wrote a series of treaties against Donatism that turned the tide against the Donatist church and toward the catholic church.[[56]](#footnote-55)

#### Augustine’s Arguments Against the Donatists

First, Augustine pointed out that the Donatist movement was a regional sect and did not consider itself in communion with the global or catholic church. They let a local persecution sever their ties to the catholic church. Since its missing a mark of the true church (i.e., catholicity) Donatist churches were not a true church.[[57]](#footnote-56) Here, Augustine follows Cyprian believing that “outside the church there is no salvation”[[58]](#footnote-57)

On one occasion, while Augustine was preaching, he saw a Donatist bishop in the congregation, turned to this Donatist bishop, and said:

It is quite true that this man can get whatever he wants outside the church. He can enjoy the dignity of office, he can receive the sacrament, he can sing Hallelujah and answer Amen, he can cling to the Gospel. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit he can hold and preach the faith, but he will not find salvation outside the universal church.[[59]](#footnote-58)

Augustine insisted that the Donatists’ insistence on rebaptism for lapsed clergy was clearly wrong.[[60]](#footnote-59) He also exposed moral hypocrisy in some of the Donatist leaders, undermining the claims of moral purity by the Donatists.[[61]](#footnote-60)

Most notably, drawing from Matthew 13:24-30, Augustine understood that the church was composed of a mix of wheat and tares—and even among the wheat there were many who had a long way to go in being made just.[[62]](#footnote-61) Here, Augustine saw the church as a hospital for sinners, and the Donatists' unwillingness to forgive repentant sinners was a major problem for Augustine on what a church should be and do.[[63]](#footnote-62)

Additionally, Augustine said that baptism is valid in itself, and not based upon the holiness of the priest administering it.[[64]](#footnote-63) Christ was the true minister of the Sacraments; it was for Augustine then, a matter of soteriology, ecclesiology and Christology.[[65]](#footnote-64)

Many of these arguments would lead Augustine and Aurelius of Carthage to persuade the Emperor Honorius, in 405, to ban the Donatists as heretics[[66]](#footnote-65) Then later in 411, the Council of Carthage would condemn Donatism[[67]](#footnote-66)

Yet, Donatism would still perplex and confront Augustine in North Africa. After the Council of Carthage, Augustine changed his mind about how to deal with the Donatists. Augustine advocated using the physical force of the State to end the schism.[[68]](#footnote-67) He appealed to the words in the Parable of the Wedding Feast which say “compel them to come in” (Luke 14:23) as a justification for the use of physical force.[[69]](#footnote-68) Notably, Augustine’s justification of the state’s use of physical force in religious matters would be appealed to for centuries to come.[[70]](#footnote-69)

### Pelagianism

The battle with the Donatist would shape Augustine’s early ministry. However, that would pale in comparison both in length and breadth to confrontation with Pelagianism. The controversy would begin in 405 and last for the rest of Augustine’s life and ministry. It wouldn’t be settled as a matter of orthodoxy until 529, nearly 100 years after Augustine’s death. The controversy with Pelagianism hinges on understandings of human depravity and original sin. To observe the edges of this conflict in the minitrsy of Augustine we’ll detail some finer points of Augustine’s teaching then turn to the rise of Pelagian thought.

#### Augustine’s Teaching

##### Predestination

Augustine held that God predestined (i.e., chose ahead of time) to show grace to some. He affirmed that without God’s gracious intervention, none would freely choose God.

Therefore God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, predestinating us to the adoption of children, not because we were going to be of ourselves holy and immaculate, but He chose and predestinated us that we might be so.[[71]](#footnote-70)

For Augustine, God’s choice was not based on foreseen faith. In commenting on the Gospel of John, Augustine says:

Here certainly, there is no place for the vain argument of those who defend the foreknowledge of God against the grace of God, and accordingly maintain that we were elected before the foundation of the world because God foreknew that we would be good, not that He Himself would make us good. This is not the language of Him who said, ‘You did not choose Me, but I chose you’ (John 15:16).[[72]](#footnote-71)

##### Human Depravity

In his writing, Augustine emphasized the depravity of mankind.[[73]](#footnote-72) He observed that after Adam sinned, humankind is depraved from birth. Saying in *Confessions*, “I have seen a baby who was envious. It could not speak, but it turned pale and looked at another baby sharing its milk” (*Confessions*, 1.7.11).[[74]](#footnote-73) The problem, as Augustine saw it, was not with human will exclusively but that mankind has a depraved nature given over to sin apart from the intervening work of God’s grace.

##### Doctrine of Original Sin

This idea coalesced around Augustine’s understanding of original sin.[[75]](#footnote-74) In *City of God* he offers this description:

Therefore if even infants, as the true faith holds, are born sinners, not on their own account but in virtue of their origin (and hence we acknowledge the necessity for them of the grace of remission of sins), then it follows that just as they are sinners, they are recognized as breakers of the Law which was given in paradise. (*City of God*, 16.27).[[76]](#footnote-75)

The root cause of mankind’s sin came from its inheritance of Adam nature. Mankind now constitutes, what Augustine called, a condemned mass (*massa damnata)* because of Adam’s sin.[[77]](#footnote-76)

For some this presents a question. If humanity is depraved in its nature based on the first man’s sin, what then do we make of freedom? Aren’t we free to choose what is good and right. Augustine did indeed teach that the human will is free. It’s free to choose what it wants. But because of Adam’s sin, the human will is bound to choose evil.[[78]](#footnote-77)

#### Pelagius’ Teaching

Bringing us to Pelagius. Who was Pelagius? Pelagius was a British or Welsh monk who arrived in Rome around 405.[[79]](#footnote-78) Upon arrival, Pelagius was appalled at the seeming immorality of Roman Christians. He became deeply concerned upon hearing a line in Augustine’s *Confessions*:

My entire hope is exclusively in your very great mercy. Grant what you command, and command what you will… You command continence; grant what you command, and command what you will (*Confessions*, 10.29.40).[[80]](#footnote-79)

[Discussion Question] - What are the implications of this? Why could it be offensive?

Pelagius viewed the Roman Christians in a moral crisis, and he viewed Augustine’s teaching as license for Christians to pursue immoral conduct. He saw Augustine’s view of grace as producing immorality. Further, he saw Augustine’s doctrine of original sin as making God cruel. How could a loving God punish someone for another’s sin? On these points, Pelagius responded to Augustine by saying,

“At the same time – may God forgive us! – we ascribe to the righteous One unrighteousness, and cruelty to the Holy One; first, by complaining that God has commanded the impossible, second, by imagining that some will be condemned by God for what they could not help; so that – the blasphemy of it! – God is thought of as seeking our punishment rather than our salvation… No one knows the extent of our strength better than God who gave us strength. … God has not willed to command anything impossible, for God is righteous; and will not condemn anyone for what they could not help.”[[81]](#footnote-80)

The central Pelagian claim is the belief that people are born morally neutral. Pelagius denied total depravity and original sin:

“Everything good and everything evil, in respect of which we are either worthy of praise or of blame, is done by us, not born with us. We are not born in our full development, but with a capacity for good and evil; we are begotten as well without virtue as without vice, and before the activity of our own personal will there is nothing in man but what God has stored in him.”[[82]](#footnote-81)

When pressed on his views in 415 at the Synod of Diospolis, Pelagius said:

“I did indeed say that a man can be without sin and keep the commandments of God, if he wishes; for this ability has been given to him by God.”[[83]](#footnote-82)

Pelagianism, however, wasn’t a system of doctrine espoused by one man. The term is used to mark a breadth of teaching that denies the consequences of original sin as corrupting human nature. So, other Pelagian teachers such as Julian of Eclanum thought that Augustine’s doctrines denied free will and minimized the importance of obedience.[[84]](#footnote-83)

### Augustine’s Response

Augustine believed that the Pelagians’ denial of original sin and its consequences constituted a significant deviation from orthodoxy. Writing in response to his Pelagian opponent Julian of Eclanum, Augustine said:

“It is not I who made up original sin! The Catholic faith has believed in it from its beginnings. But you who deny it are undoubtedly a new heretic. All, however, who have been born with sin are by the judgment of God under the power of the devil.”[[85]](#footnote-84)

Toward the end of his life, Augustine wrote in the *Enchiridion* about Adam’s sin:

“By [Adam’s] sin the whole race of which he was the root was corrupted in him, and thereby subjected to the penalty of death. And so it happens that all descended from him...were tainted with the original sin.”[[86]](#footnote-85)

### The Council of Orange

The controversy that began with Augustine and Pelagius came to a decisive head at the Second Council of Orange in 529—nearly 100 years after Augustine died. There the *Second Council of Orange* (529) rejected Pelagius’ teaching and affirmed Augustine’s defense of orthodoxy. The council clearly affirmed original sin

“CANON 2. If anyone asserts that Adam's sin affected him alone and not his descendants also, or at least if he declares that it is only the death of the body which is the punishment for sin, and not also that sin, which is the death of the soul, passed through one man to the whole human race, he does injustice to God and contradicts the Apostle, who says, ‘Therefore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned’ (Rom. 5:12)”[[87]](#footnote-86)

Additionally, the council affirmed the unconditional nature of God’s grace:

“CANON 3. If anyone says that the grace of God can be conferred as a result of human prayer, but that it is not grace itself which makes us pray to God, he contradicts the prophet Isaiah, or the Apostle who says the same thing, ‘I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me’ (Rom 10:20, quoting Isa. 65:1)”[[88]](#footnote-87)

We can observe the consequences of such a belief in our own day as well. Our Doctrine of Sin and Doctrine of Grace are connected. If Adam was merely a bad example and his guild isn’t applied to us, then Christ is merely a good example and his righteousness is not applied to us.

Is Pelagianism alive and well today? According to one study, 82% of evangelicals agreed with the statement "People have the ability to turn to God on their own initiative."[[89]](#footnote-88) 74% agreed with the statement "Individuals must contribute to their own salvation."[[90]](#footnote-89)

What do you think? Where do you see Pelagianism or Semi-Pelagianism today?

## Assessing Augustine[[91]](#footnote-90)

Augustine is without question one of the most influential figures in the western world. The reformers would rely on many of Augustine’s arguments to affirm the gospel and Rome’s departure from it in the 16th century. But, those same reformers, allied with Augustine on total depravity and unconditional election, would critique his views on baptism, the church, and justification.

### Baptism & Justification[[92]](#footnote-91)

Like many in the early church, Augustine believed that baptism effectively washed away the guilt of original sin and cleansed the recipient of sins:

“Your will was brought home to me in the depths of my being, and rejoicing in faith I praised your name. This faith did not allow me to be free of guilt over my past sins, which had not yet been forgiven through your baptism (*Confessions*, 9.4.12).”[[93]](#footnote-92)

“When the time came for me to give in my name for baptism, we left the country and returned to Milan. Alypius also decided to join me in being reborn in you (*Confessions*, 9.6.14).”[[94]](#footnote-93)

In Augustine’s day, many children died. Consequently, Augustine saw the baptism of a dying child as a guarantee of salvation for that infant.[[95]](#footnote-94) The reasoning behind this was baptism washed away original sin and infants did not possess the capacity for moral reasoning and discerning right from wrong. Therefore, so long as they were baptized and original sin and guilt removed, they would be saved. Once they were able to discern right from wrong however, they were to seek repentance and forgiveness in the church.

Connected to this assertion was Augustine’s view of justification. Augustine believed that God’s justification of sinners was to make them righteous, not to credit them righteous as the Protestant Reformers would espouse. These differences led to two distinctions of how Christ’s righteousness is applied to believers. Augustine viewed righteousness to be “infused.” The reformers would clarify that righteousness is “imputed.” Yet, the reformers esteemed Augustine for articulating a view of salvation that is entirely owing to God’s work of grace.[[96]](#footnote-95)

### Church & Catholicity

Augustine’s view of justification and infused righteousness led him to emphasize the instrumentality of churches. But, as we observed in the Donatist Controversy and like Cyprian before him, Augustine believed salvation could not occur outside the true church. Again, here we see a collapsed understanding of salvation in Augustine. He viewed grace operating through the sacraments of the church in a way the reformers would deny.

Additionally, as we saw based on Matthew 13:24-30, Augustine believed that the church on earth was a mix of wheat and tares or sheep and goats. He argued against a “pure church” composed only of believers. Though Augustine rightfully pushes on the Donatists on some points. He fails to note where true catholicity lies. For him, a church's catholicity is found in its organizational communion with other churches and not with its confessional clarity on what united all true churches—the gospel.

### Augustine’s Enduring Influence

On August 28, 430 Augustine died. The Vandals were overrunning North Africa. Times where changing for those in the Roman Empire. And though subsequent pastors and theologians would rightly challenge many of Augustine’s views, his influence on western theology is difficult to overstate. As we’ve sampled, he wrote widely and was looked to by many to correct false teaching as it spread through the church. He was the man for the time. From his soul-searching writing in the *Confessions*, to his learned theological engagement in *The Trinity*, and his grand account of the sovereign God who’s building his heavenly city from age to age in *City of God*, Augustine rightfully deserves his place among the most consequential figures in the history of the church.

# Conclusion

The Roman Empire was failing, and the preeminent western theologian was dead. But God continued to build his celestial city. Augustine imperfectly testified to that great work of our Lord. The empire would fall but the church would continue to be built by its master workman. Though the future of the church would look much different than its first 400 years, the gospel would continue to be preached and sound doctrine would continue to be defended.

## Consequences of Rome’s Fall

With the empire failing, ecumenical councils would diminish. Without an emperor to call bishops together, the church would look elsewhere for unified leadership and authority to enforce orthodoxy.

## Relationship with the East

The fractures in the foundation of east and west would continue to grow. Pelagianism was looked on more positively in the east than the west after the Council of Orange. Yet, without a unified empire the regional feuds would continue to build.

## On to the “Middle Ages”

The world was changing and what had once seemed stable and helped aide the church in clarifying its doctrine, was now gone. How would churches respond? And how would the new rulers of the former territories of the Roman Empire view Christianity? What place would bishops have in the new world order and who possessed authority over churches? These were just a few of the questions that would dominate the next several centuries of the history of the church. Next week we’ll turn to consider these questions and more as we discuss the conspicuously named “Middle Ages.”

1. Chadwick notes, “Paganism was far from being moribund when Constantine was converted to Christianity, and probably remained the religion of the majority in the empire until well into the second half of the fourth century. It had never been difficult for the Christians to argue that the ancient myths of the gods were unedifying and that pagan cult was sodden in superstition and black magic. Many educated and enlightened pagans thought so too. But it was hard for the church to overcome the inertia of social habit. The old polytheism was somehow built into the fabric of society, and to challenge it could sound dangerously like revolution and a loosening of the bonds of custom and morality.” Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church: The Sotry of Emergenet Christianity from the Apostolic Age to the Dividing of the Ways Between the Greek East and the Latin West*. v.I, The Penguin History of the Church, New York: Penguin, 1993, 152. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. Helpful tables of dates pertaining to Augustine’s life can be found in Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Rev. Ed.) (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 3, 64,178, 280, 380. Henry Chadwick likewise provides a table of dates in St. Augustine, *Confessions* (Oxford World Classics) trans. Henry Chadwick (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998), xxix. In discussing Augustine’s ideas, it is helpful to keep in mind the advice of Roger Olson: “So massive was Augustine’s literary output that one can almost literally find anything there that one wants to find.... Augustine’s writings contain many apparent contradictions. His thinking on many theological subjects developed and changed over time, so that it is important to notice transitions within his thought” (Roger E. Olson, *The Story of Christianity: Twenty Centuries of Tradition & Reform* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999], 260). Making matters more complicated, toward the end of his life, Augustine went over his earlier writings, correcting them, making changes, and publishing his *Retractions* (Gerald Bray, *Augustine on the Christian Life*. Theologians of the Christian Life. [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015], 28). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. Gerald Bray, *Augustine on the Christian Life*. Theologians of the Christian Life. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 29. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
4. Timeline adapted from Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Rev. Ed.) (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2000). [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
5. Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Rev. Ed.) (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 17- 18. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
6. Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Rev. Ed.) (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 32-35. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
7. Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Rev. Ed.) (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 3. Brown writes that Augustine’s concubine may “have remained a Catholic catechumen; their son was called Adeodatus, ‘given by god.’ This is the Latin form of the Punic, Iatanbaal; with its religious associations, it was a popular name among Carthaginian Christians (Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 52). Augustine describes his relationship with his concubine “the mere bargain of a lustful love” (*Confessions*, 4.2.2). Later in life, Augustine dismissed his long-term concubine as he intended to get married at his mother’s request. Augustine then took another concubine, though Augustine did not remain with this later concubine long. Augustine never tells us the name of the concubine he was with for more than 15 years. See Gerald Bray, *Augustine on the Christian Life*. Theologians of the Christian Life. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 25, 72. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
8. Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Rev. Ed.) (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 51-52. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
9. Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Rev. Ed.) (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 51. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
10. Olson notes: “It’s worldview was similar in some ways to gnosticism, and many of its early converts were probably Christian gnostics. Manichaeism promoted a plethora of fantastic myths about the origins of the physical world out of a primeval fall and of cosmic combat between good and evil forces. The human soul or spirit was said to be a spark of the good power that had been stolen by the evil force and trapped in matter. Evil was explained as the product of an eternal evil force that had created matter. It is perpetuated by the existence of physical reality and the soul’s attachment to that” (Roger E. Olson, *The Story of Christianity: Twenty Centuries of Tradition & Reform* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999], 262). [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
11. Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Rev. Ed.) (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 35. Robin Lane Fox, *Augustine: Conversions to Confessions* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2015), 98. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
12. Allen, Augustine: Class Lecture, RTS, delivered October 20, 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
13. Michael Allen, Augustine, class lecture, delivered October 20, 2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
14. *Confessions* 3.12.21. St. Augustine, *Confessions* (Oxford World Classics) trans. Henry Chadwick (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998), 51. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
15. *Confessions* 3.12.21. St. Augustine, *Confessions* (Oxford World Classics) trans. Henry Chadwick (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998), 51. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
16. Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Rev. Ed.) (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
17. Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Rev. Ed.) (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 3. See also Robin Lane Fox, *Augustine: Conversions to Confessions* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2015), 182. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
18. Michael Allen, Augustine: Class Lectures, Reformed Theological Seminary, delivered October 20, 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
19. Ambrose famously stood up to the Arian wishes of the Emperor’s mother. See Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Rev. Ed.) (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 71-72. In 390, after Theodosius ordered a particularly brutal massacre of thousands of citizens at Thessalonica, Ambrose required Emperor Theodosius to do penance or be excommunicated. See Tony Lane, *A Concise History of Christian Thought* (Rev. Ed.) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2006), 43. Ambrose is also credited with the popularization of communal hymn singing in the Western church. See John Anthony McGuckin, “Ambrose” in *The Westminster Handbook to Patristic Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 9. In *Confessions* 9.7.15, Augustine recounts the story of how hymn singing made it into the Western church in order to stave off an attempt to impose Arianism on Ambrose’s church. One other interesting fact about Ambrose: he is traditionally regarded as the man who pioneered reading silently, a practice which struck Augustine (see *Confessions* 6.3.3). See Gerald Bray, *Augustine on the Christian Life*. Theologians of the Christian Life. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 62-63. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
20. Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Rev. Ed.) (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 71. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
21. Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Rev. Ed.) (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 64. Henry Chadwick gives late July 386 as the date of conversion. See St. Augustine, *Confessions* (Oxford World Classics) trans. Henry Chadwick (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998), xxix. Robin Fox gives early August as the date of Augustine’s conversion. See Robin Lane Fox, *Augustine: Conversions to Confessions* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2015), 292. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
22. *Confessions* 8.11.29. St. Augustine, *Confessions* (Oxford World Classics) trans. Henry Chadwick (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998), 153. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
23. *Confessions* 9.6.14. St. Augustine, *Confessions* (Oxford World Classics) trans. Henry Chadwick (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998), 164n19. See also Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Rev. Ed.) (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 64. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
24. Robin Lane Fox, *Augustine: Conversions to Confessions* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2015), 348. C.f. *Confessions*, 9.6.14. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
25. Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Rev. Ed.) (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 108. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
26. Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Rev. Ed.) (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 64. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
27. Augustine, *Confessions,* IX, vi. Quoted in Brown, *Augustine*, 119-120. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
28. Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Rev. Ed.) (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 64. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
29. Cited in Brown, 131. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
30. Donald Fortson, Lecture: Augustine & the City of God, RTS Global, Accessed 10.8.2021 [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
31. Cited in Wilken, *The First Thousand Years,* 194. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
32. Gerald Bray, *Augustine on the Christian Life*. Theologians of the Christian Life. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 29. Also stated in, Donald Fortson, Lecture: Augustine and the City of God, RTS Global accessed October 8 2021 [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
33. Henry Chadwick in introduction to St. Augustine, *Confessions* (Oxford World Classics) trans. Henry Chadwick (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998), xxix. Levering says 397-401 (see Matthew Levering, *The Theology of Augustine* [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013], 89). Bray says “around 400” (Gerald Bray, *Augustine on the Christian Life*. Theologians of the Christian Life. [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015], 30). [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
34. Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church* (Rev. Ed.). The Penguin History of the Church Vol. 1 (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1993), 219. *Confessions* does not address a lot of major theological controversies that Augustine addressed elsewhere such as the Donatist schism (Robin Lane Fox, *Augustine: Conversions to Confessions* [New York, NY: Basic Books, 2015], 26). [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
35. It’s notable that some of the first sermons he likely heard Ambrose preach were in Genesis. See Brown, 74. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
36. Matthew Levering, *The Theology of Augustine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), 89. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
37. Michael Allen, Lectures: Augustine, delivered 10.21.21 [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
38. Cited in Brown, 164. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
39. Ibid., 164-165. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
40. Ibid., 166. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
41. William G.T. Shedd, “On the Trinity: Introductory Essay,” in Philip Schaff, ed., *St. Augustin: On the Holy Trinity, Doctrinal Treatises, Moral Treatises*, vol. 3 of *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series* (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1887), 4. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
42. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
43. William G.T. Shedd, “On the Trinity: Introductory Essay,” in Philip Schaff, ed., *St. Augustin: On the Holy Trinity, Doctrinal Treatises, Moral Treatises*, vol. 3 of *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series* (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1887), 5. Here, Shedd summarizes, “Augustine starts with the assumption that man was made in the image of the *triune* God, the God of revelation not in the image of the God of natural religion, or the untriune deity of the nations. Consequently, it is to be expected that a trinitarian analogue can be found in his mental constitution. If man is God’s image, he will show traces of it in every respect,” Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
44. Augustine of Hippo, [“On the Trinity,”](https://ref.ly/logosres/npnf03?ref=Augustine.De+Trin.+4.9&off=981&ctx=ty+into+one+spirit.+~For+to+this+His+word) in *St. Augustin: On the Holy Trinity, Doctrinal Treatises, Moral Treatises*, ed. Philip Schaff, trans. Arthur West Haddan, vol. 3 of *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series* (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1887), 76. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
45. William G.T. Shedd, [“On the Trinity: Introductory Essay,”](https://ref.ly/logosres/npnf03?ref=Page.p+4&off=467&ctx=+the+patristic+age.+~The+author+devoted+n) in Philip Schaff, ed., *St. Augustin: On the Holy Trinity, Doctrinal Treatises, Moral Treatises*, vol. 3 of *A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series* (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1887), 10. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
46. For dating see Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 280. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
47. Augustine, *The City of God,* trans. Marcus Dods, New York: Random House, 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
48. The name of work comes from Ps 87:3, “Glorious things are spoke of thee, O City of God”; Michael Allen points out the irony of such a statement. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
49. Robert Louis Wilken, *The First Thousand Years,* New Haven: Yale, 2012, 190. He continues, “The *City of God* is a book about the community whose founder is Christ, not a treatise on political life. Augustine’s theme is the justice due God and the community that serves and worships the one God. The city of God is not, however, an ideal; the Church is an actual community with its own history and memory, beliefs and language, calendar and rituals, institutions and practices. Christianity is inescapably social, and for Augustine the great metaphor for becoming a Christian was not an individual being born again but ,becoming part of a city” 190. Wilken also notes that the city of God is more than the church. It includes all those who worship God. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
50. Augustine, *The City of God,* trans. Marcus Dods, New York: Random House, 698-699. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
51. May be worth writing a brief section on Manicheism. Though it wasn’t a enduring challenge for Augustine’s ministry, much of his early work deal with distancing himself from the Manichees. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
52. John Anthony McGuckin, “Donatism” in *The Westminster Handbook to Patristic Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 106-107. Donatism derives its name from one of its early leaders, Donatus (John Anthony McGuckin, “Donatism” in *The Westminster Handbook to Patristic Theology* [Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2004], 106). [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
53. Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Rev. Ed.) (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 212. See also Gerald Bray, *Augustine on the Christian Life*. Theologians of the Christian Life. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 143. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
54. Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Rev. Ed.) (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 216. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
55. John Anthony McGuckin, “Donatism” in *The Westminster Handbook to Patristic Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 107. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
56. John Anthony McGuckin, “Donatism” in *The Westminster Handbook to Patristic Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 107. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
57. John Anthony McGuckin, “Donatism” in *The Westminster Handbook to Patristic Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 107. See also Gerald Bray, *Augustine on the Christian Life*. Theologians of the Christian Life. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 146. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
58. Gerald Bray, *Augustine on the Christian Life*. Theologians of the Christian Life. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 146. Cyprian also famously said, “He cannot have God for his Father who does not have the Church for his Mother.” [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
59. Augustine, *Sermo ad Caesareae ecclesiae plebem 6*. Cited in Gerald Bray, *Augustine on the Christian Life*. Theologians of the Christian Life. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 147. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
60. John Anthony McGuckin, “Donatism” in *The Westminster Handbook to Patristic Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 107. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
61. Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Rev. Ed.) (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 213-214. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
62. Wilken writes, “Augustine argued that the Church included sinners as well as saints, chaff among the wheat, men and women who were manifestly not holy but who as members of the Church were in the process of being healed. In his words, the form of the Church is ‘not those who are now just, but those who are being made just.’ The line between devout believers and those who went through the motions of believing was so faint as to be invisible. Only at the end of time would the wheat and the chaff be separated” (Robert Louis Wilken, *The First Thousand Years: A Global History of Christianity* [New Haven, Yale University Press, 2012], 187). [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
63. Gerald Bray, *Augustine on the Christian Life*. Theologians of the Christian Life. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 146. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
64. Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Rev. Ed.) (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 218. See Robert Louis Wilken, *The First Thousand Years: A Global History of Christianity* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2012), 187. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
65. Michael Allen, Lecture: Augustine, delivered October 20, 2020. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
66. John Anthony McGuckin, “Donatism” in *The Westminster Handbook to Patristic Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 107. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
67. John Anthony McGuckin, “Donatism” in *The Westminster Handbook to Patristic Theology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 107. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
68. Robert Louis Wilken, *The First Thousand Years: A Global History of Christianity* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2012), 188-189. Augustine wrote, “Originally my opinion was that no one should be forced to the unity of Christ, btu that we should act with words, fight with arguments, and conquer by reason” (Cited in Wilken, 188). [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
69. Robert Louis Wilken, *The First Thousand Years: A Global History of Christianity* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2012), 189. See also Gerald Bray, *Augustine on the Christian Life*. Theologians of the Christian Life. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 145. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
70. Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years* (New York, NY: Viking, 2009), 304. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
71. Augustine, *On The Predestination of the Saints* Chapter 37. See *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers* Series 1. Volume 7. ed. Philip Schaff (1888; reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 5:516. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
72. This quote is cited by Calvin in *Institutes* III.xxii.8. See John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Vol. 2). The Library of Christian Classics. trans. Ford Lewis Battles ed. John T. McNeil (1960; reprint, Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 2:942. The original, which is rendered slightly different, is from Augustine, *On The Gospel of St. John* LXXXVI 2. See *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers* Series 1. Volume 7. ed. Philip Schaff (1888; reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 7:353. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
73. Roger Olson helpfully notes: “In his early theology he defended a libertarian idea of human freedom against the deterministic Manichaeans... Later, in debate with Pelagius and the Pelagians (and so-called Semi-Pelagians) he changed his mind and began to interpret human freedom as the ability only to sin and commit evil apart from God’s transforming grace” (Roger E. Olson, *The Story of Christianity: Twenty Centuries of Tradition & Reform* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999], 260). [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
74. *Confessions* 1.7.11. St. Augustine, *Confessions* (Oxford World Classics) trans. Henry Chadwick (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998), 9. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
75. Some scholars today point out that Augustine worked from a translation of Romans 5:12 that was wrong (See Gerald Bray, *Augustine on the Christian Life*. Theologians of the Christian Life. [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015], 45, 114-115, 120, 204). An example of such scholarship can be found in Adam Harwood, *The Spiritual Condition of Infants* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), 17; c.f. Elaine Pagels, *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent* (New York, NY: Random House, 1988), 109. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
76. *City of God*, 16.27. St. Augustine, *Concerning the City of God Against the Pagans* trans. Henry Bettenson (1972; reprint, New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2003), 688. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
77. Gerald Bray, *Augustine on the Christian Life*. Theologians of the Christian Life. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 125. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
78. Michael Allen, Class Lecture: Augustine, delivered October 20, 2021 [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
79. Roger E. Olson, *The Story of Christianity: Twenty Centuries of Tradition & Reform* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 267. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
80. *Confessions* 10.29.40. St. Augustine, *Confessions* (Oxford World Classics) trans. Henry Chadwick (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998), 202, 202n27. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
81. Pelagius. Cited in Alister E. McGrath, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to the History of Christian Thought* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1998), 81. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
82. *Documents of the Christian Church* (4th Ed) ed. Henry Bettenson, Chris Maunder (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), 56. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
83. Pelagius. Cited in Roger E. Olson, *The Story of Christianity: Twenty Centuries of Tradition & Reform* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 270. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
84. Gerald Bray, *Augustine on the Christian Life*. Theologians of the Christian Life. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 39. Bray writes, “Augustine responded [to Julian of Eclanum] with books of his own, followed soon afterward by two others dealing with the specific question of matrimony. These were all written in 419-420, but Julian would not be deterred, and so in 412 Augustine wrote a further six books against him” (Bray, *Augustine on the Christian Life*, 39). [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
85. St. Augustine, *Marriage and Desire*, 2.12.25, in *Answer to the Pelagians*, Vol. 2 of 4. Cited in Peter Sanlon, “Original Sin in Patristic Theology” in *Adam, the Fall, and Original Sin: Theological, Biblical, and Scientific Perspectives* ed. Hans Madueme (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2014), 86. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
86. Augustine, *Enchiridion*. Cited in Roger E. Olson, *The Story of Christianity: Twenty Centuries of Tradition & Reform* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 271. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
87. *Creeds of the Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine, from the Bible to the Present* (3rd. Ed.) ed. John H. Leith (Louisville, KY; Westminster John Knox Press, 1982), 38. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
88. *Creeds of the Churches: A Reader in Christian Doctrine, from the Bible to the Present* (3rd. Ed.) ed. John H. Leith (Louisville, KY; Westminster John Knox Press, 1982), 38. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
89. “Evangelicals' Favorite Heresies Revisited by Researchers” by Caleb Lindgren. http://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2016/september/evangelicals-favorite-heresies-state-of-theology-ligonier.html September 28, 2016. Accessed March 6, 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
90. “Evangelicals' Favorite Heresies Revisited by Researchers” by Caleb Lindgren. http://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2016/september/evangelicals-favorite-heresies-state-of-theology-ligonier.html September 28, 2016. Accessed March 6, 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
91. If there is any additional time, Augustine’s use of the apocrypha. Further, Augustine on justification by faith (and infusion of righteousness). In addition to Schreiner, see; Thomas Oden, *The Justification Reader*; Heiko Oberman, *Luther: Man Between God and the Devil* (on imputation from Luther’s viewpoint). Further, Augustine on topics like Mary’s perpetual virginity. See Brian Daley, *God Visible*, 157. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
92. In *Confessions* 6.13.23, Augustine refers to “the saving water of baptism”. St. Augustine, *Confessions* (Oxford World Classics) trans. Henry Chadwick (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998), 107. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
93. *Confessions*, 9.4.12. St. Augustine, *Confessions* (Oxford World Classics) trans. Henry Chadwick (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998), 163. In addition, Bray writes: “Augustine affirmed the power of baptism to cleanse souls from sin, and he believed that had he been baptized as a child, he would have been made a Christian” (Gerald Bray, *Augustine on the Christian Life*. Theologians of the Christian Life. [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015], 52). [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
94. *Confessions*, 9.6.14. St. Augustine, *Confessions* (Oxford World Classics) trans. Henry Chadwick (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1998), 163. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
95. Gerald Bray, *Augustine on the Christian Life*. Theologians of the Christian Life. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 20, 53. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
96. For a more extended discussion see Thomas Schreiner, *Justification by Faith Alone,* Grand Rapids: Zondervan 2015, 33-34, 222-224. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)