

Church History: A Tale of Two Churches
Tracing the Loss and Recovery of Pauline Truth
Course Outline
Grace Life School of Theology
2010/2011 School Year

Course Description

As the title suggests, the goal of this course is to survey the history of the New Testament Church from the vantage point of Pauline dispensational truth. Due to the difficult nature of this endeavor, this class will be structured around tracing two compelling stories that occur simultaneous as church history unfolded. One story deals with the genesis, germination, emergence, organization, and power structure of the sacramental Roman Catholic Church of Christendom. The second story will trace groups of believers who maintained theological independence from Rome, where persecuted as heretics by the organized church, but preserved many of the fundamental doctrines of Biblical New Testament Christianity. Most importantly, we will seek to interpret the entire history of the Christian Church through the prism of Pauline authority. As the one to whom the ascended Christ first revealed the revelation of the mystery, pertaining to the Church the Body of Christ, for the present Dispensation of Grace (Church Age), the thirteen epistles of Paul will constitute our final authority when judging the veracity of doctrinal beliefs or practices of any group or movement. Consequently, particular attention will directed toward chronically the order in which Pauline truth was lost as well as recovered.

This course is not intended to be an exhaustive study of every event, person, group, or movement that has impacted the last two thousand years of Church History. Rather, we will focus our gaze on those events, people, and groups that further our goals as outlined above. Finally, the first couple weeks of this study will focus on accurately articulately a Biblical framework for understanding history, explaining the importance of history to the Christian Worldview, and establishing the historical reliability of the Bible.

Topical Course Outline (Subject to Change)

- The Biblical View of History
 - Scientific vs. Speculative History
 - Dots, Lines, and Circles: Three Views of Time
 - Constructing a Scriptural Framework of Understanding History
 - The Importance of History to the Christian Worldview
 - Historical Accuracy of the Bible
- The Era of Paul (35-65 A.D.)
 - What is the Body of Christ (Universal Church)?
 - What is the local church: beliefs and organization?
 - Luke the first church historian/summary of Paul's Apostolic journeys
 - II Timothy: Paul's parting thoughts on apostasy

- The Infant Church and the Roman Empire (65-313 A.D.)
 - Christian beliefs and Roman culture
 - The formation of the canon
 - Early heresies and the beginning of the Catholic Hierarchy
 - The school of Alexandria and the heretical church fathers
 - Roman Imperial Persecutions
- The Christian Roman Empire (315-590 A.D.)
 - The Conversion of Constantine and the Edit of Milan
 - The secular council of Nicea
 - Christianity become the state religion of the Empire
 - Church councils and the increase in Papal power
 - St. Augustine the heretic
 - Organized church persecutes the true church
 - The fall of the Roman Empire and the state of the church in the East
- The so-called Christian Middle Ages (590-1517 A.D.)
 - The ordering force the church
 - Christianizing the barbarians
 - Clovis, Charles Martel, Charlemagne and the power of the Papacy
 - Holy Mother Church
 - Papal dictatorship persecutes the true church
 - Crusades and Renaissance the tinder of the Reformation
- The Protestant Revolution (1517-1648 A.D.)
 - Erasmus, the Textus Receptus, and the Reformation
 - Luther's Dangerous Ideas
 - Calvin and Zwingli
 - From Henry VIII to Cromwell
 - Reformers persecute other Reformers
 - Short comings of the reformers
 - Is the reformation over?

Working Bibliography

Barlow, R. Dawson. *The Apostasy of the Christian Church*. Erie, PA: Seedsower Publications, 2005.

Barzun, Jacques. *From Down to Decadence 1500 to the Present: 500 Years of Western Cultural Life*. New York, NY: Perennial, 2000.

Bercot, David W. *Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs*. Peabody, MS: Hendrickson Publishers, 1998.

Broadbent, E.H. *The Pilgrim Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Gospel Folio Press, 1931.

- Durant, Will. *The Reformation: A History of European Civilization From Wycliffe to Calvin, 1300-1564*. New York, NY: MJF Books, 1957.
- Dowley, Tim. *The Baker Atlas of Christian History*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997.
- Horton, David. *The Portable Seminary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Bethany House Publishers, 2006.
- Geisler, Norman. *Systematic Theology: Volume Four*. Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 2005.
- Jones, Timothy Paul. *Christian History Made Easy*. Torrance, CA: Rose Publishing, 2009.
- Latourette, Kenneth Scott. *A History of Christianity: Reformation to the Present*, Peabody, MA: Prince Press, 1953.
- McGrath, Alister. *Christian Theology An Introduction*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1994.
- McGrath, Alister. *Christianity's Dangerous Idea: The Protestant Revolution*. New York, NY: Harper One, 2007.
- McGrath, Alister. *Heresy: A History of Defending the Truth*. New York, NY: Harper One, 2009.
- Miller, Andrew. *Miller's Church History*. Adison, IL: Bible Truth Publications, 1999.
- Nash, Ronald H. *The Meaning of History*. Nashville, TN: Boardman and Holman Publishers, 1998.
- Noll, Mark A. *Turning Points: Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997.
- Noll, Mark A. and Carolyn Nystrom. *Is the Reformation Over?* Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005.
- Price, Matthew K., and Michael Collins. *The Story of Christianity: 2.000 Years of Faith*. London: Dorling Kindersley, 1999.
- Ross, Bryan C. *What Is History? How Should Believers View History?* Grand Rapids, MI: Grace Life Bible Church, 2010.
- Ruckman, Peter S. *The History of the New Testament Church, Vol. I*. Pensacola, FL: Bible Baptist Bookstore, 1982.
- Ruckman, Peter S. *The History of the New Testament Church, Vol. II*. Pensacola, FL: Bible Baptist Bookstore, 1984.
- Shelly, Bruce. *Church History in Plain Language*. Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1982.