

CHURCH HISTORY

Lesson 7 The Medieval Church (Middle Ages): 590 A.D - 1517 A.D.

This week we continue our study of church history by looking at the period which followed the Dark Ages, known as the Medieval Church period (also known as the Middle Ages) approximately 590 - 1517. Beginning with Gregory I as the bishop of Rome we'll take a quick look this week at the rise of the influence of the Church and the role of Church and State as the Papacy grows in power and influence worldwide.



Following this, in the lessons ahead we'll look at the Crusades, Luther and the beginning of the Protestant movement; then on into American Church history and the events that have lead to our current Church composition. Realizing that a subject of this magnitude could easily take us months to conclude, given our short periods of study each week, I'm attempting to compress as much into a single lesson as I believe we can manage. This approach will undoubtedly result in the glossing over of some events and time periods, but I'm hopeful that by taking this overview approach we will all gain a basic understanding of our Church heritage.

With all that said then let's consider the following:

1. What's the significance of Gregory I as Bishop of Rome, why would this period of Church history be marked by his appointment?
2. What's the significance of 1517 A.D.? Why would this period in Church history end in this year and new period begin?
3. List some of the major religious and historical events that occur between 590 A.D. and 1517 A.D. - particularly those related to the relationship of Church and State. (For example, 1095 A.D. and 1453 A.D. are a couple of them)
4. What was the impact on the Church made by Saint Boniface?
5. What is significant about the relationship between Constantinople and Rome during period?
6. Who was Charlemagne and what's the significance of Christmas Day 800 A.D.?
7. What was developed between 735 and 804 A.D. by the great scholar Alcuin under the reign of Charlemagne? (History trivia question.)

Next week we'll look at the second half of the middle ages leading up to Luther and the Protestant Reformation. For this week we see that the Catholic Church continues to grow in importance and influence, reaching a new height of power and influence under the rule of Charlemagne. Meantime in the East the Church at Constantinople struggles for a leadership role while also fending off the new threat of aggression and occupation from the followers of Islam, the Muslims, as Africa, Spain and much of the Middle East falls to Islam and Jerusalem itself is occupied.

Between the Eastern and Western Churches doctrinal differences draw close to comprise and acceptance, then widely differ as rulers and church leaders at various points during this time struggle for power and influence. At one point the Eastern Church will ban the inclusion of icons or images in the church and actually orders their destruction (Leo III). This would later be overturned by the Second Council of Nicaea in 787.

We'll also look at the climax of this struggle with the creation of the Greek Orthodox, or Eastern Orthodox Church as the division between it and the Roman Catholic Church is made permanent. Meanwhile Papal power in Rome will continue to increase as the dominion of the Roman Catholic Church spreads.

I'm glad you're sticking with us through this study and pray you'll continue in your efforts to better understand the roots of the Church and our brothers and sisters in Christ of all denominations.

May God richly bless you as you continue to study with us.

In Christ,

Wes