



## The Spread of the Eastern Church

The Evolution of the Eastern Church from the 9<sup>th</sup> through 16<sup>th</sup> Centuries

1

## Moscow's Political Independence

- Eventually, the Moscow rulers believed they could defeat the Mongols.
- In 1380, they inflicted a serious defeat on the Golden Horde at the Battle of Kulikovo.
  - This was the first time a native Russian Army defeated the Mongols. Of course, the Mongols retaliated and sacked Moscow in 1382. But it survived.
- Years later, in Asia, the main Mongol kingdom tried to reestablish the old empire.
  - They went to war with the Golden Horde and destroyed its kingdom.
  - All that remained were small Mongol Muslim kingdoms in its place.
  - The new Mongol threat did not reach Russia because wars with India and Persia weakened it, and its ruler died in 1405.
- This left the Russian Orthodox Kingdom of Muscovy as the dominant power in the region.
  - By the time you get to Ivan III (1462-1505) Moscow had enough military and political strength for Ivan to declare himself the sole ruler of all of Russia.
- Ivan obliterated what was left of the Mongol yoke in 1480 when he stopped all tribute payments from Russia to any Mongol kingdoms. Russia was now free.



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## Moscow's Religious Independence

- The Russian Orthodox Church also became free from the rule of Constantinople.
  - Prior to this time, the Patriarch of Constantinople appointed the leader of the Russian Church.
- At the Council of Florence in 1439, the Eastern Church agreed to submit to the papacy for help against the Ottoman Empire.
  - When Papal legates entered Moscow, the Russian Orthodox Church angrily rejected the union of Florence.
  - However, in the process, they lost their archbishop since he was loyal to Constantinople, and Constantinople backed Florence.
  - In 1448, Russian bishops met and decided to independently elect their own archbishop.
- Meanwhile, the Byzantine Empire fell to the Turks in 1453, and the Patriarchs of Constantinople abandoned the Union of Florence.



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## Ukrainian Orthodox Church

- Moscow and Constantinople re-established communion, but the Russians continued to choose their own archbishop.
  - Henceforth, they too were an self-governing Orthodox Church.
- Though Moscow was the center of Russian Orthodoxy, Kiev was still an important city.
- It remained loyal to the Union of Florence, and accepted the archbishop appointed by the papacy.
  - Kiev became the center of a separate Ukrainian Orthodox Church that was in communion with Rome.
- In 1470, however, they too abandoned the Union of Florence, rejected the papacy, and placed themselves back under the authority of Constantinople.
- They were independent of the Russian Orthodox Church in Moscow.



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## Third Rome—New Center of Eastern Orthodoxy

- When Constantinople was captured by the Ottoman Turks in 1453, it ended a thousand years of Byzantine civilization.
  - The leadership and influence of orthodoxy naturally passed from Byzantium to Moscow. Russian Orthodoxy championed the faith of Eastern Christianity.
- The passing of the torch was indicated by a number of things:
  - 1) Ivan III of Moscow married Sophia, the niece of the final Byzantine Emperors. This established a link of royal blood between the families of Byzantium and Russia.
  - 2) Ivan III took over the Byzantine sign of the double eagle. This symbolizing that Moscow had inherited the Byzantine Empire.
  - 3) Ivan IV (1533-1584), also known as the Terrible, assumed the title of Czar. This is derived from the title Caesar used by the Romans and Byzantines. Ivan IV had himself crowned as the successor of the Caesars in an official coronation. He used the same ceremonies used by the Byzantine Emperors.
  - 4) Russian Orthodox Theologians referred to Moscow as the Third Rome. Rome was the first Rome, but the Russians believe it departed the faith under the papacy. Constantinople was the second Rome, but it betrayed the faith by surrendering to the papacy in Union of Florence. They believe that God allowed Islam to conquer the city as punishment.
- Therefore, the Third Rome was Moscow, the new spiritual capital of the Orthodox Christian faith.

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## Fall of the Byzantine Empire

- The final thing to talk about is the fall of Byzantine Empire.
- In the 11<sup>th</sup> Century, a central Asian Pagan people, the Seljuk Turks, invaded the Middle East and conquered Persia and Iraq.
  - In the process they converted to Islam, and the Caliph in Baghdad bestowed the title of Sultan on the Turkish ruler.
  - Even though the Caliph was supposed to be the head of Islam, the real power was Sultan.
- The Turks conquered Armenia in 1067. The Byzantines tried to free Armenia in 1071, but the Turkish army destroyed the Byzantine army in its entirety.
  - They swept down into Asia Minor and conquered the whole area. This was a decisive moment in Christian-Muslim history.
  - It was only through the First Crusade that Byzantium received a reprieve and regained the western part of Asia Minor.
  - Their ability to exist in part depended on help from Western Christian kingdoms. At times, those kingdoms were just as damaging to them as the Turks.



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## Progressive Byzantine Decline

- After a century of Christian success, Islam goes back on the offensive and conquers the Crusader states.
- In 1176, again the Turks destroyed the whole Byzantine army in a single battle.
  - This enabled them to regain all of Asia Minor. Due to Byzantine weakness, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Hungary all removed their allegiance to the Byzantine Empire.
- When the Catholics took over Constantinople in the Fourth Crusade, Byzantium split into three smaller kingdoms.
  - They fought each other, the Catholics, and the Muslims. This only served to weaken them more. The kingdom of Nicaea (one of the three) was able to reconquer Constantinople, and recreated the Byzantine Empire. They even regained much of Asia Minor.
- But the empire only became progressively weaker.



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## Fall of Constantinople

- In 1354 the Ottoman Turks, the new Muslim rulers of the East, reconquered Asia Minor.
- By 1400, the Ottomans also invaded and conquered the Balkans.
  - All that remained of the old Byzantine Empire were parts of Greece and the city of Constantinople itself.
- Constantinople in desperation pleaded with the Catholic West for aid, but the demand was always the same—submit to the papacy.
  - That is why the Union of Florence was even accepted—desperation. Even with the agreement, the Catholic West sent no real aid. And the subjects of the East rejected the deal anyway.
- In 1453, the Turkish military under the leadership of Muhammad II besieged and captured Constantinople. The final Byzantine Emperor, Constantine XI (1448-1453) died defending his city.
  - The Byzantine Empire, founded in 330 by the first Christian Emperor of Rome, Constantine the Great, was gone. The final vestige of the Roman Empire, which existed for 1,500 years, was now dead.



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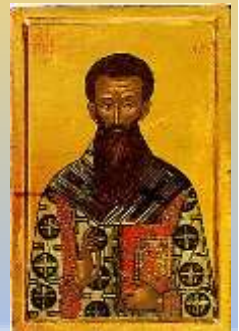
## Byzantine Intellectual Movements

- In the centuries leading up to the fall, Constantinople had its intellectual movements and heresies that it dealt with.
- Some of its leading academics embraced Plato to such a point that they embraced the heresies of Origen (eternal souls, no resurrection body, etc.). They were rightly condemned.
- The East made it clear that theology and philosophy cannot be married, but instead philosophy is merely a tool that can be used in the service of theology.
  - Western Scholasticism's embrace of Aristotle as the lens by which they created systematic theology was absolutely unthinkable to the Eastern theologians.
  - Systematic theology was to be based on Scripture and the early Church Fathers.
  - The monastery rather than the university remained the center of theological study. This was the case, even though the Constantinople University was prestigious.
- One of the large controversies during this time was the hesychasm.
  - This was the idea of meditating and praying a particular prayer, "Lord Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me." It would be repeated so much (with lips and then in the head), and with special breathing techniques.
  - The idea is it would become something on the mind and lips without even having to think about it.

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## Hesychasm Controversy

- This became very popular among Eastern monks, even in the national churches independent of Constantinople.
- Barlaam of Calabria (died in 1350) will ignite the controversy by opposing it.
  - He already opposed the West's embrace of Aristotle and considered Aquinas and his followers as arrogant people that thought with reason they could master God's being.
  - He insisted on the Eastern apophatic way of knowing God. He insisted that we could not have actual knowledge of the transcendent God, but we could only glimpse God's shadow from created things.
- Barlaam intended this to be the Eastern response to Western Scholasticism, but it was equally an attack on Eastern monastic piety as exemplified in the hesychasm movement.
  - The movement assumed humans could enjoy a true knowledge of God through prayer and contemplation.
  - Barlaam insulted their prayer postures and techniques. Even mystic visions are not actual experiences of God, but analogies from created things according to Barlaam.



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## Hesychasm Controversy

- His main opponent, Palamas successfully countered his arguments.
- He relied heavily on the popular Eastern notion of theosis, in which humans share in divine energies through Christ's incarnation, but we do not receive divine nature.
- Salvation is us becoming gods through God's divine power perfecting our humanity.
- Church councils in the East upheld hesychasm and condemned Barlaam.



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## Union of Florence

- The Union of Florence is also worth special mention here.
- Of all the Eastern delegates, only one stood against it. The rest gave in to political expediency.
  - Only Mark of Ephesus refused to agree to the demands: accept the filioque clause, accept the primacy of the Pope, and accept purgatory.
  - Some Easterners were also highly impressed with Scholasticism and considered their Eastern theologians an embarrassment in comparison. So they were willing to unite with the West on those grounds too.
- But the people of the East rejected this union, even if most of the leaders favored it.
  - It was so loathed by Eastern Christians, that the Hagia Sophia was empty for worship service.
- The patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem wrote a letter condemning the Union.
- The West sent no aid, and Muhammad II conquered Constantinople.
  - He placed as Patriarch one of Mark of Ephesus's disciples, and he denounced the union. So at that point, the East was in agreement against Rome.



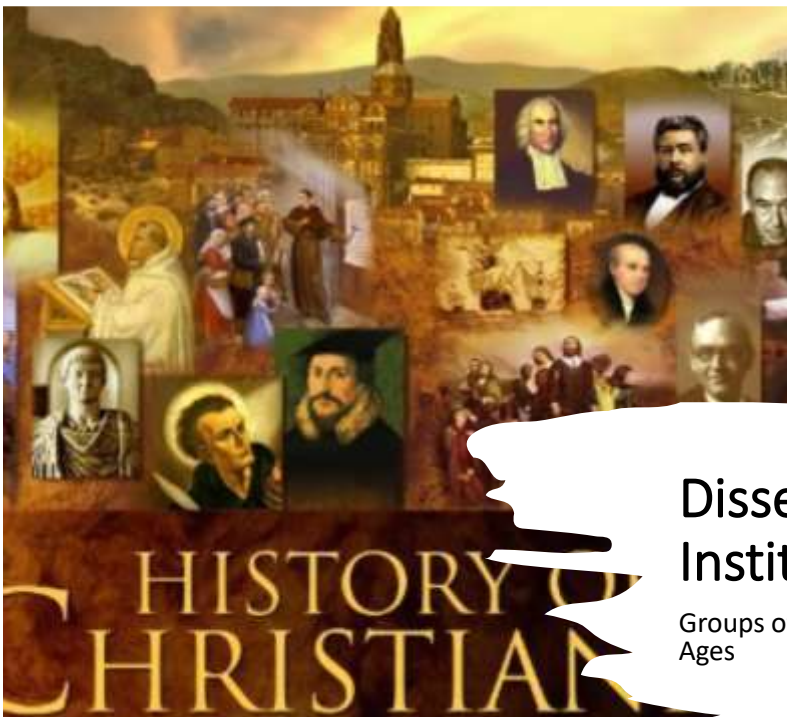
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## Conclusion

- Most Christians in the West neglect study of the Eastern Church.
  - This lesson helped fill in the gaps.
- The Eastern Church thrived even as it's Byzantine Empire slowly eroded.
  - Eastern Christianity spread to the Slavic peoples.
  - Eventually its center moved to Moscow.
  - The Eastern Church practiced missionary contextualization, and this accounted for much of its success.
- The Fall of Constantinople was the end of the Roman era.
  - The idea of Rome lived on in Moscow, the papacy, and the Holy Roman Empire.
- The Eastern Church had its own theological controversies in the late Middle Ages.
  - They also had their own answer to Western Scholasticism.



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## Dissenters of the Institutional Church

Groups of Dissent Throughout the Middle Ages

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## Introduction

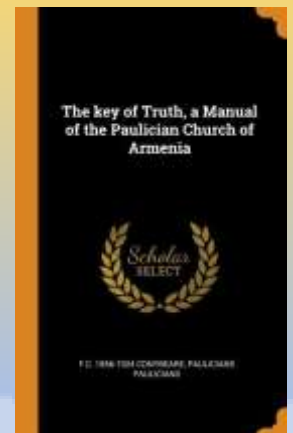
- Throughout the history of the institutional church, there have always been groups of dissent.
  - We have already talked about the Montanists, Novatians, and Donatists.
  - We also talked about Gnostic cults that claimed “church” status.
  - We also covered the nationalistic Monophysite churches.
- Apart from these groups of dissent, there was one universal church, until the schism of 1054. Then there were two: RC and EO.
- We will conclude this course talking about groups of dissent that emerged in the Middle Ages. Some of the focus will be the universal church, but most attention will be given to the Western Church.
- This lesson will cover dissenting groups chronologically within the following themes.
  - Heretical Groups
  - Orthodox Groups



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## The Paulicians

- Beginning with the heretics, they first emerged within the Eastern Church and spread to the West through persecution and missionary activity.
- The first group was the Paulicians.
  - They were heirs to the Gnostics. Though Gnosticism was largely in decline, there were examples of Gnostic resurgence.
- The Paulicians originated in Armenia in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. They spread south to Asia Minor. They were founded by a man named Constantine.
  - He taught that an evil, inferior god created the physical world. Matter was evil, and therefore he rejected the use of all material things in worship, such as the water of baptism, the bread and wine of communion, and icons.
- Like earlier Gnostics, the inferior creator god was identified with the God of the Old Testament and some parts of the New Testament.
- Constantine only accepted the Gospels and Paul's letters as coming from the true God. His reverence for Paul is why he and his followers were called Paulicians.



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## The Paulicians

- Constantine changed his name to Silvanus to indicate that he was a disciple of Paul.
- He taught that Jesus was nothing more than an angel sent by God to show the true way of salvation. To him salvation was escaping material existence.
- The Byzantine state persecuted the Paulicians—though the Iconoclastic emperors went easier on them due to a shared opposition to icons.
  - After the Iconoclasts won the Empire in 843, the emperors mercilessly persecuted the Paulicians.
- The Paulicians formed armed bands and fought back.
  - They often used brilliant tactics. Sometimes they allied themselves with the Muslims against Byzantium.
- This heretical group survived in parts of Armenia up to the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



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## The Bogomils

- The next group was the Bogomils. They emerged in Bulgaria in the 10<sup>th</sup> century.
  - We know of them through the polemical work written in 970 by a Bulgarian Orthodox Priest named Cosmas.
  - The group was named after their founder, Bogomil. His name means friend of God. It is likely he derived his theology from the Paulicians. Around this time, the Byzantines forcibly resettled a large number of Paulicians in Bulgaria.
- The Bogomils taught a more complex system of Gnostic heresy than the Paulicians. They claimed the Supreme God had two angel-sons, Satanel the elder and Christ the younger.
  - Satanel rebelled against the Supreme God and seduced many lesser angels to follow him. He commanded them to indwell bodies of flesh that he created as part of an evil world of matter.
  - So they taught Satan was the creator of matter and mankind. All physical creation exists by will of the devil. The souls of humans were claimed to simply be angels that fell away from heaven.
- Later Bogomils changed this by making Satanel into an uncreated eternal power of evil that invaded heaven, abducted angels, and imprisoned them in human bodies.

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## The Bogomils



- Their doctrines led them to deny the inspiration of the Old Testament.
- They rejected marriage and meat eating.
- Like the Paulicians, they banished anything material from their worship services.
- They claim the Supreme God sent his younger son Christ to earth as Jesus of Nazareth to set mankind free of matter.
  - After Satanel killed Jesus, he was resurrected with a spirit body and returned to heaven. Because of this, after believers die, God would give them spirit bodies like Jesus.
- They flourished in Bulgaria in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. By 1150 they had missionaries carrying their heresy to Western Europe.
  - There, they influenced two other heretical groups, the Cathars and Albigensians.
- The Bogomils died out after 1393 when the Muslim Turks conquered Bulgaria. But their heresy lived on in Western Europe among the groups previously mentioned.
- One reason they were successful is their moral lives were blameless.
  - Unsuspecting people would assume they are orthodox and ask them the way of salvation. They would then spread their heresy.



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## The Cathars

- The Cathars were another great dissenting movement. They operated in Western Europe and were perhaps the most widespread of the anti-Catholic dissenters. The word Cathar is Greek for “pure ones.”
  - Past Protestant scholars thought they were orthodox, but now it is more commonly believed they were heretics like the Bogomils.
- The Cathars divided up into many sects.
  - In fact, a lot of distinct heretical groups of the Middle Ages were just different sects of Cathars: Patarenes, Albigensians, etc.
- They originated in Northern Europe around 1140, but moved south and became strong in Northern Italy (Lombardy and Tuscany), and most of all in Languedoc, France.
- By 1200, they were a powerful force in France, enjoying protection from many southern French nobles.
  - The protection was not given because they agreed with them theologically, but they were equally opposed to the financial corruption of the church. They did not wish to pay tithes, and they saw an opportunity to seize church lands for themselves.
- The Cathars in southern France were called Albigensians (named after the French town Albi).

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## The Cathars

- Their beliefs were similar to the Bogomils. They taught that the physical world of matter was created by Satan, who was co-eternal and equally powerful to God. Souls were angel spirits abducted by Satan and imprisoned in evil physical bodies.
  - To them, the greatest sin was sexual reproduction, because it increased the number of evil bodies for Satan to use to imprison abducted spirits.
  - They claimed that Christ did not have a physical body, did not really die, and was not physical resurrected.
  - Salvation, according to Cathars, did not come through the cross, but through spiritual enlightenment. Such enlightenment came only through Cathar teachings.
- They were divided into two classes: an outer group of believers and an inner group of the perfect.
  - To be a part of the perfect, you had to renounce marriage and property, and stay away from meat, cheese, eggs, and milk since they were byproducts of sexual reproduction.
  - One can only be part of the perfect through a form of ordination. The perfect were organized into the clergy, having bishops, priests, and deacons. All bishops were equal. Women of the perfect could not be clergy.
  - The Cathar argued they were the only true Church of Christ and that salvation was impossible outside of their organization.
  - They declared the Catholic Church to be the Great Whore of Revelation 17 and the Pope to be the Antichrist.

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## The Albigensian Crusade

- The Albigensians deserve special attention due to their stronghold in southern France.
- Catholic missionaries did not have widespread success there, and Innocent III was tired of the French nobility protecting them.
  - He excommunicated the most powerful noble offering protection, which then caused those loyal to the noble to assassinate Innocent's papal legate in the area.
  - In 1209, Innocent III then declared a Crusade on the region. This was the first time the Crusade was used on a population within Christian Europe.
  - Previously, it was reserved for Muslims. The same promise was made to those who participated in this crusade—forgiveness of sins, salvation, etc.
- The nobles of northern France were eager to participate since it allowed them to conquer more French land for themselves. King Philip Augustus was also tired of the defiance of the southern nobility.
- The Albigensian Crusade lasted 20 years (1209-1229).
  - It brought horrific bloodshed and destruction to southern France. The Crusaders were savage in their attack, killing women and children. They wiped out the Albigensians and destroyed the southern nobility.



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## Consequences of the Crusade

- Another group was destroyed as collateral damage in this Crusade—the French Waldensians.
  - This group was not heretical, but the Crusaders did not distinguish between dissenting groups. All were treated as heretics.
  - Because of this, the Waldensians had to move their chief place of residence to Aplin valleys near Turin in northern Italy.
- This Crusade strengthened the papacy's ability to punish dissenters within Western Europe.
- Conclusion on the Cathars. They were the most widespread of the dissenter groups,

