

# **Concepts of History and Historical Analysis and overview of historical heritage (Antiquity, Early Church)**

Crosroads Church, Belton Texas

This study will provide an overview (survey) of Church  
History with a focus modern Protestant History

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# The Study and Presentation of History

- Historical research and writing tends to produce in depth analysis of specific topics (principally events) but also lacks breadth
  - This appeals to professional and hobbyist historians but lacks broad appeal
- An integrated view of history across longer periods of time is created through the educational system and the media
  - Unfortunately this is also influenced by peer pressure and desire to be popular
  - Very few books are written at a “survey” level and are careful not to go against acceptable opinion
- Prior to 1960’s history texts in addition to addressing events and high profile people also prominently addressed demographics, culture, religion, geography, technology, banking, and economics
  - Most common authors of texts were Charles and Mary Beard – much effort has gone into discrediting them since
- Since the mid 1960’s, history texts and curriculum has focused almost exclusively on people, events, and selective technologies written around political philosophy
  - New Right Neoconservatives (Leo Strauss and Harry Jaffa – Claremont school) - American exceptionalism, “messianic” nation, guided by collective vision of world “liberation”
  - Post-Modernism (Frankfort School) – “relentless criticism of everything”, no definable guiding philosophy or theory, critical theory, America seen as evil and oppressive
  - Strangely both of these movements have a good deal in common historically and both are globalist
  - Any sort of group identity is ignored or denied

# What is a Culture / What is a Nation

- A culture is defined by shared characteristics, beliefs, and history that create a group identity or affiliation
  - Doesn't preclude individual differences
  - Tends to be far more durable than other sorts of political categorization
  - Not synonymous with art or media especially when these things are financialized
- While geopolitical events document the decisions and actions of the “elite”, culture represents the common persons history
- Nation State in Classical Thought (Civilization State)
  - A broader collection of multiple cultures that share enough common history, beliefs, and characteristics to create cohesion
  - Subcultures are respected and power is decentralized
  - Common economic interests and common recognition of external threats
  - Cannot benefit certain groups or areas at the expense of others or it will collapse
- Nation State in Modern Neo-Liberal Thought
  - State defined by economic interests frequently linked to geographic boundaries
  - Power is centralized and nation is subservient to “global community” and multi-national economic interests (global government or governance), finance as means of control
  - Culture is de-emphasized as is history and beliefs – frequently actively suppressed
  - Demands common belief in Nihilism (nothing) other than obedience to the collective
  - Religion tolerated so long as it is “useful” and controllable (“diversity is strength”)

# Ground Rules for this Study

- Because of time restrictions a good deal of “filtering” will need to be done
  - Will not attempt to create biased conclusions
  - Will attempt to highlight information most people would find relevant in developing an integrated view of history presented at a high school or lower division college level
  - Will focus on addressing assumptions and beliefs established through the educational system and media that aren’t necessarily true - Will prioritize topics based on relevance to the world today
- Generally only information that is certain or near certain will be presented
  - Any uncertainties will be noted and defensible alternative positions noted
  - “Everyone is entitled to their own opinion but not their own set of facts”
- Presentism (projecting modern paradigms backwards) will be avoided
  - As will a couple related logical fallacies like *“if one side is bad the other must be good”* or *“the enemy of my enemy is my friend”*
- Information will not be crafted to create a narrative – It will simply be left to speak for itself and allow you to form your own conclusions.
- *“Truth is like a Lion, you don’t have to defend it, just set it free”* St. Augustine
- Other axioms of history
  - “History is complicated” – Tucker Carlson (and others)
  - “Great and Good are seldom the same man” (Winston Churchill)
  - “History is written by the victors” (Winston Churchill) (and also by those who write the most and sometimes by those who live the longest)

# Names and Labels

- Right and Left (Conservative / Liberal)
  - Convenient but definitions change with time and place
  - The most obvious example of this is the meaning of “liberal” in the 1960’s (anti-war / imperialist and pro civil liberty) to what it has become today
- Political Parties
  - Major parties can and have had numerous major policy shifts
  - Parties are “large tent” organizations that attract people that aren’t that homogenous
  - “Uniparty” theory - see conspiracy theories below
- Historical “Revisionism”
  - Term used for any person or position that challenges the dominant belief or narrative
  - Dominant academic positions have been changed over time in the past
  - Modern historians make minimal use of original sources which allows of conclusions to be passed on without being assessed or challenged
- “Conspiracy” Theories
  - Name given to those not accepting the official explanation of JFK assassination – rolled out in organized manner in NYT after focus group testing
  - Used to silence or cancel dissenting voices since then
  - Concept of conspiracy theory based on German philosopher Hegel and the Hegelian Dialectic which holds that society can be controlled through managed conflicts
  - Content generally linked to historian Carroll Quigley and his books “Tragedy and Hope” and the “Anglo-American Establishment”

# Universal Economic Concepts

- There are only four ways an economy can expand in terms of output
  - Add material resources, Add human resources, Change technology Change processes (minor)
  - When adding human resources, additive output is greater than linear initially then flattens, decreases and ultimately stagnates (scale of plant concept)
- Currency
  - For something to be used as a currency it must be scarce, have broadly recognized value, and be readily transportable (gold, silver, other precious metals, opium at many points in time)
  - Political units have sometimes used less valuable metals for internal or domestic use and conducted foreign trade in gold and silver (examples ranging from ancient Greece to Europe in the 1930's)
- Inflation
  - This has always been around but requires expansion in amount of currency circulated
  - Harder to do with specie backed currency than fiat currency with central banks (post 1900)
  - In antiquity this was done by changing the ratio of precious vs common metals in coins
- Trade and Commerce
  - The larger a political unit is, the less dependent on trade it can (and probably should) be
- Finance and Interest/Capital
  - Capital tries to expand exponentially but no economy can support this
  - Results in boom bust cycles and foreclosures (moral hazard – creditor, debtor, public)
  - To avoid this capital will try to expand outward (foreign investment, currency manipulation, war)

# Concepts from Antiquity (Mediterranean and Middle East)

- There are a few concepts from Antiquity that directly track to American history either because they didn't change significantly or because they were studied by our founders who were well schooled in classical history
- “Presentism” is the practice of projecting modern conditions and beliefs backwards
  - This creates an impression of modern superiority that may not be justified
- Management of Water
  - This was the principal engineering challenge prior to the invention of electricity and the steam and internal combustion engine – it provided free power but could be only directed by gravity
  - Population centers were located where fresh water flowed in and sewage could flow out
  - Waterways were the roads that enabled commerce
  - Rivers to be useful must be able to flow and not rock filled marshes
- Power
  - Water wheels were the principle form of power but was not as common as might be expected
  - Ships were dependent on wind power – limited use of wind other than that
  - Extensive use of levers and pulleys
- Roads
  - Roads were stone or dirt and labor intensive to create
  - The wheel was useful but generally required roads and domesticated animals – limited commercial value
- Agriculture yields constrained population size
  - Large horses, improved plows, crop rotation , high caloric density crops from new world would change that with time

# Concepts from Antiquity (cont.)

- Demographics

- The average age and average mortality was very low relative to today (early 20's and 30's) but this is somewhat deceptive due to high infant mortality
- If someone lived past their teenage years, there was a high likelihood they would live to the late 50's or early 60's
- In antiquity girl children were abandoned and even killed creating a gender imbalance
- Primitive abortion procedures were also fairly common
- Christianity greatly reduced child abandonment
- As infant mortality and childhood diseases were dramatically reduced it created a population explosion which had far reaching geo-political implications

- Cities / Population Centers

- Densely populated but not large by modern standards (Athens was only about 40K at peak)
- Wood construction tended to burn easily compounded by the structures being close together - Fires couldn't be contained
- Repeated waves of mass economic migration
- Generally located / built around port locations – difficult to control or defend
- Unmarried military age men seen as potentially dangerous
- Kingdoms consisted of urban area, typically along waterway, and agricultural area
- Modern concept of nation state didn't exist until much later but there were confederations of towns or tribes (ancient Israel is example of this)



# Concepts from Antiquity (cont.)

- **Economics**
  - Because of small size and limited ability to locate resources they were trade dependent and fragile
  - “Sea People” (sea based raiders) were a constant threat (Bronze Age Collapse)
- **Religion**
  - Typically each group would have a pantheon of lesser gods and a creator god who generally originated from the collection of lesser gods
  - Creator god didn’t create but fashioned things from other things
  - Distinctly different in that regard from Genesis where there are two words for “create”. One is to fashion from that which exists and the other is to make from nothing (energy/matter, spirit)
  - Always adaptable to more gods – gods got more capable, personal, and universal with time
  - Pantheon of gods in pre-history may be based on angels/demons, exaggerated human heroes and villains, made up, or other more exotic explanations (early Genesis, book(s) of Enoch, Sumerian tablets, Jewish Talmud, etc.. – aint chasing that squirrel here)
  - Hard to assess level of belief but these did attempt to create common identity more than belief
- **War**
  - Armies were typically militias due to economic implications of maintaining a full time military
  - Groups that formed full time militaries were aggressive (i.e. Assyrians) and frequently in late stages of empire - Required tribute or plunder to pay for military
  - War is always brutal and destructive but ancient warfare was very personal (few prisoners taken)
  - Tactics in many ways didn’t change dramatically until American Civil War
  - Land based civilization could be very stable for long periods but “sea people” (i.e. Philistines), who were dependent on trade and conquest typically created rapid volatility made worse in antiquity by fragile economic structure (Bronze Age Collapse)

## Concepts from Antiquity (cont.)

- Debt, Finance and Interest
  - Finance and debt as a concept developed in the Middle East
  - It was passed to Greece and Rome through the Phoenicians
- Middle Eastern civilizations saw the practice as being dangerous and potentially unjust and sought to limit it
  - This is best reflected in the Old Testament Law in the Book of Leviticus
  - Limits on interest rates (usury)
  - Limits to the ability to charge rent on resources they add no value to
  - Attempts to avoid condition of debt resulting in slavery to resolve debt. This was always the most common way people wound up in slavery
  - Concept of Jubilee to eliminate the compounding effects of interest wiping debt clean at set intervals
  - “Money Changing” (currency exchange) seen as facilitating financial theft
- When debt and interest was established in the Greco / Roman and western traditions the constraints on its use didn’t carry over
  - This created permanent creditor / land owner and debtor / renter classes
  - Credit based economies must continually expand or collapse which led to continuous wars of expansion – they couldn’t produce real growth without war
  - Wars and debt created large number of slaves that evolved into serfs in the middle ages
  - ALL wars in ancient Greece and Rome can be seen as creditor / debtor wars and the debtors nearly always lost.

# Antiquity to Modernity

- Moving from antiquity to modernity common ways of thinking gradually changed
  - These changes accelerated after the reformation and have continued to accelerate
- Modern society assumes that the objective of being is to maximize human pleasure (and minimize suffering)
  - Antiquity sought to establish order and constrain chaos – sought stability
- Modernity looks towards global absolutes
  - Antiquity tended to base society around “covenants” that were specific and conditional
- Communication in the modern world is heavily text dominant and the spoken word is considered as inherently unreliable
  - Antiquity was hearing dominant
- In modern text dominant world the authority for written text flows from the author who is typically also the writer
  - In antiquity the authority of the text was associated with the authority that managed or employed the scribes. Those holding economic or political power were rarely highly literate.
- Modernity tends to not value history or tradition and sees change as overwhelmingly positive
  - Antiquity sought to preserve history and generally saw change as negative (chaos)

# Antiquity to Modernity – Adoption of Dualism

- Dualism is the belief in distinctly different Spiritual and Physical worlds or realities and ties closely to cosmological beliefs and interpretations
  - Not dominant in antiquity but some elements of it were present
  - It gradually became dominant during the period between the Old and New Testaments
  - Dualism was predominant in Greek Philosophy and a foundation of Gnosticism
  - Different Jewish sects held different positions on this topic with “Enochian” Jews being the most integrated with Dualism – All forms of Jewish mysticism were dualistic
- Extreme positions of this topic can be problematic either way
  - Rejection of unseen realities leaves only a belief in the physical world as we perceive it and, in modern terms, would align with scientific naturalism
  - The Sadducees took this position and rejected any concept of an afterlife or the eternal soul
  - On the other hand focusing on unseen spiritual dimension will diminish the significance of this life
  - In its most extreme forms dualism led to the belief in different creator gods with the creator of the physical world being seen as inferior or even evil
- (Opinion) The modern Christian position can probably best be described by saying there is one universe or reality with seen and unseen realms
  - This aligns well with modern theoretical physics but would have been difficult to discern prior to modern times (within the last 150 years or so)
  - Apart from an understanding of physics, the difference is nuanced and lost on most
- This subject continued to be relevant and remains so today

# Lessons for Classical Civilization (reflected in Constitution)

- Greece and Rome both ultimately collapsed and went through phases that were seen as warnings by the American founders
- Standing Military
  - Rome established a standing army during the Punic wars.
  - This was and is regarded as a key shift leading to the fall of the republic
  - Prohibited by US constitution but easily worked around
- Financialization and concentration of property and wealth
  - Also happened around Punic war time period and related to previous point
- Empire
  - Created heavy financial burden that tended to benefit the few at the expense of the many
  - Loss of economic and eventually military independence
  - Washington warned against “entangling foreign alliances”
- Mass Immigration and loss of societal cohesion
  - Loss of common history and cultural commonality
  - Loss of economic stake in the success of the society
- Challenges of Democracy and Democratic/Republic
  - Failure to protect minority interests and individual rights
  - Government used as a means of wealth and income transfer

# Summary of Demographics and Timeline of the Early Church

- Roman Persecution(s)
  - Intense and brutal but targeted principally people seen as influential
  - Did not see Christianity as a “*grass roots*” movement that was not dependent on a few high profile leaders – in many ways this is still true today by the opponents of the Faith
- Spread of Christianity
  - Christians took in and raised abandon (principally female) children and also made basic attempts to care for the sick. During two epidemics this contributed greatly to the rapid spread of Christianity
  - While frequently being referred to as the “*religion of women and slaves*” it spread most effectively through middle class populations (frequently with some education) in and around population centers
- St Augustine (354-430)
  - Bishop of Hippo, the most influential person in the history of Christianity other than Jesus and Paul
  - Son of a Christian mother and pagan father in Egypt schooled in classical Greek philosophy
  - Primary Literary work was “*City of God*” which was very influential throughout the middle ages and was also significant in the Reformation period (reflected final collapse of Rome)
- Economic Life
  - Not communal as many on the political left today have inferred but not a forerunner to modern capitalism and “rent seeking” behavior either
  - “In order to enslave the many, the greedy began to appropriate and accumulate the necessities of life and keep them tightly closed up, so that they might keep these bounties for themselves. They did this not for humanity’s sake (which was not in them at all), but to rake up all things as products of their greed and avarice. In the name of justice they made unfair and unjust laws to sanction their thefts and avarice against the power of the multitude. In this way they availed as much by authority as by strength of arms or overt evil” Church Father Lactantius in Divine Institutions describing the Roman Empire around 300 AD

# The Establishment of Christianity

- Theological “Diversity” in the Early Church
  - Judaizers, Gnostics (these first two are addressed in scripture), Valentinians, other groups
  - Role and interpretation of Jewish scriptures and Talmud (also Canon wasn’t clearly defined)
  - Extra-biblical material (Enoch) and some NT books most notably Revelation
  - Role and influence of Platonic philosophy (many church leaders were neo-Platonists)
- Constantine (272 – 327) became Emperor of Rome after a complex civil war culminated by his victory at the Milvian Bridge in Rome (Oct 28, 312)
  - Saw cross shaped symbol in the sky that read as “By This Conquer”. Also reported to have a related dream. Painted Chi-Rho symbol on his soldiers shields according to one account
  - Two slightly different versions written by Constantine’s Advisor Lacantius in 315 and Bishop Eusebius 30 years after the battle at Milvian Bridge
  - This event is complicated by other conflicting accounts that don’t align exactly but consensus is Constantine’s conversion was real but his understanding of the faith evolved throughout his life
  - Took active interest in theological matters and supported church building
  - Established Constantinople in the East (now Istanbul)
- Edict of Milan in February 313 legalized Christianity
  - Agreement to treat Christians benevolently within the Roman Empire
- Council of Nicaea (325) established basic Christian beliefs including nature of Christ
  - There were both religious and political reasons to do this
  - Avoided open conflict between contending groups and created cultural cohesion
- General church regions (Apostolic, Greek, Alexandrian, Latin, Syriac, Desert)

# Influences of Plato and Greek Philosophy

- Monotheism
  - Plato, Aristotle, and their followers can generally be seen as Monotheistic
  - Although they may make some references to Greek/Roman gods and folklore this can probably best be seen as more cultural than theological
  - Pythagoras, who lived earlier between app. 570 BC and 500 BC, by writings and sayings attributed to him would also appear to be monotheistic with a “Christian like” concept of the soul and heaven.
  - There was also a strain of Monotheism in Egypt that is older.
- Jew and Greeks
  - There was some interaction between Jews and Greeks on a philosophical or intellectual level that varies by region and also with Egyptian tradition
  - Jews living outside of the Holy Land area (which was a majority) would tend to be more influenced by Greek ideas than those around Jerusalem involved in the Jewish revolts
  - Greek influence would also tend towards dualism but not necessarily go to Gnosticism
- Influence on New Testament
  - This is important because influences of Greek thought is evident in New Testament Books, most notably the Gospel of John, and specifically in the life and writings of Paul
  - Also major influence on early church figures
  - Some Christian writers have said “Plato gave Christianity a language” See Hillsdale Introduction to early Christianity Course – FREE and highly recommended



# Other Influences and Controversies

- Most people in the early church, especially the leaders, came from other traditions
  - Platonic, Rabbinic Judaism, Jewish Mysticism (Talmud), Paganism (most influenced Gnostics)
  - These were all influential and affected not just their writing but their writing style
- Gnosticism
  - Term derived from *gnostikoi* meaning those who have knowledge or secret knowledge
  - Not a consistent movement and producing a definitive definition is somewhat problematic
  - Differentiation between transcendent and material realms and dualism of creation with the physical world being associated with an inferior creator god
  - Had ties to Greek and Egyptian paganism and complex creation myths and eschatology
  - Hard to quantify the size, degree of influence, or geographical concentrations but were probably a minority consisting of largely disconnected groups of followers
- Perfectionism (Exclusive Sects – Rebaptizers)
  - In a theological sense this has to do with the relative role of God and Man in salvation
  - In the modern period the mainstream range of Christian positions on this are established by the Calvinist position on one side and the Armenian position on the other (emphasizes free will)
  - Throughout Christian history this has produced groups emphasizing human will that see other believers as not being in fellowship with God and these are generally designated by the title “exclusive”
  - In the early church this topic was frequently linked to persecutions and re-admittance to fellowship
  - It was also tied to competing groups or divisions leading to re-baptisms
- Infant Baptism
  - This seemed to be a fairly common practice that wasn’t created later
  - Exception are those who deferred baptism due to the belief that sins after baptism weren’t forgiven
  - Constantine probably delayed his baptism to shortly before his death for fear this was correct

# Controversies (cont..)

- Eschatology: Premillennialism vs. Amillennialism
  - Premillennialism maintains that Christ will reign for 1000 years (or some extended period of time) on earth while Amillennialism holds that Christ's kingdom is not of this world and that Jesus return will bring about the final judgment
  - Most historians believe millenarian position was dominant but there were prominent people on either side and quantifying those aligned with each belief isn't possible
  - premillennialist Justin Martyr wrote *"I and many others are of this opinion and [believe] that such will take place, as you assuredly are aware; and, on the other had, I signified to you that many who belong to the pure and pious faith, and are true Christians, think otherwise"* Dialogue with Trypho
  - Either way, the concept of dispensations and restoring Israel wasn't present at this time
  - The Amillennial position that was associated with the Alexandrian school became dominant after Augustine
- Role of Women in the Church
  - Seemed to vary significantly (St. Junia or Junias (Romans 16.7) is interesting case study)
- Purgatory
  - This was a broadly held belief traceable to Jewish Talmudic traditions
  - Some groups (Donitius) believed that martyrdom would allow them to go directly to heaven
  - Eventually incorporated into Catholic doctrine by the 5<sup>th</sup> century
- Time of Man
  - Jewish Talmudic teachings frequently identified the time of man from the creation of Adam to the final judgment (or millennium) as being 6000 years
  - This was derived from Ecclesiastes (for everything there is a season) and possible other sources
  - Several prominent people in the early church promoted this (Barnabas, Irenaeus)

# Prominent Individuals in the Early Church

- Papius: App 100 to 150. Bishop of Hierapolis
  - Cited by Irenaeus as having known the Apostle John. Eusebius also states his material came from John the Presbyter- writings also appear to have been influenced by Jewish Talmudic traditions
- Justin Martyr: 100 – 165
  - Early Christian Apologist, Philosopher, and Missionary
  - Hellenistic background and student of Greek Philosophy who saw specific Greek philosophers as forerunners to Christianity
  - Martyred along with numerous followers for refusal to acknowledge pagan deities
- Irenaeus: App 120 to 200
  - Wrote *Adversus haereses* where he catalogues and criticizes various gnostic teachers most notably Valentinus and those who had adopted his teachings (5 volumes in Greek 180 AD)
  - *Adversus haereses* was later expanded upon by others including Clement and Origen
  - Believed the world would end in 6000 years in accordance with Talmudic traditions and writing “*they will come to an end in the 6000<sup>th</sup> year*” (See Titus 1:14 regarding “*Jewish Fables*”)
- Clement of Alexandria: 150 – 215
  - Christian apologist and missionary to the Hellenistic world, intellectual leader of Alexandrian community, dealt with Gnosticism, paganism, as well as economic and political issues
- Origen: 185 – 254, Student of Clement
  - Wrote *Miscellanies (Stromateis)*, *On the Resurrection (Peri anastaseos)*, and *On First Principles (De principiis)* along with extensive commentary on John – influential centuries beyond his life
  - Imprisoned and tortured in 250 but survived and died several years later

# Prominent Individuals in the Early Church (cont.)

- **Montinus:** became prominent around 150
  - Claimed to be a prophet and spoke in a kind of possession or ecstasy
  - Two female disciples, Prisca or Priscilla and Maximilla, named “Virgins of the Church”
  - Declared a heretic around 175-80 but Montanism continued to spread for decades
- **Tertullian:** 150 – 229 (died of natural causes).
  - Wrote several works condemning Gnosticism and coined the word “*Trinity*”
  - Prophesied that he saw a New Jerusalem suspended in the sky (circa 208 AD)
  - Saw persecution as strengthening the church and taught only martyrs go directly to heaven
  - Taught that sins after baptism weren’t forgiven and saw broader church as unredeemable
- **Donatus of Casas Nigrae:** App 300 to 350
  - 4<sup>th</sup> Century Bishop of Carthage (313) and founder of Donatist sect
  - During Diocletian persecution in North Africa “traditores” clergy turned over texts to Romans. Donatus maintained that the traitors couldn’t be returned to fellowship without being re-Baptized
  - His appointment as bishop created schism in the church with North Africa separating from Rome
  - Movement continued after his death
  - Some of the Donatist groups were violent towards other Christian groups
  - They were also involved in revolts against Rome
- **Athenisus:** 298 - 373
  - Chief defender of Christian orthodoxy in 4<sup>th</sup> century against Arianism – extensive writings
- **Pelagius (354-418)**
  - Emphasized human choice in salvation and denied original sin, wrote *De libero arbitrio* (“On Free Will”)

# Christianity and Judaism

- Christianity from its earliest beginnings was based on Theology
  - Judaism wasn't and isn't – rule based and political with many different sects or groups
  - Jesus internalized the law and Paul coalesced or established Christian theology based on thinking like Christ (think Christianly) - served both holiness and unity
- Relations between the two groups varied significantly by time and area
  - In some cases they were almost the same community while in others (Jerusalem) they were adversarial
  - Jews in some cases incited violence against Christians and Christian groups beyond Biblical accounts
- Jews were widely dispersed in Europe prior to fall of 2<sup>nd</sup> Temple
  - Josephus stated 75% to 80% of Jews lived outside of the Holy Land at this time (10% of total population of Roman Empire and concentrated in urban areas)
  - Probably weighted towards Israel as opposed to Judah – May have integrated with Phoenicians after fall of northern kingdom and further dispersed into other groups and possibly Christianized later
  - Sephardic Jews refer to Jews in Iberian Peninsula who generally lived comfortably among Sunni's later
- Following the fall of Jerusalem and Masada in 70AD there were two large rebellions
  - Roman war was preceded by a period of civil war (in total as much as 1/3 of population died)
  - No mass exodus after the fall of Jerusalem although some slaves were taken (Egypt, Greece)
  - Kitos War followed from 115-117 and only the final phase was fought in Judea (Cyprus, Egypt, Mess.).
  - Casualties were so high it depopulated large regions
  - Bar Kokhba was fought from 132-136 in Judea
  - It was initially successful but rebels were eventually defeated resulting in further depopulation

# The Christian Bible

- The Uniqueness of the Bible
  - Written by 40 authors over 1500 years in four languages on a variety of materials (clay, stone, ink, papyrus, metal, etc.) in a variety of literary styles
  - Consistent theme is the story of salvation
- Timeline of major events in building the Bible
  - **Circa A.D. 240** - Origen compiles the Hexapla, a six-columned parallel of Greek and Hebrew texts.
  - **Circa A.D. 305-310** - Lucian of Antioch's Greek New Testament text becomes the basis for the Textus Receptus.
  - **A.D. 367** - Athanasius of Alexandria identifies the complete New Testament canon (27 books)
  - **A.D. 382-384** - Saint Jerome translates the New Testament from original Greek into Latin. This translation becomes part of the Latin Vulgate manuscript.
  - **A.D. 397** - Third Synod of Carthage approves the New Testament canon (27 books).
  - **A.D. 390-405** - Saint Jerome [translates the Hebrew Bible into Latin](#) and completes the Latin Vulgate manuscript. It includes the 39 Old Testament books, 27 New Testament books, and 14 Apocrypha books.
- Similarities and Differences to other ancient literature
  - The first most noticeable difference is that a modern reader can read it without deep knowledge of the societies from which the original accounts were generated
  - It does have a fair number of commonalities with other ancient texts. This can be seen as either a positive or negative in terms of apologetics
  - While other ancient text glorify strength and courage they lack any real concepts of love or mercy or concern for ordinary people – This as much as any single idea makes the Bible unique
  - [Excellent resource for Bible stats and dates](#)

# Did Christianity Cause the Fall of Rome

- This has been consistently stated or inferred by secular historians and commentators starting with the “enlightenment” but a fair answer is definitively NO.
- Collapse started with fall of Republic and creation of Empire and took several centuries to run its course
  - Once the process starts it takes extraordinary intellectual, spiritual, and political will to stop it
- Rome gradually succumbed to a variety of factors that have quite a few similarities to our current condition (many or most of the factors below are related)
  - Cost of Empire became constant resource drain (benefitted few at the expense of the many)
  - Cost to maintain large permanent standing military (closely related to previous point)
  - Uncontrolled immigration
  - Increasing concentration of wealth in small number of individuals / families
  - Military made up heavily of foreign recruits, mercenaries, contractors
  - Government funds used to buy votes and reward supporters
  - Breakdown in goods producing economy
  - Excessive reliance on trade, plunder, and financial manipulation
  - Loss of societal cultural cohesion
  - General obsession with worldly pleasures / diversions and loss of discipline and moral compass

## Final Thought on Rome

*“Rome lived on it’s principal till ruin stared it in the face. Industry is the only true source of wealth, and there was no industry in Rome. By the day the Ostia Road was crowded with carts and muleteers, carrying to the great city the silks and spices of the East, the marble of Asia Minor, the timber of the Atlas, the grain of Africa and Egypt, and the carts brought out nothing but loads of dung. That was their return cargo.”*

*Winwood Read, The Martyrdom of Man (1871)*



# References and Recommended Reading

- *Tragedy and Hope – A History of the World in Our Time*, Carroll Quigley, 1966
- *The Anglo American Establishment*, Carroll Quigley, 1981
- *The Power Elite*, C. Wright Mills, 1956
- *The Great Awakening vs. The Great Reset*, Alexander Dugin, 2021
- *The Bible as History*, Werner Keller, 1965, and several later editions
- *Eusebius – The Church History*, translated by Paul L. Maier, 1999
- *A History of Israel –Bronze Age through the Jewish Wars*, Walter C Kaiser Jr, 1998
- *Josephus – The Essential Works*, Paul L. Maier, 1988
- *The Rise of Christianity*, Rodney Stark, 1997
- *Into the Heart of Romans*, NT Wright, 2023
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