



Article Title— "The Church Fathers"

Article Category— The Visible Church

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You may still be wondering whether today's rampant apostate theology got its start in modern times or much earlier than that. In this article, I intend to inspire even more curiosity in some of you...enough to prompt you to start digging for the answers to all of your pertinent questions about how, when, where and why the religious quo lost its status.

We know that God is not the author of confusion. So why do seminary professors typically start their naive students out with the writings of "the church 'fathers'?" Why don't they start them out with objective analysis of the consistently pure message of Jesus and His Apostles?

If you want to learn the truth of a matter, you must start with the matter, itself.

To start with derivative works will skew your comprehension of the truth of said matter.

The study of those church "fathers" includes the bitter struggles between orthodox and gnostic theologies. Objective scholarly analysis can only yield the conclusion that both of those early mindsets were extreme departures from the message of Jesus and the Apostles. But I think it unlikely that that conclusion ever surfaces in those institutions of "higher" learning. It is no wonder, then, that so many our seminary graduates are confused.

But where and when did all the confusion start? Is it a modern phenomenon? Well, no. It started while Jesus' Apostles still walked here and taught The 1st-Century Gospel Truth. Need confirmation? The Apostle, John, was born c. 6 AD and died c. 100 AD. At 1 John 2:18, you'll find this: "Little children...as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists..." He knew! Here is some of what he was warning the early Christians (and us) about:

Ignatius of Antioch; a.k.a. Ignatius Theophorus; a.k.a. Ignatius Nuroño; Born c. 35 AD; Died c. 108 AD—

Ignatius taught the deity of Christ, His virgin birth and His literal resurrection. He coined the phrase, "catholic church." He taught that bishops and priests have divine authority over all believers who are not bishops and priests. He claimed that Peter had personally ordained "the succession of apostles." He insisted that that there is no Salvation OUTside the orthodox church. He initiated what is still known today as "Orthodox Christianity." Google "Ignatius, church father" for more insight.

Valentinus (also spelled Valentinius; Born c. 100 AD; Died c. 160 AD—

Valentinus was the best known of the early gnostic theologians. Once a candidate for Bishop of Rome, he started his own church when another candidate got the job. He taught that bishops and priests have NO divine authority over the faithful who're not bishops and priests. He insisted that there is no such thing as "the succession of apostles." He taught that there is no Salvation INSide the orthodox church. He taught that Christ was both God and human. He insisted that Jesus did NOT experience the pain of crucifixion because He had reverted to His God being at that point. He may have been the first to teach that Christ's resurrection may NOT have been literal. Google "Valentinus" for more.

Irenaeus; Born c. 125 AD; Died c. 202 AD—

Shortly after Valentinus' death, Irenaeus began a massive work on a highly negative portrayal of Valentinus and his teachings. He is said to have been the earliest of the orthodox church "fathers" to develop a thorough "Mariology." He claimed that, even though Eve had Adam for a husband, she was still a virgin and that, by disobeying, she became the cause of death for herself and for the whole human race. He further insisted that, in the same way Mary, though she had a husband, was still a virgin, and by obeying, she became the cause of salvation for herself and for the human race.

Want more? Google "Irenaeus."


Satan is known for his half-truths. His agents follow suit.

We can't afford to fall for half-truths...might end up with the wrong half of one of'em, you know.

Here's more—

Ignatius is seen as the early "church 'father'" who presented the best case for Orthodox Christianity. Much of what he wrote can be amply defended with scripture. But the primary thrust of his contentions cannot. Here are three of those:

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So why didn't I do that? Well, maybe I didn't do that for the same reason that you haven't really checked out what your denomination teaches. 

"In religion and politics, people's beliefs and convictions are in almost every case gotten at second hand, and without examination." —Samuel Clemens



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- 1) Bishops and priests have divine authority over all the faithful who are NOT bishops and priests.
- 2) Peter personally ordained "the succession of apostles."
- 3) There is no Salvation OUTside the orthodox church.

What did Jesus say about that first claim?

> ...Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you...whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant. —Jesus, at Matthew 20:25-27 (See also Matthew 23:11,12, Mark 9:35 and Mark 10:42-44.)

It is NOT just the Roman *church* that systematically reinforces the notion that laymen (their presumed subordinates) must "come under the authority of" the Roman institutions and their appointed clergy. Laymen who dare to quote pertinent scriptures in rebuttal, are quickly labeled "insubordinate"—even by Protestant clergy. Few clergymen have a discernible interest in collaborating with mere laymen, including those who've done their homework.

Regarding Ignatius' second claim, there is no scripture that would even remotely IMPLY anything that might resemble a "succession of apostles." And the claim that Peter ordained something like that? Pure fantasy! Further, there is nothing in the scriptures to even imply that Peter might've been the first pope: https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/a359a3_5f0f982f9bd340bbb39ec60aaa586e0d.pdf Best we've been able to determine from our extensive study of the pertinent scriptures, the title "Apostle" was/is applicable ONLY to those twelve whom Jesus personally ordained. They had spent lots and lots of time with Jesus, in person. (One of my trusted correspondents says that "apostolic succession" is a lot like a fox that one may enjoy chasing but never catching.)

Is there Salvation outside of ANY orthodox church, protestant or catholic? I think you know the answer to that one, but here's some additional insight: Whenever any exciting new ideology starts "catching on," greedy marketers inevitably rush in to establish a monopoly on it. In his coining of the phrase, "catholic church," Ignatius distinguished himself as a leader among the early monopoly-seekers...seeking power over growing throngs of prospective subordinates and, eventually, their money.

Although Ignatius and his successors were somewhat effective early spokesmen for the "catholic" *church*, they were still not able to gain the monopoly they sought—until 325 AD: https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/a359a3_c4af14d973ce4388a19751ddddd14ae8.pdf

That's an especially short article, but you'll remember it forever. In it, you'll learn about the pivotal role of Constantine, who both organized and dominated the Council of Nicea. You'll learn about his sinister motives and how he leveraged the incredible greed of the Roman clergy to his personal advantage. You'll learn that, like some notable U.S. politicians, he *falsely* claimed Christianity.

Finally, regarding the blasphemy of a presumed Christian "priesthood," there's this:


- > "Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man. For I know not to give flattering titles; [in so doing] my maker would soon take me away." —Job 32:21,22
 - > "And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven." —Jesus, at Matthew 23:9
 - > "And as Peter was coming in, Cornelius met him, and fell down at his feet, and worshipped [him]. But Peter took him up, saying, Stand up; I myself also am a man." —Acts 10:25,26
- Does that sound to you like something "the first 'pope'" might say?

Valentinus is seen as the primary early influencer of the various gnostic theologies. They took on multiple forms, many of which were even more extreme regarding the deity of Christ, etc. He was scripturally correct in his teaching that bishops and priests have absolutely NO divine authority over the faithful who are not bishops and priests. He was wrong in his inflamed presumption that there is no Salvation INSIDE the orthodox church. How so? God's people are scattered even among apostate institutions. (Surprised?) God will always have a remnant of the faithful and true. They, alone, are members of The Church.

He was scripturally wrong, too, in suggesting that Jesus didn't experience the pain and anguish of the crucifixion. And, as you may already know, he was wrong in claiming that Christ's resurrection may not have been literal: Christ's resurrection is the only hope we have for our own resurrection. That'll be at the last trump; i.e.: the trumpet of the seventh angel—the first resurrection. I think you'll want to read about that, again, at Revelation 11:3-15 and Revelation 20:1-6. (You'll do well to read those passages as-if-nobody-had-ever-explained-what-they-mean.)

That character (a.k.a. church "father"), **Irenaeus**, perpetuated Ignatius' narrative re: the presumed orthodoxy of the *church* at Rome. If you've always been curious as to why Roman Catholics worship Mary, now you know! Irenaeus' claim that both Eve and Mary were perpetual virgins (!) is at the root of it. From the incredible folly of that foundation came the purported *sainthood* of many other human beings.

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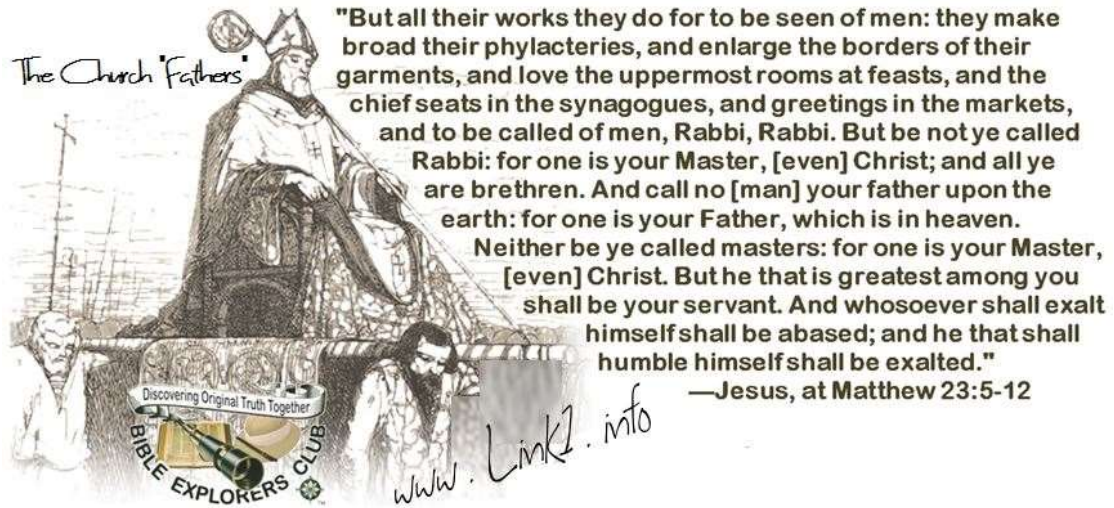
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Was Jesus' mother, Mary, *really* a perpetual virgin, as Irenaeus claimed – and as most Roman Catholics believe with all their hearts? Here are the pertinent scriptures. They should help you answer that question for yourself:

- > "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost." —Matthew 1:18
- > "Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS." —Matthew 1:24,25

The apostle, Paul, was concerned that "the ministry" would eventually describe paid professional Christians. He was convinced that the establishment of a professional clergy would inevitably corrupt "the ministry." And it has! It is unfortunate that, after the Reformation, Protestant groups quickly adopted and adapted the business model the Romans have used ever since that A.D. 325 Council of Nicea. Because "money talks," several of those Protestant organizations soon amassed political power, too. Like the Roman *church*, those Protestant organizations have also become a lot like the proverbial manufacturer of industrial lubricants that uses all or almost all of its output to lubricate the machinery with which it manufactures those lubricants.




God can save us; but will He?

—T. C. Newsome 

PS: To participate in Bible discussions about articles like this one – or to just read and enjoy them – join us at TC's Friends Club. Here's the hot link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/136708110091989/>

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