

# GOD'S TIMELINE

## THE BIG BOOK OF CHURCH HISTORY



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EARLY CHURCH

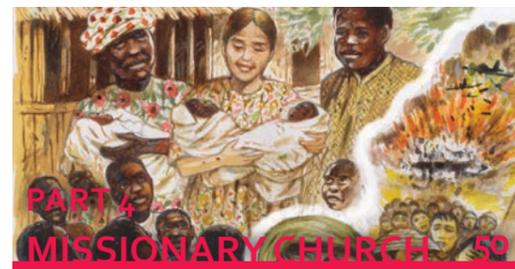
MEDIEVAL CHURCH

REFORMING CHURCH

MISSIONARY CHURCH

MODERN CHURCH

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# INTRODUCTION

Welcome to your tour of Church history. You may wonder why you should read a book about people and events that happened long ago. Here's why.

History is about people and their stories, which are often filled with action and adventure. Not boring at all! We can learn a lot from how these people lived hundreds of years ago, both the good and the bad. Knowing what happened in the past can help us in the present and even into the future.

It's the same for Church history. Right from the beginning of the Early Church there were heroes, heroines and villains. We can learn from the good examples of people who chose to follow God as he commanded, and we can be warned by bad examples of what not to do. That is true throughout the history of the church, right up to modern times.

Now that you know why you should read this book, here's a little bit about how.

This book is not just about reading. It is about looking.

The first thing you will notice is that the history here has been divided up into five periods of church history:

- EARLY CHURCH
- MEDIEVAL CHURCH
- REFORMING CHURCH
- MISSIONARY CHURCH
- MODERN CHURCH

Next you should notice the different logos that will appear again and again throughout these time periods. Although each time period is different from the others, there are common threads that run through all of Church History.

How to read the timelines. They are laid out across two pages, and they all follow the same pattern regardless of the time period. You start in the top left-hand corner and follow the arrows across the page, then down, and finally back across the page. But don't just follow the arrows! Note the people and the events, and history will unfold right in front of your eyes!

Here are some of the symbols you should watch for:

**Councils:** will appear each time the church fathers get together to discuss and decide important issues



**Creeds:** a vital part of the story of God's people

**Martyrdom:** occurs frequently throughout the church's history



**Kings and Queens:** appear regularly through history

**Monasteries:** had an important part to play



# TIMELINE: EARLY CHURCH 33-100 AD\*

**JESUS DIES AND COMES BACK TO LIFE**



**APOSTOLIC AGE (33-100)** The time when the Apostles were alive, teaching what they had learned from Jesus. The Apostles were: James, John, Peter, Philip, Andrew, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James son of Alpheus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, Matthias and Paul.

**PENTECOST**



**STEPHEN MARTYRED**



**PAUL IS CONVERTED ON ROAD TO DAMASCUS**



**APOSTLE PAUL (5-67 AD)** was a Jew who loved God and was angry that Christians said that Jesus was God's Son. While on his way to put Christians in prison, Jesus spoke to him and changed his heart. Paul became the first missionary, traveling around the Roman Empire preaching and establishing churches. When he was put in prison, he wrote letters to the churches that are now part of our Bible.

**APOSTLE JAMES MARTYRED BY KING HEROD**



**APOSTLE JAMES (DIED 44 AD)** was a leader in the early church. He and his brother John were fishermen,

working with their father Zebedee, when Jesus called them to be his disciples. After Pentecost, James, along with John and Peter, boldly preached the good news of Jesus Christ. King Herod Agrippa arrested James and had him executed with a sword.

**APOSTLE PAUL BEGINS HIS MISSIONARY JOURNEYS**



**COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM**

**COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM (CA. 49 AD)** was held to settle a dispute between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians. Some Jewish Christians thought the Gentiles should follow the Jewish law that God had given to Abraham and Moses. However, the Apostles and elders of the church decided that wasn't necessary because God had not commanded that all Christians must follow Jewish laws.



**ROME BURNS AND CHRISTIANS ARE PERSECUTED BY EMPEROR NERO**



**EMPEROR NERO (37-68 AD)** was Roman emperor for fourteen years and a thoroughly bad person. He particularly hated Christians and blamed them for a fire that destroyed much of Rome in 64 AD. As a result he had Christians rounded up and tortured and killed, and encouraged all Roman citizens to turn Christians in to the authorities. He executed the Apostles Paul and Peter.

33

33

33

34

44

44

46

\*\*ca. 49

64

**PERSECUTION BY ROMAN EMPERORS**

**EMPEROR DOMITIAN** declared himself a god during his reign and commanded that all those who refused to worship him had to be executed. He particularly wanted Jews to be killed. The next emperor, Trajan, while approving the execution of Christians, said that no one should hunt them down.

**APOSTLE JOHN EXILED TO ISLAND OF PATMOS**



**APOSTLE JOHN:** John is thought to be the last living Apostle in 90 AD. He was exiled to the island of Patmos by Emperor Domitian. While he was there, John wrote the Book of Revelation. In Revelation 2:13 & 17:6, John refers to martyrs who have died because of their faith in Jesus Christ.

**EMPEROR DOMITIAN PERSECUTES JEWS AND CHRISTIANS**



**MOUNT VESUVIUS ERUPTS AND BURIES POMPEII**



**ROMAN ROADS**

The Roman Empire paved the way for the spread of Christianity. In each country they conquered, the Romans built wide, paved roads so their army could move from place to place easily. The Apostles and other Christians also used those roads to travel to places in the empire preaching the good news of Jesus wherever they went.

**NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS ARE WRITTEN BY THE APOSTLES**

**THE NEW TESTAMENT:** Books were written during the Apostolic Age (70 - 95 AD). They include the four Gospels about Jesus' life, the Acts of the Apostles about the early church, Paul's epistles to the churches, other letters by Apostles and the book of Revelation.

**ROMANS DESTROY JERUSALEM**



**DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM (70 AD)** ended a four-year Jewish revolt against the Romans. When the revolt began, Emperor Nero sent in his troops to capture the troublemakers, but it took a long time. When the Roman army finally broke through into Jerusalem, they destroyed the walls, burned the temple and killed or enslaved as many Jews as they could find. This was the end of the Jewish temple worship, and caused the Jews and Christians to scatter throughout the Roman Empire.

**APOSTLES PAUL AND PETER MARTYRED IN ROME**



98-117

ca. 90

81-96

79

ca. 70-95

70

64, 67

# THE TWO C'S



## COUNCILS:

Church leaders gather to discuss church matters and make decisions for the whole church.

The first council was held in Jerusalem (Acts 15). The Apostles and other leaders gathered to decide if Gentile Christians had to follow the Jewish laws listed in the Old Testament. They decided no, saying that all Christians must worship only God and live according to His commandments.

During the early church time period it was important to hold quite a few councils. After the persecutions had stopped in 313 with the Edict of Milan, the church leaders wanted to make sure that all Christians were worshipping correctly and being taught right doctrines. The meetings took place in different cities to make sure that all leaders could attend them. They gathered to deal with heresies that had sprung up, such as Arianism, and wrote creeds explaining correct doctrine. They also decided on important issues such as what books were inspired and belonged in the Bible. It is important to remember that the church leaders spent a lot of time studying the Scriptures and praying, asking the Holy Spirit to give them wisdom to make right decisions.

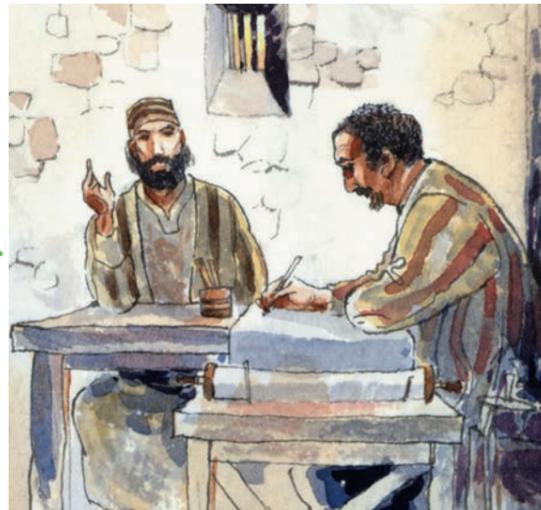


## CREEDS:

The word creed comes from the Latin word *credo*, which means I believe.

The councils used this word Creed as a description of the summaries of Biblical truth. Here are some of the creeds that the early church used.

Apostles' Creed (ca.180) is a short summary of the teachings of the Apostles about the Christian Faith. It was not written by the Apostles themselves. No one person has ever been named as its author. It was first called the Apostles' Creed in 390 AD and has been used since the beginning to teach new converts and remind mature Christians of what they believe.



## NICENE CREED (325):

was written at the Council of Nicaea to answer the heretical teaching of Arius. It is in the same form as the Apostles' Creed but longer, with more explanations about who God is.

## CHALCEDONIAN CREED:

was written to state clearly that Jesus had two natures, human and divine, and was one person. This was to answer those people who questioned how Jesus could have two natures. They insisted that he could only have one, which is wrong.

## CREED OF JERUSALEM:

was a short one-sentence creed, most often said at baptisms. I believe in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost, and in one Baptism of repentance.

## ATHANASIAN CREED:

was written to explain more clearly the Trinity, one God in three persons.

## WHAT IS A CANON?

Our English word canon comes from two ancient words:

- a Greek word **kanon**, meaning rule or measure
- a Hebrew word **keneh**, which means 'standard of measurement'

When we put the meaning of the Greek and the Hebrew words together, our English word canon means a standard list or set of rules. When we use the word in describing the Bible, we mean that the Bible contains the canon or authorised list of books of the Bible.

## OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament books were written in the Hebrew language over many centuries. As they were gathered together the books were put into categories: the Law or Torah, Historical books, Poetic or Wisdom literature and the Prophets. The Law or Torah are the first five books written by Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Next are twelve historical books: Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther. They tell the history of Israel.

Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon are the wisdom literature or poetic books. And all of the prophets' writings (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi) are gathered at the end. Put these all together and you have thirty-nine books.

Sometime after the last of the books was written, about 400 years before Jesus was born, the books were all gathered together and called the canon. This is what we call the Old Testament today.

## NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament books are centred on the life and work of God's Son, Jesus, and letters of instruction and encouragement for the church. God inspired men to write the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), the history of the early church (Acts of the Apostles) and letters (Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, Hebrews, James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1, 2 & 3 John and Jude). Finally he gave the Apostle John a prophetic vision of Heaven and the end times which he wrote down in the book of Revelation.

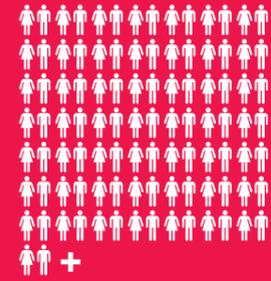
# HOW WE GOT OUR BIBLE

As had happened with the Old Testament books, these books and letters were read out to people who gathered together to worship God on the first day of the week. Copies were carefully made so that the churches in each city could have their own. However, there were also other good books that tried to encourage the early Christians in much the same way Christian books do today. But that didn't mean they should be part of God's Word. So the early church had some careful work to do to determine which books should be part of the canon of the New Testament and which should not.

Bishop Athanasius was the first to issue a list of the canonical books of the New Testament in a letter to the churches. As a church leader he spoke with authority and the churches needed to listen. Later at the Council of Hippo and also at the Council of Carthage, the bishops, after much prayer and discussion, said that Athanasius' list was correct. Only books written by the Apostles and Luke were inspired and part of the canon of the New Testament.

# TIMELINE: MISSIONARY CHURCH 1800-1855

OVER 100 PROTESTANT FOREIGN MISSIONARIES



REVIVALS IN SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS AND SOUTHERN AMERICAN STATES



BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY FORMED



**BIBLE SOCIETIES** The first Bible Society was formed in 1804 when a group of Christians heard about Mary Jones. Mary lived in Wales and had to walk twenty miles to buy a Bible. Hearing that Bibles were difficult to find, the group formed the British and Foreign Bible Society to make sure Bibles were made available throughout the UK. They also assisted missionaries who translated the Bible into other languages to print and distribute them. Throughout the 19th century, Bible societies began to be formed in many countries.

GERMAN BIBLE SOCIETY

SLAVE TRADE ABOLISHED IN THE BRITISH EMPIRE, ESPECIALLY THE ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE



**SLAVE TRADE** was officially abolished by the British parliament in 1807 through the efforts of William Wilberforce and others called abolitionists. However, it was still legal to own slaves. The abolitionists continued to work to abolish slavery itself, and in 1833 the British parliament declared slavery illegal in its empire.

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF FOREIGN MISSIONS FORMED

RUSSIAN BIBLE SOCIETY FORMED



AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY



WESLEYAN METHODIST MISSIONARY SOCIETY FORMED



AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY



GLASGOW CITY MISSION



**GLASGOW CITY MISSION** was established in 1826 by David Nasmith to provide both physical and spiritual help to those in need. In the 1830s the mission was the first charity to offer literacy classes to help people to learn to read and write. Glasgow was the first city mission, but the idea caught on and City Missions began to start up in other cities in the UK and then throughout the world.

PLYMOUTH BRETHREN CHURCH FOUNDED



**PLYMOUTH BRETHREN** denomination was formed by John Nelson Darby in Plymouth, England. A group of Christians who were dissatisfied with the Anglican Church gathered to worship together without ministers or bishops. They believe in personal salvation, celebrating the Lord's supper and that the Bible is the Word of God.

1800

1800

1804

1807

1810

1810

1816

1818

1825

1826

1829

YWCA FORMED



In 1855 the Young Women's Christian Association was formed by Emma Roberts and Mrs. Arthur Kinnaird.

SPURGEON BECOMES PASTOR OF NEW PARK STREET CHURCH, LONDON



**CHARLES SPURGEON (1834-1892)** was called the Prince of Preachers. His preaching style attracted many people to his church in London, called the Metropolitan Tabernacle, which seated 5,600. He also started orphanages, alms houses (to care for the poor), and a Pastors' College to train men for the ministry.

POPE PIUS XI ISSUES 'IMMACULATE CONCEPTION' DOGMA

**'IMMACULATE CONCEPTION' DOGMA** Pope Pius XI and many of the bishops of the Roman Catholic Church agreed that Mary, the mother of Jesus, had been born without original sin. The pope said this dogma (or true principle) came from God. However, the Bible says nothing about Mary being sinless. She was an important person because she was chosen by God to be the mother of Jesus, but she was a sinful human being like the rest of us.



ALL FOREIGN MISSIONARIES EXPELLED FROM THAILAND

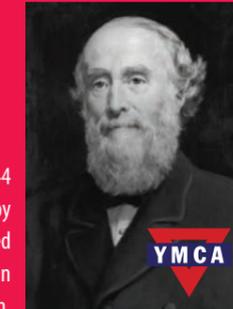


POTATO FAMINE IN IRELAND



YMCA FOUNDED IN LONDON

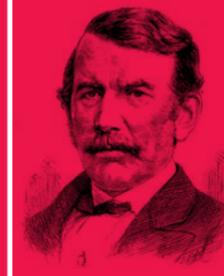
**YMCA/YWCA** In 1844 twelve men led by George Williams founded the Young Men's Christian Association in London. They wanted to improve the spiritual lives of young men by offering Bible classes, prayer meetings, and lectures on how to improve their conditions.



CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES EXPELLED FROM ETHIOPIA



DAVID LIVINGSTON ARRIVES IN BOTSWANA



ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH INVENTED



CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED IN MADAGASCAR

**CHRISTIANS PERSECUTED IN MADAGASCAR** In 1835 Queen Ranavalona threatened the London Missionary Society missionaries with prison if they didn't leave Madagascar immediately. After the missionaries left, she began to have Christians arrested and either executed or sent to do hard labour. In one year alone over 1,900 Christians were fined, arrested, tortured or killed. This continued until the queen died in 1861.



SLAVERY ABOLISHED IN BRITISH EMPIRE



1855

1854

1854

1849

1845

1844

1842

1841

1837

1835

1833