The World, The Flesh, and the Devil

The Rise of Christendom
In hoc signo vinces
Early Christianity

What is Christianity? Why “Christianity”? What was early Christianity like?

Jesus of Nazareth, ~4 BC (Augustus) -- 30 AD (Tiberius)

Paul of Tarsus, ~5-60 AD (“The Apostle”. From persecuted to converted. Paul’s letters to various early Christian communities, in Corinth, Thessalonica, etc. are the earliest sources for Christianity. Acts of the Apostles.

70 AD: Jerusalem destroyed by Titus, son of Vespasian

Gospels: Mark, Matthew, Luke, John (written ~70-110 AD)

John Marcion of Sinope (85-160), the Gnostic challenge, and the Apostolic Response
Elements of Early (Pauline) Christian Theology

Jesus is *Christos* (“the anointed one”)—a name applied in the Hebrew bible to saviors of the Jews, like David and even Cyrus the Great, the pagan Persian emperor. But Jesus is not a king of *this world* (“My kingdom is not of this world”. John 18:36)

Jesus is the Second Adam, redeeming mankind from the sin of Adam, the punishment of which is death. Jesus paid for this sin with his own death by crucifixion (a punishment of slaves). However, Jesus rose from the dead (caveat: original ending of Mark); Jesus is thereafter the Second Joshua, leading his people into the “Promised Land” (resurrection from death/everlasting life).

This salvation is universally available—even to women and slaves, and not only Jews—so long as they put their faith (trust) in Jesus as Christ.

Christianity’s superseding of Judaism is evidenced in the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem.

Resurrection is bodily, and Jesus is coming again soon to bring it. At the point, the world will be remade as a kingdom ruled by the Christ. Early Christianity is millenarian and apocalyptic.
The World of the Late Roman Empire

- Christianity inconceivable without the Roman Empire and the *pax Augusta*
- Weakness of Rome: the principate and the authority of the emperor--who would succeed? Long period of Civil War, esp. 3rd century AD.
  - The Emperor Cult
- Roman power was both centralized and de-centralized. The best way to understand the Empire is as a military state. The emperor was the top general, and the state bureaucracy existed essentially to fund the military. Government was largely left up to the provinces.
- Steady expansion of citizenship fueled by need for taxes to pay for army (Paul was a citizen).
- “Crisis of the 3rd Century” ends when Diocletian establishes the tetrarchy, only creating new problems
- Greek was the most commonly spoken language, and also the language of culture and learning
- Agriculture and slavery the basis of the economy
Crisis of the 3rd Century, continued (271 AD)
Christians in Rome

- Early Christian communities small, alienated from society, communistic
- Myth of Persecution: Christians were persecuted, but not to the extent that ancient Christian propagandists like Eusebius claimed
  - Biggest persecution under Diocletian (~302)

- In 300, Christians comprised about 5% of the Roman population. That all changed under Constantine, when being Christian brought special privileges and wealth (compare to the effect of dhimmi)
- “Pagans” vs. Christians, but what was “pagan” Religion? Problem of “superstition”. Celsus.
Constantine

Reigned 306-337, acclaimed emperor in Eboracum (York)

Battle of Milvian Bridge, 312 (defeats Maxentius)

Edict of Milan with Licinius, 313

Defeats Licinius at Chrysopolis, 324, becomes sole emperor

Council of Nicaea, 325

Roman capital moved to Constantinople, 330
Constantine: Ambivalent Christian?
Constantine and the Church: Nicaea (İznilk)

- Controversies: Donatist “Heresy” and “Arian” “Heresy” so named after Arius
- Christology: controversies over the nature of Christ. Was he man, God, or both? A divine being or THE divine being?

- **“Orthodox” (Athanasian) position**: Christ IS God the Father, but also Christ IS NOT God the Father; same essence (homoousian), different persons (hypostases)--presupposition of trinitarianism
- **Arian position**: Christ was begotten by God at some point in time before the creation of the world. Therefore Christ IS NOT God the Father (though he IS a divine being and not a creature) and is subordinate to the Father.
- Constantine conveys council; ~250 bishops attend. Nicene compromise? Constantine didn’t care about theology, but about the unity and “peace of the Church.”

- Arius legendarilly supposed to have died at the foot of the Column of Constantine from an attack of acute diarrhea
We believe in one God, Father almighty, maker of all things seen and unseen; And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten from the Father monogenēs,⁴³ that is, from the substance of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made (poiētheis), homoousios with the Father, through whom all came to be, both things in the heavens and those on earth the one who on account of us humans and our salvation came down and took flesh, becoming man, suffering and rising again on the third day and going up [or back] to the heavens, and who is coming again to judge living and dead;

And in the Holy Spirit.

But those who say ‘there was when he was not’, and ‘before being begotten he was not’, and ‘he came to be from what was not’, or assert that the Son of God is from another hypostasis or ousia, or created (ktistos)⁴⁴ or alterable or changeable: These the church catholic anathematises.
The Last Pagan Emperor: Julian “the Apostate”

- Antioch and the Empire
- Banning Christians from teaching
- Death at Ctesiphon (modern Baghdad): “Thou hast conquered, Galilean!”
The Christianization of the Empire

313: Edict of Milan
324: Defeat of Licinius makes Constantine sole emperor
330: Founding of Constantinople as Roman capital
336: Death of Arius
362: Julian bans Christians from teaching. Julian killed the next year at Ctesiphon.
364: Jovian restores Christianity. The Empire splits into East and West.
380: Theodosius makes Christianity sole religion of the Empire.
391: “Paganism” (i.e., traditional religion) outlawed
394: Olympic Games banned
451: Council of Chalcedon
476: “Fall” of the Western Roman Empire
503: Clovis, King of the Franks, converts to Christianity
529: Justinian closes the Platonic Academy
The Donation of Constantine
EARLY GERMANIC AND TURKIC INVASIONS
Augustine of Hippo, ~354-430

➢ Born in Numidia, North Africa
➢ ~370: conversion to Manicheanism
➢ “To Carthage then I came”: pleasure, concubine, and child
➢ Teacher of rhetoric (humanities prof)
➢ 384: Milan, influence of Ambrose
➢ 386: Conversion
➢ 391: Made Bishop of Hippo
➢ Controversialist and theologian; important works: *City of God*, *On Free Will*, *On Christian Doctrine*, *On the Trinity*, *Confessions*
Some Augustinian Controversies

The Interpretation of History: In light of pagan attacks on Christians, Augustine reinterprets the history of the Roman Republic, not as a tale of virtue triumphant but as the triumph of what he calls the “*libido dominandi*” (the lust for lording).

Original Sin and Free Will: the controversy with Pelagius, a bishop from Britain. Pelagius argued that God’s commandments implied humanity’s ability to obey, and therefore to be virtuous. In a word, Pelagius argued that human beings had free will (*liberum arbitrium*). The consequence was that Pelagius had to deny original sin: Adam’s sin only affected Adam.

Augustine countered by affirming original sin: human beings are depraved and need the gift of *divine grace* to do good.
Both in the World and out of it: Or, “What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?”

Christianity and pagan culture -- synthesis or separation?

- **Platonist Background:** Philo of Alexandria, Celsus, Plotinus, Porphyry

The Church Fathers:

- Tertullian, Clement, Jerome and dreams of Cicero
- Augustine of Hippo (354-430) and “Egyptian Gold” (*De Doctrina Christiana*)
  - The “two cities”
  - “Platonism for the people”?
ASCETISM
The “Barbarian” Invasions and the “Fall of Rome”

378: Battle of Adrianople, destruction of Roman army and death of emperor Valens
395: Death of Theodosius. Empire divided into Eastern and Western halves for good.
Augustine becomes bishop of Hippo in North Africa
401-3: Visigoths invade Italy
410: Alaric sacks Rome, while the emperor Honorius shelters in Ravenna. Last Roman
legions recalled from Britain.
412: Alaric dies
420s-440s: Vandals cross into North Africa. Augustine dies in 430.
451: Battle of Chalons, Aetius orchestrates the last victory of the legions over the Huns
452: Pope Leo I convinces Attila not to sack Rome
476: Odoacer deposes the last Roman emperor in the West, Romulus Augustulus
488-493: Eastern emperor sends Ostrogoths to aid Italy. Theodoric, their king, deposes
Odoacer.
Mausoleum of Theodoric
Boethius and *The Consolation of Philosophy*
THE HIGH MIDDLE AGES
570: Birth of Muhammad
590: Pope Gregory the Great reforms the Church and monastic orders.
600s: Byzantine-Persian wars weaken both empires
630: Muhammad conquers Mecca. Death of Muhammad (632).
633: Muslim armies invade Syria and Iraq.
636: Battle of Yarmouk; Damascus captured
637: Ctesiphon (near Baghdad), the Persian capital, falls.
661-680: Umayyad dynasty and the Sunni-Shia schism.
711: Muslim armies occupy the whole of the Levant, Egypt, North Africa, Southern Spain, and much of Anatolia. Visigothic kingdom of Spain falls.
717-8: Arab siege of Constantinople fails. (Greek fire)
732: The Battle of Tours: Charles Martel halts Arab advance into Gaul.
742: Birth of Charlemagne
750: Abbasid caliphate establishes its capital in Baghdad.
JUSTINIAN: CONQUEST AND PLAGUE (Yersinia Pestis)
Battle of Tours
Charlemagne and the Carolingian Renaissance

800: Charlemagne crowned Holy Roman Emperor by the Pope.

What is the "Holy Roman Empire"?

"Crusades" against the Saxons, Slavs, and Avars.

"The Carolingian Renaissance", centered in Charlemagne’s capital, Aachen. Included a general revival of pagan learning and letters, though Charlemagne himself was illiterate.
The Carolingian Empire

Expansion: 768-814
Islam, Christianity, and the Birth of the “Medieval”

1054: The Great Schism between Greek and Latin Christianity
1071: Battle of Manzikert leaves Anatolia open to the conquest of Seljuk Turks
1072: Palermo falls to the Norman adventurers Roger I and Robert Guiscard.
1081 - 1118: Alexius I Comnenus is Byzantine emperor.
1091: The last Arabic fortress in Sicily falls to the Normans.

November 18, 1095: Pope Urban II calls the First Crusade (1096-99) to aid Byzantium.
Spring-Summer 1096: Massacres against German Jews on the way to the Holy Land.
Late Summer, 1096: First Crusade leaders depart Europe.
Jun 3, 1098: Antioch falls to Bohemond, who is then quickly besieged.
Jun 14, 1098: Peter Bartholomew discovers the supposed Holy Lance. Battle of Orontes. April 20, 1099: Peter Bartholomew dies after attempting an ordeal by fire to prove the authenticity of the Holy Lance.
Jul 15, 1099: Godfrey’s forces scale the walls of Jerusalem (near Herod’s Gate) and massacre the garrison of Fatimid Muslims. Latin Christians control the Levant.
Second and Third Crusades

1187: The year of Islamic victory. Saladin crushes the Crusaders armies at Hittin, near Lake Tiberias. He reconquers Jerusalem and the greater part of the Crusaders territories. The Crusaders now hold only Tyre, Tripoli and Antioch.

1193: Saladin dies in Damascus at the age of 55. After several years of civil war, his empire is reunited under the authority of his brother al-Adil.

The Fourth and Fifth Crusades (1194-1201)

1204: The Crusaders take Constantinople. Sack of the city.

Sixth, Seventh, Eighth Crusades

1291: The sultan Khalil, son of Qalawun, takes Acre, putting an end to two centuries of Crusader presence in the Levant.
Chivalry and Literature -- “Courtly Love”

~1040: *Song of Roland*

~1100: William of Aquitaine, first troubadour poet

1136: Geoffrey of Monmouth, *History of the Kings of Britain*

1152-1189: Eleanor of Aquitaine and Henry II’s Angevin Empire

~1170s: Chretien de Troyes’s Arthurian romances. *Lais of Marie de France.*

~1190: Andreas Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*

1209-1221: Albigensian Crusade

~1230: *Romance of the Rose*

1294: Dante, *La Vita Nuova*

1308-1320: Dante’s *Commedia*

1336: Petrarch, *Rime Sparse*

1353: Boccaccio, *Decameron.* ~1390: Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*

~1400: *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*
The Andalusian “Golden Age”

- Spain after the Islamic conquest was multi-cultural, with people of influence from the three great monotheisms.
- We should not confuse the situation there with modern “tolerance” however.
- Al-Farabi, 872-951 (Syria)
- Avicenna, 980-1037 (b. Uzbekistan, d. Persia)
- Al-Ghazali, 1056-1111 (Persia)
- Avempace, 1095-1138 (Andalusia)
- Ibn Tufail, 1105-1185 (Andalusia)
- Averroes, 1126-1198 (b. Andalusia, d. Morocco)
- Maimonides, 1135-1204 (b. Andalusia, d. Egypt)
Scholasticism and the Medieval University

1033: b. Anselm: ontological argument for the existence of God
1079: b. Peter Abelard: first true “philosopher” of the Latin West (Sic et Non)
1088: University of Bologna, University of Paris around then.
1096: University of Oxford
1093: b. Bernard of Clairvaux: mystic and allegorist, enemy of Abelard
1100: b. Peter Lombard. His Sentences would become the standard school curriculum.
1200: b. Albertus Magnus
1209: University of Cambridge
1224: b. Thomas Aquinas (Summa Theologicae, Summa Contra Gentiles)
1232: b. Raymond Lull
1266: William of Moerbeke’s new translations of Aristotle from Greek
1277: Condemnation of Paris