

The Fourth Century

History: The Early Church

“And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, begotten from the Father before all ages, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of the same essence as the Father.”

-Nicene Creed

Theme: Five Highlights of the Fourth Century

1. The Rise of **Christendom**

- The **Peak of Persecution:** *Under Emperor Diocletian*
 - Expulsion from **Military**
 - Expulsion from **Government**
 - Expulsion from **Church Buildings**
 - Expulsion from **Christian Books**
 - Expulsion from **Christian Leaders**
- The **Fall of Persecution:** *Under Emperor Constantine*
 - Began with a **Dream:** *Constantine’s Vision of Chi-Rho*
 - Ended with an **Edict:** *Constantine’s Edict of Milan (313)*



- The **Rise of Christendom:** *State Religion*
 - The **Good:** *The Fall of Persecuted Christianity*
 - Ministerial Tax Exemptions
 - Elimination of Crucifixion
 - Halt to Gladiatorial Games
 - Declaration of Sunday as a Holiday
 - Return of Church Property
 - The **Bad:** *The Rise of Cultural Christianity*
 - Paganism Outlawed
 - Christianity Syncretized with Paganism
 - The **Ugly:** *The Rise of Imperial Christianity*
 - State Authority and Influence Over the Church
 - Church Authority and Influence Over the State

2. The Rise of **Monasticism and Monks**

- The **Origins** of Monasticism: *A Reaction to Imperial Christianity*

- The **Basics** of Monasticism:
 - **Solitary Monasticism:** *Anchoritic*
 - **Hermit** (*Greek eremites, "of the desert"*)

 - **Monk** (*Greek monachos, "solitary"*)

 - **Communal Monasticism:** *Cenobitic*
 - **Monastery** (*Greek monoasterion, "to live alone"*)

- The **Influencers** of Monasticism
 - **Anthony the Great** (c.251-356); *First Anchoritic Monk*

 - **Pachomius the Great** (c.292-348); *First Cenobitic Monk*

 - **Jerome** (c.342-420); *Translated Latin Vulgate Bible*

3. The Rise of **Heresies and Response of Church Councils**

- The Rise of **Donatism**: *Must Pastors Be Perfect*

- Condemned at the **Council of Arles (314)**

- The Rise of **Arianism**: *Is the Son of God Really Eternal?*

- Condemned at the **Council of Nicaea (325)**

- **Homoousios** (“same Essence”)

- **Homoiousios** (“similar essence”)

- The Rise of **Apollinarianism**: *Did Jesus Have a Human Mind?*

- Condemned at the **Council of Constantinople (381)**

4. The Rise of the **Sages**: *Influential Patristic Theologians*

- **Athanasius of Alexandria** (c.296-373)

- **Gregory of Nazianzus** (c.329-390)



- **Basil of Caesarea** (c.330-379)
 - **Ambrose of Milan** (c.340-397)
 - **John Chrysostom** (c.347-407)
 - **Augustine of Hippo** (c.354-430)
5. The Rise of the **Bible**: *Confirmation of the Christian Canon*
- The **Old Testament**
 - **Composed:** (c. 1400-430BC)
 - **Collected:** 400's BC, per Josephus
 - **Confirmed:** By Christ, Christian Apostles, and Judaism
 - The **New Testament**
 - **Composed:** (c. AD 40-90)
 - **Collected:** First Century (Col. 4:16)
 - **Confirmed:** By Apostles (2 Peter 3:16); Apostolic Fathers, Athanasius Easter Letter of 367, and Council of Carthage in 397



The Fourth Century: A Timeline

- 303-305 Persecutions Under Emperor Diocletian
- 311 Donatist Schism in Latin North Africa
- 312 Battle of Milvian Bridge; Constantine's Conversion
- 313 Edict of Milan
- 314 Council of Arles (Donatism Condemned)
- 319 Arian Controversy Begins
- 324 Constantine Becomes Sole Emperor
- 325 Council of Nicaea (Arianism Condemned)
- 330 Constantinople Becomes Capital of Roman Empire
- 337 Constantine Dies
- 367 Athanasius' Festal Letter Confirms 27 Books of New Testament
- 370 Huns Begin to Displace Goths in Eastern Europe
- 373 Athanasius Dies
- 379 Basil the Great Dies