

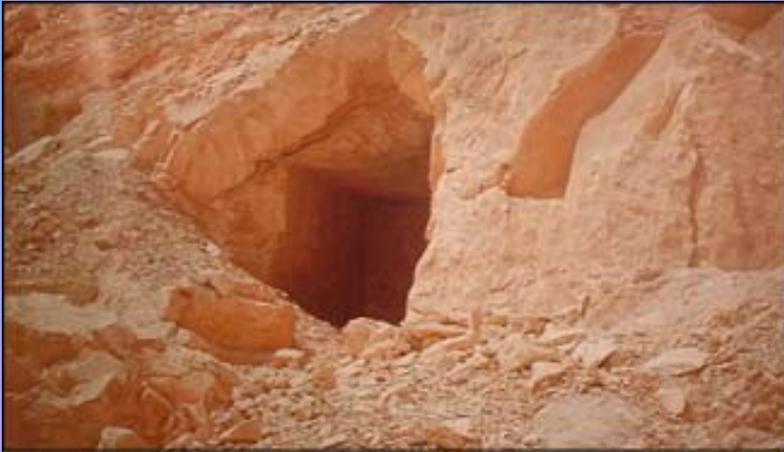
# Heresies

1. Gnosticism
2. Marcionism
3. Montanism
4. Arianism
5. Nestorianism

# Gnosticism

Gnosis meaning knowledge. Secret teaching.

Gnosticism – dualistic (good and evil). Body (evil), spirit (good).



52 books found in a cave near Nag Hammadi (Egypt) in December 1945.



The Gospel of Thomas. Didymus meaning twin. Teaches Thomas was the spiritual twin of Jesus.

## **Marcionism (c. 85 – c.160)**

Marcion's teaching

God of the Old Testament – evil.

God of the New Testament – good.

Marcionism was Docetic – denying the human nature of Christ.

Compare 1 John 4:1-3

Rejected many scriptures. Made his own canon of scripture.

Accepted Luke's Gospel and 10 of Paul's epistles.

Forced church to form a canon of scripture.

## **Writings against Marcion**

Tertullian's 'Against Marcion' (Adversus Marcionem), Book IV

Ephipanius' Panarion sect. 42 'Against the Marcionites'

Irenaeus 'Against Heresies'

## Montanism

Montanus c.150, came from Ardaban, Phrygia, Asia Minor.

Converted priest of Cybele

Montanism reaction against corruption in the Church

Call for reform

Restoration of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Montanus claimed to have the ministry of a prophet and reformer of Christianity.

Montanism was characterised by visions and prophecies.

Two women prophetesses, Maximilla and Priscilla.

c.170 church synods pronounced Montanism as heresy.

## **Montanism – New Jerusalem in Phrygia**

Announced the imminent coming of the New Jerusalem

Prophesied that the New Jerusalem would come down from heaven to a small village, Pepuza, in the west of Phrygia.

Followers led by Montanus to prepare for its coming.

Enforced a strict asceticism including celibacy

Followers left worldly possessions.

Priscilla prophesied:

‘Christ came to me in the likeness of a woman, clad in a bright robe, and He planted wisdom in me and revealed that this place (Pepuza) is holy, and that here Jerusalem comes down from heaven.’

When the New Jerusalem did not come the Montanists remained there claiming it was the residence of the Paraclete (the Holy Spirit).

## Opposition to Montanists

Montanus criticised for

- Dissolving marriages
- Enforcing fasting on followers
- Financial misdealings and taking a salary

Priscilla and Maximilla criticised for

- Leaving husbands
- Making financial gain
- Pretended stature of importance

Held prophecy to be on level of scripture.

Accepted marriage but not second marriages.

Paid salaries to clergy and accepted women in ministry.

## **Examination of Montanist prophecy**

Ecstatic utterances

Maximilla prophesied as the passive instrument of the Holy Spirit.

‘I am chased like a wolf from the flock. I am no wolf; I am utterance, spirit, and power.’ (Quoted by Eusebius)

The gift of prophesy is for exhortation, encouragement and comfort.

The Holy Spirit does not bypass the individual personality of the person prophesying.

## Moderate Montanism

Tertullian became a Montanist c.205.

A less radical form of Montanism spread quickly across Europe.

Montanism sought to bring spiritual gifts back to the church

Montanism was a reaction against:

- worldliness in the church
- clerical hierarchism

Montanism extremism

- Legalistic and
- Exalted celibacy

## Alexandrian School

Alexandria was founded by Alexander in 332 BC

Becoming the second most important city of the Roman Empire.

Cosmopolitan city – Greeks and Jews trading.

- The Hebrew scriptures were translated into Greek (Septuagint) in Alexandria.
- Philo linked the Hebrew scriptures with Greek philosophy.
- Schools of philosophical thought.
- Rise of Neo-Platonism

Church in Alexandria influenced by Greek philosophy and Hellenistic Judaism.

Development of the allegorical method of interpretation of scripture.

## Origen c.185 – 254

### Full name - Origenes Adamantius



Pupil of Clement of Alexandria (c.215)

202 Father (Leonides) martyred during the persecution of Septimius Severus in Alexandria.

Origen wanted to be martyred when his father was killed but his mother hid his clothes

Christian Neoplatonist

203-215 Head of Catechetical School in Alexandria.

Castrated himself – to avoid scandal when teaching women.

## Origen c.185 – 254



215-216 Persecution of Caracalla – visited Palestine invited to preach though only a layman.

230 Ordained presbyter in Caesarea

231 Bishop of Alexandria angry at ordination (envious)– Origen moved to Caesarea

250 Imprisoned during Decian persecution. Tortured sentenced to death.

251 Released after Decian killed.

c.254 Died

## **Origen's teaching.**

Produced 6000 works.

Works included: Textual criticism; exegesis; theological; and letters.

### Textual criticism

Origen's Hexapla – six versions of the Bible.

Origen put them together in six columns.

The six versions were:

8. Hebrew version
9. Greek transliteration (word for word) of the Hebrew version.
10. Greek literal version. Aquila of Sinope's (2nd century) literal translation from the Hebrew.
11. Greek version of the Hebrew scriptures by Symmachus the Ebionite (late 2nd Century) (paraphrase).
12. Septuagint (3rd-1st century BC)
13. Theodotion's (c.200) Greek version of the Bible.

## **Origen's heretical teaching.**

Origen's teaching was declared to be heresy in 553AD.

(Second Council of Constantinople)

There is doubt over what Origen actually taught.

His condemned teaching include:

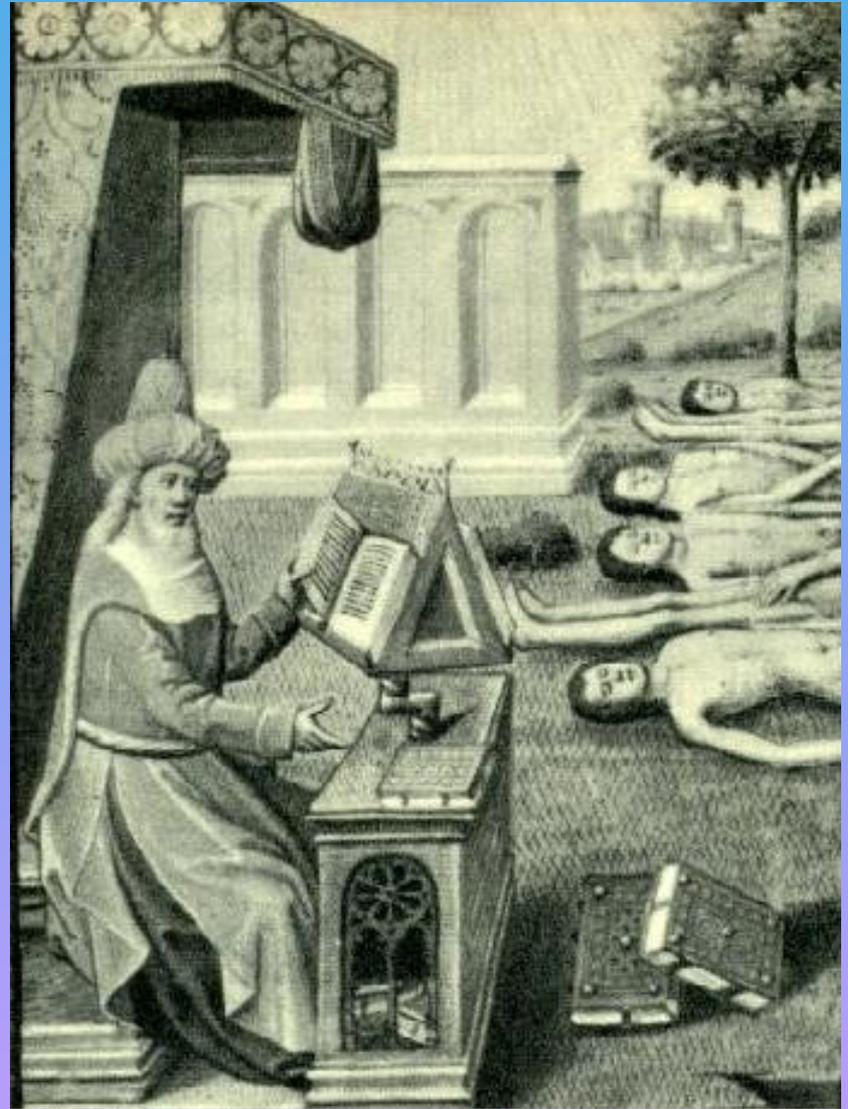
1. Universal Redemption. Even demons eventually reconciled to God.
2. Hierarchical structure of the Trinity.
3. Preexistence of the soul.

## Neo Platonism

Temporality of matter.

Eternal souls perfected by escaping temporary, imperfect material world.

‘Origen initiating neophytes into the death and rebirth experience.’



## **Arianism**

Arius was born 256 in Libya

Priest of the church of Baukalis in Alexandria.

Very popular - nearly chosen to be Bishop instead of Alexander.

Bishop Alexander addressed his clergy in 319 re: the Trinity.

Arius publicly attacked what Alexander taught and accused him of Sabellianism and 'confounding the persons'.

Sabellius claimed that God was one person who manifested Himself in three ways as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

## **Synod at Alexandria (321)**

In 321 a provincial synod at Alexandria was called to discuss Arianism. Attended by 100 bishops of Egypt and Libya.

At this synod the Arians stated that the Son of God was:

- a created being
- Unequal to the Father
- Capable of sin

The synod excommunicated Arius, two bishops, five priests, and six deacons.

Arius gained the support of Eusebius Bishop of Nicomedia.

Won support at the synod of Nicomedia.

Arius promoted his teaching through writing in defence of his doctrine and writing songs.

## **Council of Nicaea (325)**

The spread of Arianism caused the Emperor Constantine to call the Council of Nicaea.

Took place from May - August 325

318 bishops attended + many others, 2000 people altogether.

Most important expression 'Homoousion' - of one substance.

## Nicene Creed (325 AD)

'We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, only begotten - that is, of the substance with the Father; by Whom all things were made, both in heaven and in earth, Who for us men and for our salvation came down, and was incarnate, and was made man; suffered and rose the third day; ascended into the heavens; and will come again to judge the quick and the dead.

And in the Holy Ghost.'

## **Athanasius c. 296 – 373**

Young presbyter in Alexandria Church at time of Nicaean Council in 325.

Recommended as successor by Bishop Alexander

328 AD Bishop of Alexandria and metropolitan of Egypt and Libya.

46 Years as Bishop

Tirelessly defended the doctrine of the trinity against Arianism

Called 'Athanasius contra mundum' (against the world)

Exiled four times from his church by Arian Emperors and Julian the Apostate.

20 years spent in exile.

Last years spent writing against Arianism.

## **Athanasian creed**

Date of the creed – probably composed after Athanasius death (d. 373).

Not known in the Eastern Church until 12th century.

Not authorised by any council of the Church but is one of the three major creeds upheld by Western Christendom.

Apostle's creed (c. 2nd century)

Nicean creed (325)

Athanasian creed (c. 500)

## Augustine (350 – 430)



He ran back to Alypius and opened "the Apostle" at Rom. xii. 13, 14, "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof."

"No further would I read, nor was it necessary." The peace of God was in his heart, and the shadows of doubt melted away. He marked the passage and told Alypius, the friends exchanged confidences, and Alypius applied to himself the words, a little further on, "Him that is weak in the faith receive" (Rom. xv. 1).

They went in, and filled the heart of Monica with joy at the news (Conf. VIII. viii.).

Quote by Augustine

'In essentials unity; in non essentials liberty; in all things charity.'

## **Nestorius, patriarch of Constantinople (AD 428 – 431)**

Brought up in cloister:

Character depicted as narrow, partisan, impatient, and ignorant of human affairs

### **Nestorianism**

The humanity and deity of Christ - two separate and distinct natures

Heresy developed in regard to the word '**Theotokos**'

Mary called 'God bearer' or 'Mother of God'.

Nestorius claimed God has no mother rejected this teaching.

Nestorius divided the two natures of Christ so that the Logos indwelt the man Jesus.

Nestorianism declared heretical at the Council of Ephesus 431.

Nestorian Church developed in Assyria and India