Lesson 25 The "Christian" Middle Ages: The Internal History of the Catholic Church

Who Could Appoint Bishops?

- Four weeks ago when we last studied the internal history of the Catholic Church we looked at the coronation of Charlemagne by the Pope, Charlemagne's church sanctioned campaign of terror against the Saxons (and others), the Viking invasions and the emergence of Feudalism. Furthermore, we considered who the lack of a centralized government during the middle ages caused the power of the papacy to increase.

- Charlemagne was not the only king to receive a crown from the Pope during the Middle Ages.

  – Lois the Pious (814-840) was coronated by Pope Stephen IV at Rheims in 816. Pope Stephen is reported to have said the following at the coronation, "O Christ Ruler of the empire of the world and Master of the ages, you have willed that Rome be the head of the earthly globe, grant out prayers. . ." (Hudson, 32)

  – Louis II in 850 and Charles the Bald in 875 were also crowed by Popes. (Hudson, 32)

Who Could Appoint Bishops?

- Over time through a matrix of complex circumstances secular authorities' challenged the power of the church by seeking to appoint their own clergy a process knows as lay investiture. In addition, many church positions were being sold through a practice know as simony. The result, was that many church officials were more loyal to their earthly lord than papacy.

- A series of reforming Popes attempted to tackle the problem. Matthew A Price and Michael Collins, authors of *The Story of Christianity: 2,000 Years of Faith* offer the following explanation:

  - "Primarily, they wished to end the buying and selling of church offices and to see bishops and abbots elected by their clergy or monks, not appointed by lay lords. At the same time, they wanted clergy to be outside the jurisdiction of the secular courts so that the lay lords who often controlled the courts could not use them to coerce clergy. They also tired to enforce clerical celibacy, which was still widely being flaunted, with married clergy sometimes treating their offices as hereditary possessions." (Price and Collins, 106)

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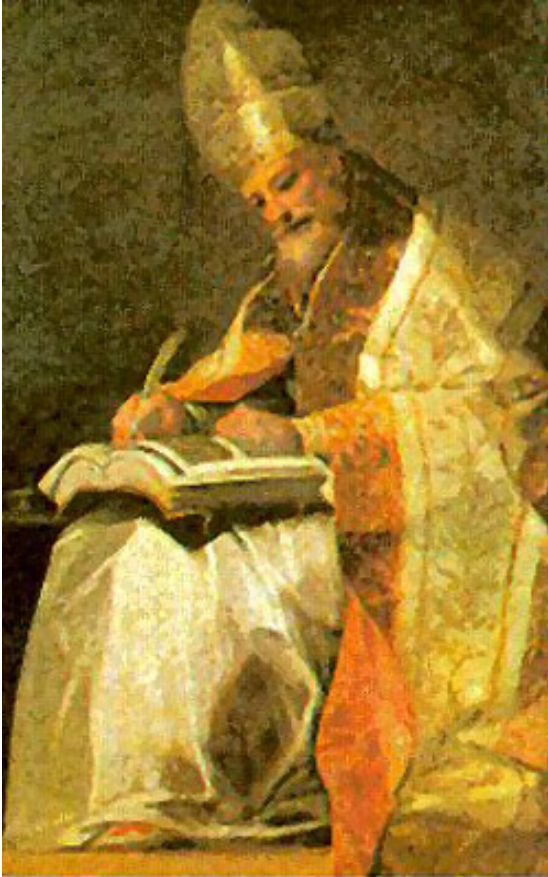
- "All of these campaigns reached a peak when Cardinal Hildebrand took the papal throne as Gregory VII in 1073. He brought papal claims to a new level, declaring that no one on earth had jurisdiction over the papacy, while popes could depose even emperors." (Price and Collins, 106)

- Jonathan Hill, author of *Zondervan Handbook to the History of Christianity* elaborates further of the Gregory's Papal decree in 1075, it stated that no one can judge the pope, that the pope alone can appoint and depose bishops, that he can depose kings and emperors, that his rule extends over earthly rulers-who must kiss his feet when they approach him-and that all popes are automatically saints. (Hill, 186)

Who Could Appoint Bishops?

- See *Papal Power: It's Origins and Development* page 35 by Henry T. Hudson for a complete listing of Pope Gregory's ideas.

- "Gregory's pronouncements were also a declaration of war against the practice of investiture, whereby secular rulers appoint bishops and abbots." (Hill, 188)

- "In the same year that he issued them, the pope deposed and excommunicated no less a person than the Holy Roman emperor, Henry IV, for trying to overrule the papal choice for bishop of Milan." (Hill, 188)

- "Gregory summoned Henry to Rome to explain his conduct. Henry's answer was to convene in 1076 a synod of German bishops that declared Gregory a usurper and unfit to occupy the Roman See: 'Wherefore henceforth we renounce, now and for the future, all obedience unto thee." In retaliation Gregory excommunicated Henry and deposed him, absolving his subjects from the oaths of allegiance." (Shelley, 181)

Who Could Appoint Bishops?

- "At last, driven to make peace with the Holy Father by a revolt among the German nobles, Henry appeared before Gregory in January 1077 at Canossa, a castle in the mountains of Italy. Dressed as a penitent, the emperor stood barefoot in the snow for three days and begged forgiveness until; in Gregory's words "We loosed the chain of anathema and at length received him . . . into the lap of Holy Mother Church." (Shelley, 181)

- "The problem of lay investiture was settled in 1122 by the compromise known as the Concordat of Worms. The church maintained the right o elect the hold of an ecclesiastical office, but only in the presence of the emperor or his representative." (Shelley, 181)

Theory of the Two Swords

- "About one hundred years after Gregory VII, the papal throne was occupied by a man who must rank among the greatest of medieval popes, Innocent III (1198-1216)." (Hudson, 36)

- "It was during his time that the theory of the two swords took definite root in Western Christendom. Bernard of Clairvaux, expressed the theory as follows: 'the tow swords belong to St. Peter. One the spiritual sword is in his hands; the other, the temporal sword, it at his command whenever it is necessary to draw it." (Hudson, 36)

- "The theory of the two swords, the one temporal, the other spiritual, was based upon the Gospel of Luke 22:38. . . . Both swords were at the disposal and under the authority of the papacy." (Hudson, 36)

Theory of the Two Swords

- "In the letter *Sicut Universitatis Conditor* (1198), Innocent clearly differentiates between the spiritual and secular powers, leaving no doubt that the spiritual is supreme. He used the analogy of the sun and the moon; the former represented the pontifical authority and the latter the royal. In the decretal *Venerabilem Fratrem* (1202), the argument for the temporal power being subservient to the spiritual rests upon the claim that the very right and power of the emperor comes from the apostolic see." (Hudson, 36-37)

- "Innocent's assertion is historically rooted in the coronation of Charlemagne by the pope. In one of his sermons on the meaning of pontifical consecration, Innocent declared, " I have obtained from Peter the mitre for my priesthood and the crown for my royalty; he has made me vicar of Him upon whose vesture is written, King of kings and Lord of lords. . ." (Hudson, 37)

Theory of the Two Swords

- "During the pontificate of Innocent III nearly every European ruler submitted to the power and authority of the Roman church. . . if judge necessary the papacy could find some legitimate spiritual justification for intervention in almost every public event. The one whose title was 'Vicar of Jesus Christ and Successor of the Prince of the Apostles,' who was, 'the representative of Him to whom belong the earth and all that it contains and all those who inhabit it,' could hardly conceive of papal power being anything less than 'super-power' with ultimate authority over both the temporal and spiritual affairs of mankind." (Hudson, 37-38)

The Great Schism (1054)

- "By the beginning of the eleventh century the cultural and religious differences between the East and the West were set to cause problems. The East had allowed Hellenistic tradition to continue little altered for 1,000 years. In the West few were able to understand Greek. The East began to look upon the West as uneducated and uncultured barbarians." (Price and Collins, 102)

- In addition, the Eastern and Western churches were divided over the exact wording of the Nicene Creed. A Latin church added one Latin word to the Creed thereby altering its meaning.
  - Original—"The Spirit proceeds from the Father."
  - Revised—"The Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son." (Jones, 69)

The Great Schism (1054)

- Timothy Paul Jones, author of *Christian History Made Easy* explains why this was such a big deal.
  - "In the first place, both Eastern and Roman Christians, believing that they had been led by the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit, had approved the Nicene Creed. At the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon, they had committed themselves never to change the creed." (Jones, 69)
  - "Both groups agreed that God is one being in three persons. Yet each group envisioned the Trinity differently. Roman theologians believed that the divine being dwelt equally in the Father, Son, and Spirit. According to Eastern thinkers, one being can dwell in only one person. In their view, divinity dwells only in the Father. The Father shares this divine being with the Son and Spirit. This does now, however, decrease the deity of the Son or the Spirit. As a result, Eastern Christians could state "(the Spirit) proceeds from the Father through the Son." But they could not confess that the Spirit "proceeds from the Father and the Son." If the Spirit arose from "the Father and the Son," the Son would be sharing divine being—which could come only from God the Father—with the Holy Spirit." (Jones, 69-70)

The Great Schism (1054)

- "In 867 Photius, the bishop of Constantinople in the Eastern Empire denounced the added phrase. Five years later, the pope offered to drop "and the Son" from the Nicene Creed. But there was a condition: Eastern churches had to accept the pope's absolute supremacy over all churches through the world. Photius declined. A narrow crack pierced the church's unity." (Jones, 70)

- In 1048 Pope Leo IX sparked a clash with Byzantium by asserting his spiritual authority, holding a synod to reform the Sicilian church and appointing a new archbishop of Sicily. (Price and Collins, 102)

- "He was met with furious opposition by the patriarch of Constantinople, Michael Cerularius, who was perhaps encouraged by the emperor of the East. Cerularius, in retaliation for Pope Leo's refusal to cooperate, ordered the closure of the Western churches in Constantinople, and expelled the clergy." (Price and Collins, 102)

The Great Schism (1054)

- Leo sent envoys to Constantinople in an attempt to restore peace, lead by the Pope's friend, Cardinal Humbert de Silva Candida. Before leaving Rome, Humbert drafted a Papal Bull of excommunication. On July 16, 1054, Humbert marched into the Church of Holy Wisdom in Constantinople, during the Eucharist and slammed the bull of excommunication on the alter and walked out the church. (Jones, 70-71)

- Jones reports that the Papal Bull cited the following errors in the Eastern Church as justification for their excommunication:
  - Allowed priests to marry. (True, but so had the Roman Church for several centuries.)
  - Refused to recognize baptism performed in Roman Churches. (Untrue in most cases.)
  - Had deleted "and the Son" from the Nicene Creed. (Completely opposite of the truth!) (Jones, 71)

The Great Schism (1054)

- An Eastern deacon grabbed the bull and begged Humbert to take it back but he refused. An altered creed and brash bull created a gash between the Eastern and Western churches. The crusades would deliver a third strike thereby making the break complete.

The Great Schism (1054)

The Crusades Seal the Schism

- Many medieval people believed they could prove their desire to turn from sin by going on a pilgrimage. The supreme pilgrimage led to Jerusalem. To impede a pilgrim's journey, was from the medieval church's perspective to imperil a person's salvation. Since about 638 AD, Muslims had controlled Jerusalem and the roads that led to the city. On the roads to Jerusalem, Muslim converts (Turks) began to force Christian pilgrims to pay vast tariffs. (Jones, 71)

- In 1093, Byzantine emperor Alexius Commenus sent an appeal to Robert, Count of Flanders asking for his help against the Muslim Turks that were threatening to conquer Constantinople. The appeal read

  - "Come then, with all your people and give battle with all your strength, so that all this treasure shall not fall into the hands of the Turks. . .Therefore act while there is still time lest the kingdom of the Christians shall vanish from your sight and, what is more important, the Holy Sepulchre shall vanish. And in coming you will find your reward in heaven, and if you do not come, God will condemn you." (*The Dream and the Tomb* by Robert Payne, quoted in *World History: Patterns of Interaction*, 382)

The Crusades Seal the Schism

- Pope Urban II also read the letter and issued a call for what he called a Crusade (holy war) to gain control of the Holy Land. Over the next 300 years numerous such Crusades would launched. (Beck, 382)

- Kenneth Scott Latourette outlines three major religious goals for the crusades:

  - "First of all in the minds of many was the rescue from the Moslem of the places in Palestine, especially Jerusalem, which were sacred to the Christian. . . To bring them into Christian hands and keep them was ostensibly the chief objective of the Crusades."

  - "Another phase of the religious motive was the protection of the Byzantine Empire against the Moslem Turks. As we have said, the Turks were threatening the historic bulwark of Christendom. The Byzantime Emperors appealed to the Christians of the West for assistance and the Popes were disposed to give it."

  - "Intimately related to this second religious motive was a third, the desire of the Popes to heal the breach between the Western and Eastern wings of the Catholic Church and restore Christian unity." (Latourette, 409)

The Crusades Seal the Schism

- Mark A. Noll, author of *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity* points out that Pope Urban also possessed political motives for the Crusades. Noll states:
  - "In addition, Urban believed that an armed expedition from Europe to the Holy Land would also relieve escalating pressures in his homeland. The tendency of violence that was built into the feudal system of competing lords and aggressive knights had become a mounting concern for the church. It's efforts to curtail the widespread violence had led to what were called The Truce of God and the Peace of God, church-enforced periods when fighting was supposed to stop. To these efforts Urban now added the ideal of a crusade." (Noll, 139)
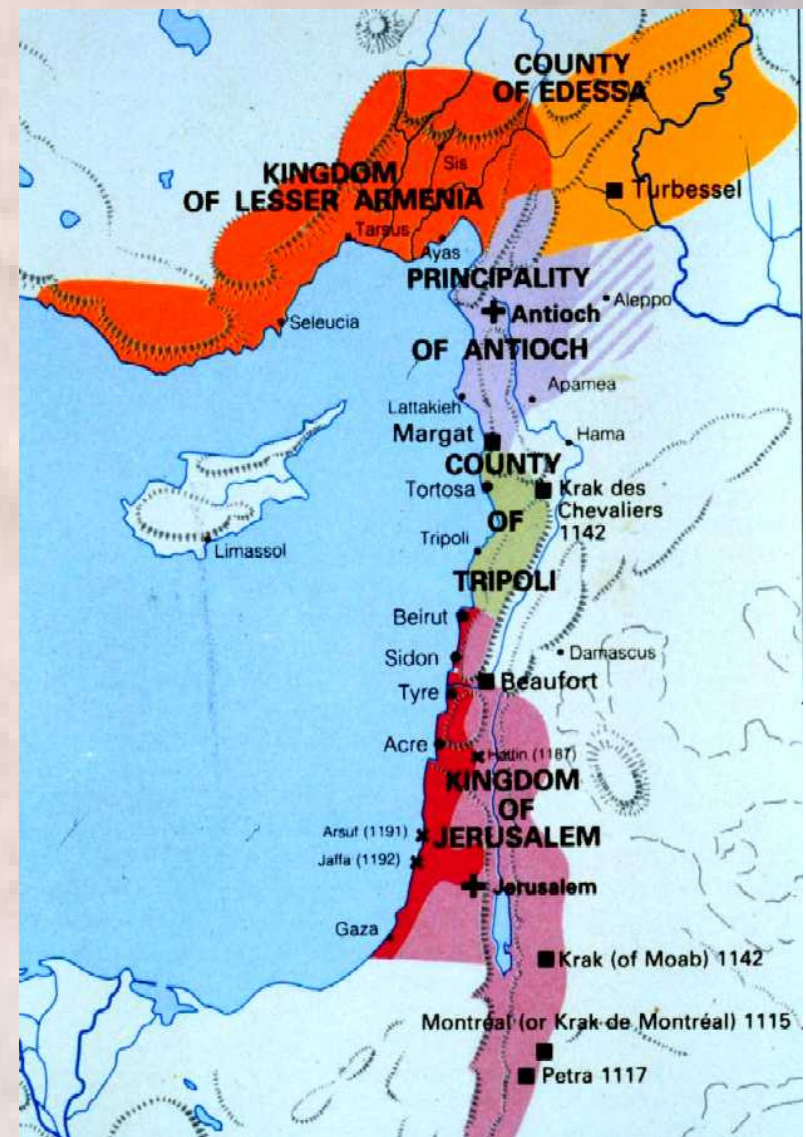
The Crusades Seal the Schism

- By 1097, with assurance of a place in heaven by the Pope, three armies wearing white tunics with red cross has assembled outside of Constantinople. This ill prepared army of French, Bohemians, Germans, Englishmen, Socts, Italians, and Spaniards knew nothing of the geography, climate, or culture of the "Holy Land" and possessed no grand strategy for capturing Jerusalem. (Beck, 382)

- Yet somehow an army of 12,000 (less than one-fourth of the original army) European knights and foot soldiers captured the city Jerusalem on July 15, 1099 and secured a narrow strip of land stretching 650 miles from Edessa in the north to Jerusalem in the south. (Beck, 383)

The Crusades Seal the Schism

- ". . . the crusaders acted with remarkable brutality massacring the inhabitants of the cities they captured and even eating some of them, an act which for many years led Muslims to regard all Europeans as cannibals." (Hill, 206)

- The most significant outcome of the crusades was the cementing of the break between the Western and Eastern Church. Noll reports that "the Fourth Crusade of 1202-4 was a special disaster that so deeply poised relations between East and West that it would be justified to see it, rather than the events of 1054, as the final break between the two great traditions in the church." (Noll, 140)

The Crusades Seal the Schism

- "It was Pope Innocent III who inspired the Fourth Crusade, the crusade that would finally divide Eastern and Roman Christians. The intent of Innocent III was simply to destroy a Muslim army based in Egypt. The merchants of Venice agreed to supply Crusaders with ships at a cost of 84,000 silver coins. In the summer of 1202, the Crusaders arrived in Venice expecting to sail to Egypt. But there was a problem: Only one-third of the expected number of Crusaders showed up, and they came up with only 50,000 silver coins." (Jones, 73)

- "An eastern prince offered to finance the crusade under one condition: the Crusaders had to sail to Constantinople and dethrone the current Eastern emperor before heading to Egypt. Pope Innocent III forbade the attack, but no one seemed to care." (Jones, 73)

- As one might expect the citizens of Constantinople were less than thrilled with this intrusion so they deposed the emperor and installed an anti-Crusader emperor. Having set out to destroy the Muslims, the now stranded Crusaders decided to plunder the city. (Jones, 73)

The Crusades Seal the Schism

- Jones reports that a priest without the Pope's approval told the Crusaders "If you righty intend to conquered this land and bring it under Roman obedience, all who die . . . partake in the Pope's indulgence." To partake an indulgence was to be free from earthly punishment and the need to perform penance for one's sins. Consequently, many Crusaders viewed themselves as free to behave as the wished. (Jones, 73)

- "On Good Friday, 1204, the Crusaders, with red crosses on their tunics, sacked Contantinople. For three days, they raped and killed Christians in the name of Christ. The city's statues were hacked to pieces and melted down. The Church of Holy Wisdom was stripped of its gold vessels. A harlot performed sensual dances on the Lord's Table, singing vile drinking songs. One Eastern writer lamented, "Muslims are merciful compare with these men who bear Christ's cross on their shoulders." (Jones 73-74)

The Crusades Seal the Schism

- "After this orgy of destruction, the Latins attempted to set up a replacement for the Byzantine emperor. They failed miserably. Within a few decades the city was regained by the Eastern Orthodox Byzantine. Even before the end of 1204, Pope Innocent III had condemned the murderous conquest of the city." (Noll, 141)

Effects of the Crusades

- 300 years of Crusading had a major impact upon Middle Ages Europe and sowed the seeds of the Renaissance and the decline of Feudalism.

- According to the authors of *World History: Patterns of Interaction* the crusades yielded the following effects:
  - Trade expanded between Europe and Southwest Asia particularly in spices, fruits, and cloth.
  - Failure of later Crusades weakened the power of the Papacy.
  - Feudal nobility also declined as thousands of knights lost their lives and fortunes. In turn the power of kings began to increase.
  - The fall of Constantinople weakened the Byzantine Empire.
  - Left a legacy of religious bitterness between Christians and Muslims which continues to this day. (Beck, 385)

- The laid the ground work for the Renaissance by stimulating economic growth in the Italian city-states and reintroducing Western Europe to the classical literature of ancient Greece and Rome.

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