3. The Church Fathers: who they were, what they taught, and how the churches read them

The Church Fathers are the bishops, teachers and martyrs of the first centuries after the apostles, whose writings are the earliest witness to how Christians read the Bible, worshiped and organized their churches. Every tradition in this resource appeals to them, and they disagree about what that witness shows. This chapter follows them in order: who they were and who taught whom; what ancient and modern historians say about them; what they believed in common; the Fathers one by one; then the questions on which the traditions cite them against each other, with the dissenting voices and the consensus; and finally how each tradition weighs their witness.

Who the Church Fathers were

"Fathers of the Church" is the name Christians give to the teachers of the first centuries who handed on and explained the faith after the apostles. The Catholic patrologist Johannes Quasten (*Patrology*, vol. 1, 1950) gives the four classic marks: **orthodoxy of doctrine, holiness of life, ecclesiastical approval and antiquity**; holiness here does not require formal canonization (*New Catholic Encyclopedia*, "Fathers of the Church"). Early authors who lack a mark are called **ecclesiastical writers**. The standard examples are Tertullian, who joined the Montanists around 207, and Origen, whose writings later fell under church censure although he lived a holy life (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, "Fathers of the Church").

Usage differs. The Catholic Church gives some Fathers the further title "Doctor of the Church"; in 1298 Boniface VIII honored Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine and Gregory the Great as the four great Latin Doctors. The Orthodox honor Basil, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom together as the Three Holy Hierarchs (January 30) and do not treat the age of the Fathers as closed. Protestant scholarship uses the word broadly: the nineteenth-century *Ante-Nicene Fathers* and *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* include Tertullian, Origen and Eusebius.

Where the age ends is also conventional. Most Catholic scholars take Isidore of Seville (d. 636) as the last Father in the West and John of Damascus (d. c. 750) as the last in the East; others stop at Chalcedon (451) or Gregory the Great (d. 604) (*New Catholic Encyclopedia*).

Apostolic Fathers

Dates: c. 90–160

Main figures: Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp, Papias; the *Didache*, the *Shepherd* of Hermas

What marked it: Letters and church manuals from writers who knew the apostles or their hearers; the label goes back to J.-B. Cotelier's 1672 edition of the Fathers "who flourished in apostolic times."

Apologists and anti-heretical writers

Dates: 2nd century

Main figures: Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Theophilus of Antioch, the *Epistle to Diognetus*, Irenaeus of Lyons

What marked it: Defenses of the faith addressed to emperors and educated pagans, and replies to Marcion and the Gnostic teachers built on the rule of faith and the succession of bishops

Third century

Dates: c. 200–300

Main figures: Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Origen, Cyprian of Carthage

What marked it: The first Latin theology (in North Africa), Origen's biblical scholarship, the empire-wide persecutions under Decius (250) and Valerian (257–258), and disputes over the lapsed and over rebaptism

Nicene and post-Nicene age

Dates: 4th–5th centuries

Main figures: Athanasius, Ephrem the Syrian, Cyril of Jerusalem, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, Ambrose, John Chrysostom, Jerome, Augustine, Cyril of Alexandria, Leo the Great

What marked it: The Church's legal freedom after 313, the Arian controversy, the first four general councils, the rise of monasticism, the great preachers and the Latin Vulgate

Close of the patristic age

Dates: 6th–8th centuries

Main figures: Gregory the Great (d. 604), Isidore of Seville (d. 636), John of Damascus (d. c. 750)

What marked it: Pastoral and monastic writing in the West; in the East, summaries of Greek theology and John of Damascus's defense of icons

Most early Christian writing was in **Greek**, even in Rome, where Clement, Justin and Hippolytus wrote. **Latin** theology first flourished in North Africa with Tertullian and Cyprian. **Syriac** was the literary language of Christians in northern Syria and Mesopotamia, where Ephrem wrote at Nisibis and Edessa. The great centers were Rome, Antioch, Alexandria, Carthage, Jerusalem, Caesarea in Palestine (where Origen taught and Eusebius wrote), Cappadocia (home of Basil and the two Gregorys), Milan, Hippo and, from 330, Constantinople.

Teachers and students

Early writers named their teachers, because a teacher who had heard an apostle, or a hearer of an apostle, vouched for what was handed on. These are the links most often cited, with the oldest source for each.

Peter and Paul

Student: Clement of Rome

Where and when: Rome, late 1st century

Ancient source: Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.3.3: Clement "had seen the blessed apostles, and had been conversant with them"

John "the disciple of the Lord" and others who had seen Jesus

Student: Polycarp

Where and when: Asia Minor, late 1st century; bishop of Smyrna

Ancient source: Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.3.4; Irenaeus's letter to Florinus, in Eusebius, *Church History* 5.20

Polycarp

Student: Irenaeus

Where and when: "Lower Asia," when Irenaeus was a boy (mid-2nd century)

Ancient source: Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.3.4 ("I also saw in my early youth"); letter to Florinus (Eusebius 5.20)

John, and "the presbyter John"

Student: Papias

Where and when: Hierapolis in Phrygia, early 2nd century

Ancient source: Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.33.4 ("a hearer of John"); Eusebius, *Church History* 3.39

Irenaeus

Student: Hippolytus

Where and when: Late 2nd century; place unknown

Ancient source: Photius, *Bibliotheca*, codex 121 (9th century)

Justin Martyr

Student: Tatian

Where and when: Rome, before Justin's martyrdom (c. 165)

Ancient source: Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 1.28.1: Tatian "was a hearer of Justin's" and left the Church after Justin's death

Pantaenus

Student: Clement of Alexandria

Where and when: Alexandria, late 2nd century; Pantaenus headed "the school of the faithful"

Ancient source: Eusebius, *Church History* 5.10–11, citing Clement's own *Hypotyposes*

Clement of Alexandria

Student: Origen

Where and when: Alexandria, c. 200; Origen led the catechetical school at about eighteen

Ancient source: Eusebius, *Church History* 6.3, 6.6

Origen

Student: Gregory Thaumaturgus ("the Wonderworker")

Where and when: Caesarea in Palestine, five years in the 230s

Ancient source: Eusebius, *Church History* 6.30; Gregory's own *Oration and Panegyric Addressed to Origen*

Gregory Thaumaturgus, through Macrina the Elder

Student: Basil the Great and his family, including Gregory of Nyssa

Where and when: Pontus, in Basil's childhood (330s)

Ancient source: Basil, Letter 204.6: his grandmother Macrina "taught me the words of the blessed Gregory"

Bishop Alexander of Alexandria

Student: Athanasius

Where and when: Alexandria; Alexander's deacon at Nicaea (325), his successor in 328

Ancient source: Socrates, *Church History* 1.8

Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus

Student: Each other, as fellow students

Where and when: Athens, 350s

Ancient source: Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oration* 43.14–20: "We seemed to have one soul, inhabiting two bodies"

Libanius, the pagan rhetorician

Student: John Chrysostom, with Theodore (later of Mopsuestia)

Where and when: Antioch, mid-4th century

Ancient source: Socrates 6.3; Sozomen, *Church History* 8.2 (Libanius would have named John his successor "had not the Christians taken him")

Diodore (later bishop of Tarsus) and Carterius

Student: John Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia

Where and when: A monastic community at Antioch; the root of what is called the Antiochene school

Ancient source: Socrates 6.3

Gregory of Nazianzus

Student: Jerome

Where and when: Constantinople, c. 380–381

Ancient source: Jerome, *On Illustrious Men* 117: "my instructor in the Scriptures"

Ambrose of Milan

Student: Augustine

Where and when: Milan, 384–387; Augustine was baptized by Ambrose at Easter 387

Ancient source: Augustine, *Confessions* 5.13.23, 9.6.14

Some links rest on the student's own word: Augustine, Gregory of Nazianzus, Jerome, Basil and Gregory Thaumaturgus all name their teachers. Others rest on later testimony. Irenaeus's link to Polycarp is a boyhood memory written down decades later. Papias survives only in quotations; Eusebius noted that Papias "by no means declares that he was himself a hearer" of the apostles, read him as naming two Johns, the apostle and "the presbyter," and pointed to two tombs at Ephesus each called John's (3.39). Historians therefore still ask which John Papias, and perhaps Polycarp, heard. Richard Bauckham (*Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 2006) identifies the Elder with the Beloved Disciple who wrote the Fourth Gospel; others take both mentions to mean the apostle. The Irenaeus–Hippolytus link first appears seven centuries later. On Alexandria, Roelof van den Broek (1995) finds no Christian academy with a regular program before the third century, and Annewies van den Hoek (*Harvard Theological Review*, 1997) argues that Eusebius built its chain of heads to lend legitimacy to the institutions of his own day, while finding his remarks verifiable in detail.

What the historians say

The ancient historians. Much of what is known about the first three centuries passes through Eusebius of Caesarea's *Church History*, completed in its final form about 324. He set out to record "the lines of succession of the holy apostles," the bishops of the great churches, the heresies and the martyrs (1.1.1). His chief value is the documents he quotes from works now lost, such as Papias, Hegesippus and Irenaeus's letter to Florinus. Arthur Cushman McGiffert (Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 1890) judged him "conscientious and honest in his work," while noting that he could misread his sources and knew Latin writers poorly. Jacob Burckhardt (*The Age of Constantine the Great*, 1853), judging chiefly his portrait of Constantine, called him "the first thoroughly dishonest historian of antiquity." Jerome's *On Illustrious Men* (392–393), 135 short lives modeled on Suetonius, leans on Eusebius throughout. In the fifth century Socrates, Sozomen and Theodoret carried the story forward, Socrates as far as 439.

Bishops and the threefold ministry. Henry Chadwick (*The Early Church*, 1967) notes that *1 Clement* and parts of the New Testament apply "bishop" and "presbyter" to the same people, while by Ignatius's time (c. 110) Antioch and the churches of Asia had a single bishop with presbyters and deacons; how the change came about is "shrouded in obscurity." The Anglican J. B. Lightfoot ("The Christian Ministry," 1868) held that the episcopate was formed "out of the presbyteral by elevation." The Reformed historian Philip Schaff (*History of the Christian Church*, vol. 1 §61, vol. 2 §44) agreed, citing Jerome, and called succession from the apostles "the Greek, the Roman Catholic, and the high Anglican theory." Peter Lampe (*From Paul to Valentinus*, 1987) finds no single "monarchical" bishop in Rome before Victor at the

end of the second century. The Jesuit Francis A. Sullivan (*From Apostles to Bishops*, 2001) accepted that Rome was first led by presbyters but held the episcopate to be "a product of the leading of the Holy Spirit," with bishops the apostles' successors, a question he judged history alone cannot settle.

Dating the earliest texts. The *Didache* has been dated as early as 50–70 (Jean-Paul Audet, 1958) and as late as c. 110–120 (Kurt Niederwimmer, 1998). Most historians, following Theodor Zahn and Lightfoot, accept the seven letters of Ignatius and date them to Trajan's reign (98–117); a minority, mainly German, treats them as later forgeries, Thomas Lechner dating them c. 170. The *Apostolic Tradition* long ascribed to Hippolytus is judged a composite of several periods by Paul Bradshaw, Maxwell Johnson and L. Edward Phillips (2002), while Allen Brent and Alistair Stewart defend an early Roman origin.

The canon. Bruce Metzger (*The Canon of the New Testament*, 1987) traces the recognition of the New Testament books as a gradual process. The Muratorian Fragment, traditionally dated c. 170–200, was redated to the fourth century by Albert Sundberg (1973) and Geoffrey Hahneman (1992); Everett Ferguson and others defend the earlier date (see the canon).

Orthodoxy and heresy. Walter Bauer (*Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity*, 1934) argued that in regions such as Edessa and Egypt, forms of Christianity later called heretical came first, and that the view which became orthodoxy spread from Rome. H. E. W. Turner (*The Pattern of Christian Truth*, 1954) found in Bauer "a persistent tendency to over-simplify problems"; Thomas Robinson (*The Bauer Thesis Examined*, 1988) argued the sources for most cities are too thin to bear the thesis; Andreas Köstenberger and Michael Kruger (*The Heresy of Orthodoxy*, 2010) revisited each region. Bart Ehrman (*Lost Christianities*, 2003) defends and extends Bauer. The Orthodox scholar John Behr (*Irenaeus of Lyons*, 2013) describes real diversity in second-century Rome and argues that the common faith came into clearer outline as dissenting groups separated themselves.

Reading the Fathers as a whole. Adolf von Harnack (*History of Dogma*, 1886–1890) called dogma "a work of the Greek spirit on the soil of the Gospel." Robert Louis Wilken (*The Spirit of Early Christian Thought*, 2003) argues that the Fathers' thought was rooted in Scripture and transformed the Greek ideas it used, so that "the Christianization of Hellenism" is the better phrase. J. N. D. Kelly (*Early Christian Doctrines*, 1958) treats Scripture and the Church's tradition of teaching as "overlapping" authorities. Jaroslav Pelikan's *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition, 100–600* (1971) writes the history of doctrine as the history of what the Church believed, taught and confessed. For the Orthodox Georges Florovsky, "'The mind of the Fathers' is an intrinsic term of reference in Orthodox theology," and their age "still continues" in the worshiping Church ("St. Gregory Palamas and the Tradition of the Fathers," 1959–1960).

What they believed in common

Historians who differ on much else agree that by the late second century the Fathers' texts show a shared core of faith and practice.

The rule of faith and Scripture. Irenaeus wrote that "the Church, though dispersed throughout the whole world," keeps one faith "as if occupying but one house": one God the Father Almighty, Creator; one Christ Jesus, the Son of God made flesh for our salvation; and the Holy Spirit, who foretold through the prophets Christ's virgin birth, passion, resurrection, ascension and return to judge (*Against Heresies* 1.10.1–2). Tertullian gives the same outline and calls it a rule "taught by Christ" (*Prescription Against Heretics* 13), adding that the Scriptures belong to those who hold that faith (19). The Fathers read the Old Testament as Christian Scripture against Marcion and quoted the Gospels and Paul as authoritative long before any list was fixed.

Baptism, Eucharist and Sunday. The *Didache* directs baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in running water if possible, otherwise by pouring water three times on the head (7); admits only the baptized to the Eucharist (9); and tells Christians to gather every Lord's Day to break bread and give thanks, "that your sacrifice may be pure," citing Malachi 1:11 (14). Justin says converts are "regenerated" in the water (*First Apology* 61) and that the bread and cup are received "not as common bread and common drink" but as "the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh" (66). His Sunday assembly has readings from "the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets," a sermon by the president, prayers, the thanksgiving, deacons taking the gifts to the absent, and a collection for "the orphans and widows" (67).

Ministry. Clement writes that the apostles appointed their first converts "to be bishops and deacons" and provided that "other approved men should succeed them" (*1 Clement* 42, 44). The *Didache* says, "appoint for yourselves bishops and deacons" (15). For Ignatius, "wherever the bishop shall appear… there is the Catholic Church," and a proper Eucharist is one held by the bishop or by one he appoints (*Smyrnaeans* 8).

Martyrdom. Ignatius, Polycarp, Justin and Cyprian died for the faith; the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* is the earliest surviving account of a martyrdom outside the New Testament. Tertullian told the persecutors, "the blood of Christians is seed" (*Apology* 50).

The moral life. The *Didache* commands, "you shall not murder a child by abortion nor kill that which is begotten" (2.2); the *Epistle to Diognetus* says Christians "beget children; but they do not destroy their offspring" (5). Tertullian describes a voluntary monthly fund for the poor, orphans, the old and prisoners, and reports pagans saying, "See how they love one another" (*Apology* 39).

The Trinity and Christ. The councils defined what the rule confessed. Nicaea (325) declared the Son "of one substance" with the Father, against Arius; Constantinople (381) confessed the Holy Spirit "the Lord and Giver of life," worshiped and glorified with the Father and the Son (see the Nicene Creed); Ephesus

(431) called Mary *Theotokos*, "God-bearer," against Nestorius; Chalcedon (451) confessed one Christ "in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably." All seven traditions on this site confess these councils' teaching on the Trinity and Christ, though they rank the councils' authority differently; the Church of the East does not receive Ephesus, nor the Oriental Orthodox Chalcedon.

Where the same texts are read differently.

- **"Bishop."** Those who hold the apostolic succession of bishops read *1 Clement* 44 and Ignatius as evidence of an apostolic order. Those who hold bishop and presbyter to be one office read the same texts, with the *Didache*'s "bishops and deacons," as describing local elders (see the visible Church, apostolic succession).
- **"Sacrifice."** Those who hold the Eucharist a true sacrifice read *Didache* 14 and its Malachi text as the Church's offering of Christ's body and blood. Those who hold Christ's sacrifice unrepeatable read it as the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving (see the Mass as sacrifice).
- **"Flesh and blood."** Those who hold a bodily presence read Ignatius (*Smyrnaeans* 7) and Justin (66) literally. Those who hold a spiritual presence or a memorial read them as defending Christ's real flesh against the Docetists, or as sacramental language (see the Lord's Supper).
- **"Born again to God."** Irenaeus says Christ came to save "all, I say, who through Him are born again to God — infants, and children" (*Against Heresies* 2.22.4). Those who baptize infants read this as infant baptism; those who baptize believers only, as Christ sanctifying every age of life (see infant baptism).
- **The rule of faith.** Those who hold Scripture and Tradition together read it as apostolic tradition alongside Scripture; those who hold Scripture alone, as a summary of Scripture's own teaching (see Scripture alone, Holy Tradition).

The sections that follow take up the questions on which the traditions cite the Fathers against each other: the dissenting voices each side points to, what those writers said in context, and where the wider consensus lay.

The Fathers one by one

A page for each of the major Fathers, in order of death: his life, his teachers and students, his writings, what he taught, what historians say about him, and how each tradition reads him.

Clement of Rome d. c. 100 Leader of the Roman church whose letter to Corinth (c. 96) describes the ministry the apostles left

Ignatius of Antioch d. c. 108–117 Bishop martyred at Rome whose seven letters describe bishop, presbyters and deacons and the Eucharist

Papias of Hierapolis fl. c. 100–130 Bishop who gathered the elders' traditions; earliest witness on how Mark and Matthew were written

Polycarp of Smyrna d. c. 155 Bishop of Smyrna who knew the apostle John, taught Irenaeus and died a martyr at 86

Justin Martyr c. 100–c. 165 Philosopher and martyr who gave the earliest full description of baptism and Sunday worship

Irenaeus of Lyons c. 130–c. 202 Pupil of Polycarp and bishop of Lyons whose Against Heresies set out the apostolic faith against the Gnostics

Clement of Alexandria c. 150–c. 215 Alexandrian teacher who joined Greek learning to the faith and described the mature Christian

Tertullian c. 155–c. 220 Carthaginian apologist, first great Latin theologian, later a follower of the New Prophecy

Hippolytus of Rome d. c. 236 Roman presbyter and rival bishop, martyred in Sardinia; the Apostolic Tradition long ascribed to him shaped modern liturgies.

Origen c. 185–c. 254 Alexandrian scholar of the Hexapla and On First Principles; all later exegesis learned from him, though his speculations were condemned in 553.

Cyprian of Carthage d. 258 Bishop of Carthage and martyr; On the Unity of the Church is the classic early text on the Church, bishops and the chair of Peter.

Athanasius of Alexandria c. 296–373 Bishop of Alexandria, five times exiled for the Nicene faith; wrote On the Incarnation and the first list of the 27 New Testament books.

Ephrem the Syrian c. 306–373 Deacon and poet of Nisibis and Edessa, the greatest Syriac writer, who taught doctrine in hymns; Doctor of the Church since 1920.

Basil the Great c. 330–379 Bishop of Caesarea and Cappadocian Father; On the Holy Spirit, monastic rules and the liturgy bearing his name.

Cyril of Jerusalem c. 313–386 Bishop of Jerusalem whose lectures to the baptized are cited for Scripture as proof, the Eucharist and prayer for the dead.

Gregory of Nazianzus c. 329–c. 390 "The Theologian": Cappadocian orator and poet whose Theological Orations shaped the doctrine of the Trinity confirmed in 381.

Gregory of Nyssa c. 335–c. 395 Bishop of Nyssa and Cappadocian Father; mystical theologian of endless progress into God, who hoped for the restoration of all.

Ambrose of Milan c. 339–397 Bishop of Milan who baptized Augustine, defended Nicene faith and wrote on the sacraments

John Chrysostom c. 347–407 Preacher of Antioch and archbishop of Constantinople; homilies on Scripture and the Divine Liturgy

Jerome c. 347–420 Biblical scholar behind the Vulgate; cited on the Hebrew canon, Mary and bishops

Augustine of Hippo 354–430 Bishop of Hippo; the West's great teacher on grace, original sin, the Church and the sacraments

Cyril of Alexandria c. 376–444 Patriarch of Alexandria; defended Mary as Theotokos and the unity of Christ at Ephesus

Leo the Great c. 400–461 Bishop of Rome whose Tome shaped Chalcedon's teaching on Christ's two natures

Gregory the Great c. 540–604 Bishop of Rome; Pastoral Rule, mission to the English and the "universal bishop" letters

John of Damascus c. 675–c. 749 Monk of Mar Saba; defender of icons, systematic theologian and hymn writer

Dissenting voices and the consensus

On several questions, writers in one tradition point to individual early writers who seem to agree with them: Tertullian on infant baptism, Jerome and Athanasius on the canon, Augustine's "sign" language about the Eucharist, Gregory the Great on the title "universal bishop." This part looks at each of those voices: what is cited, what the writer actually said in context, what the wider consensus was, and whether the writer was in good standing.

> **How the consensus is weighed.** No individual Father is infallible, and Catholic and Orthodox writers freely admit that some held views the Church later rejected (Cyprian on rebaptism, Origen on the final

restoration of all things). What carries authority is the **consensus** of the Fathers: Trent forbade interpreting Scripture "contrary to the unanimous consent of the Fathers" (Sess. 4, 1546), meaning their moral unanimity, not that every writer said the same thing. Vincent of Lérins (434) gave the classic test: what has been believed "everywhere, always, and by all." Four questions help weigh a dissenting voice: (1) How many and how widespread were the witnesses on each side? (2) Was the dissenter in good standing, or did he leave the Church? (3) Do his other writings agree with the Protestant position that cites him, or contradict it? (4) How did the Church as a whole settle the question?

Where the diversity was real. On some questions early Christians genuinely disagreed, especially the exact list of Old Testament books, the precise status of Mary's sinlessness, and the best explanation of how Christ is present in the Eucharist. On others, such as baptismal regeneration, the real presence, bishops, and prayer for the dead, the dissenters are few and usually outside the mainstream. The table below summarizes; the cards that follow give the detail.

Infant baptism

Early voices Protestants cite: Tertullian (advice to delay)

The wider consensus: Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Origen, Cyprian and a council of 66 bishops (253), Ambrose, Chrysostom, Augustine; Council of Carthage (418)

Baptism as merely symbolic

Early voices Protestants cite: None known before the 16th century

The wider consensus: Universal: baptism forgives sin and gives new birth (Nicene Creed, 381)

Eucharist

Early voices Protestants cite: Tertullian "figure"; Augustine "sign"; Theodoret and Gelasius on bread remaining; Ratramnus (9th c.)

The wider consensus: Real presence and sacrifice: Ignatius, Justin, Irenaeus, Cyril of Jerusalem, Ambrose, Chrysostom, and the same Tertullian and Augustine elsewhere

Old Testament canon

Early voices Protestants cite: Melito, Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory of Nazianzus, Jerome; Laodicea canon 60

The wider consensus: Councils of Hippo (393) and Carthage (397, 419), Innocent I (405), Augustine; most Fathers quote the deuterocanonical books as Scripture

Scripture alone

Early voices Protestants cite: Athanasius ("the Scriptures are sufficient"); Cyril of Jerusalem ("prove it from Scripture"); Irenaeus 3.1

The wider consensus: The same writers appeal to apostolic tradition and the Church's rule of faith; Irenaeus 3.3–3.4, Tertullian, Basil, Vincent

Papacy

Early voices Protestants cite: Cyprian and Firmilian against Pope Stephen; Gregory the Great against "universal bishop"; Jerome on bishops and presbyters

The wider consensus: Roman primacy acknowledged by Clement, Ignatius, Irenaeus, Cyprian himself, Jerome, Augustine, Chalcedon; disputed in its extent (see the Orthodox view)

Mary

Early voices Protestants cite: Tertullian, Helvidius (other children); Jovinian (denied her virginity in childbirth); Chrysostom, Origen, Basil (her faults)

The wider consensus: Perpetual virginity universal by the 4th century; her full sinlessness developed gradually and was defined only in 1854

Images, saints, relics, prayer for the dead

Early voices Protestants cite: Eusebius, Epiphanius, Elvira canon 36; Vigilantius; Aerius

The wider consensus: Catacomb and Dura-Europos art, Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, John of Damascus, Nicaea II (787); Vigilantius and Aerius opposed by Jerome and Epiphanius

Faith alone

Early voices Protestants cite: "Faith alone" wording in 1 Clement, Origen, Ambrosiaster, Basil, Chrysostom (and later Aquinas)

The wider consensus: The same writers teach baptismal regeneration, judgment by works and penance; "alone" meant apart from the works of the Mosaic law or prior merit

Eternal security

Early voices Protestants cite: Jovinian (the baptized cannot be overthrown by the devil)

The wider consensus: Condemned by Pope Siricius and a synod at Milan under Ambrose (c. 390–393); Jerome wrote against him

Tertullian (c. 155–c. 220), Carthage NOT A SAINT; JOINED THE MONTANISTS C. 207

WHAT PROTESTANTS CITE

- He advised delaying baptism for little children and the unmarried (*On Baptism* 18).
- He assumed Mary had other children after Jesus (*On the Flesh of Christ* 7; *Against Marcion* 4.19).
- He called the bread "the figure of my body" (*Against Marcion* 4.40).
- In his Montanist period he denied that bishops could forgive grave sins such as adultery (*On Modesty*).

CONTEXT

His advice to delay was prudential, not a claim that infant baptism was new or invalid; it shows the practice already existed. He held baptism necessary for salvation and said its water truly washes away sin (*On Baptism* 1, 12–13), which differs from a purely symbolic view of baptism. His "figure" passage argues against Marcion that Christ had a real body (only a real body can have a figure), and elsewhere he writes that "the flesh feeds on the body and blood of Christ, that the soul may be fattened by God" (*On the Resurrection of the Flesh* 8). His *Prescription Against Heretics* is one of the strongest early arguments for apostolic tradition against private interpretation of Scripture.

CONSENSUS

On infant baptism: Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Origen, Cyprian. On Mary's virginity: the *Protoevangelium of James*, Origen, Athanasius. Tertullian left the Catholic Church for the Montanist sect, and the Church never venerated him as a saint, though it values much of his writing.

Jerome (c. 347–420) SAINT AND DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

WHAT PROTESTANTS CITE

- He preferred the Hebrew canon and said the Church reads Wisdom and Sirach "for the edification of the people, not to confirm the authority of doctrines" (preface to the books of Solomon, c. 398; his canon list appears in the preface to Samuel–Kings, c. 391).
- He wrote that in the beginning presbyters and bishops were the same, and that bishops were set over presbyters by custom to prevent schism (Letter 146; *Commentary on Titus* 1:5). Presbyterians and Baptists cite this against episcopacy.

CONTEXT

Jerome translated Tobit at the request of the bishops Chromatius and Heliodorus, translated Judith as well, and noted that "the Synod of Nicaea is said to have counted Judith among the Sacred Scriptures" (preface to Judith). When challenged over the additions to Daniel, he replied that he had followed "the judgment of the churches" (*Against Rufinus* 2.33). On bishops, the same Letter 146 says that bishops, presbyters and deacons correspond to Aaron, his sons and the Levites "so that we may know the apostolic traditions were taken from the Old Testament," and that bishops alone ordain. He wrote to Pope Damasus: "I am in communion with your beatitude, that is, with the chair of Peter. On that rock I know the Church is built" (Letter 15).

CONSENSUS

Jerome's canon was a minority view in the West; Augustine and the African councils disagreed, and Jerome deferred to the churches' practice. His Vulgate included the deuterocanonical books.

Athanasius of Alexandria (c. 296–373) SAINT AND DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

WHAT PROTESTANTS CITE

- His Festal Letter 39 (367) gives an Old Testament close to the Hebrew canon and lists Wisdom, Sirach, Esther, Judith and Tobit as books "not included in the canon, but appointed by the Fathers to be read."
- "The holy and inspired Scriptures are sufficient for the proclamation of the truth" (*Against the Heathen* 1), cited for *sola scriptura*.

CONTEXT

The same letter is the first to list exactly the 27 books of the New Testament that Protestants accept, but its Old Testament also includes Baruch and the Letter of Jeremiah and omits Esther, so it matches neither the Protestant nor the Catholic list. He quotes Wisdom and Sirach as Scripture elsewhere. Against those who denied the Holy Spirit's divinity he appealed to "the very tradition, teaching and faith of the Catholic Church from the beginning, which the Lord gave, the apostles preached and the Fathers kept" (*Letters to Serapion* 1.28), because his opponents also quoted Scripture.

CONSENSUS

Scripture's sufficiency in content was widely affirmed, always read within the Church's rule of faith. On the canon, see Jerome above.

Cyril of Jerusalem (c. 313–386) SAINT AND DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

WHAT PROTESTANTS CITE

- "Do not believe me simply because I tell you these things, unless you receive the proof of what I say from the Holy Scriptures" (*Catechetical Lectures* 4.17).
- His Old Testament list omits the deuterocanonical books (4.35–36).

CONTEXT

He was teaching catechumens the Creed, the Church's rule of faith, and showing them its basis in Scripture. The same lectures teach that the bread and wine become Christ's body and blood "though sense suggests otherwise" (*Mystagogical Catecheses* 4.6; some scholars assign these final lectures to his successor John of Jerusalem), call the Eucharist a sacrifice, and describe praying for the dead and asking the saints' prayers in the liturgy (5.9–10). His list still includes Baruch.

CONSENSUS

Cyril is one of the strongest early witnesses to the real presence and liturgical prayer for the dead, which many Protestants reject.

Augustine of Hippo (354–430) SAINT AND DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

WHAT PROTESTANTS CITE

- Sign language about the Eucharist: "Believe, and you have eaten" (*Tractates on John* 25.12); the sacraments are signs, and Christ "did not hesitate to say 'This is my body' when he gave the sign of his body" (*Against Adimantus* 12.3); "eat my flesh" is a figure enjoining communion in Christ's passion (*On Christian Doctrine* 3.16.24).
- He sometimes read the "rock" of Matt 16:18 as Christ rather than Peter (*Retractations* 1.21).
- Only Scripture is free from error (Letter 82.3); his teaching on grace and predestination is foundational for Calvinists.

CONTEXT

For Augustine a sign and the reality it carries are not opposed. He also preached: "That bread which you see on the altar, sanctified by the word of God, is the body of Christ" (Sermon 227), and taught that no one eats that flesh without first adoring it (*Expositions of the Psalms* 98.9). On Matt 16 he gave both readings and left the reader to choose. He accepted the deuterocanonical books (*On Christian Doctrine* 2.8.13), prayed for his dead mother at the altar (*Confessions* 9.13), taught baptismal regeneration and infant baptism, used the thief on the cross as an example of baptism of desire (later noting in his *Retractations* that the thief may have been baptized), and wrote that he would not believe the Gospel unless moved by the authority of the Catholic Church (*Against the Fundamental Epistle* 5). (The famous "Rome has spoken, the case is closed" is a later paraphrase of Sermon 131.10.)

CONSENSUS

Both Catholics and Calvinists claim Augustine; on the sacraments and the Church his overall position is Catholic, while on grace and predestination Thomists and Calvinists both draw on him.

Gregory the Great (pope 590–604) SAINT AND DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH

WHAT PROTESTANTS CITE

When Patriarch John the Faster of Constantinople took the title "ecumenical (universal) patriarch," Gregory protested that whoever calls himself "universal bishop" is a forerunner of Antichrist, and refused the title for himself (Letters 5.18, 5.20, 7.33, 595–597).

CONTEXT

Gregory objected to a title that implied other bishops were not truly bishops; he called himself "servant of the servants of God." Yet he acted with authority over the whole Church: he heard appeals from Eastern bishops, corrected bishops in Africa, Gaul and Spain, and sent Augustine of Canterbury to evangelize England. He wrote that the see of Constantinople was subject to the Apostolic See, and he also taught purifying fire after death (*Dialogues* 4.39).

CONSENSUS

Gregory is cited fairly by the Orthodox as evidence that the early papacy did not claim the full jurisdiction defined in 1870; Catholics answer that he exercised primacy while rejecting a particular title.

Cyprian of Carthage (d. 258) and Firmilian of Caesarea

CYPRIAN: SAINT AND MARTYR

WHAT PROTESTANTS CITE

In the rebaptism controversy (255–256) Cyprian and a council of African bishops resisted Pope Stephen, declaring that "none of us sets himself up as a bishop of bishops"; Firmilian wrote Cyprian a letter attacking Stephen sharply (Cyprian's Letter 75, ANF 74). Some Baptists also note that Cyprian rebaptized those baptized outside the Church.

CONTEXT

Cyprian wrote *On the Unity of the Church* (251), which speaks of the chair of Peter as the source of unity and says "he cannot have God for his Father who does not have the Church for his mother" (ch. 6). He held that there is no salvation outside the visible Church, taught baptismal regeneration and infant baptism, and called the Eucharist a sacrifice offered by the priest. He died a martyr in communion with Rome. His rebaptism position was rejected by the Church: the Council of Arles (314, canon 8) ruled that those baptized in the Trinitarian name are not rebaptized (Nicaea in 325 drew the same distinction, rebaptizing only groups whose baptism it judged defective).

CONSENSUS

Rome's view that valid baptism, even by heretics, is not repeated prevailed, which Catholics see as an early instance of Rome's teaching being decisive. Cyprian is a strong witness for a visible, episcopal Church even where he resisted a pope.

The "proto-Protestant" dissenters: Aerius, Helvidius, Jovinian and Vigilantius (4th–5th c.)

OPPOSED OR CONDEMNED AT THE TIME

WHAT PROTESTANTS CITE

- **Aerius** (c. 360s) taught that presbyters equal bishops and rejected prayers for the dead and fixed fasts (Epiphanius, *Panarion* 75).
- **Helvidius** (c. 383) argued that Mary had other children after Jesus.
- **Jovinian** (c. 390) taught that marriage and virginity have equal merit, that fasting earns no reward, and that those reborn in baptism with full faith "cannot be overthrown by the devil" (Jerome, *Against Jovinian* 1.3), an early form of eternal security.
- **Vigilantius** (c. 400) opposed honoring relics, vigils at martyrs' tombs, asking the saints' prayers and clerical celibacy.

The Lutheran Matthias Flacius Illyricus included such figures in his *Catalogue of Witnesses to the Truth* (1556), and later Protestant historians followed him.

CONTEXT

Each was answered by the leading theologians of the day: Epiphanius against Aerius, Jerome against Helvidius (383), Jovinian (393) and Vigilantius (406); Jovinian was condemned by Pope Siricius and a synod at Milan under Ambrose. Their views did not form an ongoing church.

CONSENSUS

Their existence shows that these practices were already established and contested by individuals, not that they were later inventions.

Eusebius, Epiphanius and the Council of Elvira on images (4th c.)

DISPUTED TEXTS

WHAT PROTESTANTS CITE

Eusebius of Caesarea refused a request from Constantia (Constantine's sister) for an image of Christ (letter c. 325–330). Epiphanius tore down a church curtain bearing an image of Christ or a saint (a letter preserved among Jerome's letters as Letter 51, c. 394). The Council of Elvira (c. 305, canon 36) forbade pictures on church walls "lest what is worshipped be painted on walls."

CONTEXT

Eusebius's letter survives only in fragments quoted by the iconoclast council of 754 and preserved by its opponents (the acts of Nicaea II and Patriarch Nikephoros), and Eusebius sympathized with the Arians. The Epiphanius passage, preserved in Latin among Jerome's letters, has been challenged by some iconophile writers but is accepted as genuine by most modern scholars; Nicaea II rejected other texts the iconoclasts attributed to him. Elvira was a local Spanish council during persecution, possibly concerned with desecration of images. Meanwhile Christian art is abundant from the 2nd–3rd centuries (catacombs, Dura-Europos c. 235), Gregory of Nyssa wept before a painting of Isaac's sacrifice, and Basil wrote that honor given to an image passes to its prototype.

CONSENSUS

Images were widespread; the Second Council of Nicaea (787), accepted by both Catholics and Orthodox, settled the question.

"Faith alone" in the Fathers REAL WORDING, DIFFERENT MEANING

WHAT PROTESTANTS CITE

1 Clement says we are justified "not through ourselves… but through faith" (32). Origen (*Commentary on Romans* 3.9), Ambrosiaster (on Rom 3:24 and 4:5), Basil (*Homily on Humility* 20) and Chrysostom use phrases like "by faith alone." Even Thomas Aquinas wrote that hope of justification lies "in faith alone" (*Commentary on 1 Timothy* 1, lecture 3). A "faith alone" line from the Romans commentary printed among Jerome's works (Patrologia Latina, vol. 30) is sometimes added; that commentary is Pelagius's, written before 410 (Souter; de Bruyn), not Jerome's.

CONTEXT

In these writers "faith alone" means faith apart from the works of the Mosaic law, or apart from any merit before grace, which Catholics also teach. The same writers teach baptismal regeneration,

judgment according to works, and penance; 1 Clement goes straight on to urge good works (33), and Aquinas taught that justifying faith is faith formed by charity. None held that justification is a purely legal declaration excluding inner renewal. Pelagius too uses "faith alone" in his Romans commentary while warning, on Rom 3:28, against those who use the phrase to abolish works; Catholic and Orthodox writers conclude that the words alone do not show the doctrine. Lutheran, Reformed and Anglican writers answer that the doctrine is argued from Paul (Rom 4:5), not from a spurious attribution, and grant that wording and doctrine are separate questions.

CONSENSUS

Grace before any human merit was settled (Council of Orange, 529); the Reformation sense of *sola fide* (forensic imputation) has no clear patristic precedent, which many Protestant scholars acknowledge (for example, Alister McGrath, *Iustitia Dei*).

The Old Testament canon lists GENUINE DIVERSITY

WHAT PROTESTANTS CITE

Melito of Sardis (c. 170) traveled to the East to learn the books of the Old Testament accurately and recorded a list close to the Hebrew canon (without Esther). Similar lists appear in Origen, Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Gregory of Nazianzus, Amphilochius, Epiphanius, Jerome and canon 60 of the Council of Laodicea (c. 363, whose authenticity is doubted).

CONTEXT

Several of these writers say they are following the Hebrew canon, and most of them still quote the deuterocanonical books as Scripture. In the West, Hippo (393), Carthage (397, 419), Pope Innocent I (405) and Augustine listed the full 46 books; in the East the question remained less defined until the Synod of Jerusalem (1672).

CONSENSUS

This is the one area where Protestants have real patristic support: some Fathers did distinguish the Hebrew-canon books from the others. Catholics answer that the Church's usage and its councils, not individual lists, settled the canon, and that Protestants accept the New Testament from the same process.

Theodoret, Gelasius and Ratramnus on the Eucharist (5th–9th c.)

DISPUTED MEANING

WHAT PROTESTANTS CITE

Theodoret of Cyrus wrote that after consecration the bread and wine "remain in their former substance and shape and form" (*Eranistes*, Dialogue 2, c. 447). Pope Gelasius I wrote that "the substance or nature of the bread and wine does not cease to be" (*On the Two Natures in Christ*). In the 9th century the monk Ratramnus of Corbie argued against Paschasius Radbertus that Christ is present "in figure" (*On the Body and Blood of the Lord*, c. 843); English Reformer Nicholas Ridley credited Ratramnus with his own change of view.

CONTEXT

Theodoret and Gelasius were arguing about Christ's two natures (that the divine does not swallow up the human), using "substance" in the pre-scholastic sense of physical nature; Theodoret in the same passage says the elements are adored as Christ's body and blood, and Gelasius says they "pass into the divine substance" by the Holy Spirit's work. Ratramnus affirmed a real spiritual presence, and scholars still debate his meaning. These texts show that the explanation of the presence was debated before 1215, not that the presence itself was denied.

CONSENSUS

Real presence from Ignatius onward; the term "transubstantiation" was adopted in 1215 to name it.

Fathers who attributed faults to Mary REAL, AND ACKNOWLEDGED

WHAT PROTESTANTS CITE

Chrysostom suggested Mary showed vainglory at Cana and when seeking Jesus (*Homilies on Matthew* 44; *Homilies on John* 21). Origen, Basil and Cyril of Alexandria thought she wavered in faith at the cross. Basil also wrote that belief in her perpetual virginity was not strictly necessary to the faith, though "lovers of Christ" would not accept that she ceased to be a virgin.

CONTEXT

Others moved the other way: Ephrem (c. 370) praised her as without stain, Ambrose called her free from every stain of sin, and Augustine refused to include her in discussions of sin "out of honor to the Lord" (*Nature and Grace* 36.42).

CONSENSUS

Mary's perpetual virginity was universal by the late 4th century, but her complete sinlessness and Immaculate Conception developed over centuries and were debated by Catholic theologians until defined in 1854. Catholics treat this as development of doctrine; those who reject the Immaculate Conception see it as evidence that the doctrine is not apostolic.

Bottom line. Dissenting voices in the early church are real and should be acknowledged. But on the questions that divide Protestants from Catholics and Orthodox, the dissenters are usually (1) few, (2) often outside the Church or later rejected, and (3) not actually Protestant in their other views; Tertullian, Jerome, Athanasius, Cyril and Augustine all taught baptismal regeneration and a sacramental, episcopal church. The strongest Protestant case from the Fathers concerns the Old Testament canon and the gradual development of Marian doctrine.

Key early Christian writers

The writers most often cited in these debates, with what each side usually cites them for.

Clement of Rome

Date: c. 96

Most cited for: Apostolic succession; Roman intervention at Corinth; justification

Didache

Date: c. 50–120

Most cited for: Baptism (including pouring), Eucharist, Sunday "sacrifice," confession

Ignatius of Antioch

Date: c. 110

Most cited for: Bishops, presbyters and deacons; "Catholic Church"; real presence

Polycarp of Smyrna

Date: d. c. 155

Most cited for: Link to the apostle John; relics

Justin Martyr

Date: c. 155

Most cited for: Baptism as regeneration; the Eucharist; Sunday worship

Irenaeus of Lyons

Date: c. 180

Most cited for: Succession of Roman bishops; Tradition; Eucharist; Mary as New Eve

Tertullian

Date: c. 200

Most cited for: Baptism; advice to delay infant baptism; offerings for the dead

Hippolytus (attrib.)

Date: c. 215

Most cited for: Liturgy, catechumenate, infant baptism

Origen

Date: c. 185–254

Most cited for: Infant baptism as apostolic tradition; prayer of saints; confession

Cyprian of Carthage

Date: d. 258

Most cited for: Unity of the Church; chair of Peter; infant baptism; the lapsed

Athanasius

Date: d. 373

Most cited for: Nicene faith; canon list (367); "Ever-Virgin"

Cyril of Jerusalem

Date: d. 386

Most cited for: Eucharist; prayer for the dead; Scripture as proof

Ambrose of Milan

Date: d. 397

Most cited for: Eucharist; baptism of desire; penance

John Chrysostom

Date: d. 407

Most cited for: Baptismal instructions; Eucharist

Jerome

Date: d. 420

Most cited for: Vulgate; Hebrew canon; Mary's virginity

Augustine of Hippo

Date: d. 430

Most cited for: Grace; original sin; infant baptism; the thief; millennium; purgation

How each tradition reads the Fathers

What weight each tradition gives the Fathers, in its own words and from its own documents.

Catholic

No single Father is infallible, and some held views the Church later rejected. What carries authority is their moral unanimity on matters of faith: the Council of Trent forbids interpreting Scripture against "the unanimous consent of the Fathers."

Sources: Council of Trent, Session IV (1546); Vincent of Lérins, *Commonitorium* 2.

Orthodox

The Fathers belong to Holy Tradition: the Holy Spirit teaches the Church through them and through the Ecumenical Councils, and Scripture is read as the Fathers read it. No single Father is infallible; weight rests on their agreement as received by the whole Church. The Fathers are not limited to the early centuries: later teachers such as Gregory Palamas are counted among them.

Sources: Confession of Dositheus (1672), Decrees 2 and 12; Longer Catechism of St. Philaret, Q. 16–18, 56; Encyclical of the Eastern Patriarchs (1848), §17.

Lutheran

Scripture alone is the judge of doctrine. Ancient and modern teachers are received "as witnesses" to how the pure teaching was kept after the apostles, never as judges equal to Scripture. Lutherans hold that their teaching departs neither from Scripture nor from the Church catholic, and the Book of Concord's Catalog of Testimonies sets out patristic support for its teaching on Christ.

Sources: Formula of Concord, Epitome, "Rule and Norm" 2, 8; Augsburg Confession, conclusion of Part I; Catalog of Testimonies.

Reformed

The Fathers are respected and used but have no binding authority: their opinions, like the decrees of councils, are tested by the Holy Spirit speaking in Scripture, and councils "may err." The Second Helvetic Confession receives what in the Fathers agrees with Scripture and modestly dissents from the rest, noting that the Fathers themselves did not want their writings made equal to Scripture.

Sources: Westminster Confession 1.10, 31.3; Second Helvetic Confession, ch. 2; Belgic Confession, art. 7.

Anglican

Doctrine rests on Scripture, and on the teaching of the ancient Fathers and councils so far as it agrees with Scripture; general councils may err. The English Reformers presented their church as a return to "the primitive Church of the ancient fathers and Apostles," and the Ordinal grounds the orders of bishops, priests and deacons in Scripture and "ancient Authors."

Methodist

Scripture is the complete rule of faith. Wesley ranked the writers of the first centuries "not equally with but next to the Scriptures," revering them as models of early Christianity while granting their mistakes. Methodist doctrinal standards keep the Anglican rule that nothing outside Scripture is required for salvation.

Sources: Canon A5 of the Church of England; Thirty-Nine Articles VI, XXI; John Jewel, *Apology of the Church of England* (1562); Ordinal (1662), preface.

Sources: John Wesley, letter to Conyers Middleton (1749); Methodist Articles of Religion (1784), V.

Baptist

The Fathers are valuable but fallible witnesses. The decrees of councils and "opinions of ancient writers" are to be examined by Scripture, the supreme judge of every controversy. Baptists also point to early writers whose views seem closer to their own, as this chapter discusses.

Sources: Second London Confession (1689), 1.10.

Clement of Rome d. c. 100

Clement was a leader of the church at Rome at the end of the first century, remembered in the earliest lists as its third bishop after Peter. The letter the Roman church sent to Corinth in his time, known as 1 Clement, is among the oldest Christian writings outside the New Testament. It matters to every tradition because it is one of the first texts to describe the ministry the apostles left behind: Catholics and Orthodox read it for apostolic succession, Presbyterians and Baptists for its elders and deacons, and Protestants generally for its words on justification through faith.

Lived	Died c. 100; Eusebius dates his time as bishop from c. 92 to c. 100 (*Church History* 3.15, 3.34)
Where	Rome
Taught by	Peter and Paul, by tradition: Irenaeus says he "had seen the blessed apostles" (*Against Heresies* 3.3.3), and Tertullian that Peter ordained him (*Prescription Against Heretics* 32). Eusebius identifies him with the Clement of Phil 4:3.
Taught or influenced	The church of Corinth, which was still reading the letter in its Sunday assembly c. 170 (Dionysius of Corinth, in Eusebius, *Church History* 4.23.11); Irenaeus, who summarized it

Writings	*1 Clement* (Letter to the Corinthians), sent in the name of the church of Rome. *2 Clement* and the Clementine *Homilies* and *Recognitions* bear his name but are by later writers (Eusebius, *Church History* 3.38).
Language	Greek
Honored	Saint and martyr in the Catholic Church (November 23) and the Orthodox Church (November 25); commemorated on November 23 in the Church of England, the Episcopal Church and the calendars of the ELCA and LCMS

LIFE

Almost nothing is known of Clement beyond his letter and the lists of Roman bishops. Irenaeus names him third after Linus and Anacletus (*Against Heresies* 3.3.3). The *Shepherd of Hermas* mentions a Clement at Rome whose task was to send writings to other cities (Vision 2.4). The letter itself does not name its author; it speaks for "the Church of God which sojourns at Rome." It answers a dispute at Corinth, where younger members had removed presbyters from office, and apologizes for its delay because of "sudden and successive calamitous events" (ch. 1), often taken as a reference to trouble under Domitian. It gives an early account of the deaths of Peter and Paul, saying that Paul reached "the extreme limit of the west" (ch. 5). Accounts that he was exiled to the Crimea and drowned with an anchor tied to him come from the fourth century and later.

WHAT HE TAUGHT

The letter calls the Corinthians back to peace and order. It traces the ministry to God through Christ: "The apostles have preached the gospel to us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ [has done so] from God" (ch. 42). The apostles appointed "bishops and deacons," and, knowing "there would be strife on account of the office of the episcopate," arranged that other approved men should succeed them (chs. 42, 44). The men removed at Corinth are called presbyters who held the episcopate, and the letter says it is no small sin to "eject from the episcopate" those who served blamelessly (ch. 44). On salvation it says that we are "not justified by ourselves, nor by our own wisdom, or understanding, or godliness, or works," but "by that faith through which, from the beginning, Almighty God has justified all men" (ch. 32), and goes straight on to ask whether we should therefore "become slothful in well-doing" and answers no (ch. 33). It quotes the Old Testament constantly and tells the Corinthians to "take up the epistle of the blessed Apostle Paul" (ch. 47).

WHAT HISTORIANS SAY

Most scholars accept a date near the end of Domitian's reign, c. 95–96, the date J. B. Lightfoot defended in his edition of *The Apostolic Fathers*. Laurence Welborn ("On the Date of First Clement," *Biblical Research*, 1984) argued that the internal evidence allows a range of about 80–140, while Thomas Herron (*Clement and the Early Church of Rome*, 2008) argued for a date around 70. Historians also debate what Clement's office was. Peter Lampe (*From Paul to Valentinus*) argued that Rome was led by a group of presbyters until well into the second century and that Clement may have been the presbyter charged with the church's letters; others hold, with Irenaeus's list, that Rome already had a single presiding bishop. Lightfoot and most later scholars read the letter as using "bishop" and "presbyter" of the same men.

HOW THE CHURCHES READ HIM

- **Catholic:** Catholics count Clement as the fourth pope. Benedict XVI called the letter "a first exercise of the Roman primacy after St Peter's death" (general audience, March 7, 2007), and Catholic writers cite chapters 42–44 for apostolic succession.
- **Orthodox:** The Orthodox venerate him as a hieromartyr consecrated by Peter, and read chapters 42–44 as witness to bishops in succession. They note that the letter is written by one church to another and claims no jurisdiction; the Apostolic Canons, received in Orthodox canon law, list "two Epistles of Clemens" among the books of the New Testament (canon 85).
- **Lutheran:** Lutherans commemorate him and cite chapter 32 as an early witness to justification by faith. On the ministry they read him with Jerome and the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope (61–65): bishops and elders were one office by divine right.
- **Reformed:** Presbyterians point out that the letter calls the same men bishops and presbyters, which fits their parity of elders and the Second Helvetic Confession's account that "the bishops or presbyters governed the Church in common" (ch. 18).
- **Anglican:** Anglicans cite the letter, with the Ordinal's appeal to "ancient Authors," for an ordered ministry handed on from the apostles. The Anglican bishop J. B. Lightfoot produced the standard English edition and held that the episcopate grew out of the presbyterate.
- **Methodist:** John Wesley placed the letter first in volume 1 of his *Christian Library* (1749) as an example of primitive Christianity. Following Lord King's account of the primitive church, he held that bishops and presbyters were "the same order" (letter "To Our Brethren in America," 1784).
- **Baptist:** Baptists note that chapter 42 names only two offices, bishops and deacons, as their confessions do ("Bishops or Elders, and Deacons," Second London Confession 26.8), and they welcome chapter 32 on faith. They do not read the letter as evidence of a single bishop over Rome.

Cited in: 1. Scripture alone; 3. The Church Fathers; 4. The visible Church; 5. Peter and the papacy; 9. Faith alone; 21. The Mass as sacrifice; 25. Priesthood and celibacy; 39. Timelines of the traditions

Sources: 1 Clement (ANF 9, New Advent); Eusebius, Church History 3 (NPNF2 1); Eusebius, Church History 4; Irenaeus, Against Heresies 3.3; Apostolic Canons; Benedict XVI, General Audience, March 7, 2007; OCA, Hieromartyr Clement; Catholic Encyclopedia, Pope St. Clement I; Wesley, A Christian Library, vol. 1; Early Christian Writings, 1 Clement (dating).

Ignatius of Antioch d. c. 108–117

Ignatius was bishop of Antioch in Syria in the early second century. Arrested under the emperor Trajan, he was taken under guard to Rome to die in the arena, and on the way he wrote seven letters to churches and to Polycarp of Smyrna. They are the earliest writings to describe a single bishop with presbyters and deacons in each church, the first to speak of "the Catholic Church," and among the earliest to call the Eucharist the flesh of Christ. Every tradition reads them, and they are central to the debates over bishops, the Lord's Supper and Rome.

Lived	Died c. 108–117, in the reign of Trajan (98–117)
Where	Antioch in Syria; letters written at Smyrna and Troas on the road to Rome
Taught by	The apostle John, by tradition (later martyr accounts); Eusebius calls him "second in succession to Peter" at Antioch (*Church History* 3.36) and names Evodius as the first bishop (3.22)
Taught or influenced	Polycarp of Smyrna, to whom he wrote and who collected his letters (Polycarp, *Philippians* 13); the churches of Asia Minor
Writings	Seven letters: to the Ephesians, Magnesians, Trallians, Romans, Philadelphians and Smyrnaeans, and to Polycarp. A longer, interpolated set of thirteen letters circulated from the fourth century.
Language	Greek
Honored	Saint and martyr in the Catholic Church (October 17) and the Orthodox Church (December 20); commemorated on October 17 in the Church of England, the Episcopal Church and the calendars of the ELCA and LCMS

LIFE

Ignatius calls himself "Theophorus," the God-bearer, in the opening of each letter. Of his life before his arrest nothing certain is known. Eusebius says that as he traveled through Asia "under the strictest military surveillance" he strengthened the churches and warned them against heresy (*Church History* 3.36). At Smyrna, where Polycarp was bishop, he wrote to Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles and Rome; at Troas he wrote to Philadelphia, Smyrna and Polycarp. He asked the Roman Christians not to prevent his death: "I am the wheat of God, and let me be ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of Christ" (*Romans* 4). Polycarp's letter to the Philippians assumes that he had died (ch. 9).

WHAT HE TAUGHT

His great themes are the reality of Christ's flesh and the unity of the church. Against those who said Christ "only seemed to suffer" (*Smyrnaeans* 2), he insisted on a real birth, death and resurrection. Unity meant gathering around the bishop, presbyters and deacons: "Apart from these, there is no Church" (*Trallians* 3); "Wherever the bishop shall appear, there let the multitude [of the people] also be; even as, wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church" (*Smyrnaeans* 8). Heretics "abstain from the Eucharist and from prayer, because they confess not the Eucharist to be the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ" (*Smyrnaeans* 7), and the one bread is "the medicine of immortality" (*Ephesians* 20). Christians no longer keep the Sabbath but live "in the observance of the Lord's Day" (*Magnesians* 9). He greets the Roman church as the one "which presides over love" (*Romans*, greeting), yet tells it, "I do not, as Peter and Paul, issue commandments unto you" (*Romans* 4). When opponents would believe only what they found in "the ancient Scriptures," he answered, "to me Jesus Christ is in the place of all that is ancient" (*Philadelphians* 8).

WHAT HISTORIANS SAY

The letters survive in three forms: a long recension of thirteen letters with fourth-century additions, a middle recension of seven letters published by James Ussher (Latin, 1644) and Isaac Vossius (Greek, 1646), and a short Syriac abridgment of three letters published by William Cureton (1845). The Reformed scholar Jean Daillé (1666) rejected even the seven; the Anglican John Pearson answered him in *Vindiciae Epistolarum S. Ignatii* (1672). Theodor Zahn (1873) and J. B. Lightfoot (1885) defended the middle recension, and most scholars since, including William Schoedel (Hermeneia commentary, 1985), accept it. Robert Joly (1979) and Josep Rius-Camps argued that the seven are wholly or partly later compositions. The date is also debated: the traditional range is about 108–117, while Timothy Barnes ("The Date of Ignatius," *Expository Times*, 2008) placed the letters in the 140s.

HOW THE CHURCHES READ HIM

- **Catholic:** The Catechism cites him for the Catholic Church gathered around Christ and the bishop (CCC 830, 896, 1369) and for the Eucharist as "medicine of immortality" (CCC 1405). Benedict XVI read the greeting to Rome as a "primacy of love" (general audience, March 14, 2007).
- **Orthodox:** The Orthodox honor him as "the God-bearer" and a disciple of John. Orthodox theologians such as Nicholas Afanasiev and John Zizioulas (*Eucharist, Bishop, Church*) built their account of the church on his picture of one bishop and one Eucharist in each place; they read Rome's "presiding in love" as a priority among sister churches, not jurisdiction.
- **Lutheran:** Lutherans cite *Smyrnaeans* 7 among early witnesses to the true body and blood of Christ in the Supper, which they confess (Augsburg Confession 10). They treat his single bishop as a good human order rather than a divine requirement (Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope 61–65).
- **Reformed:** Calvin knew only the interpolated letters and dismissed "the impertinencies which have been published under the name of Ignatius" (*Institutes* 1.13.29). Reformed writers today generally accept the seven but read his bishop over presbyters as a development beyond the New Testament, where elders and overseers are one office (Second Helvetic Confession 18).
- **Anglican:** Anglican scholars recovered and defended the genuine letters (Ussher, Pearson, Lightfoot), and Anglicans cite them for the threefold ministry of bishops, priests and deacons, which the Ordinal says has existed "from the Apostles' time."
- **Methodist:** Wesley included the letters and the account of his martyrdom in volume 1 of his *Christian Library* (1749). Methodists honor his devotion and martyrdom but, with Wesley, do not hold that bishops form a separate order by divine right.
- **Baptist:** Baptists hold that "bishop" and "elder" name one office in the New Testament (Titus 1:5–7; Acts 20:17, 28) and see Ignatius's single bishop as a development, not apostolic. Those who hold the memorial view of the Supper read *Smyrnaeans* 7 in the light of chapter 2: his concern was the reality of Christ's flesh against those who denied it, not the mode of the elements.

Cited in: 1. Scripture alone; 3. The Church Fathers; 4. The visible Church; 5. Peter and the papacy; 19. The Lord's Supper; 20. The symbolic view; 25. Priesthood and celibacy; 39. Timelines of the traditions

Sources: Ignatius, Smyrnaeans (ANF 1, New Advent), with Ephesians, Magnesians, Trallians, Romans, Philadelphians; Eusebius, Church History 3; Srawley, the Ignatian controversy; Benedict XVI, General Audience, March 14, 2007; OCA, Hieromartyr Ignatius the God-Bearer; Calvin, Institutes, vol. 1 (Allen tr.); Catholic Encyclopedia, St. Ignatius of Antioch.

Papias of Hierapolis fl. c. 100–130

Papias was bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, in the Lycus valley near Laodicea and Colossae, in the early second century. He collected sayings and stories of the Lord from people who had known the apostles and wrote them up in five books, now lost except for quotations. Those fragments contain the earliest statements about how the Gospels of Mark and Matthew were written, and one of the earliest expectations of a thousand-year earthly kingdom after the resurrection. Every tradition meets him in debates over the Gospels' origins and over the millennium, though none rests doctrine on him.

Lived	Active c. 100–130; Eusebius places him in the time of Trajan (98–117) (*Church History* 3.36). Dates of birth and death unknown.
Where	Hierapolis in Phrygia (Asia Minor)
Taught by	By his own account, followers of the apostles and "Aristion and the presbyter John, the disciples of the Lord" (Eusebius, *Church History* 3.39). Irenaeus calls him "the hearer of John, and a companion of Polycarp" (*Against Heresies* 5.33.4).
Taught or influenced	Irenaeus, who quotes him on the millennium; Eusebius, who preserved most of the fragments; later writers who held an earthly millennium
Writings	*Expositions of the Oracles of the Lord* (five books), lost; fragments survive in Irenaeus, Eusebius and later writers
Language	Greek
Honored	Listed as a saint in the Roman Martyrology (February 22)

LIFE

Almost everything known about Papias comes from his preface, which Eusebius quotes. He says he did not "take pleasure in those that speak much, but in those that teach the truth," and that when anyone came who had followed the elders, he asked "what Andrew or what Peter said, or what was said by Philip, or by Thomas, or by James, or by John, or by Matthew," and what Aristion and the presbyter John were saying. He explains why: "I did not think that what was to be gotten from the books would profit me as much as what came from the living and abiding voice" (*Church History* 3.39.3–4). He also reported stories he heard from the daughters of Philip, who lived at Hierapolis,

including one of a person raised from the dead, and a story that Justus Barsabbas drank poison without harm (3.39.9).

WHAT HE TAUGHT

On the Gospels he passed on what "the presbyter" said: "Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately, though not in order, whatsoever he remembered of the things said or done by Christ." Of Matthew he wrote, "Matthew wrote the oracles in the Hebrew language, and every one interpreted them as he was able" (3.39.15–16). He used 1 John and 1 Peter. Eusebius summarizes his view that "there will be a period of some thousand years after the resurrection of the dead, and that the kingdom of Christ will be set up in material form on this very earth" (3.39.12), and Irenaeus quotes from him the elders' report of the Lord's saying that in that kingdom vines will grow "each having ten thousand branches" (*Against Heresies* 5.33.3–4; compare Rev 20).

WHAT HISTORIANS SAY

Eusebius disagreed with Irenaeus on whom Papias had heard. Noting that the name John appears twice in the preface, he argued that the second John, "the presbyter," was a different man from the apostle (3.39.5–7). Eusebius also judged that Papias "appears to have been of very limited understanding" because of his millennial views (3.39.13). Dates for his book range widely: Adolf von Harnack put it as late as 140–160, while Richard Bauckham (*Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*, 2006) argues that it fits an earlier date, perhaps c. 110, with his inquiries made decades before. Bauckham and others treat his preface as evidence that the Gospel traditions were tied to named eyewitnesses; other scholars give the fragments less weight. His "Hebrew language" is usually read as the language Matthew wrote in, though Josef Kürzinger argued that it meant a Hebrew style of presentation. J. B. Lightfoot argued that by "oracles" Papias meant the Gospel writings, narratives as well as sayings (*Essays on Supernatural Religion*).

HOW THE CHURCHES READ HIM

- **Catholic:** The Catholic Church lists him as a saint. His notices on Matthew and Mark belong to the tradition on the Gospels' authorship that the Pontifical Biblical Commission affirmed for Matthew in 1911. Catholic teaching does not follow his millennium: the Church has rejected "even modified forms" of millenarianism (CCC 676).
- **Orthodox:** The Orthodox make little use of him. Orthodox teaching, which confesses that Christ's kingdom "shall have no end," does not follow his expectation of an earthly thousand-year reign.
- **Lutheran:** Lutherans do not follow his millennial hope: the Augsburg Confession condemns "Jewish opinions" that the godly will possess the kingdom of the world before the resurrection (Article 17). They cite his Gospel traditions as historical testimony only.

- **Reformed:** The Second Helvetic Confession likewise condemns "Jewish dreams that there will be a golden age on earth before the Day of Judgment" (ch. 11). Reformed writers otherwise use him mainly on the origins of the Gospels.
- **Anglican:** The Forty-Two Articles of 1553 condemned the "Millenarii" (Article 41), an article dropped from the Thirty-Nine Articles of 1563. The Anglican J. B. Lightfoot defended Papias as an early witness to the written Gospels.
- **Methodist:** Methodists make little use of him; the Methodist Articles of Religion take no position on the millennium.
- **Baptist:** Premillennial Baptists cite Papias, with Justin and Irenaeus, as evidence that an earthly reign of Christ after his return was held within a generation or two of the apostles. Baptist confessions such as the Baptist Faith and Message (art. 10) name no millennial view.

Cited in: 36. The Rapture and end times

Sources: Eusebius, Church History 3.36, 3.39 (NPNF2 1, New Advent); Irenaeus, Against Heresies 5.33; Catholic Encyclopedia, St. Papias; Roman Martyrology, February 22; Pontifical Biblical Commission, documents index; Second Helvetic Confession, ch. 11; Schaff, Creeds of Christendom, on the Forty-Two Articles; Review of Bauckham, Jesus and the Eyewitnesses (Denver Journal).

Polycarp of Smyrna d. c. 155

Polycarp was bishop of Smyrna (modern Izmir) for much of the first half of the second century and died a martyr in old age. His pupil Irenaeus remembered him telling of his time with the apostle John, so he is the clearest living link between the apostles and the later church. His one surviving letter, to the Philippians, is full of New Testament language, and the account of his death is the oldest Christian martyrdom narrative outside the New Testament. Every tradition claims his faithfulness; they read differently what his life shows about bishops, baptism, Easter and the honor given to martyrs.

Lived	c. 69–c. 155; his martyrdom is usually dated 155 or 156, though Eusebius places it later, c. 167
Where	Smyrna in the Roman province of Asia; visited Rome c. 155
Taught by	The apostle John and others "who had seen the Lord," according to Irenaeus (*Against Heresies* 3.3.4; letter to Florinus in Eusebius, *Church History* 5.20). Irenaeus adds that he was appointed bishop "by apostles in Asia."

Taught or influenced	Irenaeus of Lyons, who heard him as a boy; Papias, called his "companion" by Irenaeus; Ignatius of Antioch wrote to him and Polycarp collected Ignatius's letters
Writings	*Letter to the Philippians*. The *Martyrdom of Polycarp* is a letter from the church of Smyrna about his death.
Language	Greek
Honored	Saint and martyr in the Catholic and Orthodox churches (February 23); commemorated on February 23 in the Church of England, the Episcopal Church and the calendars of the ELCA and LCMS

LIFE

Irenaeus, writing to a former fellow pupil, said he could still describe "the very place in which the blessed Polycarp sat as he discoursed," and how he told of "his intercourse with John and with the others who had seen the Lord" (Eusebius, *Church History* 5.20). About 155 Polycarp went to Rome and discussed the date of Easter with Bishop Anicetus. Neither persuaded the other: Polycarp kept the custom he had observed "with John the disciple of our Lord," Anicetus that of the presbyters before him; yet "Anicetus conceded the administration of the eucharist in the church to Polycarp," and they parted in peace (5.24). Later, during a persecution at Smyrna, he was arrested, brought before the proconsul in the stadium and burned. Urged to swear and "reproach Christ," he answered: "Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He never did me any injury: how then can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour?" (*Martyrdom* 9).

WHAT HE TAUGHT

His letter, written "with the presbyters" of Smyrna, is an exhortation drawn largely from Paul, 1 Peter and 1 John. Believers are saved, "knowing that by grace you are saved, not of works" (*Philippians* 1, quoting Eph 2:8–9), and must go on to serve God "in fear and truth" (ch. 2). "Whosoever does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, is antichrist" (ch. 7, quoting 1 John 4:3). The Philippians are to be "subject to the presbyters and deacons, as unto God and Christ" (ch. 5). He quotes Eph 4:26 as among "these Scriptures" (ch. 12). The *Martyrdom* greets "all the congregations of the Holy and Catholic Church in every place," records his prayer at the stake (ch. 14), and says the church gathered his bones "as being more precious than the most exquisite jewels" so as to "celebrate the anniversary of his martyrdom" (ch. 18).

WHAT HISTORIANS SAY

P. N. Harrison (*Polycarp's Two Epistles to the Philippians*, 1936) argued that the letter joins two letters: a short note sent with Ignatius's letters (ch. 13) and a later letter (chs. 1–12), since chapter 9 treats Ignatius as dead while chapter 13 asks for news of him. Many scholars accept this; others think one letter can hold both. The date of his death turns on the proconsul named in the *Martyrdom*, Statius Quadratus (ch. 21), usually placed in 155 or 156, against Eusebius's later date. Candida Moss ("On the Dating of Polycarp," *Early Christianity*, 2010) argued that the *Martyrdom* in its present form is a third-century composition; most scholars still treat it as a mid-second-century letter, though with later additions.

HOW THE CHURCHES READ HIM

- **Catholic:** Catholics see in him apostolic succession through bishops appointed by apostles, and cite the *Martyrdom* for the early honor paid to martyrs and their relics; the Catechism quotes his prayer at the stake (CCC 2474). His meeting with Anicetus is read as communion with Rome amid differing customs.
- **Orthodox:** The Orthodox honor him as a hieromartyr and disciple of John. His Easter custom, kept "with John," and the peace he made with Anicetus are read as apostolic tradition held in each church and unity without a single see imposing its practice.
- **Lutheran:** Lutherans commemorate him and cite *Philippians* 1, "by grace you are saved, not of works," among early witnesses to salvation by grace. They welcome his confession of Christ before the proconsul as a model of steadfast faith.
- **Reformed:** Presbyterians note that he writes together with "the presbyters with him" and tells the Philippians to obey "the presbyters and deacons" without naming any bishop at Philippi, which fits their view that the early church was governed by elders.
- **Anglican:** Anglicans commemorate him and read him as a bishop in the line of the apostles; the Anglican J. B. Lightfoot edited his letter and the *Martyrdom* in *The Apostolic Fathers* (1885).
- **Methodist:** Wesley included his letter and the account of his martyrdom in volume 1 of his *Christian Library* (1749), offering them to Methodists as examples of primitive Christian holiness.
- **Baptist:** Baptists cite *Philippians* 1 on grace and honor his martyrdom. To the claim that his "eighty and six years" of serving Christ means he was baptized as an infant, they answer that the words do not mention baptism and may count from his birth into a Christian home or from an early conversion.

Cited in: 3. The Church Fathers; 9. Faith alone; 17. Infant baptism; 33. Statues, icons and relics; 39. Timelines of the traditions

Sources: Polycarp, Letter to the Philippians (ANF 1, New Advent); Martyrdom of Polycarp (ANF 1); Irenaeus, Against Heresies 3.3; Eusebius, Church History 5; Review of Harrison (Church History); OCA, saints of February 23;

Catholic Encyclopedia, St. Polycarp; Wesley, A Christian Library, vol. 1.

Justin Martyr c. 100–c. 165

Justin was a philosopher from Samaria who became a Christian, taught in Rome and died there as a martyr. His defenses of the faith, addressed to the emperor Antoninus Pius and to a Jewish interlocutor named Trypho, are the fullest Christian writings to survive from the mid-second century. He gives the earliest detailed description of Christian baptism and of Sunday worship with the Eucharist, and he set out how Christ the Word relates to the truth found in Greek philosophy. All seven traditions draw on him, especially for what early Christians did on Sunday and what they believed about baptism and the Supper.

Lived	c. 100–c. 165
Where	Born at Flavia Neapolis (ancient Shechem, modern Nablus) in Samaria; Eusebius sets the *Dialogue* at Ephesus (*Church History* 4.18.6); taught in Rome, where he died
Taught by	Teachers of the Stoic, Peripatetic, Pythagorean and Platonist schools, and finally an unnamed old Christian he met by the sea, by his own account (*Dialogue with Trypho* 2–8)
Taught or influenced	His pupil Tatian, who calls him "the most admirable Justin" (*Address to the Greeks* 18); Irenaeus, who quotes him: "Justin well says…" (Eusebius, *Church History* 4.18.9)
Writings	*First Apology* (c. 155), *Second Apology*, *Dialogue with Trypho* (c. 160). Other works named by Eusebius are lost; several writings once attributed to him are by others.
Language	Greek
Honored	Saint and martyr in the Catholic and Orthodox churches (June 1); commemorated on June 1 in the Church of England, the Episcopal Church and the calendars of the ELCA and LCMS

LIFE

Justin introduces himself as a native of "Flavia Neapolis in Palestine" (*First Apology* 1). In the *Dialogue* he tells how he went from one school of philosophy to another until an old man showed him that the prophets, not the philosophers, had seen the truth. He kept the philosopher's cloak and opened a school in Rome. His *First Apology*, addressed to Antoninus Pius and his sons, asks that Christians be judged by their conduct, not their name. In the *Second Apology* he expected to be "plotted against" by the Cynic Crescens (ch. 3). The record of his trial, the *Martyrdom of Justin*, shows him and six companions before Rusticus, prefect of Rome, saying he had "endeavoured to learn all doctrines" but settled on the Christian ones; they were beheaded about 165.

WHAT HE TAUGHT

Christ is the Word (*Logos*) of God, of whom every race shares a part: "those who lived reasonably are Christians, even though they have been thought atheists; as, among the Greeks, Socrates and Heraclitus" (*First Apology* 46), for each "spoke well in proportion to the share he had of the spermatic word" (*Second Apology* 13). Those who "are persuaded and believe" pray and fast and "are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated"; the washing "is called illumination" (*First Apology* 61). Only the baptized who believe and live as Christ commanded receive the Eucharist, "for not as common bread and common drink do we receive these," but as "the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh" (ch. 66). "On the day called Sunday" Christians gather, read "the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets," hear the president's exhortation, pray, and share the bread and wine (ch. 67). He defends free choice against fate (ch. 43), sees the Eucharist as the pure offering foretold in Mal 1:11 (*Dialogue* 41), and contrasts Eve's disobedience with Mary's faith (ch. 100). He expected "a thousand years in Jerusalem" after the resurrection, while granting that "many who belong to the pure and pious faith, and are true Christians, think otherwise" (ch. 80).

WHAT HISTORIANS SAY

His genuine works survive almost entirely in one fourteenth-century manuscript, which makes some readings uncertain. Denis Minns and Paul Parvis, in their Oxford edition of the *Apologies* (2009), reopened the question of how the short *Second Apology* relates to the *First*. Oskar Skarsaune (*The Proof from Prophecy*, 1987) showed how much of Justin's argument rests on collections of Old Testament proof texts that he inherited. Scholars differ on whether the *Dialogue* records a real conversation or is a literary work modeled on one, and on how far his Logos teaching borrows from Middle Platonism and Stoicism.

HOW THE CHURCHES READ HIM

- **Catholic:** The Catechism takes his account of Sunday worship as the witness for "the basic lines of the order of the Eucharistic celebration," unchanged in all the great liturgical families

(CCC 1345). Benedict XVI, citing *Fides et Ratio* 38, presented him as marking the early church's "forceful option for philosophy" (general audience, March 21, 2007).

- **Orthodox:** The Orthodox commemorate him as "Justin the Philosopher" and read *First Apology* 61–67 as an early outline of the Divine Liturgy and of initiation by baptism. His teaching on the Word present in all reason is part of their approach to Greek learning.
- **Lutheran:** Lutherans cite chapter 66 for the true body and blood of Christ received in the Supper (Augsburg Confession 10), and his rule that only the baptized who share the church's faith receive it supports their practice of close communion.
- **Reformed:** Calvin wrote that on the Trinity Justin "agrees with us in every point" (*Institutes* 1.13.29). Reformed theology, which holds that the fallen will cannot turn to God by its own strength (Westminster Confession 9.3), does not follow his strong language on free choice, which was aimed at pagan fatalism.
- **Anglican:** Anglicans commemorate him, and Anglican liturgists, among them Gregory Dix (*The Shape of the Liturgy*, 1945), used his account of Sunday worship as early evidence for the shape of the Eucharist.
- **Methodist:** Wesley cited Justin's testimony that "there are prophetic gifts among us even until now" against Conyers Middleton, who denied that miracles continued after the apostles (*Letter to Dr. Middleton*, 1749).
- **Baptist:** Baptists note that in *First Apology* 61 those baptized are people who have been "persuaded" and believe, who pray and fast beforehand, and that he describes no infants. They do not follow his language of baptismal regeneration or his realist reading of the Supper.

Cited in: 3. The Church Fathers; 11. The state of grace; 13. Predestination and free will; 14. The sinner's prayer; 16. Baptism; 19. The Lord's Supper; 20. The symbolic view; 21. The Mass as sacrifice; 22. Who may receive Communion?; 28. Spiritual gifts; 31. Immaculate Conception and Assumption; 36. The Rapture and end times; 39. Timelines of the traditions

Sources: Justin, First Apology (ANF 1, New Advent); Second Apology; Dialogue with Trypho; Martyrdom of Justin; Tatian, Address to the Greeks; Benedict XVI, General Audience, March 21, 2007; Catechism of the Catholic Church 1345; Calvin, Institutes, vol. 1 (Allen tr.); Wesley, Letters, 1749; Catholic Encyclopedia, St. Justin Martyr.

Irenaeus of Lyons c. 130–c. 202

Irenaeus grew up in Asia Minor, where as a boy he heard Polycarp, and became bishop of Lyons in Gaul. His five books *Against Heresies*, written about 180 against the Gnostic teachers, are the first full statement of Christian belief to survive: one God who made the world, one Christ who "recapitulates" humanity, one faith handed down from the apostles in the churches and in the

Scriptures. Because he appeals both to Scripture and to the succession of bishops, and singles out the church of Rome, every tradition claims him and argues over how to weigh his words.

Lived	c. 130–c. 202 (birth dates proposed range from c. 115 to c. 140)
Where	Born in Asia Minor, probably at or near Smyrna; presbyter and then bishop at Lyons (Lugdunum) in Gaul
Taught by	Polycarp of Smyrna, whom he heard "in my early youth" (*Against Heresies* 3.3.4); he also cites unnamed "elders" who had known John, and draws on Papias and Justin
Taught or influenced	Hippolytus, who drew on his refutation of the Gnostics, and Tertullian, who used his work against Valentinus; later writers on tradition and on Christ as the new Adam
Writings	*Against Heresies* (*Refutation and Overthrow of Knowledge Falsely So Called*, five books, c. 180), complete in an early Latin translation with Greek fragments; *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*, found in Armenian in 1904; fragments of letters
Language	Greek
Honored	Saint in the Catholic Church (June 28), named a Doctor of the Church as "Doctor of Unity" in 2022; saint in the Orthodox Church (August 23); commemorated on June 28 in the Church of England, as a Teacher of the Faith, the Episcopal Church and the calendars of the ELCA and LCMS

LIFE

Irenaeus reminded his former fellow pupil Florinus how they had listened to Polycarp, who told "of his intercourse with John and with the others who had seen the Lord" (Eusebius, *Church History* 5.20). By 177 he was a presbyter at Lyons; the martyrs of that year sent him to Rome with a letter to Bishop Eleutherius, describing him as "zealous for the covenant of Christ" (5.4). The ninety-year-old bishop Pothinus died in that persecution, and Irenaeus succeeded him (5.5.8). About 190, when Bishop Victor of Rome moved to cut off the churches of Asia for keeping Easter on the fourteenth day of the month, Irenaeus wrote to urge peace, recalling that earlier Roman bishops had stayed in

communion with those who kept the other custom (5.24). He died about 202; a later tradition, recorded by Gregory of Tours, makes him a martyr.

WHAT HE TAUGHT

Against teachers who claimed secret knowledge, Irenaeus pointed to what the apostles had taught openly: they first preached the gospel, "and, at a later period, by the will of God, handed down to us in the Scriptures, to be the ground and pillar of our faith" (*Against Heresies* 3.1.1). The same faith is kept in the churches through "the successions of the bishops," and he lists Rome's bishops from Linus to Eleutherius, adding: "it is a matter of necessity that every Church should agree with this Church, on account of its preeminent authority" (3.3.2–3). Christ "recapitulates" Adam's race: "the knot of Eve's disobedience was loosed by the obedience of Mary" (3.22.4), and he came "to save all… who through Him are born again to God — infants, and children, and boys, and youths, and old men" (2.22.4). He "became what we are, that He might bring us to be even what He is Himself" (book 5, preface). On the Eucharist: "our opinion is in accordance with the Eucharist, and the Eucharist in turn establishes our opinion" (4.18.5). "The glory of God is a living man; and the life of man consists in beholding God" (4.20.7). Following Papias and the elders, he expected an earthly kingdom of the righteous after the resurrection (5.32–36).

WHAT HISTORIANS SAY

The sentence on Rome survives only in Latin (*propter potentiorem principalitatem*), and scholars still debate whether *convenire* means "agree with" or "resort to," and whether "this Church" means Rome alone or the apostolic churches it exemplifies. The discovery of Gnostic texts at Nag Hammadi (1945) confirmed that some of the systems he describes existed much as he reports, while showing that he presented them as an opponent. Full studies of his theology include Eric Osborn, *Irenaeus of Lyons* (2001), and John Behr, *Irenaeus of Lyons: Identifying Christianity* (2013). The Catholic Encyclopedia judged it "not very probable" that he died a martyr.

HOW THE CHURCHES READ HIM

- **Catholic:** The Catechism quotes 3.3.2 on the church of Rome (CCC 834) and his words on the glory of God (CCC 294). Benedict XVI summarized him: "All Churches must agree with the Church of Rome" (general audience, March 28, 2007), and Francis named him "Doctor of Unity" for bridging East and West.
- **Orthodox:** The Orthodox venerate him as a hieromartyr and value his teaching that God became man so that man might share God's life (book 5, preface), an early form of deification. Orthodox writers stress that he rebuked Victor of Rome and read 3.3.2 as honoring Rome as a church founded by Peter and Paul, not as a grant of jurisdiction.
- **Lutheran:** The Swedish Lutheran bishop Gustaf Aulén made him the chief witness for the "classic" view of the atonement, Christ's victory over sin, death and the devil (*Christus Victor*,

1931). Martin Chemnitz, in his *Examination of the Council of Trent*, cited 3.1–3.4 to argue that the tradition Irenaeus meant had the same content as Scripture.

- **Reformed:** Calvin answered the appeal to his succession lists that succession counts only if "the truth of Christ" is kept (*Institutes* 4.2.2), and cited his rebuke of Victor as "a token of equality, and not of dominion" between bishops (4.7.7). Reformed writers cite 3.1.1 on the Scriptures as "the ground and pillar of our faith."
- **Anglican:** The Church of England honors him as a "Teacher of the Faith." Anglicans read his joint appeal to Scripture and to the faith kept by bishops in the apostolic churches as matching their own rule of Scripture with the ancient Fathers (Canon A5).
- **Methodist:** Wesley cited his testimony that true disciples still worked miracles, healings and even raisings of the dead against Conyers Middleton (*Letter to Dr. Middleton*, 1749). Beyond that, Methodist doctrinal standards make little direct use of him.
- **Baptist:** Baptists cite 3.1.1 for Scripture as the foundation of faith, and premillennial Baptists cite 5.32–36 for an earthly reign of Christ. They read 2.22.4 as speaking of Christ sanctifying every age of life, not as a reference to infant baptism.

Cited in: 1. Scripture alone; 3. The Church Fathers; 4. The visible Church; 5. Peter and the papacy; 8. The Five Solas; 12. Original sin; 13. Predestination and free will; 16. Baptism; 17. Infant baptism; 19. The Lord's Supper; 21. The Mass as sacrifice; 28. Spiritual gifts; 31. Immaculate Conception and Assumption; 36. The Rapture and end times; 37. "The pope is the Antichrist"; 39. Timelines of the traditions

Sources: Irenaeus, Against Heresies (ANF 1, New Advent); Eusebius, Church History 5; Catholic Encyclopedia, St. Irenaeus; Benedict XVI, General Audience, March 28, 2007; Dicastery for Christian Unity, Irenaeus "Doctor unitatis" (2022); OCA, Hieromartyr Irenaeus; Calvin, Institutes, vol. 2 (Allen tr.); Wesley, Letters, 1749.

Clement of Alexandria c. 150–c. 215

Titus Flavius Clemens was a convert from paganism who became the leading Christian teacher in Alexandria at the end of the second century. Steeped in Greek literature, he argued that philosophy had prepared the Greeks for Christ as the law prepared the Jews, and he described the mature Christian as the true "gnostic," whose knowledge grows out of faith and shows itself in love. He is the first Christian writer to engage Greek learning at full length, and an early voice for the idea that God became man so that humans might share the divine life. The traditions use him unevenly: Catholics and Orthodox read him as a pioneer of faith and reason, Anglicans and Methodists have drawn on his picture of Christian perfection, and most Protestant churches make little use of him.

Lived	c. 150–c. 215 (died between about 211 and 215)

Where	Born probably at Athens (Epiphanius); taught at Alexandria; after c. 202 in Cappadocia and Palestine with his former pupil Alexander
Taught by	Pantaenus, whom he names as his teacher (Eusebius, *Church History* 6.13), after earlier teachers in Greece, Italy and the East (*Stromata* 1.1)
Taught or influenced	Alexander, later bishop of Jerusalem, who called him "my master and benefactor" (*Church History* 6.14); Origen, his pupil according to Eusebius (6.6)
Writings	*Exhortation to the Heathen* (*Protrepticus*), *The Instructor* (*Paedagogus*, three books), *Stromata* (*Miscellanies*, eight books), *Who Is the Rich Man That Shall Be Saved?*; fragments of the *Hypotyposes* and notes on the Valentinian Theodotus
Language	Greek
Honored	Commemorated in the Episcopal Church (December 5). Once listed in Western martyrologies on December 4, he was dropped from the Roman Martyrology under Clement VIII, a decision Benedict XIV upheld; he is not commemorated as a saint in the Eastern Orthodox Church.

LIFE

Clement says he learned from teachers in Greece, southern Italy, Syria, Palestine and elsewhere before finding in Egypt the one who satisfied him, usually identified with Pantaenus (*Stromata* 1.1). Eusebius says he succeeded Pantaenus in charge of "the catechetical instruction in Alexandria" (*Church History* 6.6). He wrote there for some twenty years, for educated converts and inquirers. During the persecution under Septimius Severus, about 202, he left Alexandria. A letter Alexander wrote to the church of Antioch about 211, while he was a prisoner for the faith, was sent "by Clement, the blessed presbyter," who had been with him and "strengthened and built up" his church; in a later letter Alexander speaks of him as already dead (6.11, 6.14).

WHAT HE TAUGHT

The Word who made the world now speaks to all: "the Word of God became man, that you may learn from man how man may become God" (*Exhortation* 1). Before Christ, "philosophy was

necessary to the Greeks for righteousness"; it was "a schoolmaster to bring the Hellenic mind, as the law, the Hebrews, to Christ" (*Stromata* 1.5; compare Gal 3:24). Faith is the foundation, and knowledge (*gnosis*) is faith grown mature; the true gnostic is marked by freedom from the passions and by love (*Stromata* 7). *The Instructor* sets out a Christian way of life in food, dress and marriage, and *Stromata* 3 defends marriage against those who condemned it. In *Who Is the Rich Man That Shall Be Saved?* he argued that Christ's command to sell all does not "bid him throw away the substance he possessed," but to banish from his soul "his notions about wealth" (ch. 11; Mark 10:17–31). He held that Paul wrote Hebrews and Luke translated it, and called John "a spiritual Gospel" (Eusebius, *Church History* 6.14).

WHAT HISTORIANS SAY

Annewies van den Hoek ("The 'Catechetical' School of Early Christian Alexandria," *Harvard Theological Review*, 1997) questioned whether a formal church school existed in Clement's day, arguing that Eusebius built a succession of heads from the institutions of his own time. In 1958 Morton Smith found at the monastery of Mar Saba a copy of a letter attributed to Clement that quotes a "secret" longer Gospel of Mark. Stephen Carlson (*The Gospel Hoax*, 2005) argued that Smith forged it; Scott Brown (*Mark's Other Gospel*, 2005) defended it, and the question remains open. Scholars also differ on how much of his thought is Platonist and Stoic and how much is biblical.

HOW THE CHURCHES READ HIM

- **Catholic:** Catholic writers value him as a pioneer of faith and reason: John Paul II wrote that he understood philosophy "as instruction which prepared for Christian faith" (*Fides et Ratio* 38), and Benedict XVI devoted a catechesis to his "true gnosis" (general audience, April 18, 2007). He is not venerated as a saint, partly because some of his teaching was judged doubtful.
- **Orthodox:** The Orthodox do not venerate him. They quote his words on God becoming man so that man might become god as an early statement of deification, but the patriarch Photius criticized his lost *Hypotyposes*, and his teaching is read through later Fathers.
- **Lutheran:** Lutherans make little use of him; the Lutheran confessions do not cite him.
- **Reformed:** Reformed churches likewise make little use of him, and their confessions do not cite him.
- **Anglican:** The Episcopal Church commemorates him as "Priest and Theologian." Anglican scholarship has long studied him, notably Charles Bigg's Bampton Lectures, *The Christian Platonists of Alexandria* (1886).
- **Methodist:** Wesley wrote that as a young man he "much admired the character of a perfect Christian drawn by Clemens Alexandrinus," and that it led him to write *The Character of a Methodist* (1742), though in more scriptural terms (letter in his *Journal*, March 5, 1767).

- **Baptist:** Baptists make little use of him.

Cited in: 26. Marriage

Sources: Clement, Exhortation to the Heathen (ANF 2, New Advent); Stromata 1; Stromata 7; Who Is the Rich Man That Shall Be Saved?; Eusebius, Church History 6; Britannica, St. Clement of Alexandria; Catholic Encyclopedia, Clement of Alexandria; Benedict XVI, General Audience, April 18, 2007; OrthodoxWiki, Clement of Alexandria; Episcopal Dictionary of the Church; Wesley, Journal, March 5, 1767; Review of Carlson, The Gospel Hoax.

Tertullian c. 155–c. 220

Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus of Carthage was the first great Christian writer in Latin. A forceful, often biting controversialist, he defended Christians against Roman persecution, attacked Marcion and the Gnostics, and gave Western theology much of its vocabulary, including the Latin *trinitas* and the formula of one substance in three persons. In later life he joined the New Prophecy movement (Montanism), and no church venerates him as a saint. All seven traditions still quote him: on tradition and Scripture, on baptism and his counsel to delay it, on the Eucharist, on penance and on the Trinity.

Lived	c. 155–c. 220; his writings run from about 196 to about 220
Where	Carthage, in the Roman province of Africa (modern Tunisia)
Taught by	No known teacher; he drew on Irenaeus, whom he calls "that very exact inquirer into all doctrines" (*Against the Valentinians* 5), and on Justin
Taught or influenced	Cyprian of Carthage, who according to Jerome read him daily and called him "the master" (*Lives of Illustrious Men* 53); Novatian and later Latin theology, including Augustine
Writings	About thirty surviving works, among them *Apology* (197), *Prescription Against Heretics*, *On Baptism*, *Against Marcion* (five books), *On the Flesh of Christ*, *On the Resurrection of the Flesh*, *Against Praxeas*, *On Repentance*, *The Crown*, *On Monogamy* and *On Modesty*
Language	Latin (some early works also in Greek, now lost)

Honored	Not venerated as a saint in any of the seven traditions; read as an important early witness

LIFE

Jerome, writing nearly two centuries later, says Tertullian was the son of a proconsular centurion, became a presbyter, joined the Montanists, and lived to a great age (*Lives of Illustrious Men* 53). He was a convert, and recalls that Christian beliefs were once "the theme of ridicule" for him too (*Apology* 18). His *Apology* of 197 addressed the governors of Africa. From about 207 his writings show sympathy with the New Prophecy, the movement begun in Phrygia by Montanus with Priscilla and Maximilla, which claimed new revelations from the Paraclete and demanded stricter fasting, no second marriage and no forgiveness by the church for grave sins. His later works attack the "psychics," the ordinary Catholic Christians. Augustine reports that a group called Tertullianists survived at Carthage until his own time, when they returned to the Catholic Church (*On Heresies* 86).

WHAT HE TAUGHT

Against persecution: "The oftener we are mown down by you, the more in number we grow; the blood of Christians is seed" (*Apology* 50), for "men are made, not born, Christians" (ch. 18). Against heretics he argued that Scripture belongs to the churches founded by the apostles, which hold the rule of faith in succession from them; heretics have no right to use it (*Prescription* 20–21, 32, 37), and he asked, "What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" (ch. 7). Against Praxeas he taught one God in three, "not in substance, but in form," yet "of one substance, and of one condition, and of one power" (*Against Praxeas* 2). "Happy is our sacrament of water, in that, by washing away the sins of our early blindness, we are set free and admitted into eternal life" (*On Baptism* 1); yet "the delay of baptism is preferable; principally, however, in the case of little children" (ch. 18). He wrote that "the flesh feeds on the body and blood of Christ, that the soul may be fattened by God" (*On the Resurrection of the Flesh* 8), called the bread "the figure of my body" (*Against Marcion* 4.40), and described offerings "for the dead as birthday honours" each year (*The Crown* 3). His Montanist works deny the bishops' power to forgive adultery (*On Modesty*).

WHAT HISTORIANS SAY

Timothy Barnes (*Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Study*, 1971) rejected most of Jerome's details: he doubted that Tertullian's father was a centurion and that he was the jurist Tertullianus. David Rankin (*Tertullian and the Church*, 1995), following Barnes, treats him as a layman rather than a presbyter and finds no need to assume a definite break with the Catholic church at Carthage; on this reading he was a member of the New Prophecy within the church rather than the founder of a separate sect. Others keep the older view that he left the Catholic community, the view also taken

in Benedict XVI's catechesis. Augustine, by contrast, thought he had broken with the Montanists too and founded a group of his own (*On Heresies* 86).

HOW THE CHURCHES READ HIM

- **Catholic:** Catholics value his *Prescription* as an early argument for apostolic tradition and his witness to penance: the Catechism takes from him the description of penance as "the second plank of salvation after the shipwreck which is the loss of grace" (CCC 1446). Benedict XVI said that "a too individualistic search for the truth" led him into the Montanist sect, yet even then he called the Church "Mother" (general audience, May 30, 2007).
- **Orthodox:** The Orthodox make little use of him. He wrote in Latin, was never venerated, and his Montanist rigor on penance runs against the Orthodox practice of restoring penitents.
- **Lutheran:** Lutherans share his realist language about baptism's washing and the body of Christ in the Supper, but not his counsel to delay infant baptism; the Augsburg Confession teaches that children are to be baptized and condemns those who reject it (Article 9).
- **Reformed:** Calvin used *Against Praxeas* against opponents of the Trinity (*Institutes* 1.13.28). In the 1520s Oecolampadius read "This is my body" as "the figure of my body," citing Tertullian, a reading the Reformed tradition took up in its spiritual or symbolic understanding of the Supper.
- **Anglican:** The Anglican Oxford Movement's *Library of the Fathers* published his *Apologetic and Practical Treatises* (1842, translated by Charles Dodgson, with a preface by E. B. Pusey), and Anglicans read him with the other ancient Fathers so far as he agrees with Scripture.
- **Methodist:** Wesley cited Tertullian's challenge to the magistrates to test Christian exorcisms as evidence of continuing gifts (*Letter to Dr. Middleton*, 1749), and wrote in his *Journal* (1750) that he was convinced the Montanists "were real, scriptural Christians."
- **Baptist:** Baptists cite *On Baptism* 18 as early evidence that infant baptism was not universal and was questioned, and his saying that Christians "are made, not born." They do not follow his teaching that baptism washes away sin.

Cited in: 1. Scripture alone; 3. The Church Fathers; 4. The visible Church; 11. The state of grace; 16. Baptism; 17. Infant baptism; 20. The symbolic view; 27. Women pastors and priests; 29. Church discipline; 30. Mary ever-virgin; 35. Purgatory; 39. Timelines of the traditions; 40. From the Reformation to the Baptists

Sources: Tertullian, Apology (ANF 3, New Advent); Prescription Against Heretics; On Baptism; Against Praxeas; On the Resurrection of the Flesh; The Crown; Catholic Encyclopedia, Tertullian; Benedict XVI, General Audience, May 30, 2007; Review of Barnes, Tertullian (JTS); Rankin, Tertullian and the Church; Jerome, Lives of Illustrious Men 53; Augustine, On Heresies 86; Library of the Fathers, Tertullian; Calvin, Institutes, vol. 1 (Allen tr.); Wesley, Letters, 1749.

Hippolytus of Rome d. c. 236

Hippolytus was a presbyter and theologian of the Roman church in the early third century, the most important Greek-writing author there in his day. He opposed the Roman bishops Zephyrinus and Callistus, led a rival community, and died in exile in Sardinia, honored afterward as a martyr. His commentaries on Daniel and his treatises on the Antichrist and the Trinity are among the earliest of their kind. The church order known as the *Apostolic Tradition*, long ascribed to him, describes ordinations, the catechumenate, baptism and the Eucharist, and it served as a model when Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran and Reformed churches revised their services in the twentieth century. Scholars now dispute whether he wrote it.

Lived	Birth unknown; active at Rome from c. 200; banished to Sardinia in 235, where he died c. 236
Where	Rome; exile in Sardinia
Taught by	Irenaeus of Lyons, by tradition (the ninth-century patriarch Photius calls him Irenaeus's disciple)
Taught or influenced	Origen, who heard him preach at Rome (Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men* 61); Eusebius, whose Easter cycle built on his; later church orders such as the *Apostolic Constitutions*, which drew on the *Apostolic Tradition*
Writings	*Commentary on Daniel*; *On Christ and Antichrist*; *Against Noetus*; *Refutation of All Heresies* (attributed); a chronicle and Easter tables; the *Apostolic Tradition* (attribution disputed); many works lost or surviving only in fragments and translations
Language	Greek
Honored	Saint and martyr in the Catholic Church (August 13, with Pope Pontian); commemorated in the Orthodox Church on January 30 as "Hieromartyr Hippolytus, Pope of Rome"; not in the Church of England, Episcopal or main Lutheran calendars

LIFE

Even ancient writers knew little about him: Jerome calls him "bishop of some church" whose city he could not learn (*Lives* 61). What can be pieced together comes mainly from the *Refutation of All Heresies*, whose ninth book attacks Callistus, bishop of Rome from about 217. Its author accuses Callistus of leaning toward the modalist teaching of Noetus and Sabellius, and of laxity toward grave sinners, "saying that all had their sins forgiven by himself" (*Refutation* 9.7). When Callistus was elected, Hippolytus left communion with him and was set up as bishop by his own followers; Catholic historians count him an antipope. According to the Roman Chronography of 354, Hippolytus and Pope Pontian were banished together to Sardinia in 235. Both died there, and their remains were brought back to Rome and buried on August 13; he is believed to have been reconciled before his death. In 1551 a marble statue of a seated figure was dug up in Rome, its chair carved with an Easter cycle and a list of writings, and it has been linked to him ever since.

WHAT HE TAUGHT

Against Noetus, who taught that the Father himself was born and suffered, Hippolytus defended the distinction of Father, Son and Spirit within one God: "The Father indeed is One, but there are two Persons," with the Spirit as the third (*Against Noetus* 14). He begins his argument: "There is, brethren, one God, the knowledge of whom we gain from the Holy Scriptures, and from no other source" (9). In *On Christ and Antichrist* and the Daniel commentary he expected a single personal Antichrist at the end of history. The *Apostolic Tradition* gives ordination prayers for bishops, presbyters and deacons, a catechumenate of up to three years, renunciation of Satan and a threefold profession of faith in the water, and an anointing after baptism. It directs that the children be baptized first, with parents or relatives speaking for those who cannot answer for themselves (21.4).

WHAT HISTORIANS SAY

The *Refutation* came to light in a manuscript from a monastery on Mount Athos, found by Minoides Mynas in 1842 and published at Oxford in 1851 by Emmanuel Miller under Origen's name; scholars soon assigned it to Hippolytus instead. Who wrote the whole body of works under his name is still debated. Pierre Nautin divided it between two writers, one an Eastern bishop. Allen Brent (*Hippolytus and the Roman Church in the Third Century*, 1995) placed both writers in Rome, in one Christian "house-school," and read the statue as a monument of that community rather than of a single bishop. The *Apostolic Tradition* was identified with a text known as the "Egyptian Church Order" by Eduard Schwartz (1910) and R. H. Connolly (1916), and Gregory Dix popularized the attribution. Its Greek is largely lost and has to be reconstructed from Latin, Coptic, Arabic and Ethiopic versions. Paul Bradshaw, Maxwell Johnson and L. Edward Phillips (*The Apostolic Tradition: A Commentary*, 2002) argue that it is a composite of layers from different times and places, the work neither of Hippolytus nor of any single author. That is why this site marks it "attributed."

HOW THE CHURCHES READ HIM

- **Catholic:** Venerated as a martyr with Pope Pontian, the rival bishop whose exile he shared. After the Second Vatican Council, the anaphora of the *Apostolic Tradition* served as the model for Eucharistic Prayer II, and its prayer for ordaining a bishop entered the revised Roman Pontifical.
- **Orthodox:** Commemorated on January 30 as a hieromartyr and "Pope of Rome," credited in the Orthodox lives with the *Apostolic Tradition* and with discourses on Theophany and Daniel; Orthodox hagiographers note that several early saints named Hippolytus are hard to tell apart.
- **Lutheran:** Makes little doctrinal use of him, but Lutheran service books adapted the anaphora of the *Apostolic Tradition*: Eucharistic Prayer IV in the *Lutheran Book of Worship* (1978) and a prayer in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (2006).
- **Reformed:** Likewise uses the church order more than the theologian: *The Worship Sourcebook* (2004), prepared for Reformed congregations, includes a eucharistic prayer "adapted from the Anaphora of Hippolytus."
- **Anglican:** The prayer for consecrating a bishop in the Episcopal Church's 1979 Book of Common Prayer is taken from the *Apostolic Tradition*, the same prayer used in the Roman Pontifical, and its eucharistic pattern shaped the 1979 prayer book's Rite Two.
- **Methodist:** Methodist writers make little direct use of him.
- **Baptist:** Steven McKinion of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary reads the *Apostolic Tradition* as describing the baptism of tested believers after a long catechumenate. He notes that the clause on children who cannot speak may be a later interpolation and argues that, even if original, it shows infant baptism was permitted, not the norm.

Cited in: 3. The Church Fathers; 14. The sinner's prayer; 16. Baptism: saving or symbolic?; 17. Infant baptism; 24. Seven sacraments or two?; 25. Priesthood and celibacy; 37. The pope as Antichrist?; 39. Timelines of the traditions

Sources: Hippolytus, *Against Noetus* (ANF 5); *Refutation of All Heresies*, book 9 (ANF 5); ANF 5, introductory notice to the *Refutation*; Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men* 61; Catholic Encyclopedia, "St. Hippolytus of Rome"; Bradshaw, Johnson and Phillips, *The Apostolic Tradition: A Commentary*; review of Brent, *Journal of Early Christian Studies*; OCA, Hieromartyr Hippolytus; The Pilot, "Eucharistic Prayer II"; Diocese of New York, *The Episcopate* (1988); A Collection of Prayers, Hippolytan anaphoras in Lutheran and Reformed books; McKinion, "Believers' Baptism in the Patristic Writings," *Southeastern Theological Review* 14.2 (2023)

Origen c. 185–c. 254

Origen of Alexandria was the most prolific scholar of the early Church: a teacher in Alexandria and then Caesarea in Palestine, he compiled the *Hexapla*, a six-column comparison of the Hebrew Old Testament with its Greek versions, wrote commentaries and homilies on most of the Bible, and produced in *On First Principles* the first attempt at a systematic Christian theology. Nearly every

later interpreter in East and West learned from him. Some of his speculations, on the origin of souls and the final restoration of all things, were condemned three centuries after his death, so every tradition both draws on him and sets part of him aside.

Lived	c. 185 to 253 or 254
Where	Alexandria; from 231–232 Caesarea in Palestine; journeys to Rome, Antioch, Greece and Arabia; died at Tyre
Taught by	Clement of Alexandria, as a boy (Eusebius, *Church History* 6.6); the philosopher Ammonius Saccas, according to Porphyry as quoted by Eusebius (6.19)
Taught or influenced	Gregory Thaumaturgus, his pupil for five years at Caesarea; Pamphilus and Eusebius of Caesarea; Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus, who compiled the *Philokalia* of extracts from him; Jerome and Rufinus, who translated him into Latin
Writings	*Hexapla*; *On First Principles* (mostly in Rufinus's Latin of 397); *Against Celsus* (eight books, written when he was over sixty); commentaries on John, Matthew and Romans; homilies; *On Prayer*; *Exhortation to Martyrdom*
Language	Greek; many works survive only in the Latin of Rufinus and Jerome
Honored	Not venerated as a saint in the Catholic or Orthodox churches. In 543 the emperor Justinian condemned Origenist propositions, and bishops at Constantinople subscribed the anathemas; canon 11 of the Second Council of Constantinople (553) names Origen among heretics, though whether that council itself adopted the fifteen anathemas against Origenism is disputed. Not in Anglican or Lutheran calendars.

LIFE

Eusebius devotes most of book 6 of his *Church History* to Origen. His father Leonides was beheaded in the persecution of the tenth year of Severus (202), when Origen was "not quite seventeen years old" (6.2.12); he wanted to share his father's martyrdom, and his mother hid his

clothes. "He was in his eighteenth year when he took charge of the catechetical school" (6.3.3), and Eusebius reports that he took Matt 19:12 "in too literal and extreme a sense" (6.8.1). The empress mother Julia Mammaea summoned him to Antioch with a military escort (6.21). On a journey to Greece he was ordained presbyter by the bishops of Caesarea and Jerusalem, which Bishop Demetrius of Alexandria resented; Alexandrian synods condemned him, and he settled in Caesarea, where he founded a school and assembled a library. Imprisoned and tortured in the Decian persecution of 250, he never recovered, and died at Tyre at the age of sixty-nine.

WHAT HE TAUGHT

Origen set out first the faith "transmitted in orderly succession from the apostles," insisting that "that alone is to be accepted as truth which differs in no respect from ecclesiastical and apostolic tradition" (*On First Principles*, preface 2). On questions the apostles left open he speculated, which is where his later critics found fault. He taught that Scripture has layers of meaning: "as man is said to consist of body, and soul, and spirit, so also does sacred Scripture" (4.1.11). On the end of all things he proposed that "the end is always like the beginning" (1.6.2), while saying such subjects "are treated by us with great solicitude and caution" (1.6.1). Writers on every side cite his other testimonies: that the Church received from the apostles the practice of baptizing infants (*Commentary on Romans* 5.9, preserved in Latin), that the saints pray with us (*On Prayer* 11), that sins are to be declared to a priest of the Lord (*Homilies on Leviticus* 2.4), and "faith alone" wording in the same Romans commentary (3.9).

WHAT HISTORIANS SAY

Because so much survives only in Latin, scholars weigh how far Rufinus, who admitted softening passages he thought corrupted, and Jerome, who later turned against Origen, reshaped his words. Henri Crouzel (*Origen*, English 1989) argued that, properly understood, Origen was orthodox. Mark Edwards (*Origen against Plato*, 2002) argues that he built a Christian philosophy in order to keep pagan thought out of theology. Ilaria Ramelli (*The Christian Doctrine of Apokatastasis*, 2013) makes the restoration of all central to his thought and, like Edwards, denies that he taught the preexistence of disembodied souls. Michael McClymond (*Theological Studies*, 2015) replies that her account passes over early non-universalist voices. Scholars also debate how closely the sixth-century anathemas, aimed partly at Origenist monks of that century, match Origen's own writings.

HOW THE CHURCHES READ HIM

- **Catholic:** Not a saint, but Benedict XVI devoted two catecheses to him (April 25 and May 2, 2007), centered on his threefold reading of Scripture. Catholic writers cite his witness to infant baptism, confession and the prayers of the saints, while the Church set aside his speculation on the final restoration of all.

- **Orthodox:** The Fifth Ecumenical Council names him among heretics, but Orthodox tradition received much of his exegesis through Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus; where one Father's private opinion departs from the common mind, the Church honors what is sound and sets the opinion aside, "as it did with Origen's speculations."
- **Lutheran:** The *Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope* (1537) counts Origen among the Fathers who read "upon this rock" as Peter's confession of faith (§28). Luther was sharper about his method: "Origen altogether is not worth one word of Christ," blaming him and Jerome for the esteem given to allegories (*Table Talk*, "Of Allegories").
- **Reformed:** Calvin wrote that Origen and others seized on Paul's word "allegory" as an occasion "of torturing Scripture" away from its true sense (*Commentary on Galatians* 4:22).
- **Anglican:** Absent from Anglican calendars, but long studied by Anglican scholars; Henry Chadwick's English translation of *Against Celsus* (1953) remains standard.
- **Methodist:** In his *Letter to Conyers Middleton* (1749) Wesley cited Origen among the third-century witnesses that miraculous gifts continued in the Church, correcting Middleton's rendering of his words.
- **Baptist:** Michael Haykin of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary gives a favorable account of Origen's exegesis in *Rediscovering the Church Fathers* (2011). On infant baptism, Steven McKinion argues that Origen's defense shows the practice was contested, and that it "rests on its intended outcome rather than its apostolic origin."

Cited in: 3. The Church Fathers; 16. Baptism: saving or symbolic?; 17. Infant baptism; 23. Confession to a priest; 30. Mary ever-virgin; 32. Praying to Mary and the saints; 36. The Rapture and end times; 39. Timelines of the traditions; 40. From the Reformation to the Baptists

Sources: Eusebius, *Church History*, book 6 (NPNF II.1); Origen, *On First Principles* (ANF 4); Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men* 54; Catholic Encyclopedia, "Origen and Origenism"; McClymond, review of Ramelli, *Theological Studies* 76 (2015); Edwards, *Origen against Plato*; Benedict XVI, general audience, April 25, 2007; *Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope*; Luther, *Table Talk*, "Of Allegories"; Calvin, *Commentary on Galatians* 4:21–26; Wesley, *Letter to Dr. Conyers Middleton*; review of Haykin, *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal*; McKinion, "Believers' Baptism in the Patristic Writings"

Cyprian of Carthage d. 258

Cyprian was a teacher of rhetoric at Carthage, in Roman North Africa, who became a Christian in middle life and within three years was bishop of the city. He led the African church through the Decian persecution, the bitter dispute over Christians who had lapsed under it, a plague, and a clash with Pope Stephen over the baptism of heretics, and he died a martyr in 258. His treatise *On the Unity of the Catholic Church* is the most quoted early text on the Church's unity and on bishops, and every tradition reads it: some for the chair of Peter, some for an episcopate shared

equally by all bishops, some for his resistance to Rome and for the people's part in choosing their bishop.

Lived	Birth unknown; baptized c. 246; bishop c. 248–249; beheaded at Carthage on September 14, 258
Where	Carthage (near modern Tunis); exile at Curubis in 257–258
Taught by	The aged presbyter Caecilianus, who brought him to faith; he read Tertullian every day, asking for him with the words "Give me the master" (Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men* 53)
Taught or influenced	His deacon Pontius, who wrote his life; the whole Latin tradition on the Church and the sacraments; Augustine, who answered the Donatists' appeal to Cyprian's teaching on baptism in *On Baptism*
Writings	About 81 letters, 62 of them his own; *On the Unity of the Catholic Church* and *On the Lapsed* (251); *On the Lord's Prayer*; *On Mortality* (c. 252); *To Donatus*; *On Works and Alms*
Language	Latin
Honored	Saint and martyr in the Catholic Church (September 16, with Pope Cornelius) and the Orthodox Church (August 31); Lesser Festival in the Church of England (September 15); commemorated in the Episcopal Church (September 13) and in Lutheran calendars

LIFE

A wealthy and celebrated rhetor, Cyprian was converted through Caecilianus and gave much of his property to the poor (Jerome, *Lives* 67). He was chosen bishop about 248 while still a recent convert. When the emperor Decius ordered a general sacrifice in January 250, Cyprian withdrew into hiding and governed by letter, a decision some in Rome and Carthage criticized. Many Christians had sacrificed or bought certificates saying they had; some confessors issued letters of peace restoring them at once. Cyprian insisted that the lapsed be readmitted only after penance and under the bishops' judgment, and councils from 251 set the terms. He backed Cornelius as bishop of Rome against the rigorist Novatian, organized care for the sick in the plague of about

252, and in 255–256 led African councils that rejected baptism given by heretics, against Pope Stephen. Exiled to Curubis in 257, he was tried and beheaded the next year, the first bishop of Carthage to be martyred.

WHAT HE TAUGHT

Unity was his theme: "He can no longer have God for his Father, who has not the Church for his mother" (*On the Unity of the Church* 6). Christ built on Peter so as to show "the origin of that unity, as beginning from one," though "the rest of the apostles were also the same as was Peter" (4), and "the episcopate is one, each part of which is held by each one for the whole" (5). Writing against the baptism of heretics he declared that "there is no salvation out of the Church" (Letter 72.21, ANF numbering) and that their baptism "we cannot consider as valid or legitimate" (72.1). A council of sixty-six bishops under him held that infants need not wait until the eighth day to be baptized (Letter 58, to Fidus). He insisted that the eucharistic cup contain wine mixed with water, because the priest offers what Christ himself offered (Letter 62). Writing to Antonianus about the lapsed, he introduces "Alms do deliver from death" (Tobit 4:10) and "God did not make death" (Wisdom 1:13) with "it is written," in the same chain as Rev 2:5 (Letter 51.22, ANF numbering); Catholic and Orthodox writers cite this for the deuterocanon, while Anglican, Lutheran and Reformed writers answer that the Fathers read these books for edification and that Cyprian's formula does not fix a canon (see The canon).

WHAT HISTORIANS SAY

Chapter 4 of *On the Unity of the Church* survives in two forms: a "primacy text," with stronger language about Peter's chair and primacy, and the "received text" printed in most editions, including the Ante-Nicene Fathers. The primacy text was once widely suspected of being a later interpolation, but John Chapman (writing in the Catholic Encyclopedia, 1908) and Maurice Bévenot, whose edition underlies the standard critical text, argued that Cyprian himself wrote both. The editors of that critical text date the primacy text to the spring of 251 and add that neither version speaks of Roman primacy in its later, developed sense. J. Patout Burns (*Cyprian the Bishop*, 2002) studies the social structures behind Cyprian's plan for unity and why it later failed.

HOW THE CHURCHES READ HIM

- **Catholic:** The Catechism quotes his saying that no one can have God as Father who does not have the Church as Mother (CCC 181), and Catholic writers read him as a witness to the chair of Peter and to Rome as the center of unity. His view on rebaptism is treated as an error that the Church corrected, at Arles in 314. Benedict XVI devoted a catechesis to him on June 6, 2007.
- **Orthodox:** Commemorated on August 31. The Council in Trullo (692), canon 2, ratified "the Canon set forth by Cyprian" and his synod as kept "according to the custom delivered down

to them," so his council stands in Orthodox canon law.

- **Lutheran:** The *Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope* cites his letters for the ancient custom that a bishop be chosen by neighboring bishops "in the presence of the people," a custom Cyprian calls "a divine tradition and an apostolic observance" (§14–15), and counts him among the Fathers who read "this rock" as Peter's confession (§28).
- **Reformed:** Calvin used his images of the sun's rays and a tree's branches for the one Church spread through the world, adding that Cyprian "constantly calls us back to the head," Christ (*Institutes* 4.2.6).
- **Anglican:** Cyprian's model of bishops governing together in communion has long been studied by Anglicans; Archbishop of Canterbury Edward White Benson spent decades on *Cyprian: His Life, His Times, His Work* (published 1897).
- **Methodist:** Wesley defended Cyprian's testimony to the gifts of the Spirit in his own day against Conyers Middleton, objecting that Middleton had altered his words (*Letter to Middleton*, 1749).
- **Baptist:** Baptists note his resistance to Stephen and that he baptized again those baptized outside the Church. Steven McKinion argues that the need for a council in 253 shows infant baptism was not yet universal, and Michael Haykin's *Rediscovering the Church Fathers* (2011) weighs his eucharistic piety critically.

Cited in: 3. The Church Fathers; 4. The visible Church; 5. Peter and the papacy; 10. Assurance and eternal security; 11. The state of grace and Communion; 12. Original sin; 15. Salvation outside the Church; 16. Baptism: saving or symbolic?; 17. Infant baptism; 18. Immersion only?; 19. The Lord's Supper: symbol or presence?; 21. The Mass as sacrifice; 23. Confession to a priest; 24. Seven sacraments or two?; 29. Church discipline; 39. Timelines of the traditions

Sources: Cyprian, *On the Unity of the Church* (ANF 5); Cyprian, Letter 72, to Jubaianus (ANF 5); Letter 51, to Antonianus (ANF 5); Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men* 53, 67; Catholic Encyclopedia, "St. Cyprian of Carthage"; review of the critical edition, *Estudios Eclesiásticos*; Burns, *Cyprian the Bishop*; Council in Trullo, canons (NPNF II.14); *Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope*; Calvin, *Institutes* 4.2; Benson, *Cyprian* (1897); Wesley, *Letter to Middleton*; McKinion, "Believers' Baptism in the Patristic Writings"; review of Haykin, *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal*; Church of England calendar

Athanasius of Alexandria c. 296–373

Athanasius was bishop of Alexandria for forty-five years, from 328 to 373, and the leading defender of the Council of Nicaea's teaching that the Son is of one substance (*homoousios*) with the Father. Five times driven from his see, he wrote *On the Incarnation*, the *Orations against the Arians*, letters on the divinity of the Holy Spirit, and the *Life of Antony*, which carried the ideal of desert monasticism across the Christian world. His Festal Letter of 367 is the earliest surviving list

of exactly the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. Every tradition honors him as a defender of Christ's full divinity, and they read his list of Old Testament books in different ways.

Lived	c. 296 (some say 293 or 298) to May 2, 373
Where	Alexandria; exiles in Trier, Rome and the Egyptian desert
Taught by	Bishop Alexander of Alexandria, whom he served as deacon, secretary and theological adviser at Nicaea (325); the monks of the Egyptian desert, above all Antony
Taught or influenced	Basil the Great, who corresponded with him; his successors at Alexandria, among them Cyril of Alexandria; Western monasticism through the Latin *Life of Antony*, whose story moved Augustine (*Confessions* 8.6)
Writings	*Against the Heathen* and *On the Incarnation* (dated c. 318–323 or in the 330s); *Orations against the Arians*; *Defense against the Arians* (c. 350); *History of the Arians*; *Letters to Serapion* on the Holy Spirit; the Festal Letters, including Letter 39 (367); *Life of Antony*, written after Antony's death in 356 (authorship debated)
Language	Greek
Honored	Saint and Doctor of the Church in the Catholic Church (May 2); in the Orthodox Church commemorated on January 18 with Cyril of Alexandria and on May 2; Lesser Festival in the Church of England and commemoration in the Episcopal Church and Lutheran calendars (May 2)

LIFE

As a young deacon Athanasius accompanied Bishop Alexander to Nicaea and succeeded him in 328. His opponents brought charges against him at the Synod of Tyre (335), and Constantine sent him to Trier. Restored in 337, he was driven out again in 339 and went to Rome, where Pope Julius took up his cause; a Roman synod and the Council of Sardica (343) declared him innocent, and he returned in 346. Councils at Arles and Milan condemned him in the 350s under Constantius II; in February 356 soldiers broke into his church, and he spent six years hidden among the monks of the desert. Julian the Apostate expelled him in 362, and Valens briefly in 365–366. In all he spent

about seventeen years in exile under four emperors, then ruled his church in peace until his death in 373.

WHAT HE TAUGHT

The Word, who made the world, took "a body capable of death" so that by his death and resurrection he might undo the corruption that sin had brought (*On the Incarnation* 9). "For He was made man that we might be made God" (54.3): the Son must be fully divine to give humanity a share in the divine life. Against Arius he argued that the Son is eternal and not a creature, and in his letters to Serapion he defended the divinity of the Holy Spirit. Festal Letter 39 lists the books of Scripture: "These are fountains of salvation," and "Let no man add to these, neither let him take ought from these" (§6). Other books, Wisdom, Sirach, Esther, Judith and Tobit, with the *Didache* and the *Shepherd*, are "not indeed included in the Canon, but appointed by the Fathers to be read by those who newly join us" (§7). His Old Testament counts Baruch and the Letter of Jeremiah with Jeremiah, so it matches neither the Catholic nor the Protestant list.

WHAT HISTORIANS SAY

The *Life of Antony* has been questioned for more than a century. René Draguet (1980) argued that its Syriac version preserves an earlier text not by Athanasius, and Timothy Barnes (*Journal of Theological Studies*, 1986) took up the case; David Brakke (*Le Muséon*, 1994) answered both arguments, and Draguet's theory is now generally discounted. On the controversy itself, Lewis Ayres (*Nicaea and its Legacy*, 2004), following R. P. C. Hanson and others, rejects a simple division of the century into uniform "Arian" and Nicene camps and treats the "Arian" label as partly Athanasius's own polemic. The Athanasian Creed (*Quicunque vult*) is not his: since Gerard Voss (1644) scholars have held that its language and structure point to a Western, Latin origin, though it reflects his theology.

HOW THE CHURCHES READ HIM

- **Catholic:** A Doctor of the Church, the subject of Benedict XVI's catechesis of June 20, 2007. Catholic writers point to his appeal to Pope Julius and his restoration by the Roman synod, and read Festal Letter 39 alongside his quotations of Wisdom and Sirach as Scripture.
- **Orthodox:** Honored as "the Great" and a pillar of Orthodoxy; his saying that God became man that we might be made god is a classic statement of *theosis*. The Council in Trullo (692), canon 2, received his canonical letters into Orthodox church law, and Philaret's Longer Catechism follows him in setting apart the books read in the Church outside the canon.
- **Lutheran:** The Book of Concord places the Athanasian Creed among the three ecumenical creeds, and its Catalog of Testimonies quotes Athanasius on the person of Christ.
- **Reformed:** The Belgic Confession (art. 9) "willingly accept[s] the three ecumenical creeds—the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian." Reformed and other Protestant writers cite Festal

Letter 39 for the New Testament canon and for the distinction of books outside the Hebrew Bible.

- **Anglican:** Article VIII of the Thirty-Nine Articles holds that the three creeds, including "Athanasius's Creed," "ought thoroughly to be received and believed." The Church of England keeps his day as a Lesser Festival.
- **Methodist:** Wesley's 1784 Articles of Religion dropped the Anglican article on the creeds. In his sermon "On the Trinity" Wesley called the creed "commonly ascribed to Athanasius" the best explanation of the doctrine he had seen, while declining to insist on any explanation or on its damnatory clauses.
- **Baptist:** Baptists cite Festal Letter 39 on the canon and his statement that "the holy and inspired Scriptures are sufficient" (*Against the Heathen* 1). The Baptist historian Michael Haykin's *The Spirit of God* (1994) studies how Athanasius and Basil defended the Spirit's divinity from 1 and 2 Corinthians.

Cited in: 2. The canon; 3. The Church Fathers; 30. Mary ever-virgin; 39. Timelines of the traditions

Sources: Athanasius, *On the Incarnation* (NPNF II.4); Festal Letter 39 (NPNF II.4); Catholic Encyclopedia, "St. Athanasius"; Catholic Encyclopedia, "Athanasian Creed"; Christian History, "Against the world and for the Trinity"; Brakke, "The Greek and Syriac Versions of the Life of Antony"; Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage, "Athanasius"; Ayres, *Nicaea and its Legacy*; Council in Trullo, canon 2; Catalog of Testimonies; Thirty-Nine Articles; Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, on the Methodist Articles; Wesley, Sermon 55, "On the Trinity"; Haykin, *The Spirit of God*

Ephrem the Syrian c. 306–373

Ephrem was a deacon of Nisibis and later Edessa, on the frontier between the Roman and Persian empires, and the greatest writer of Syriac Christianity. He taught doctrine in hymns written to be sung in church, using symbol and paradox rather than philosophical argument, and Christian tradition calls him the "Harp of the Holy Spirit." He matters to every tradition as the chief witness to a fourth-century Christianity that thought and prayed in a Semitic language outside the Greek and Latin worlds, for his praise of Mary, and because later writings circulated under his name, among them a Greek corpus John Wesley loved and a Latin sermon cited in modern debates about the Rapture.

Lived	c. 306 to probably June 9, 373
Where	Nisibis (now Nusaybin, Turkey) until 363; then Edessa (now Şanlıurfa), his home for the last decade of his life

Taught by	Served Bishop Jacob of Nisibis (d. 338) and his successors; later tradition makes Jacob his teacher
Taught or influenced	The hymnody and liturgy of all the Syriac churches; Greek readers through translations, among them Jerome, who read his work on the Holy Spirit in Greek (*Lives of Illustrious Men* 115); John Wesley, through the Greek writings under his name
Writings	Nearly 400 surviving hymns (*madrashe*), set to some fifty melodies, including the *Hymns on Faith*, *on Nisibis*, *on Paradise*, *on the Nativity* and *against Heresies*; verse homilies (*memre*), many not genuine; a *Commentary on the Diatessaron*; prose refutations of Bardaisan, Marcion and Mani
Language	Syriac
Honored	Saint and Doctor of the Church in the Catholic Church (Benedict XV, 1920; June 9); Orthodox Church (January 28); honored across the Syriac churches; commemoration in the Church of England (June 9) and the Episcopal Church (June 10)

LIFE

Ephrem was born early in the fourth century, probably at Nisibis and probably to Christian parents. He served the bishops of Nisibis as a deacon and teacher and lived through the Persian sieges of the city; one of his hymns recalls the day "when the wall was broken through, when the elephants pressed in" (*Hymns on Nisibis* 2.18). When the treaty of 363 handed Nisibis to Persia, its Christians left, and Ephrem settled at Edessa, where he spent his last decade and died, probably on June 9, 373. A sixth-century Syriac *Life* and later legends, which make him a monk, bring him to Basil and have him feign madness to avoid becoming a bishop, are considered unreliable; Jerome knew him simply as "deacon of the church at Edessa," whose writings were "repeated publicly in some churches, after the reading of the Scriptures" (*Lives* 115).

WHAT HE TAUGHT

Against those he called "scrutinizers," who tried to define the Son's relation to the Father by reason, Ephrem taught that God is known in wonder and praise: "Search out the sea, but search not out the Lord of the sea!" (*The Pearl* 1.3), for "even the diver pries not into his pearl" (4.1). He defended the Nicene faith against Arian teaching and the Church's teaching against the followers of Bardaisan, Marcion and Mani. His images come from Scripture and from nature, the pearl, the

sea, light and the mirror among them. Mary is a constant theme; in one hymn on Nisibis (27) he says that neither Christ nor his mother has any stain or blemish.

WHAT HISTORIANS SAY

Distinguishing the real Ephrem from writings attributed to him is the first task. Many Greek texts circulated under his name, but only a few are genuinely his, and many Syriac homilies credited to him are also not authentic; Edmund Beck's critical editions are the basis of modern study, and the *Commentary on the Diatessaron* was probably finished after his death. Robert Murray called him "the greatest poet of the patristic age" (1967), and Sebastian Brock's *The Luminous Eye* (1985; revised 1992) introduced his symbolic theology to Western readers. The Lenten prayer that bears his name in the Byzantine churches survives in Greek. The Latin sermon used in Rapture debates (Pseudo-Ephraem) is dated anywhere from the fourth to the seventh century, most scholars favoring the late sixth or seventh.

HOW THE CHURCHES READ HIM

- **Catholic:** Benedict XV named him a Doctor of the Universal Church in the encyclical *Principi Apostolorum Petro* (1920), and Benedict XVI devoted a catechesis to him (November 28, 2007). Catholic writers cite his praise of Mary's purity as an early witness to the belief later defined as the Immaculate Conception.
- **Orthodox:** Commemorated on January 28 as a teacher of repentance. The Lenten prayer bearing his name, "O Lord and Master of my life," is said with prostrations at weekday services of Great Lent, and his hymns remain in use in the Syriac churches.
- **Lutheran and Reformed:** Neither makes much use of him, and he does not appear in the main Lutheran calendars.
- **Anglican:** The Church of England commemorates "Ephrem of Syria, deacon, hymn writer, and Teacher of the Faith" on June 9, and the Episcopal Church on June 10.
- **Methodist:** Wesley first read "Ephraim Syrus" at Oxford about 1732, read his exhortations aloud to his household in Georgia, and called him "the most awakening writer, I think, of all the ancients" (*Journal*). What Wesley read was the Greek corpus under Ephrem's name, and Gordon Wakefield sees it as one of Wesley's links with the Cappadocian Fathers and their teaching on perfection.
- **Baptist:** Baptists make little use of the historical Ephrem. Pretribulationist writers, among them Thomas Ice of the Pre-Trib Research Center at Liberty University, a Baptist school, cite the Pseudo-Ephraem sermon as an early statement of a rapture before the tribulation, while granting that Ephrem himself probably did not write it.

Cited in: 3. The Church Fathers; 31. Immaculate Conception and Assumption; 36. The Rapture and end times; 39. Timelines of the traditions

Sources: Brock, "Ephrem," Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Syriac Heritage; Ephrem, *The Pearl* (NPNF II.13); Ephrem, *Nisibene Hymns* (NPNF II.13); Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men* 115; Encyclopedia of Religion, "Ephraem of Syria"; Benedict XV, *Principi Apostolorum Petro*; Benedict XVI, general audience, November 28, 2007; OCA, Venerable Ephraim the Syrian; OrthodoxWiki, "Prayer of Saint Ephrem"; Wakefield, "John Wesley and Ephraem Syrus," *Hugoye* 1.2; Ice, "The Rapture in Pseudo-Ephraem"; Episcopal Church calendar

Basil the Great c. 330–379

Basil was bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia from 370 until his death, and with his brother Gregory of Nyssa and his friend Gregory of Nazianzus one of the three "Cappadocian Fathers." His writings against Eunomius and his treatise *On the Holy Spirit* helped settle the language of one God in three persons confirmed at Constantinople in 381. His rules for community life shaped Eastern monasticism, the poorhouse and hospital he built outside Caesarea became a model of Christian charity, and the eucharistic liturgy that bears his name is still celebrated. His appeal to unwritten apostolic tradition and his saying that honor paid to an image passes to its original are cited in the debates between the traditions.

Lived	c. 330 to January 1, 379 (the traditional date; some scholars prefer 377 or 378)
Where	Caesarea in Cappadocia (now Kayseri, Turkey); studies at Constantinople and Athens; an ascetic community in Pontus
Taught by	His father, Basil the Elder, a teacher of rhetoric; the schools of Caesarea, Constantinople and Athens, where he studied with Gregory of Nazianzus; his sister Macrina, who turned him to the ascetic life
Taught or influenced	Gregory of Nyssa, whose early education he probably directed; Amphilochius of Iconium, to whom he wrote *On the Holy Spirit*; Eastern monasticism; Benedict of Nursia, whose Rule commends "the Rule of our holy Father Basil" (ch. 73)
Writings	*Against Eunomius* (c. 364); *On the Holy Spirit* (c. 375); nine homilies on the *Hexaemeron* (the six days of creation); homilies on the Psalms; the *Moralia* and the longer and shorter monastic rules; about 366 letters; an address to young men on reading Greek literature; with Gregory of Nazianzus, the *Philokalia* of

	extracts from Origen; the Liturgy of St. Basil (his share in it debated)
Language	Greek
Honored	Saint and Doctor of the Church in the Catholic Church (January 2, with Gregory of Nazianzus); Orthodox Church (January 1, and January 30 as one of the Three Holy Hierarchs); Lesser Festival in the Church of England (January 2, with Gregory); Episcopal Church (June 14); Lutheran calendars (with the two Gregories)

LIFE

Basil was one of ten children of Basil the Elder and Emmelia; his siblings included Macrina, Gregory of Nyssa and Peter, later bishop of Sebaste. After study at Caesarea, Constantinople and Athens, where his friendship with Gregory of Nazianzus began, he came home a successful rhetorician. Influenced by Macrina, he gave up his career, was baptized as an adult, and visited the monks of Egypt, Palestine, Syria and Mesopotamia before founding a community in Pontus that joined common life to the hermit's discipline. Ordained presbyter at Caesarea in the 360s, he became its bishop in 370 and stood firm against the emperor Valens, who favored the Homoian party. Outside the city he built the complex later called the Basileias, with lodging for strangers, care for the sick poor and training in trades. He died on January 1, 379, by the traditional reckoning.

WHAT HE TAUGHT

Basil defended the full divinity of the Son against Eunomius, who held that the Son is unlike the Father in essence, and the divinity of the Holy Spirit against those who denied it, distinguishing the one essence (*ousia*) of God from the three persons (*hypostaseis*). In *On the Holy Spirit* he defends giving glory to the Father "with" the Son and the Spirit. He notes that some of the Church's beliefs and practices come from written teaching and others were "delivered to us in a mystery by the tradition of the apostles," both having equal force (27.66), and lists among the latter signing with the cross, facing east to pray and triple immersion. Arguing that Father and Son are two persons yet not two gods, he writes that "the honour paid to the image passes on to the prototype" (18.45), words later applied to icons. A letter in his collection urges, "Therefore let God-inspired Scripture decide between us" (Letter 189.3). He also taught that God's operations come down to us while his essence remains beyond approach (Letter 234.1).

WHAT HISTORIANS SAY

Philip Rousseau's *Basil of Caesarea* (1994), only the second substantial English study of him since 1913, presents his understanding of human nature as his chief legacy, beyond his roles as

opponent of heresy and founder of monasticism. The date of his death is disputed: the January 1, 379 of tradition is still the most common, but some scholars argue for 377 or 378. Letter 189 also appears among the works of Gregory of Nyssa, and scholars are divided over which brother wrote it. How much of the anaphora of the Liturgy of St. Basil is his own work is likewise debated.

HOW THE CHURCHES READ HIM

- **Catholic:** A Doctor of the Church, the subject of two catecheses by Benedict XVI (July 4 and August 1, 2007). Catholic writers cite *On the Holy Spirit* 27 for apostolic tradition alongside Scripture and his monastic rules as a source of Western monasticism through Benedict.
- **Orthodox:** One of the Three Holy Hierarchs. The Divine Liturgy of St. Basil is served about ten times a year, including the Sundays of Great Lent, Holy Thursday, Holy Saturday and his feast on January 1. Orthodox writers cite his teaching on God's operations and essence as a foundation of the distinction between God's energies and essence, and the Council in Trullo (692) received his canonical letters into church law.
- **Lutheran and Reformed:** Both confess the Trinitarian faith he defended, and the Book of Concord's Catalog of Testimonies quotes him on the person of Christ. Because their confessions make Scripture the only rule of doctrine (Formula of Concord, Epitome, Rule and Norm; Westminster Confession 1.6), they do not receive the unwritten customs of *On the Holy Spirit* 27 as binding, and Reformed writers quote instead his call to let Scripture decide (Letter 189).
- **Anglican:** The Church of England keeps January 2 as a Lesser Festival of Basil and Gregory, and the Episcopal Church commemorates him on June 14. The Elizabethan divine William Whitaker answered Roman appeals to *On the Holy Spirit* 27 in his *Disputation on Holy Scripture* (1588).
- **Methodist:** Methodist writers make little direct use of him, though studies of Wesley's Eastern sources note how close the ascetic writer Macarius, whom Wesley admired, stands to Basil's approach to monastic reform.
- **Baptist:** The Baptist historian Michael Haykin has written on him in *The Spirit of God* (1994), on Athanasius and Basil in the controversy over the Holy Spirit, and in *Rediscovering the Church Fathers* (2011). Steven McKinion notes that Basil, though the son of Christian parents, was not baptized as an infant.

Cited in: 1. Scripture alone; 3. The Church Fathers; 33. Images and relics; 42. Paganism claims

Sources: Basil, *On the Holy Spirit* (NPNF II.8); Basil, Letter 189; Catholic Encyclopedia, "St. Basil the Great"; Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men* 116; review of Rousseau, *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* 1996.07.08; World History Encyclopedia, "Basil the Great"; NPNF II.5, note on Letter 189 and Gregory of Nyssa; Patriarchate of Antioch, on the Liturgy of St. Basil; Council in Trullo, canon 2; Catalog of Testimonies; Theopedia, "Sola scriptura"; Whitaker, *A*

Disputation on Holy Scripture (Parker Society); Plant and Plested, "Macarius, St Gregory of Nyssa, and the Wesleys," *Epworth Review* 33.1; Haykin, *The Spirit of God*; McKinion, "Believers' Baptism in the Patristic Writings"

Cyril of Jerusalem c. 313–386

Cyril was bishop of Jerusalem from about 350 until his death in 386, three times driven into exile in the disputes that followed Nicaea. As a young presbyter or newly made bishop he gave a course of lectures to candidates for baptism in Constantine's church at the site of the crucifixion and burial, followed by five "mystagogical" lectures to the newly baptized on baptism, anointing and the Eucharist. Together they are the fullest surviving picture of how a fourth-century church prepared converts, and every tradition quotes them: for Scripture as the proof of doctrine, for the change of the bread and wine, and for prayer for the dead.

Lived	c. 313–315 to probably March 18, 386
Where	Jerusalem; exiled in 357–359, 360–361 and 367–378
Taught by	Bishop Maximus of Jerusalem, who ordained him presbyter (Jerome)
Taught or influenced	His successor John of Jerusalem, who used his mystagogical lectures; later catechists who took the lectures as a model of instruction in the Creed
Writings	A procatechesis and eighteen *Catechetical Lectures* on the Creed (c. 350; Cyril's own reckoning suggests about 347); five *Mystagogical Catecheses* (authorship debated); a letter to the emperor Constantius describing a cross of light seen over Jerusalem
Language	Greek
Honored	Saint and Doctor of the Church in the Catholic Church (named by Leo XIII in 1882; March 18); Orthodox Church (March 18); commemoration in the Church of England and the Episcopal Church (March 18)

LIFE

Ordained presbyter by Maximus, Cyril succeeded him about 350. The ancient accounts of how he became bishop conflict: Jerome says Acacius of Caesarea and other bishops of the Arian party offered him the see if he would renounce his ordination, while the historian Socrates says Acacius drove out Maximus and installed Cyril. He soon quarreled with Acacius over the rank of Jerusalem and over doctrine. In 357 Acacius had him exiled on a charge of selling church property during a famine; he returned after the Council of Seleucia (359), was driven out again in 360, came back under Julian, and was banished by a decree of Valens in 367 until the emperor's death in 378. In 379 a council at Antioch sent Gregory of Nyssa to report on the Jerusalem church. Cyril attended the Council of Constantinople in 381 and accepted its confession of the Son as of one substance with the Father, a term he had earlier avoided while teaching that the Son is "in all things like the Father."

WHAT HE TAUGHT

Teaching the Creed, he told his hearers: "concerning the divine and holy mysteries of the Faith, not even a casual statement must be delivered without the Holy Scriptures," and "Even to me, who tell you these things, give not absolute credence, unless thou receive the proof of the things which I announce from the Divine Scriptures" (*Catechetical Lectures* 4.17). He urged them to "Read the Divine Scriptures, the twenty-two books of the Old Testament" (4.33), a list that includes Baruch. The mystagogical lectures describe the renunciation of Satan facing west, the threefold immersion, and the anointing with chrism that follows (Lectures 19–21). Of the Eucharist he says: "Consider therefore the Bread and the Wine not as bare elements," for "the seeming bread is not bread," though it tastes like bread, but the Body of Christ (Lecture 22.6, 22.9). He describes the eucharistic prayer as a sacrifice offered for the departed, with the commemoration of patriarchs, prophets, apostles and martyrs so that God may receive our petitions at their prayers (Lecture 23.9–10).

WHAT HISTORIANS SAY

Some manuscripts attach the five mystagogical lectures to John, Cyril's successor, and scholars still debate who gave them. Alexis Doval (*Cyril of Jerusalem, Mystagogue*, 2001), comparing vocabulary, rites and theology and using stylometry, concludes that the weight of evidence favors Cyril, suggesting that John's name was attached because he went on using them; Juliette Day (*The Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*, 2007) has argued for John. The Catholic Encyclopedia placed his early theology with those who avoided the Nicene term, perhaps because he thought it open to misunderstanding, until he accepted it in 381. Edward Yarnold, who translated him, judged that Cyril "subscribed to a form of 'sola scriptura' doctrine."

HOW THE CHURCHES READ HIM

- **Catholic:** A Doctor of the Church, the subject of Benedict XVI's catechesis of June 27, 2007. Catholic writers cite the mystagogical lectures for the change of the bread and wine into

Christ's body and blood and for prayer for the dead, and read Lecture 4.17 as proof of the Church's Creed from Scripture, not a rule apart from the Church.

- **Orthodox:** Commemorated on March 18. Orthodox writers find in his lectures the pattern of their own initiation, baptism followed at once by anointing with chrism and by Communion, and his teaching that the gifts are the Body and Blood of Christ.
- **Lutheran and Methodist:** Writers in both traditions make little direct use of him.
- **Reformed:** Andrew Koperski, writing in the Protestant journal *Ad Fontes* of the Davenant Institute, cites Lecture 4 to argue that the Reformation's emphasis on Scripture as the test of doctrine was not entirely new.
- **Anglican:** Both the Church of England and the Episcopal Church commemorate him on March 18, the former as a "Teacher of the Faith." Anglicans, who hold with Article VI that nothing not read in Scripture or proved by it is to be required as an article of faith, are among those who quote Lecture 4.17.
- **Baptist:** Baptists quote Lecture 4.17 for Scripture as the final test. Steven McKinion reads the baptismal lectures as addressed to believers old enough to renounce Satan, profess faith and obey, which he takes as evidence for believers' baptism.

Cited in: 1. Scripture alone; 2. The canon; 3. The Church Fathers; 19. The Lord's Supper: symbol or presence?; 32. Praying to Mary and the saints; 35. Purgatory and indulgences; 39. Timelines of the traditions

Sources: Cyril, *Catechetical Lecture* 4 (NPNF II.7); Cyril, *Catechetical Lecture* 22 (Mystagogical 4); Catholic Encyclopedia, "St. Cyril of Jerusalem"; Doval, *Cyril of Jerusalem, Mystagogue*; study of the mystagogical authorship debate (2021); Day, *The Baptismal Liturgy of Jerusalem*; Koperski, "Cyril of Jerusalem and Sola Scriptura," *Ad Fontes*; Benedict XVI, general audience, June 27, 2007; McKinion, "Believers' Baptism in the Patristic Writings"; Church of England calendar

Gregory of Nazianzus c. 329–c. 390

Gregory of Nazianzus, called in the East "Gregory the Theologian," was the most eloquent of the three Cappadocian Fathers: an orator and poet who wanted a life of study and prayer and was drawn again and again into church office against his will. In 379–381 he led the small Nicene congregation of Constantinople, and his five *Theological Orations*, preached there in 380, gave classic form to the doctrine of the Trinity and the divinity of the Holy Spirit that the Council of Constantinople confirmed in 381. He briefly presided over that council before resigning. Every tradition that confesses the Nicene faith draws on him, and his sayings on the Trinity and on Christ's full humanity are quoted across the churches.

Lived	c. 329–330 (some say c. 325) to c. 389–390

Where	Born at Arianzus near Nazianzus in Cappadocia; studied at Caesarea in Cappadocia and in Palestine, Alexandria and Athens; Constantinople 379–381; died at Arianzus
Taught by	His father, Gregory the Elder, bishop of Nazianzus, and his mother Nonna; the rhetorician Thespesius at Caesarea (Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men* 113); the schools of Athens, where he studied alongside Basil and the future emperor Julian
Taught or influenced	Jerome, who calls him "my instructor in the Scriptures" (*Lives* 117); later Byzantine theology, in which commentary on his orations became a genre of its own
Writings	Orations, among them the five *Theological Orations* (27–31, 380), Oration 2 defending his flight from the priesthood, funeral orations for Basil and members of his family, and Oration 40 on baptism; letters, including Letters 101–102 to Cledonius against Apollinarius; many poems, among them the autobiographical *On His Own Life*; with Basil, the *Philokalia* of extracts from Origen
Language	Greek
Honored	Saint and Doctor of the Church in the Catholic Church (January 2, with Basil); Orthodox Church (January 25, and January 30 as one of the Three Holy Hierarchs), with the title "the Theologian"; Lesser Festival in the Church of England (January 2, with Basil); Episcopal Church (May 9); Lutheran calendars (with Basil and Gregory of Nyssa)

LIFE

Gregory's father had belonged to a sect of "Hypsistarians" before converting and becoming bishop of Nazianzus. Gregory studied for about ten years at Athens, leaving in 356, and then lived for a time with Basil in Pontus. At Christmas 361, probably, his father had him ordained presbyter against his will; he fled, returned, and explained himself in Oration 2. Basil made him bishop of Sasima, a post station Gregory never took up, and he served instead as his father's assistant until the old man's death in 374, then withdrew to a monastery at Seleucia. Early in 379 he came to Constantinople to lead the Nicene minority, meeting in a house chapel he called the Anastasia ("Resurrection"). The emperor Theodosius installed him in the cathedral late in 380, and in May 381

he presided over the council for a time, but he resigned in June 381 and went home. He spent his last years at Arianzus writing poetry and died around 389 or 390.

WHAT HE TAUGHT

Against the Eunomians, who claimed to know God's essence, he taught that God is beyond comprehension and yet truly three and one. Asked "Is the Spirit God?" he answered, "Most certainly" (Oration 31.10), and explained why the Spirit's divinity was taught later than the Son's: "The Old Testament proclaimed the Father openly, and the Son more obscurely. The New manifested the Son, and suggested the Deity of the Spirit" (31.26). Against Apollinarius, who held that the divine Word took the place of a human mind in Christ, he wrote: "For that which He has not assumed He has not healed" (Letter 101). On baptism he urged adults not to delay; children in danger of death should be baptized, "For it is better that they should be unconsciously sanctified than that they should depart unsealed and uninitiated," but otherwise, "I give my advice to wait till the end of the third year," when children "may be able to listen and to answer something about the Sacrament" (Oration 40.28). He held that those who die unbaptized through no fault of their own, a passage often applied to infants, will be "neither glorified nor punished by the righteous Judge" (40.23), and his verse list of the books of Scripture follows the Hebrew Old Testament.

WHAT HISTORIANS SAY

Much of what is known of his life comes from his own orations and autobiographical poems. John McGuckin's *Saint Gregory of Nazianzus: An Intellectual Biography* (2001) was the first full critical study of his life and thought in English, and Brian Daley's *Gregory of Nazianzus* (2006) pairs a study of his theology with translations of orations, poems and letters. His date of birth is uncertain: older works give about 325, most recent ones about 329 or 330.

HOW THE CHURCHES READ HIM

- **Catholic:** A Doctor of the Church, celebrated with Basil on January 2 and the subject of two catecheses by Benedict XVI (August 8 and 22, 2007). Catholic writers read his canon list in the light of the later councils and cite Oration 40 for baptism of infants in danger of death.
- **Orthodox:** Honored with the title "the Theologian" and as one of the Three Holy Hierarchs. In 2004 Pope John Paul II returned to the Ecumenical Patriarchate relics of Gregory and John Chrysostom taken from Constantinople in 1204.
- **Lutheran:** Commemorated with Basil and Gregory of Nyssa in Lutheran calendars and honored as a teacher of the Trinity; Lutheran writers otherwise make modest use of him.
- **Reformed:** Calvin wrote that "nothing can be more admirable" than Gregory's words on the Trinity, which he quoted: "I cannot think of the unity without being irradiated by the Trinity" (*Institutes* 1.13.17, citing Oration 40).

- **Anglican:** The Church of England keeps January 2 as a Lesser Festival of Basil and Gregory, "bishops and Teachers of the Faith," and the Episcopal Church commemorates him on May 9.
- **Methodist:** Methodist writers make little direct use of him.
- **Baptist:** Steven McKinion reads Oration 40.28 as allowing infant baptism only in emergencies and otherwise asking for a child old enough to understand, and notes that Gregory, though a bishop's son, was not baptized until about the age of thirty.

Cited in: 3. The Church Fathers; 12. Original sin

Sources: Gregory, Oration 31 (NPNF II.7); Gregory, Oration 40 (NPNF II.7); Gregory, Letter 101 to Cledonius (NPNF II.7); Catholic Encyclopedia, "St. Gregory of Nazianzus"; Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men* 113, 117; review of McGuckin, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*; review of Daley, *Bryn Mawr Classical Review* 2008.03.14; Benedict XVI, general audiences of 2007; Calvin, *Institutes* 1.13; Church of England calendar; McKinion, "Believers' Baptism in the Patristic Writings"

Gregory of Nyssa c. 335–c. 395

Gregory, bishop of Nyssa in Cappadocia, was the younger brother of Basil the Great and the most philosophical of the three Cappadocian Fathers. After Basil's death in 379 he carried on his brother's defense of the Nicene faith against Eunomius and took a leading part at the Council of Constantinople in 381. His writings on the Trinity, on human nature, on the soul's endless ascent into God and on the Christian life made him one of the great mystical theologians of the Church, and the Second Council of Nicaea (787) called him "father of fathers." He is also the Father most often cited for the hope that God will at last restore every creature, a hope the churches weigh differently.

Lived	c. 335 to c. 395; last recorded at a synod in Constantinople in 394
Where	Cappadocia and Pontus; bishop of Nyssa from about 371–372; journeys to Arabia and Jerusalem; councils at Antioch (379) and Constantinople (381, 394)
Taught by	His brother Basil, who probably directed his early education; his sister Macrina, whom he portrays as his teacher in *On the Soul and the Resurrection*
Taught or influenced	Later Greek theology and spirituality, which at Nicaea II honored him as "father of fathers"; the ascetic writings known as the

	Macarian homilies, whose relation to his *On the Christian Way of Life* scholars debate; through them, the Wesleys' teaching on perfection
Writings	*Against Eunomius*; *To Ablabius, That There Are Not Three Gods*; the *Catechetical Oration* (*Great Catechism*); *On the Making of Man*; *On the Soul and the Resurrection*; *Life of Macrina*; *Life of Moses*; *Homilies on the Song of Songs*; *On Virginity* (c. 370); *On Infants' Early Deaths*; letters, including *On Pilgrimages*
Language	Greek
Honored	Saint in the Catholic Church; Orthodox Church (January 10); Lesser Festival in the Church of England (July 19, with his sister Macrina); Episcopal Church (March 9); Lutheran calendars (with Basil and Gregory of Nazianzus)

LIFE

Gregory first followed a secular career as a teacher of rhetoric, against Basil's wishes, and married; a letter of Gregory of Nazianzus names his wife Theosebeia. Basil consecrated him bishop of Nyssa, a small town in his province, about 371. Opponents of the Nicene party had him deposed by a synod at Nyssa in 376, and he returned only in 378, after the death of the emperor Valens. In 379 he attended the Council of Antioch, after which he visited Jerusalem, and at Constantinople in 381 he was among the leading bishops; an edict of Theodosius dated July 30, 381 named him, with Helladius and Otreius, among the bishops whose communion marked out the Catholic faith in the East. He preached the funeral oration for Bishop Meletius of Antioch in 381 and for the princess Pulcheria and Empress Flacilla in 385–386. His last recorded appearance is at a synod in Constantinople in 394.

WHAT HE TAUGHT

Against Eunomius he argued that God's essence is infinite and beyond comprehension, and in *To Ablabius* that Father, Son and Spirit are not three gods, because every divine action is one, from the Father, through the Son, in the Spirit. In the *Life of Moses* he describes perfection not as a state reached but as unending progress, the soul "straining forward" (*epektasis*, from Phil 3:13) into God. In the *Catechetical Oration* he describes the Incarnation as "freeing both man from evil, and healing even the introducer of evil himself," for the punishment of moral disease is its cure (26), and teaches that the eucharistic bread is changed into the Body of the Word (37). Of infants who die young he wrote that "the innocent babe has no such plague before its soul's eyes" as adults

must be purged of (*On Infants' Early Deaths*). After visiting Jerusalem he warned that "change of place does not effect any drawing nearer unto God" (*On Pilgrimages*).

WHAT HISTORIANS SAY

Gregory taught, in the words of the Catholic Encyclopedia, "a doctrine of the general restoration of sinful creatures," with the pains of hell temporary. An old theory that Origenists interpolated these passages into his works was revived in the nineteenth century, but that encyclopedia itself judged it "both useless and gratuitous." Morwenna Ludlow (*Universal Salvation*, 2000) compares his eschatology with Karl Rahner's. Werner Jaeger's critical edition is the basis of modern study; Jaeger's view that the Macarian "Great Letter" depends on Gregory has been reversed by Reinhart Staats and others, who hold that Gregory reworked Macarius. The letter *On Pilgrimages* has been controversial since the Reformation: Bellarmine suspected it, while Tillemont and Baronius accepted it as genuine.

HOW THE CHURCHES READ HIM

- **Catholic:** The Catechism cites his sermons on the Beatitudes for the teaching that the goal of a virtuous life is to become like God (CCC 1803), and Benedict XVI devoted two catecheses to him (August 29 and September 5, 2007). Catholic teaching holds that hell is eternal, so his hope of universal restoration is honored as a Father's opinion, not followed.
- **Orthodox:** Commemorated on January 10 and honored by the Seventh Ecumenical Council as "father of fathers"; the Council in Trullo (692) received his canonical letter into church law. To critics who cite his hope of restoration, Orthodox writers answer that authority rests on the agreement of the Fathers received by the whole Church, not on one Father's private opinion.
- **Lutheran:** The Book of Concord's Catalog of Testimonies quotes him on the exaltation of Christ's human nature. Lutheran and Reformed critics point to his hope for the restoration of all as evidence that the Fathers disagree.
- **Reformed:** In 1607 the Reformed minister Pierre Du Moulin republished his letter *On Pilgrimages* with a defense of it, and the Jesuit Jacob Gretser answered him.
- **Anglican:** The Church of England keeps July 19 as a Lesser Festival of Gregory and his sister Macrina, and the Episcopal Church commemorates him on March 9.
- **Methodist:** Albert Outler, following Jaeger, traced Wesley's dynamic idea of Christian perfection to Gregory by way of Macarius. Stephen Plant and Marcus Plested argue that Gregory followed Macarius rather than the reverse, but find the same theme of endless "straining forward" in Gregory, Macarius and the Wesleys.
- **Baptist:** Shawn Wilhite of California Baptist University, writing in *Credo*, presents him as a pro-Nicene guide to the doctrine of the Trinity and the Christian's share in the divine life. Steven McKinion notes that, like Basil, he was not baptized as an infant.

Cited in: 3. The Church Fathers; 12. Original sin; 36. The Rapture and end times

Sources: Gregory, *Catechetical Oration* 26 (NPNF II.5); Gregory, *On Pilgrimages*, with NPNF note; Catholic Encyclopedia, "St. Gregory of Nyssa"; Jerome, *Lives of Illustrious Men* 128; OCA, Saint Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa; Ludlow, *Universal Salvation*; Plant and Plested, "Macarius, St Gregory of Nyssa, and the Wesleys," *Epworth Review* 33.1; Benedict XVI, general audience, August 29, 2007; Catechism of the Catholic Church, index of citations; Council in Trullo, canon 2; Catalog of Testimonies; Wilhite, "Gregory of Nyssa," *Credo*; McKinion, "Believers' Baptism in the Patristic Writings"

Ambrose of Milan c. 339–397

Ambrose was bishop of Milan, then a seat of the Western imperial court, from 374 until his death in 397. A Roman governor acclaimed bishop before he was even baptized, he defended the Nicene faith against an Arian court party, helped bring hymn singing into Latin worship, refused communion to an emperor until he did penance, and baptized Augustine. His catechetical sermons on baptism and the Eucharist are read by every tradition that debates the sacraments, and his hymns are still sung in translation, from Luther's Advent hymn to Methodist hymnals.

Lived	c. 339 – 4 April 397
Where	Born at Trier in Gaul; educated at Rome; governor and then bishop at Milan
Taught by	The priest Simplicianus, whom Augustine calls Ambrose's "father" in receiving grace (*Confessions* 8.2.3); as bishop he studied the Greek writers, above all Origen and Basil
Taught or influenced	Augustine of Hippo, whom he baptized at Easter 387; the Latin hymn tradition; through *On the Duties of the Clergy*, later Western moral teaching
Writings	*On the Faith* (for the emperor Gratian, c. 380); *On the Holy Spirit*; *On the Duties of the Clergy*; *On Repentance*; *On the Mysteries* and *On the Sacraments*; *Hexameron*; *On Virgins* (377); letters, funeral orations and hymns
Language	Latin; he read Greek

Honored	Catholic saint, one of the four great Latin Fathers and among the first Doctors of the Church (1298), feast 7 December; Orthodox saint ("Saint Ambrose, Bishop of Milan," 7 December); Lesser Festival in the Church of England (7 December); commemorated in Lutheran calendars (7 December)

LIFE

Ambrose was born about 339; his father held high office in the administration of Gaul (scholars disagree whether he was the praetorian prefect himself). After studies at Rome he became consular governor of Aemilia-Liguria, based at Milan. When the Arian bishop Auxentius died in 374, the assembly gathered to choose a successor acclaimed the governor as bishop. Though still a catechumen, he was baptized and consecrated within a week, on 7 December 374. In 384 he answered the pagan senator Symmachus, who asked for the Altar of Victory to be restored to the Senate house. In 385–386 he refused the empress Justina's demand that a Milan basilica be given to the Arians; his congregation occupied the church, and Augustine records that it was then that hymns and psalms began to be sung "after the manner of the Eastern Church" (*Confessions* 9.7.15). In 388 he pressed Theodosius I to withdraw an order that the bishop of Callinicum rebuild a synagogue burned by Christians. After the massacre at Thessalonica (390) he withheld communion from Theodosius until the emperor did public penance. He died on Good Friday, 4 April 397, and was buried beside the martyrs Gervasius and Protasius.

WHAT HE TAUGHT

Ambrose defended the full divinity of the Son and the Spirit in *On the Faith* and *On the Holy Spirit*, and answered the Novatians in *On Repentance*, holding that the Church may forgive grave sins after baptism. To the newly baptized he explained baptism, anointing and the Eucharist: "that sacrament which you receive is made what it is by the word of Christ" (*On the Mysteries* 9.52); "it is the true Flesh of Christ" (9.53); yet "it is therefore not bodily food but spiritual" (9.58). On church and state he told the court, "the Emperor is within the Church, not above it" (*Sermon against Auxentius* 36). He praised virginity, and a synod at Milan under him condemned Jovinian (c. 390–393). His funeral oration for Valentinian II (392), who died before he could be baptized, is cited for the hope of salvation through desire for baptism.

WHAT HISTORIANS SAY

Neil McLynn (*Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital*, 1994) portrays a skilled politician building his authority in a divided city, and doubts that he had as much influence over emperors as his own writings suggest; later studies have qualified this picture. Historians, working from Ambrose's own letter to Theodosius, generally treat the later story of the bishop barring the

emperor at the church door as embellishment. The authenticity of *On the Mysteries* was once questioned but is now generally accepted; *On the Sacraments* is usually taken as notes of his sermons. Several hymns traditionally called Ambrosian are disputed, and a fourth-century commentary on Paul once ascribed to him is now assigned to an unknown writer called "Ambrosiaster."

HOW THE CHURCHES READ HIM

- **Catholic:** A Doctor of the Church, cited for the change of the elements by the word of consecration, for penance, for Mary's freedom from sin and for baptism of desire. The Ambrosian rite of Milan preserves the liturgical tradition linked with his name.
- **Orthodox:** Venerated as a saint and honored as a defender of the Nicene faith in the West; Orthodox theology draws on him less than on the Greek Fathers.
- **Lutheran:** The Augsburg Confession quotes "Ambrose" twice: that whoever believes in Christ is saved "by faith alone" (art. VI, a passage now assigned to Ambrosiaster) and that "faith is the mother of a good will" (art. XX). Luther's Advent hymn "Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland" (1524) renders a hymn traditionally ascribed to him.
- **Reformed:** Honored as Augustine's teacher and a defender of the Trinity. Reformed theologians do not follow his teaching that the word changes the elements; they hold that believers feed on Christ spiritually (Westminster Confession 29.7).
- **Anglican:** Kept as a Lesser Festival. John Jewel's *Apology* (1562) quoted his advice to Gratian, "Let the Scripture be asked," for the authority of Scripture.
- **Methodist:** Little direct use in Methodist doctrine, though Methodist hymnals sing his morning hymn as "O Splendor of God's Glory Bright" (United Methodist Hymnal 679).
- **Baptist:** Baptists make little use of Ambrose. His teaching on baptism as new birth and on the Eucharist differs from the Baptist view of the ordinances (Second London Confession, chs. 28–30).

Cited in: 3. The Church Fathers; 12. Original sin; 16. Baptism: saving or symbolic?; 17. Infant baptism; 19. The Lord's Supper: symbol or presence?; 23. Confession to a priest; 39. Timelines of the traditions

Sources: Ambrose, *On the Mysteries* and *Sermon against Auxentius* (NPNF II/10); Augustine, *Confessions* 9 and 8; J. Loughlin, "St. Ambrose," *Catholic Encyclopedia* (1907); "Doctors of the Church," *Catholic Encyclopedia*; Neil McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan* (1994); Orthodox Church in America, lives of the saints, 7 December; Augsburg Confession, arts. VI, XX; John Jewel, *Apology of the Church of England*; UMC Discipleship, "O Splendor of God's Glory Bright"; Church of England calendar; Lutheran calendars.

John Chrysostom c. 347–407

John, later called Chrysostom ("golden-mouthed"), was the great preacher of Antioch and, from 398 to 404, archbishop of Constantinople; he died in exile in 407. His verse-by-verse homilies on Scripture form the largest body of preaching to survive from the early Church, and the eucharistic liturgy that bears his name is the usual eucharistic service of the Orthodox Church and of the Byzantine Catholic churches. Catholics and Orthodox quote him on the Eucharist and the priesthood, Lutherans on the early practice of communion, Reformed readers for his exegesis, and Anglicans have prayed "A Prayer of St. Chrysostom" at Morning and Evening Prayer since the Reformation.

Lived	c. 347 – 14 September 407
Where	Antioch in Syria; Constantinople; exile at Cucusus in Armenia; died at Comana in Pontus
Taught by	The rhetorician Libanius; Diodore of Tarsus, who trained him in the literal and historical reading of Scripture associated with Antioch; Bishop Meletius of Antioch, who drew him to Scripture and ordained him deacon
Taught or influenced	John Cassian, whom he made a deacon and who pleaded his cause at Rome; the deaconess Olympias; his biographer Palladius; later preachers in East and West
Writings	*On the Priesthood* (c. 386); homilies on Genesis (67), Matthew (90), John (88), Acts (55) and all of Paul's letters; *Homilies on the Statues* (387); baptismal instructions; eight homilies against the Jews and Judaizing Christians (386–387); about 238 letters from exile
Language	Greek
Honored	Orthodox saint, one of the Three Holy Hierarchs (30 January), feasts 13 November and 27 January; Catholic saint and one of the four great Greek Doctors (recognized by Pius V, 1568), feast 13 September; Lesser Festival in the Church of England (13 September); commemorated in Lutheran calendars (LCMS 27 January, ELCA 13 September)

LIFE

John was born at Antioch about 347; his father Secundus, an army officer, died young, and his mother Anthusa saw to his education under Libanius, the leading orator of the age. Around 367 Bishop Meletius turned him toward Scripture; some three years later he was baptized and made a reader. He joined an ascetic community led by Diodore and Carterius, then lived two years as a hermit in the caves near Antioch until his health broke. Meletius ordained him deacon (381) and Bishop Flavian priest (386). For twelve years he preached at Antioch, including some twenty sermons in Lent 387, when the city awaited punishment for overturning the emperor's statues. In 398 the court brought him secretly to Constantinople, and he was consecrated archbishop on 26 February by Theophilus of Alexandria. He reformed the clergy and monks, cared for the poor and built a hospital, but a dispute over a widow's vineyard and a sermon she took as aimed at her estranged the empress Eudoxia. Theophilus's Synod of the Oak deposed him (403); he was recalled, then exiled again on 24 June 404, first to Cucusus. Ordered in 407 to remote Pithyus, he died on the road at Comana on 14 September; his last words, reported by Palladius, were "Glory be to God for all things." His body was brought to Constantinople on 27 January 438.

WHAT HE TAUGHT

Chrysostom preached the Bible book by book, explaining its plain sense and pressing it on daily conduct. On the Eucharist he urged: "Let us then in everything believe God, and gainsay Him in nothing" (*Homilies on Matthew* 82.4), adding of the gifts that "He who sanctifies and changes them is the same" Christ who first gave them (82.5). He tied worship to mercy: "Would you do honor to Christ's body? Neglect Him not when naked" (*Homilies on Matthew* 50.4). He described baptism as burial and new birth: "when we immerse our heads in the water, the old man is buried as in a tomb" (*Homilies on John* 25.2). *On the Priesthood* sets out the dignity and danger of the priest's office. He stressed the free choice of the will, working with grace.

WHAT HISTORIANS SAY

J. N. D. Kelly's *Golden Mouth* (1995) remains the standard English biography. Wendy Mayer (*The Homilies of St John Chrysostom: Provenance*, 2005) has shown that many homilies cannot be securely assigned to Antioch or Constantinople, unsettling the traditional dating of much of his work. Robert Wilken (*John Chrysostom and the Jews*, 1983) read the homilies against the Jews as a conventional rhetoric of blame aimed at Christians attending synagogue, in a city where Judaism was attractive; scholars still debate how far their target was Judaizers or Jews in general, and the homilies were later used against Jews. Robert Taft argued (1990) that Chrysostom himself revised the anaphora that bears his name, bringing an earlier Antiochene prayer to Constantinople. Some works long printed under his name, such as the Latin *Opus imperfectum* on Matthew, are spurious.

HOW THE CHURCHES READ HIM

- **Catholic:** A Doctor of the Church, cited for the real presence and the sacrifice of the Mass, for the priesthood, and for his appeal of 404 to Pope Innocent I (copies went also to the bishops of Milan and Aquileia); Byzantine Catholic churches celebrate his Divine Liturgy.
- **Orthodox:** One of the Three Holy Hierarchs and the model of the preacher; his Divine Liturgy is the Church's usual Eucharist, and his homilies are read as the classic exposition of Scripture in the Greek Church.
- **Lutheran:** The Augsburg Confession cites him for the ancient practice of the priest inviting the people to communion daily, against private Masses (art. XXIV), and the Catalog of Testimonies draws on his exegesis for the exaltation of Christ's human nature.
- **Reformed:** Calvin's preface to his homilies ranks him above the other Fathers as an interpreter of Scripture, and he is the Father most often cited in Calvin's commentaries, though Calvin's *Institutes* criticizes his account of grace and free will.
- **Anglican:** "A Prayer of St. Chrysostom," taken from the Byzantine liturgies into Cranmer's Litany (1544), closes Morning and Evening Prayer; John Jewel cited him that the keys are "the knowledge of the Scriptures."
- **Methodist:** John Wesley wanted clergy acquainted "with St. Chrysostom, Basil, Jerome, Austin" (*Address to the Clergy*, 1756), naming him first; Methodist doctrinal standards do not otherwise rest on him.
- **Baptist:** Baptists make limited use of him. His picture of baptism as immersion and burial with Christ (Rom 6:4) matches Baptist practice; his teaching on baptismal regeneration and the Eucharistic sacrifice does not.

Cited in: 3. The Church Fathers; 9. Faith alone; 12. Original sin; 16. Baptism: saving or symbolic?; 17. Infant baptism; 19. The Lord's Supper: symbol or presence?; 20. The symbolic view: Zwingli and after; 21. The Mass as sacrifice; 28. Gifts, tongues and healing

Sources: Chrysostom, *Homilies on Matthew* 82 and 50, *Homilies on John* 25 (NPNF I/10, I/14); C. Baur, "St. John Chrysostom," *Catholic Encyclopedia* (1910); "John Cassian," *Catholic Encyclopedia*; J. N. D. Kelly, *Golden Mouth* (1995); Wendy Mayer, *The Homilies of St John Chrysostom: Provenance* (2005); Robert L. Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews* (1983); Robert F. Taft, "The Authenticity of the Chrysostom Anaphora Revisited," *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 56 (1990); Paul A. Hartog, "Calvin's Preface to Chrysostom's Homilies", *Perichoresis* 17 (2019); Augsburg Confession, art. XXIV; John Jewel, *Apology*; John Wesley, *Address to the Clergy*; Orthodox Church in America, 30 January and 13 November; Church of England calendar; Lutheran calendars.

Jerome c. 347–420

Jerome was the most learned biblical scholar of the Latin Church: he revised the Latin Gospels for Pope Damasus and translated the Old Testament from the Hebrew, work that became the core of the Vulgate, the Bible of the Western Church for more than a thousand years. He was also a

teacher of the ascetic life and a fierce controversialist. Every tradition reads him on the Bible: Catholics for the Vulgate and his deference to "the judgment of the churches," Protestants for his preference for the Hebrew canon, which the Church of England's Articles quote by name, and Presbyterians and Baptists for his remarks on bishops and presbyters.

Lived	c. 347 (some scholars say c. 342) – 30 September 420
Where	Born at Stridon, "on the border of Dalmatia and Pannonia"; studied at Rome and Trier; desert of Chalcis near Antioch; Constantinople; Rome; Bethlehem from 386
Taught by	The grammarian Aelius Donatus at Rome; Apollinaris of Laodicea, whom he heard at Antioch; Gregory of Nazianzus, "my instructor in the Scriptures" (*Lives of Illustrious Men* 117); he translated and admired Didymus the Blind and long drew on Origen
Taught or influenced	Paula, Eustochium, Marcella and the ascetic circle of Roman women; correspondence with Augustine; through the Vulgate and his commentaries, Latin biblical study through the Middle Ages and the Reformation
Writings	Revised Latin Gospels (begun 382) and Old Testament from the Hebrew (c. 390–405), with prefaces; *Lives of Illustrious Men* (392–393); commentaries on the Prophets, Matthew and Paul; *Against Helvidius* (383), *Against Jovinian* (393), *Apology against Rufinus* (401), *Against Vigilantius* (406), *Dialogue against the Pelagians* (415); Latin version of Eusebius's *Chronicle* (c. 380); letters
Language	Latin; he worked from Greek and Hebrew
Honored	Catholic saint, one of the four great Latin Fathers and among the first Doctors of the Church (1298), feast 30 September; Orthodox saint ("Saint Jerome of Stridon," 15 June); commemorated in the Church of England (30 September) and in Lutheran calendars (30 September)

LIFE

Born to a Christian family at Stridon, Jerome studied rhetoric at Rome under Donatus and was baptized there in the 360s. He began theological study at Trier, stayed at Aquileia, and went east about 373. In the desert of Chalcis (c. 374–379) he lived as a hermit and began to learn Hebrew; in a fever he dreamed he stood before the Judge and heard: "You are a follower of Cicero and not of Christ" (Letter 22.30). Ordained priest at Antioch, he spent 380–381 at Constantinople with Gregory of Nazianzus. From 382 to 385 he served Pope Damasus at Rome and began revising the Latin New Testament, while guiding a circle of ascetic Roman women. After Damasus died in December 384, criticism of Jerome and an inquiry touching his friendship with the widow Paula led him to leave Rome in August 385. From 386 he lived at Bethlehem near the monasteries founded by Paula and her daughter Eustochium, translating, commenting and writing. He broke with his old friend Rufinus over Origen, exchanged sometimes sharp letters with Augustine, and wrote against the Pelagians. He died at Bethlehem on 30 September 420.

WHAT HE TAUGHT

Jerome held that the Latin Old Testament should rest on the Hebrew text (his *Hebraica veritas*). He wrote that the Church reads Wisdom and Sirach "for the edification of the people, not to confirm the authority of doctrines" (preface to the books of Solomon), yet translated Tobit and Judith and defended the additions to Daniel by appeal to "the judgment of the churches" (*Against Rufinus* 2.33). Against Helvidius he defended Mary's perpetual virginity, reading the "brethren" of Jesus as kinsmen; against Jovinian he ranked virginity above marriage; against Vigilantius he defended honoring relics and asking the saints' prayers. On the ministry he wrote that one presbyter was set over the rest "to remedy schism," and asked, "what function, excepting ordination, belongs to a bishop that does not also belong to a presbyter?" (Letter 146.1). To Damasus he wrote that he was in communion with "the chair of Peter" (Letter 15).

WHAT HISTORIANS SAY

J. N. D. Kelly's *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies* (1975) remains the standard biography; Stefan Rebenich's *Jerome* (2002) offers a shorter study. Megan Hale Williams (*The Monk and the Book*, 2006) examines how he joined the roles of ascetic and scholar into a new model of Christian learning, and Andrew Cain (*The Letters of Jerome*, 2009) argues that he shaped his letters and letter collections to establish himself as an authority on Scripture and the ascetic life. Scholars disagree on his birth year, placing it between about 340 and 347.

HOW THE CHURCHES READ HIM

- **Catholic:** A Doctor of the Church. Trent declared the Vulgate "authentic" for public use (1546), and the Catechism quotes his saying that ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ (CCC 133). Catholics stress that he deferred to the churches on the disputed books.

- **Orthodox:** Venerated as a saint. The Orthodox Old Testament follows the Septuagint, including the books Jerome placed outside the Hebrew canon.
- **Lutheran:** The Augsburg Confession cites him for the cup given to the people (art. XXII). Luther's Bible (1534) set the books outside the Hebrew canon apart as Apocrypha, useful to read but not equal to Scripture, close to Jerome's distinction.
- **Reformed:** Reformed confessions exclude the Apocrypha from the canon (Belgic Confession 6; Westminster Confession 1.3), going further than Jerome's reading "for the edification of the people." Presbyterians cite Letter 146 for the original identity of bishops and presbyters.
- **Anglican:** Article VI of the Thirty-Nine Articles adopts his rule by name: the other books "(as Hierome saith) the Church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners," but not to establish doctrine.
- **Methodist:** Wesley named Jerome among the Fathers clergy should know (*Address to the Clergy*, 1756), but in abridging the Articles for American Methodists (1784) he removed all reference to the Apocrypha, including Jerome's sentence.
- **Baptist:** Baptists cite his preference for the Hebrew canon (Second London Confession 1.3 excludes the Apocrypha) and his Letter 146 against a separate order of bishops. Most Baptists hold, against his *Against Helvidius*, that Mary had other children after Jesus.

Cited in: 2. The canon; 3. The Church Fathers; 4. The visible Church; 30. Mary ever-virgin; 32. Praying to Mary and the saints; 39. Timelines of the traditions; 41. Rome kept the Bible from the people?

Sources: Jerome, Letter 22, Letter 146 and *Lives of Illustrious Men* (NPNF II/3, II/6); "St. Jerome," *Catholic Encyclopedia*; J. N. D. Kelly, *Jerome* (1975); Stefan Rebenich, *Jerome* (2002); Megan Hale Williams, *The Monk and the Book* (2006); Andrew Cain, *The Letters of Jerome* (2009); Orthodox Church in America, 15 June; Augsburg Confession, art. XXII; Thirty-Nine Articles, art. VI; *Epworth Review* on Wesley's Article V; John Wesley, *Address to the Clergy*; Church of England calendar; Lutheran calendars.

Augustine of Hippo 354–430

Augustine, bishop of Hippo in Roman North Africa for some thirty-five years, is the most influential theologian of the Latin West. His *Confessions* and *City of God* are classics, and his controversies with the Manichaeans, Donatists and Pelagians set the terms of later Western debate on the Church, the sacraments, original sin, grace and predestination. Every Western tradition claims him: Catholics for grace, the sacraments and the Church's authority, Lutherans and Reformed for grace before merit, Anglicans and Methodists for original sin. The Orthodox honor him as a saint while holding back from some of his teaching.

Lived	13 November 354 – 28 August 430

Where	Born at Thagaste in Numidia (Souk Ahras, Algeria); studied at Madauros and Carthage; taught at Carthage, Rome and Milan; priest and bishop at Hippo Regius (Annaba, Algeria)
Taught by	Ambrose of Milan, whose preaching drew him to the Catholic faith and who baptized him; the priest Simplicianus, later bishop of Milan; his mother Monica
Taught or influenced	His friend and biographer Possidius; Prosper of Aquitaine; the Council of Orange (529); the medieval West; Thomas Aquinas; Luther (an Augustinian friar), Calvin and Jansenius
Writings	*Confessions* (c. 397–401); *On Christian Doctrine*; *On the Trinity*; *The City of God* (413–426); anti-Pelagian treatises; *Retractations* (426–427); *Tractates on John*; *Expositions of the Psalms*; hundreds of sermons and letters
Language	Latin; his Greek was limited
Honored	Catholic saint and Doctor of the Church ("Doctor of Grace," among the first four declared in 1298), feast 28 August; Orthodox saint ("Blessed Augustine, Bishop of Hippo," 15 June), with reservations about some of his teaching; Lesser Festival in the Church of England (28 August); commemorated in Lutheran calendars (28 August)

LIFE

Augustine was born to Patricius, a pagan who was baptized near death, and Monica, a devout Christian. He studied rhetoric at Carthage, was for about ten years a "hearer" among the Manichaeans, and taught at Carthage and Rome before winning the chair of rhetoric at Milan (384). There Ambrose's preaching and Neoplatonist books loosened his objections. In a Milan garden in late summer 386 he heard a child's voice say "Take up and read," opened Paul at Rom 13:13–14, and resolved to live as a Christian (*Confessions* 8.12.29). Ambrose baptized him with his son Adeodatus at the Easter Vigil of 387; Monica died at Ostia as they prepared to sail home, asking only to be remembered "at the Lord's altar" (9.11.27). Back in Africa (388) he lived with friends in a small community until, on a visit to Hippo in 391, the people pressed him into the priesthood; he became coadjutor bishop in 395 or 396 and soon bishop. As bishop he preached, judged disputes and wrote against the Donatists, who held theirs to be the only pure Church, and

from 411 against Pelagius and his followers. After the Gothic sack of Rome (410) he wrote *The City of God*. He died on 28 August 430, while the Vandals besieged Hippo.

WHAT HE TAUGHT

The *Confessions* pray, "Give what You command, and command what You will" (10.29.40), a line Pelagius, hearing it quoted at Rome, "could not bear" (*On the Gift of Perseverance* 53). Against the Pelagians he taught that all inherit Adam's sin and guilt, that infants are baptized for its forgiveness, and that grace goes before every good will; looking back on his answer to Simplicianus (396) he wrote, "I laboured indeed on behalf of the free choice of the human will, but God's grace overcame" (*On the Predestination of the Saints* 8). He held that God gives perseverance to the elect, chosen not for foreseen merit. Against the Donatists he taught that the sacraments belong to Christ, so baptism given outside the Church is valid, and that the Church on earth is a mixed body of good and bad. He spoke of the sacraments as signs, yet preached that the bread on the altar "is the body of Christ" (Sermon 227), accepted the deuterocanonical books, prayed for the dead and allowed purifying punishment after death. He traced history as two cities, "the earthly by the love of self, even to the contempt of God" and the heavenly by the love of God (*City of God* 14.28). He also defended imperial laws compelling the Donatists, reading Luke 14:23, "compel them to come in," in that sense (Letter 185.24).

In the dispute over whether baptism given by heretics is valid, he wrote about custom and councils, and both sides cite him. Catholic and Orthodox writers point to his defense of unwritten apostolic practice: observances kept by the whole Church "which yet are not mentioned in their writings" are "fairly held to have been enjoined by the apostles" (*On Baptism* 5.23.31), and a custom held by the whole Church "not as instituted by Councils" is "rightly held to have been handed down by apostolic authority" (4.24). Even where no certain example comes from the canonical Scriptures, he says, the truth of Scripture is kept when Christians do what the universal Church has approved (*Against Cresconius* 1.33.39). Reformed, Lutheran, Anglican and Baptist writers answer that he infers apostolic origin from universal custom as probable ("may be supposed"), chiefly for the baptism of heretics and infants, and that he also says he gives the honor of freedom from error only to the canonical books (Letter 82.3). Protestant writers cite the same treatise for the fallibility of councils: provincial councils "must yield" to "plenary Councils which are formed for the whole Christian world," and "the earlier are often corrected by those which follow them" (*On Baptism* 2.3.4). Catholic and Orthodox writers reply that he is speaking of Cyprian's African council, overruled by the wider Church, and of corrections in discipline and understanding, not of one council contradicting another in doctrine; Anglican and Reformed writers answer that he defines "plenary" there as councils for the whole Christian world and ranks all of them below Scripture. See where Christians are told that only what was written binds them.

WHAT HISTORIANS SAY

Peter Brown's *Augustine of Hippo* (1967) remains the classic life. In the epilogue to its 2000 edition Brown weighed newly found letters (published by Johannes Divjak, discovered 1975) and sermons (identified by François Dolbeau, 1990), which show a bishop with less control over his flock and the government than his formal works suggest, and found more compassion where he had once seen rigidity. James J. O'Donnell (*Augustine: A New Biography*, 2005) reads the *Confessions* as a constructed public self and gives more weight to the Donatists, whom he treats as the larger church in Africa; some reviewers judged this speculative. Scholars disagree about when his theology of grace took its mature form: Augustine himself dated the change to his reply to Simplicianus (396), while Kenneth Wilson (*Augustine's Conversion from Traditional Free Choice to "Non-free Free Will"*, 2018) argues that he kept the traditional view of free choice until about 412.

HOW THE CHURCHES READ HIM

- **Catholic:** The Doctor of Grace, whose teaching on original sin and prevenient grace was received at Orange (529) and Trent. Catholics cite him for the sacraments, purgatory and the Church's authority (*Against the Fundamental Epistle* 5). They do not follow every opinion: the Catechism allows hope for unbaptized infants (CCC 1261).
- **Orthodox:** Venerated as a saint, though his works had little influence in the East until late. Orthodox teachers do not accept that Adam's descendants inherit his guilt, only the consequences of his sin, chiefly death, and they reject the Filioque that later Western theology built partly on his *On the Trinity*.
- **Lutheran:** Luther was an Augustinian friar, and the Augsburg Confession says Augustine "in many volumes, defends grace and the righteousness of faith, over against the merits of works" (art. XX). The Smalcald Articles deny that he taught purgatory as later practiced.
- **Reformed:** Augustine is by far the Father Calvin cites most, especially on predestination and the bondage of the will. B. B. Warfield called the Reformation "the ultimate triumph of Augustine's doctrine of grace over Augustine's doctrine of the Church."
- **Anglican:** He is the Father John Jewel's *Apology* cites most, and the Articles on original sin and grace (IX–XIII) follow his anti-Pelagian line.
- **Methodist:** Methodists keep his doctrine of original sin (Articles of Religion VII) but reject unconditional election. Wesley wrote that "when Augustine's passions were heated, his word is not worth a rush" (Sermon 68).
- **Baptist:** Calvinistic Baptists follow his teaching on grace and election (Second London Confession 3, 9–10); other Baptists do not. All Baptists reject his teaching on infant baptism, and Roger Williams answered John Cotton's appeal to Augustine's defense of punishing the Donatists (*The Bloudy Tenent of Persecution*, 1644).

Cited in: 1. Scripture alone; 2. The canon; 3. The Church Fathers; 4. The visible Church; 7. The Filioque; 9. Faith alone; 10. Assurance and eternal security; 12. Original sin; 13. Predestination and free will; 15. Salvation outside the Church; 16. Baptism: saving or symbolic?; 17. Infant baptism; 19. The Lord's Supper: symbol or presence?; 20. The

symbolic view: Zwingli and after; 24. Seven sacraments or two?; 26. Marriage, divorce, contraception; 28. Gifts, tongues and healing; 31. Immaculate Conception and Assumption; 32. Praying to Mary and the saints; 33. Images and relics; 35. Purgatory and indulgences; 36. The Rapture and end times; 39. Timelines of the traditions

Sources: Augustine, *Confessions* 8 and 9, *City of God* 14.28, *On the Predestination of the Saints*, Letter 185 (NPNF I/1–5); *On Baptism* 2.3.4, 4.24, 5.23.31, Letter 82.3, *Against Cresconius* 1.33.39 (CSEL 52); E. Portalié, "Life of St. Augustine," *Catholic Encyclopedia*; Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (1967; new ed. 2000); James J. O'Donnell, *Augustine: A New Biography* (2005), with review by Thomas Williams; Orthodox Church in America, "St. Augustine & Original Sin"; OCA, 15 June; Augsburg Confession, art. XX; Smalcald Articles II.2; Anthony N. S. Lane, *John Calvin: Student of the Church Fathers* (1999); B. B. Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine*, 321–22; John Jewel, *Apology*; John Wesley, Sermon 68, "The Wisdom of God's Counsels"; Roger Williams, *The Bloudy Tenent of Persecution*; Church of England calendar; Lutheran calendars.

Cyril of Alexandria c. 376–444

Cyril was patriarch of Alexandria from 412 to 444 and the leading opponent of Nestorius of Constantinople. His insistence that the eternal Word himself was born of Mary, so that she is rightly called Theotokos ("God-bearer"), prevailed at the Council of Ephesus (431), and his letters became a standard of orthodoxy for Chalcedon (451). His Christology is the common inheritance of every tradition that confesses one Christ in two natures, and the non-Chalcedonian churches of Egypt, Syria and Armenia claim him as well. His record as a church leader, from the expulsion of Alexandria's Jews to the conduct of Ephesus and the murder of the philosopher Hypatia by Christians, remains disputed.

Lived	c. 376 – 27 June 444 (some sources give 9 June)
Where	Born in Egypt; Alexandria; the Council of Ephesus (431)
Taught by	His uncle Theophilus, patriarch of Alexandria, with whom he attended the Synod of the Oak (403) that deposed John Chrysostom; he appealed constantly to Athanasius
Taught or influenced	The councils of Ephesus (431), Chalcedon (451) and Constantinople II (553); later Byzantine theologians such as John of Damascus; the non-Chalcedonian tradition
Writings	*Commentary on John*; *On Adoration in Spirit and in Truth* and *Glaphyra* on the Pentateuch; commentaries on Isaiah and the Minor Prophets; *Against Julian*; treatises on the Trinity; *Against*

	Nestorius; letters, including the second and third letters to Nestorius and the Twelve Anathemas (430); festal letters
Language	Greek
Honored	Catholic saint and Doctor of the Church ("Doctor of the Incarnation," Leo XIII, 1883), feast 27 June; Orthodox saint ("Saint Cyril, Archbishop of Alexandria," 9 June and, with Athanasius, 18 January); commemorated in the Church of England (27 June) and in Lutheran calendars (27 June); also called "Pillar of Faith" and "Seal of the Fathers"

LIFE

Cyril studied grammar, rhetoric and theology in Egypt and in 403 went with his uncle Theophilus to the Synod of the Oak. When Theophilus died in October 412, Cyril was made patriarch after rioting between his supporters and those of a rival. He closed the churches of the Novatians, and in 414–415 clashed with the prefect Orestes; after an attack on Christians, the Jews were expelled from the city (Socrates says all were driven out, John of Nikiu only those involved). In March 415 a Christian mob led by a reader named Peter killed the philosopher Hypatia; the historian Socrates wrote that the deed brought "opprobrium, not only upon Cyril, but also upon the whole Alexandrian church" (*Church History* 7.15). From 429 Cyril attacked the teaching of Nestorius, bishop of Constantinople since 428, who objected to the title Theotokos. Pope Celestine's Roman synod backed Cyril, and Cyril sent Nestorius twelve propositions to anathematize. At Ephesus Cyril opened the council on 22 June 431 before John of Antioch and the Syrian bishops arrived; it deposed Nestorius, and John's rival assembly deposed Cyril. The emperor briefly detained Cyril, but he returned to Alexandria, and in 433 he and John were reconciled on a common statement of faith. He died in 444.

The title Theotokos was not defined by a new creed at Ephesus, which approved Cyril's Second Letter to Nestorius and deposed Nestorius. Cyril's Third Letter, with its twelve anathemas, was the part the Easterners under John of Antioch found too Alexandrian. The settlement of 433 used a formula drawn up on the Eastern side, which Cyril accepted in his letter to John of Antioch (Letter 39): "According to this understanding of this unmixed union, we confess the holy Virgin to be Mother of God," and "there became a union of two natures." Chalcedon (451) later cited Cyril's letter to John. Eastern Orthodox and Catholic writers read the two documents, Cyril's anathemas and the Eastern formula, as one faith expressed in two vocabularies; the non-Chalcedonian churches, which honor Cyril's "one nature" phrase, do not accept the "two natures" language of Chalcedon.

WHAT HE TAUGHT

For Cyril the Word did not join himself to a man but became man. The holy Fathers called the Virgin Theotokos "not as if the nature of the Word or his divinity had its beginning from the Holy Virgin," but because the Word, "having personally united to himself flesh animated by a rational soul," was born of her (second letter to Nestorius). His first anathema reads: "If anyone will not confess that the Emmanuel is very God, and that therefore the Holy Virgin is the Mother of God... let him be anathema." Because the flesh belongs to the Word, it is life-giving, a point he pressed in his commentary on John 6 and in the eleventh anathema. He used the phrase "one nature of God the Word incarnate," taking it from a treatise he believed was by Athanasius, to stress the unity of Christ's person.

Defenders of the title argue that it names the person born, not the divine nature. Elizabeth, "filled with the Holy Ghost," says "the mother of my Lord" (Luke 1:41-43, KJV), and Matthew says the virgin's child is "Emmanuel, ... God with us" (Matt 1:23). They also note that the word was in use before Nestorius: Alexander of Alexandria wrote of a body "derived from Mary the mother of God" (c. 319); Athanasius speaks of "Mary Bearer of God" (*Orations against the Arians* 3.29, 3.33); and Gregory of Nazianzus wrote that "if anyone does not believe that Holy Mary is the Mother of God, he is severed from the Godhead" (Letter 101, c. 382). Nestorius held that the title suggests Mary originated the Word, and preferred "Mother of Christ." Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican and Methodist writers accept Theotokos in the sense of Ephesus, as a statement about one divine person, while rejecting devotion built on it.

WHAT HISTORIANS SAY

John McGuckin (*St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy*, 1994) sets the dispute within imperial politics and the rivalry of the great sees, defends Cyril's theology against the charge of hidden Apollinarianism, and gives a favorable account of his character. Susan Wessel (*Cyril of Alexandria and the Nestorian Controversy: The Making of a Saint and of a Heretic*, 2004) explains his success by his identification with Athanasius and his rhetorical skill. Modern scholars trace the "one nature" phrase to an Apollinarian work circulating under Athanasius's name, but differ on how much weight Cyril gave it: Mark Edwards ("One Nature of the Word Enfleshed," 2015) weighs the reading that it shows Cyril tending toward one nature after the union, while Hans van Loon (*The Dyophysite Christology of Cyril of Alexandria*) stresses how rarely Cyril used it. On Hypatia, the ancient sources differ: Socrates blames the zeal of Alexandria's Christians, the later pagan Damascius blames Cyril directly, and modern historians disagree how far Cyril was responsible.

HOW THE CHURCHES READ HIM

- **Catholic:** The Doctor of the Incarnation, cited for Mary as Mother of God and for the unity of Christ. Catholics also note that Pope Celestine commissioned him to act against Nestorius.

- **Orthodox:** One of the great Fathers of the Church, read as the key to Chalcedon: the council acclaimed that "Leo and Cyril taught the same thing," and the Fifth Council (553) condemned writings against Cyril and his Twelve Anathemas.
- **Lutheran:** The Catalog of Testimonies appended to the Book of Concord cites Cyril and the eleventh anathema of Ephesus on the life-giving flesh of Christ, in support of the Lutheran teaching on Christ's person and the Supper.
- **Reformed:** The Second Helvetic Confession (ch. 11) receives the decrees of Ephesus and Chalcedon and condemns the Nestorians "who make two of the one Christ"; unlike Lutherans, Reformed theologians do not draw from the union of natures that Christ's human nature shares divine properties such as omnipresence.
- **Anglican:** Anglican divines such as Lancelot Andrewes appealed to "four general councils," Ephesus among them, and John Jewel cited Cyril on Communion; the Church of England commemorates him as a Teacher of the Faith.
- **Methodist:** Little direct use, but the Articles of Religion keep the conciliar teaching that "two whole and perfect natures" are joined in one person (art. II).
- **Baptist:** Baptists make little use of Cyril, though their confessions keep the conciliar definition of "two whole, perfect, and distinct natures... inseparably joined together in one person" (Second London Confession 8.2).

Cited in: 3. The Church Fathers

Sources: Council of Ephesus: Cyril's letters to Nestorius and the Twelve Anathemas (NPNF II/14); Council of Chalcedon, acts (session 1, with Cyril's letter to John of Antioch and the formula of 433); Alexander of Alexandria, letter in Theodoret, *Church History* 1.3; Athanasius, *Orations against the Arians* 3.29, 3.33; Gregory of Nazianzus, Letter 101 to Cledonius (NPNF II/7); Second Council of Constantinople, anathemas; Socrates, *Church History* 7; J. Chapman, "St. Cyril of Alexandria," *Catholic Encyclopedia* (1908); John McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria* (1994); Susan Wessel, *Cyril of Alexandria and the Nestorian Controversy* (2004); Orthodox Church in America, 9 June and 18 January; Catalog of Testimonies; Second Helvetic Confession, ch. 11; "One Nature of the Word Enfleshed," *Harvard Theological Review*; review of van Loon, *Themelios*; Arthur Middleton, on Lancelot Andrewes; Second London Confession, ch. 8; John Jewel, *Apology*; Church of England calendar; Lutheran calendars.

Leo the Great c. 400–461

Leo I was bishop of Rome from 440 to 461, in the years when the Western Empire was breaking apart. His letter to Flavian of Constantinople, known as the Tome (449), set out the faith that Christ is one person in two natures, each keeping its own properties, and the Council of Chalcedon (451) received it with the cry "Peter has spoken thus through Leo." Ninety-six of his sermons survive, and in them he set out the claim that Peter still speaks and acts in the bishop of Rome. All seven

traditions accept the Chalcedonian Christology his Tome helped to shape; they divide over what the council's acclamation and his claims for the Roman see mean.

Lived	c. 400 (birth date and place unknown; the *Liber Pontificalis* calls him a Tuscan) – 10 November 461
Where	Rome; a mission to Gaul (c. 440); met Attila on the Mincio near Mantua (452)
Taught by	No teacher recorded; formed in the Roman clergy as a deacon under Popes Celestine I and Sixtus III
Taught or influenced	John Cassian, who wrote *On the Incarnation* against Nestorius at Leo's suggestion (c. 430); the Council of Chalcedon and its Christology; the later Western theory of papal primacy
Writings	96 genuine sermons, chiefly for the feasts and fasts of the Roman year and the anniversaries of his consecration; 143 letters, above all Letter 28, the Tome to Flavian (13 June 449)
Language	Latin
Honored	Catholic saint and Doctor of the Church (Benedict XIV, 1754), feast 10 November; Orthodox saint ("Saint Leo the Great, Pope of Rome," 18 February); Lesser Festival in the Church of England (10 November)

LIFE

As a Roman deacon Leo was already influential under Celestine I and Sixtus III. He was in Gaul, sent by the emperor Valentinian III to reconcile the general Aetius and the magistrate Albinus, when Sixtus died in August 440; he was consecrated on 29 September. He pursued Manichaeans in Rome (443–444), wrote against the Priscillianists of Spain, and in 445 limited the authority of Hilary of Arles, supported by an imperial edict of 8 July 445. When the monk Eutyches of Constantinople, who taught that after the union Christ had only one nature, appealed to him, Leo sent Flavian his Tome. The council at Ephesus in 449 ignored it, restored Eutyches and deposed Flavian; Leo called it a "robber synod." Under the emperor Marcian the Council of Chalcedon (451) accepted the Tome. Leo confirmed the council's faith but rejected its canon 28, which raised Constantinople to the second rank. In 452 he met Attila on the Mincio, and Attila withdrew from Italy; when the

Vandal king Gaiseric took Rome in 455, Leo obtained a promise to spare the people's lives. He died on 10 November 461 and was buried at St Peter's.

WHAT HE TAUGHT

The Tome holds that "without detriment therefore to the properties of either nature and substance," both came together in one person (ch. 3), so that "each form does what is proper to it with the co-operation of the other" (ch. 4). His Christmas sermons draw the consequence for believers: "Christian, acknowledge your dignity, and becoming a partner in the Divine nature, refuse to return to the old baseness" (Sermon 21.3). On the Roman see he taught that "the blessed Peter persevering in the strength of the Rock, which he has received, has not abandoned the helm of the Church," and that his "power lives and... authority prevails in his See" (Sermon 3.3). He also stressed almsgiving, fasting and the Church's yearly round of feasts.

WHAT HISTORIANS SAY

Walter Ullmann ("Leo I and the Theme of Papal Primacy," *Journal of Theological Studies*, 1960) argued that Leo drew on the Roman law of inheritance to present each pope as Peter's heir. Susan Wessel (*Leo the Great and the Spiritual Rebuilding of a Universal Rome*, 2008) reads his theology and his policy together, as an answer to the collapse of the Western Empire in a Christian and universal Rome. Bronwen Neil (*Leo the Great*, 2009) likewise reads his Christology alongside his pastoral and political work. The Coptic, Armenian and Syriac Orthodox churches rejected Chalcedon and the Tome as departing from Cyril.

HOW THE CHURCHES READ HIM

- **Catholic:** A Doctor of the Church, cited for Christ's two natures and for Peter's abiding presence in the bishop of Rome; Catholics read the cry at Chalcedon, "Peter has spoken thus through Leo," as the council's recognition of that authority. The Catechism opens its teaching on Christian life with his "Christian, recognize your dignity" (CCC 1691).
- **Orthodox:** Venerated as a saint and Orthodox teacher; the Tome is received as true doctrine. Orthodox writers note that the council examined the Tome against the earlier creeds before accepting it, acclaimed that "Leo and Cyril taught the same thing," and kept canon 28 despite his objection.
- **Lutheran:** The Catalog of Testimonies appended to the Book of Concord quotes the Tome on the personal union of Christ's natures; Lutherans do not accept his teaching that Peter's authority lives on in the Roman see.
- **Reformed:** The Second Helvetic Confession (ch. 11) receives the creed and decrees of Chalcedon. Calvin argued that Leo's legates presided at Chalcedon by the emperor's concession, not by right of his see, and that Leo at first took up Eutyches' appeal out of ambition (*Institutes* 4.7).

- **Anglican:** Chalcedon is one of the "four general councils" Anglican divines such as Lancelot Andrewes accept; the Church of England keeps Leo as a Lesser Festival and Teacher of the Faith.
- **Methodist:** Little direct use, but the Articles of Religion keep the Chalcedonian teaching that "two whole and perfect natures" are joined in one person, "never to be divided" (art. II).
- **Baptist:** Baptists make little use of Leo and reject his teaching on the papacy; their confessions keep his Christology, confessing two natures "inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion" (Second London Confession 8.2).

Cited in: 5. Peter and the papacy; 6. The Orthodox claim; 7. The Filioque; 39. Timelines of the traditions

Sources: Leo, Letter 28 (Tome), Sermon 21 and Sermon 3 (NPNF II/12); Council of Chalcedon, acts (NPNF II/14); J. P. Kirsch, "Pope St. Leo I," *Catholic Encyclopedia* (1910); "Doctors of the Church," *Catholic Encyclopedia*; Walter Ullmann, "Leo I and the Theme of Papal Primacy," *JTS* n.s. 11 (1960); Susan Wessel, *Leo the Great and the Spiritual Rebuilding of a Universal Rome* (2008); Bronwen Neil, *Leo the Great* (2009); Orthodox Church in America, 18 February; Catalog of Testimonies; Second Helvetic Confession, ch. 11; Calvin, *Institutes* 4.7; Arthur Middleton, on Lancelot Andrewes; Second London Confession, ch. 8; Church of England calendar.

Gregory the Great c. 540–604

Gregory I, bishop of Rome from 590 to 604, was a former prefect of the city turned monk who governed the Roman church through plague, war with the Lombards and the collapse of imperial power in Italy. He sent the mission that brought Christianity to the English, wrote the *Pastoral Rule* that shaped the ideal of the bishop for centuries, and called himself "servant of the servants of God." His letters protesting the title "ecumenical" or "universal" claimed by the patriarch of Constantinople are quoted by every side in the debate over the papacy, and his *Dialogues* are a chief early witness to the Western teaching on purgation after death. The Orthodox honor him as Gregory the Dialogist.

Lived	c. 540 – 12 March 604
Where	Rome; papal envoy at Constantinople (579–c. 586)
Taught by	No teacher recorded; formed as a monk in the monastery of St Andrew that he founded in his family's house on the Caelian Hill
Taught or influenced	Augustine of Canterbury and the mission to the English; Leander of Seville, at whose request he wrote the *Moralia*; medieval

	bishops and monks through the *Pastoral Rule*, which King Alfred translated into Old English
Writings	*Moralia on Job* (begun at Constantinople); *Pastoral Rule* (c. 590–591); *Homilies on Ezekiel* (593) and *on the Gospels*; *Dialogues* (four books, c. 593–594); the *Register* of his letters in fourteen books
Language	Latin
Honored	Catholic saint, one of the four great Latin Fathers and among the first Doctors of the Church (1298), feast 3 September; Orthodox saint ("Saint Gregory Dialogus, Pope of Rome," 12 March); Lesser Festival in the Church of England (3 September); commemorated in Lutheran calendars (12 March; LCMS also 3 September)

LIFE

Gregory was born at Rome about 540 to a wealthy patrician family; his father was Gordianus and his mother Silvia. About 573 he was prefect of the city, but soon gave up public life, turned his house on the Caelian into the monastery of St Andrew, and became a monk. Ordained one of Rome's seven deacons (578), he was sent in 579 as the pope's envoy to Constantinople, where he stayed some six years and began the *Moralia*. After Pope Pelagius II died in February 590, during a plague, Gregory was chosen to succeed him and consecrated on 3 September 590. He organized relief for the city, ran the church's estates, negotiated with the Lombards who besieged Rome in 593, and corresponded with bishops from Spain to Alexandria. In 596 he sent the monk Augustine with a band of companions to the English. When John the Faster of Constantinople used the title "ecumenical patriarch," Gregory protested repeatedly; the dispute was unresolved at his death on 12 March 604.

WHAT HE TAUGHT

The *Pastoral Rule* teaches that the ruler of souls must first rule himself and must suit his counsel to each kind of hearer. On the title of universal bishop he wrote to Eulogius of Alexandria: "if your Holiness calls me Universal Pope, you deny that you are yourself what you call me universally," and "my honour is the honour of the universal Church: my honour is the solid vigour of my brethren" (Letter 8.30). Yet he held that Constantinople was subject to the Apostolic See (Letter 9.12) and exercised authority well beyond Italy. In the *Dialogues* he taught that for certain lesser faults there is a purifying fire before the judgment (4.39), and he told of souls helped by the offering of the Mass. He defended pictures in churches as a means of teaching those who cannot read, while

forbidding their worship (letter to Serenus of Marseilles), and advised that pagan temples in England be turned to Christian use (601).

WHAT HISTORIANS SAY

R. A. Markus (*Gregory the Great and His World*, 1997) sets his life, thought and spirituality in the world of the late sixth century, and Carole Straw (*Gregory the Great: Perfection in Imperfection*, 1988) is a leading study of his spirituality. Francis Clark (*The Pseudo-Gregorian Dialogues*, 1987) argued that the *Dialogues* were written in the later seventh century by someone using fragments of Gregory; Paul Meyvaert, Adalbert de Vogüé and others replied, and most scholars now accept the work as Gregory's. His connection with the chant named after him is uncertain: the earliest witness is his ninth-century biographer John the Deacon.

HOW THE CHURCHES READ HIM

- **Catholic:** A Doctor of the Church and model pastor, cited for Roman primacy as he exercised it, for purgatory (CCC 1031 quotes *Dialogues* 4.39), and for the evangelization of the English. Catholics read his protest as aimed at a title that seemed to deny other bishops' office, not at Rome's primacy.
- **Orthodox:** Venerated as Gregory the Dialogist; Byzantine service books traditionally ascribe to him the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, though historians doubt it. Orthodox writers cite his letters as evidence that an early pope rejected universal jurisdiction over the other patriarchs.
- **Lutheran:** The Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope (1537) cites his refusal of the title "universal bishop" (¶19), and the Augsburg Confession notes that the Fathers before him make no mention of private Masses (art. XXIV).
- **Reformed:** Calvin used his letters against the papacy of his own day, judging his cause "good and honourable" and the later papacy "a hundred times more corrupt than in the days of Gregory" (*Institutes* 4.7.16, 22). The Heidelberg Catechism rejects his defense of images as books for the unlearned (Q 98).
- **Anglican:** Bede called him the apostle of the English, and the Church of England keeps him as a Lesser Festival. John Jewel's *Apology* (1562) quoted his letters that the title of universal bishop is "antichristian."
- **Methodist:** Little direct use; Methodist Articles of Religion reject "the Romish doctrine concerning purgatory" (art. XIV), for which his *Dialogues* are an early source.
- **Baptist:** Baptists make little use of Gregory apart from his universal-bishop letters, which Baptist writers on the papacy cite like other Protestants; they reject purgatory and prayer for the dead.

Cited in: 3. The Church Fathers; 35. Purgatory and indulgences; 39. Timelines of the traditions; 42. Paganism claims

Sources: Gregory, Letter 8.30 and Letter 9.12 (NPNF II/12–13); G. Huddleston, "Pope St. Gregory I," *Catholic Encyclopedia* (1909); "Servant of the servants of God"; R. A. Markus, *Gregory the Great and His World* (1997); Carole Straw, *Gregory the Great* (1988); Francis Clark, *The Pseudo-Gregorian Dialogues* (1987), and the debate in *JEH*; Bede, *Ecclesiastical History* 2.1; Orthodox Church in America, 12 March; Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope; Augsburg Confession, art. XXIV; Calvin, *Institutes* 4.7; Heidelberg Catechism, Q 98; John Jewel, *Apology*; Church of England calendar; Lutheran calendars.

John of Damascus c. 675–c. 749

John of Damascus was a Christian of Umayyad Damascus who left a family career in the caliph's administration to become a monk near Jerusalem. Writing outside the Byzantine Empire, he produced the classic defense of icons against the emperor Leo III's iconoclasm, and his *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, a summary of the Greek Fathers, is often called the first systematic theology of the East and became a textbook of the medieval West. He is also one of the great hymn writers of the Orthodox Church. The Second Council of Nicaea (787) vindicated his teaching on images, which Catholics and Orthodox accept and most Protestant traditions reject; his Easter hymns are sung in translation across Protestant churches.

Lived	c. 675 – c. 749 (traditionally 4 December; the exact year is uncertain)
Where	Damascus, under the Umayyad caliphs; the monastery of Mar Saba near Jerusalem
Taught by	Not securely known; his surviving Life is late and legendary. His works gather the earlier Greek Fathers, among them Basil, whom he quotes on the honor that passes from image to prototype, and Cyril of Alexandria
Taught or influenced	The Second Council of Nicaea (787); Byzantine theology and hymnody; through the Latin translation of Burgundio of Pisa (1153–1154), Peter Lombard and Thomas Aquinas
Writings	Three treatises *On the Divine Images* (from the late 720s or 730s); *The Fount of Knowledge*: *Philosophical Chapters*, *On Heresies* (including a chapter on Islam) and the *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*; homilies, including three on the Dormition of Mary; hymns and canons, among them the canon for Easter

Language	Greek
Honored	Orthodox saint ("Venerable John of Damascus," 4 December); Catholic saint and Doctor of the Church (Leo XIII, 1890), feast 4 December; commemorated in the Church of England (4 December) and in Lutheran calendars (4 December)

LIFE

John was born about 675 into a leading Christian family of Damascus. His grandfather Mansur ibn Sarjun was a tax official in the city, and his father Sarjun served the early Umayyad caliphs; how far John himself held office is unclear. Some time after the early 700s he left Damascus for the monastic life, probably at Mar Saba in the Judean desert, and he was ordained priest, perhaps about 735. In 726 the emperor Leo III issued his first edict against the veneration of images, and John answered in three treatises on the divine images, safe from imperial reach under Muslim rule. He died about 749. The iconoclast council of Hieria (754) anathematized him; the Second Council of Nicaea (787) restored his name and relied on his arguments. A later legend tells that the caliph cut off his right hand on forged evidence and that the Mother of God restored it after he prayed before her icon, the origin of the "Three-Handed" icon of the Theotokos.

WHAT HE TAUGHT

His defense of images rests on the Incarnation: "When the Invisible One becomes visible to flesh, you may then draw a likeness of His form" (*On Holy Images* 1.8). "I do not worship matter, I worship the God of matter, who became matter for my sake... I venerate it, though not as God" (1.16). He distinguished the worship due to God alone from the honor given to images, and quoted Basil that honoring the image leads to the prototype. In the *Exact Exposition* he summed up the Greek Fathers on the Trinity and on Christ's two natures and two wills. Of the Eucharist he wrote that "the bread and the wine are not merely figures of the body and blood of Christ" but the deified body of the Lord, changed by the Holy Spirit "just as the Lord took on Himself flesh" (4.13). On the Spirit he said "we do not speak of the Spirit as from the Son: but yet we call Him the Spirit of the Son" (1.8). His homilies on the Dormition teach Mary's bodily assumption.

WHAT HISTORIANS SAY

Andrew Louth (*St John Damascene: Tradition and Originality in Byzantine Theology*, 2002) answers the older view of John as a mere compiler, arguing that for him originality lay in faithfulness to tradition, and places him among the Neo-Chalcedonians who read Chalcedon through Cyril. Daniel Sahas (*John of Damascus on Islam*, 1972) studied his chapter on the "Ishmaelites," one of the first Christian treatments of Islam; scholars disagree how far his father served in the caliph's finances.

His biography rests mostly on a later, legendary Life, and the romance *Barlaam and Josaphat*, long ascribed to him, is now generally given to a later author.

HOW THE CHURCHES READ HIM

- **Catholic:** A Doctor of the Church, cited for the veneration of images defined at Nicaea II, for the Eucharistic change and for the Assumption, where Pius XII's *Munificentissimus Deus* (1950) quotes his Dormition homilies.
- **Orthodox:** A Father of the Church whose teaching on icons the Seventh Council made its own and the Sunday of Orthodoxy celebrates; his Easter canon is sung every Pascha, and the cycle of eight tones (Octoechos) is traditionally linked with his name. Orthodox writers cite him for the Spirit's procession "from the Father" and against the Filioque.
- **Lutheran:** The Formula of Concord cites him on the union and communion of Christ's natures (Solid Declaration VIII.22), and the Catalog of Testimonies quotes him. Luther defended images in churches against Karlstadt (*Against the Heavenly Prophets*, 1525), though Lutherans do not adopt the Seventh Council's veneration.
- **Reformed:** Calvin attacked Nicaea II, saying the council "relies as much on images as on the living God" (*Institutes* 1.11.16), and the Reformed confessions forbid worshiping God by images (Westminster Confession 21.1; Heidelberg Catechism Q 97–98). His Easter hymns are sung in Reformed hymnals.
- **Anglican:** Article XXII rejects the "Worshipping and Adoration, as well of Images as of Reliques." John Mason Neale's translations of his Easter hymns, "The Day of Resurrection" and "Come, Ye Faithful, Raise the Strain," appear in Anglican hymnals such as the *New English Hymnal*.
- **Methodist:** The Articles of Religion reject the Roman doctrine of "worshiping, and adoration, as well of images as of relics" (art. XIV); his Easter hymns appear in Methodist hymnals ("Come, Ye Faithful, Raise the Strain," United Methodist Hymnal 315).
- **Baptist:** Baptists make little use of him and reject the veneration of images: God "may not be worshipped... under any visible representations" (Second London Confession 22.1).

Cited in: 3. The Church Fathers; 7. The Filioque; 33. Images and relics

Sources: John of Damascus, *On Holy Images*, trans. Mary H. Allies (1898); *Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* 4.13 (NPNF II/9); "Doctors of the Church," *Catholic Encyclopedia*; Andrew Louth, *St John Damascene* (2002), with review in *Arc*; Daniel J. Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam* (1972); "John of Damascus"; Orthodox Church in America, 4 December; Formula of Concord, SD VIII; Calvin, *Institutes* 1.11; Second London Confession, ch. 22; Hymnary.org, "Come, Ye Faithful, Raise the Strain"; Church of England calendar; Lutheran calendars.