

The background of the slide features a faded, sepia-toned photograph of four large stone statues of men in historical religious attire, likely the Reformers. They are standing in a row, with the second figure from the left holding a book. The statues are set against a light-colored wall. At the bottom of the image, there is a faint, embossed Latin inscription: "IHS" flanked by two decorative flourishes.

# A SURVEY OF THE REFORMATION

ITS HISTORY & IMPACT

# WHY STUDY THE REFORMATION?

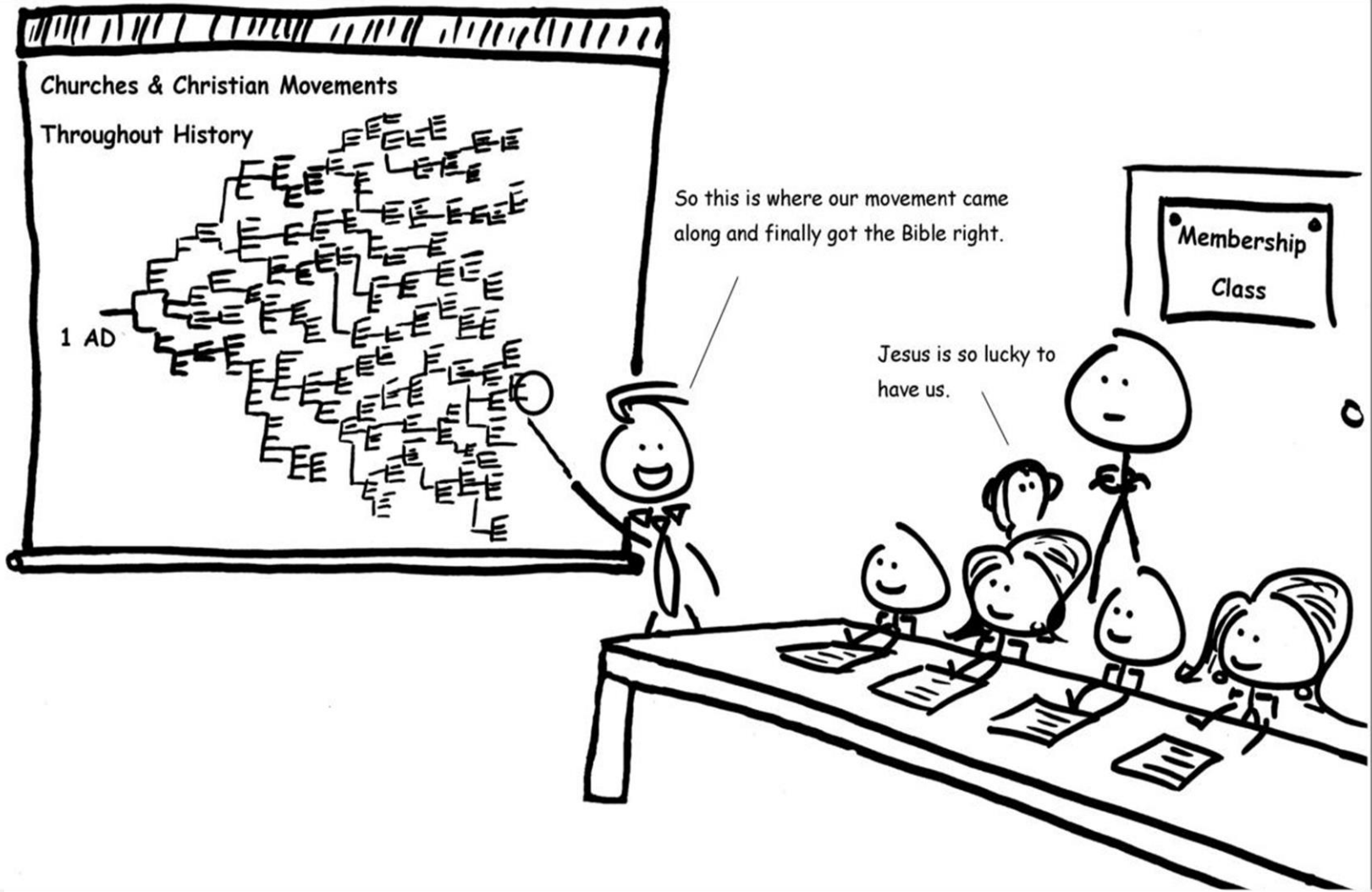
- American Christians suffer from **historical amnesia**.
- Studying church history will **safeguard us from error** now.
  - Errors: Jehovah's Witnesses (Arianism), Evangelicals & Catholics Together.
  - Departures: Many Evangelicals feel detached from history and migrate to Catholicism or Greek Orthodoxy.
- The Reformation was the **virtual recovery of evangelical doctrine** – and we are still being blessed because of this (often forgotten) event.
- Studying the doctrine of the Reformation may help us **reform the Church today** and recover the passion for God that characterized that era.

# HISTORY

1. Intro & Early Church History
2. **Church Schisms, & the Decline of the Roman Church**
3. Forerunners of the Reformation
4. The Protestant Reformation
5. Puritanism & the Legacy of the Reformers

# IMPACT

6. Reformation Doctrine: 5 Solas & the Sovereignty of God
7. Why the Reformation Matters Today



## NOT SO HUMBLE APPROACH TO HISTORY

# RECAP OF EARLY CHURCH HISTORY

- As **persecution** waned, the Church stabilized and spread even more.
- **Church fathers** comforted & defended the Church.
- The Church grew in her understanding of doctrine **progressively** over time, often after the birth of new heresies, and the convening of councils.



The background of the slide features a faded, sepia-toned photograph of four large, standing statues of early church fathers. They are dressed in traditional ecclesiastical robes and have long, full beards. The statues are set against a light-colored wall. In the foreground, below the statues, there is a stone ledge with a faint, carved inscription in Greek characters, which appears to be the IHS monogram flanked by decorative flourishes.

# CONTROVERSIES & HERESIES

EARLY CHURCH HISTORY (A.D. 100 – A.D. 1100)

# EARLY HERETICAL GROUPS

- **Gnostics** – emphasized wisdom for the enlightened, dualistic, mystic, denied Jesus' humanity – produced Gnostic Gospels (many were unearthed at Nag Hammadi, Egypt).
- **Montanists** – followed Montanus, a schismatic leader in the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century, taught asceticism/legalism, followers were “spiritually elite”, had some charismatic practices.
- **Monarchians** – “rule of one” / monotheists who often taught modalism (Father is the only true personality in the godhead, Son and Spirit are more like attributes or modes of the one God's existence).
- **Manicheists** – followers of Mani, a gnostic-like, dualistic, mystical form of Christianity. It was a pervasive error for a while & may have influenced a sharp division between clergy and laity, role of priests as intermediaries, & fostered asceticism. **Augustine** had followed this prior to his conversion & later wrote against them.



# SPLINTER GROUPS

- **Novatians** – a splinter group that followed Novatius (a rival bishop of Rome in A.D. 251), who refused to admit those who had recanted under persecution back into the church even if they repented.
- **Donatists** – rejected those who had recanted the faith under persecution; viewed the ordinations of defective pastors as invalid; and ultimately baptisms and communion received by these pastors as invalid. This idea created concern among many average believers.
- **Augustine** (354-430), bishop of Hippo, argued that ordination and sacraments were valid if performed as prescribed by God, who has established them.
- (Novatians later merged with Donatists and lasted a few hundred years (4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> centuries.)

# ARIAN CONTROVERSY

- **Arius** (~256-336), elder in Alexandria, influenced by Platonic thought, desired to emphasize supremacy of God the Father claimed Jesus (the Logos) was created and not eternal, thus not divine. A great orator with a charismatic personality.
- Constantine called the Nicene Council in **A.D. 325** to examine Arian's views and at the council Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, convinced the council that this view is heresy.
- His successor, **Athanasius** (~296-373), led the charge against the continued strength of Arianism based on:
  - Truth of Scripture (many Scriptures claim Christ is divine)
  - Logic of Salvation (Jesus had to be divine to be able to save us)
  - Experience and support of common Christians (baptized in Jesus' name and have worshipped him – the common churchgoer added strength to the rebuttal of these views.
- Modern Arianism: **Jehovah's Witnesses**

*~adapted from "Church History," a core seminar from Capitol Hill Baptist Church (DC)*

# PELAGIAN CONTROVERSY

- **Pelagius**, (~354-418), was a British monk who taught that Adam's sin did not make sin a necessity for his offspring. People are contaminated by the world, but through effort could attain perfection. Christ died not as a substitute but as our guide, to give us a moral example. Man's will is so free that he only needs education and direction to follow after God.
- **Augustine** (354-430) argued against this claiming all people are born sinful, by virtue of our being a son or daughter of Adam. We invariably choose sin, and by our own effort we could never save ourselves. Only "through God's initiative in graciously choosing to give us the gift of faith in Christ could we repent of our sins and trust in Christ for our salvation."
- "**Give what you command, command what you will.**" – Augustine.
- Semi-Pelagians took a moderate Pelagian view: "we human beings take the first step towards God." Then God responds with grace. Grace then is merited by something we do, our ability to take that step towards God.
- The **Council of Orange A.D. 529**, condemned Semi-Pelagianism, but unofficially it became gradually accepted in Roman Catholicism.

~ unattributed quotes from "Church History," seminar

# MAJOR CHURCH COUNCILS

Statement	Council
Christ is fully divine	Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325)
Christ is fully human	Council of Constantinople (A.D. 381)
Christ is a unified person	Council of Ephesus (A.D. 431)
Christ is human and divine in one person	Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451)

- Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox (Greek/Russian) and accept all 4 councils
- Oriental Orthodox (Coptic, Nestorian, Jacobite, Ethiopian, Syriac, Indian) only accept the first 3 councils

~ *Church History in Plain Language* by Bruce Shelley (Thomas Nelson, 1995), pg. 141

# OTHER TRINITARIAN CONTROVERSIES

- **Apollinarism** (4th century) – denied Jesus' full humanity.
- **Macedonians** (4th century), also known as *Pneumatomachi* "fighters against the Spirit" – denied deity of Holy Spirit.
- These groups were semi-Arian and continued to argue for a modified Arian position.
- **Council of Constantinople A.D. 381** condemned their views – declaring Christ is fully human and yet fully divine.
- Key writers expounding what is orthodox trinitarian views on these disputes include: Hilary of Poitiers (France), Gregory of Nyssa (Cappadocia), and Basil of Caesarea.

# MORE TRINITARIAN CONTROVERSIES

- **Nestorius**, (~386-450), bishop of Constantinople, emphasized the human nature of Jesus and held his two natures were distinct and only loosely connected in the person of Christ. He argued that the eternal God could not be a baby.
- **Cyril**, (~376-444), bishop of Alexandria, argued against this and emphasized Jesus' full divinity and a strict unity of his nature. He argued that if Jesus' two natures were distinct and separated, then only his human nature had suffered and died: but mere humanity could never save us.
- The **Council of Ephesus A.D. 431** condemned Nestorius and his views.
- The Nestorians left and formed their own church (the Nestorian Church) as they could not agree to the Council's decisions.

# FINAL TRINITARIAN CONTROVERSY

- **Eutyches**, (~380-456), a monk who led a monastery near Constantinople, argued that after the Incarnation Christ's two natures were thoroughly blended "the human nature being dissolved into the divine much as a drop of wine is dissolved into the sea." His humanity is swallowed up into the divine so that "the Jesus that Christians now pray to is not human at all."
- The bishop of Constantinople condemned Eutyches.
- **Dioscorus**, (?-454), bishop of Alexandria, kept up the habit of disagreeing with Constantinople and embraced Eutyches as a kindred spirit. The views of Cyril, and his emphasis on the unity of Christ's natures, seemed to fit with this understanding.
- The **Council of Chalcedon A.D. 451** was swayed by the writings of Leo, bishop of Rome, and condemned Eutychus and Dioscorus and their views, and gave the fullest creed/definition yet of Christ's nature.

*~first quote from "Church History," seminar, second quote from Zondervan Handbook to the History of Christianity, p. 98*

# THE CHALCEDONIAN CREED (A.D. 451)

“We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable soul and body; consubstantial with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood...



# THE CHALCEDONIAN CREED (A.D. 451)

...one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophets from the beginning have declared concerning him, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.”

~ *Systematic Theology* by Wayne Grudem  
(Zondervan, 1994), pg. 1169-1170

# MONOPHYSITES

- **The Monophysites** could not hold to Chalcedon's decisions and considered this the last straw. There was a great appreciation for Cyril's writing (he had died already, and it is unknown what Cyril would have said of Eutyches' views). The Monophysite church became prominent in the East.
- Were also known by the term **Jacobite Church**, after **Jacob Baradeus** (~543-578) a key leader in the early sixth century. He helped organize this church, travelling throughout Syria and to Egypt and possibly beyond.
- Nestorians gradually were replaced or absorbed by the Monophysites. Armenia and Persia were key areas where this happened – partly due to the influence of persecution/loss of social power. It made sense to consolidate to continue to survive.

# EXTENT OF EASTERN CHRISTIANITY

- **Eastern** Christianity had different emphases, and came to largely embrace Monophysite teaching.
- In Egypt this teaching was known as Melkite, but over time the Coptic church there largely adopted this teaching.
- Ethiopia and India also had churches – with missions to Central Asia and China in about the 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- Ancient Indian churches (claiming to have originated with the apostle Thomas) adopted this teaching as well.
- Today these churches are known as Oriental Orthodox churches and include:
  - Armenian Apostolic Church
  - Coptic Orthodox Church
  - Eritrean Orthodox Tewahdo Church
  - Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church
  - Indian Orthodox Church
  - Syriac Orthodox Church.

# DEMISE OF EASTERN CHRISTIANITY

- The Rise of Islam, and the strife during the Crusades (40,000 killed in Constantinople by Western Europeans), as well as ultimately the Mongols in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> Century spelled the end of this flourishing form of Christianity.
- At one point, Christians were advisors to Sultans and there was religious freedom and missionary endeavors among Islam and reaching even into China, and India.
- But where hundreds and thousands of churches had been, virtually none remained.
- Genocide and persecution ended things, but prior to that social stigma and lack of power in the church allowed for a gradual deconversion to Islam.

~ for more see *The Lost History of Christianity: The Thousand Year Golden Age of the Church in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia – and How it Died* by Philip Jenkins

# RISE OF THE ROMAN CHURCH

- **The Rise of the Papacy** – the rise of bishops as first among equal pastors in a city, was natural. Smaller cities and their pastors looked to the larger city. Certain cities became especially prominent: Rome, Alexandria, Antioch (all places connected to Apostles). Then later Constantinople (due to it being “New Rome”).
- **The Popes** – gradually the bishops of Rome took more and more power. Gregory the Great (540-604) greatly solidified the papacy. He was unassuming, genuinely godly, and took the leadership seriously. Worked to help the poor and standardize the church practices. He promoted missionary activity, but also promoted asceticism.
- **More Spreading** – the Christianization of the Pagan tribes in England, France, Hungary, Russia and elsewhere resulted in a large increase in the size of Christendom from the 600s through 1000, even as Islam was spreading.

# EAST - CENTRALIZED POWER

- **Emperor over the Patriarch/Pope** – In the 6<sup>th</sup> Century, **Justinian the Great**, (~482-565; emperor 527-565), believed in Caesaropapism. The Emperor (like Constantine of old) should not only convene councils, but have the final say.
- Byzantium in A.D. 527 is a stable center where the remnant of the Roman Empire still lives (unthreatened by the barbarian invaders who have already sacked Rome several times by now)
- Justinian takes on the work of organizing the church but also re-conquering the entire Roman empire.
- This stable period will soon fade as Islam will be on their door in just a hundred and fifty years (or less).

# WEST - DECENTRALIZATION

- **Emperor Crowned by the Pope** – among distinct tribal groups clamoring for power, the pope became an independent referee of sorts. And as papal power rose, eventually the pope crowned Charles of the Franks to be the Holy Roman Emperor (Charlemagne – Charles the Great) in A.D. 800.
- **Gregory the Great** (Pope Gregory I) (~540-604; pope 590-604) – was according to John Calvin, “the last good pope”.
  - Was missions minded – wanted to spread the Gospel to
  - Eschewed pomp/circumstance, aspired to live simply
  - Concerned with pastoral ministry and communicating to the increasingly illiterate commoners in the church.

# GROWTH OF OTHER TRADITIONS

- **Monasticism** – this grew out of an ascetic drive to purify the soul through harsh treatment of the body. But much that the monks did was commendable. Helping the poor, copying Scripture & preserving learning, and many were sincerely devoted to God.
- **Mariolatry & Worship of the Saints** – this gradually grew. From honor, to veneration, to outright worship. Saints and martyrs were revered for their holy testimony and for some miracles that were associated with their relics – and obvious legends that grew from this. Doctrines about Mary's sinlessness gradually grew. "The immaculate conception of Mary" idea wasn't enshrined as church dogma until the mid-1800s.
- **Transubstantiation** – the emphasis on the Eucharist gradually developed into a view that the celebration was effective in conveying grace (sacrament) and further that it truly was transformed into Christ's actual body & blood.



# CHURCH SCHISMS

- A.D. 500s – In the East, some sectors of the church never accepted the Council of Chalcedon (remaining monophysites or Nestorians)
- A.D. 1073 – West & East split: “the Great Schism”
  - Iconoclast controversy (for a time the East rejected all images and pictures/icons as vehicles of worship)
  - Still today statues are not used in churches in the East, just pictures.
  - Dispute over the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father alone (East view) or the Father and Son (West view)
  - The Patriarch of Constantinople and the Pope of Rome refused to submit to each other. And politics and cultural differences played a role. Emperor over the church in the East, Emperor under the church in the West.

# THE *FILIOQUE* CLAUSE

- **Nicene Creed** (381 version): “And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and life-giver, Who proceeds from the Father and the Son, Who is worshiped and glorified together with the Father and Son, Who spoke through the prophets and in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.”
- The words “and the Son” were added later by the Western church, officially adopted in A.D. 809 by a church synod.