

CONTENTS

Teaching Guidelines.....	v
Chapter 1.....	4
Chapter 2.....	10
Chapter 3.....	16
Chapter 4.....	20
Chapter 5.....	24
Chapter 6.....	28
Chapter 7.....	32
Chapter 8.....	36
Chapter 9.....	40
Chapter 10.....	44
Chapter 11.....	46
Chapter 12.....	48
Chapter 13.....	50
Chapter 14.....	52
Chapter 15.....	56
Chapter 16.....	60
Chapter 17.....	62
Chapter 18.....	64
APPENDIX	
Appendix A:	
Reading 1 — Christian Persecution	68
Reading 2 — Justin and the Logos.....	70
Reading 3 — Irenaeus Against the Gnostics.....	71
Appendix B: Who’s Who in the Early Church.....	73
Appendix C: Chart of Ecumenical Councils.....	76
Appendix D: Major Heresies and Schismatic Movements.....	77
TESTS & KEY	
Test I: Chapters 1-4	80
Test II: Chapters 5-9	82
Test III: Chapters 10-15.....	84
Final Exam.....	87
Test I: Chapters 1-4 — Answer Key.....	90
Test II: Chapters 5-9 — Answer Key.....	92
Test III: Chapters 10-15 — Answer Key.....	94
Final Exam — Answer Key.....	97

CHAPTER 8

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter outlines Constantine's rise to power and his following search for unity in the Church, which culminated in the council of Nicaea. Constantine is characterized as a somewhat confused, but nonetheless genuine, convert who came to power through successful civil wars. He called and presided over the council of Nicaea for the purpose of church unity, though its most significant impact was theological.

REVIEW

Constantine, Arius

KEY TERMS TO REVIEW

Chi-Rho

READING QUESTIONS TO REVIEW

1, 3, 5

NOTES – Reading Questions

- *On Arianism, Question 3:* As is explained in future chapters, Arianism is a heresy which claims that the Son is not eternally existent, but is the first created being. Arians conjured this notion, amongst other things, from a false understanding of the term "firstborn" which is applied to Jesus. This notion was distressing to many of the orthodox camp, for if the Son was not of the same essence as the Father, then how could the Son be the author of salvation? Again, we see how the logic of Christian redemption clarifies heresy. This, of course, is not to mention that "firstborn" is a term relating to ancient notions of inheritance and not origin. The firstborn receives the inheritance of the father, which, in the case of Christ, is the Church and the world redeemed through Him.

CHAPTER 8: Constantine and the Council of Nicaea (pp. 125-132)

I. TERMS:

1. **Ecumenical** – From the Greek word meaning "the inhabited world" (oikoumene), this word signifies universal cooperation of Christians as opposed to regional, cultural, or (now) denominational and traditional cooperation of Christians.
2. **Chi-Rho** – These are the first Greek letters in the name of Christ (Greek Χριστός), which was used as a Christian symbol: Chi (Χ, χ) and Rho (Ρ, ρ).

II. READING QUESTIONS:

1. Describe emperor Constantine's personal religion.
Constantine was a genuine but possibly confused convert. He was emphatically a Christian, yet held cultic beliefs in the Unconquered Sun (Lat. Sol Invictus), beliefs which influenced his policy as well as his Christianity. No matter what one may think concerning the quality of his Christian faith, one cannot seem to doubt his sincerity. (pp. 125-127)
2. What happened to make Constantine sole ruler of the empire, bringing him "to the centre of gravity of the empire" in the East?
Constantine's former caesar, Licinius, began to harass Christians in his domain of the East. Certainly not happy with the actions of Licinius, and surely driven by slight ambition, Constantine waged war against Licinius and defeated him in the year 324. After this defeat, it seemed expedient and beneficial for Constantine to remain the sole ruler of a previously divided empire. (p. 129)
3. Why did Constantine wish for a council to gather at Ancyra in 325?
Now that the Church and empire had a new and closer relationship, Constantine's first priority was to achieve unity in the churches. Unfortunately, though, there was some distressing division in the East over the teaching of an Alexandrian presbyter named Arius, who seemed to deny Nicene orthodoxy concerning the nature of the Son. (p. 129)
4. Why was the council subsequently moved to Nicaea?
Actions of bishops before the council to "prejudice the issue" caused Constantine to move the council to a location where he could preside personally. The previous location was more inland Asia Minor. The new location of Nicaea, a fairly insignificant town in comparison, was much closer to Constantine's home in Constantinople. (p. 130)

5. Summarize the main resolutions of the council.

The primary resolution concerned the Arian controversy. The teachings of Arius were denounced and the following position was affirmed: the Father is of the same essence as the Son (homoousios). According to Chadwick, though, this word was not strong enough to erase all ambiguity. Additionally, it resolved to have Syria observe Easter in the Western manner (always on Sunday and not the 14th day of Nissan). The council also declared that bishops cannot move from one see (the area of a bishop's ecclesiastical jurisdiction) to another, to prevent a kind of ambitious ladder-climbing. Lastly, the council made resolutions which handed more power and influence to the bishops in Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch. (pp. 130-131)

III. PRIMARY READINGS:

1. The rise of Constantine is surely one of the most significant political events in the history of Christianity. Constantine first came to power in the West through his victory at the Milvian Bridge over Maxentius in A.D. 312. Eusebius documents this battle and victory in Bk. 9.9 (pp. 291-294). Immediately after this account, Eusebius also recounts the rebellion of Maximin, which would result in further consolidation of power in Bk. 9.9a-11 (pp. 294-302). Read the first given passage and answer the following questions. Read the second given passage for a compelling account of the general end of hostilities towards Christians.

a. How did Maxentius seek to stay off Constantine?

Eusebius recounts how Maxentius, like a coward, placed forces in Constantine's way, hoping that he would not make it to Rome, where Maxentius safely stayed, at least until Constantine was marching toward Rome and Maxentius had no choice but to intercept him. (p. 292)

b. What seems to be the reason for this conflict?

Eusebius speaks of Constantine feeling "pity for the victims of tyranny at Rome." (p. 292)

c. To what biblical event does Eusebius compare this battle?

The battle is compared, as seen by the biblical references, to the Exodus and the crossing of the Red Sea. This allusion is even more appropriate considering the battle was fought on the Tiber at the Milvian Bridge. (pp. 292-293)

• *Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch,*
Question 5: These three cities, along with Jerusalem, held the greatest prestige in Christianity from about the late second century onward. Later, much power would move to the new imperial city of Constantinople, the "New Rome." One thing to notice: of these cities, only one is a Western city—Rome. This example is but one of many to show that Christianity was far more pervasive and influential in the East and North. Africa in the first three centuries than the West. In the fourth century, as we will see, the West would achieve greater prominence as it became common for the bishop of Rome to invoke the legacy and authority of Peter.

NOTES – Primary Readings

• *Eusebius, the Arian, pp. 310-311:*

Though never fully condemned an Arian, it is clear that Eusebius had Arian tendencies. Now, Eusebius does attribute much worth and honor to Christ, but does elicit doubt about the consubstantiality of the Son with the Father when he speaks of the Son having “second place after Him.” If not outright Arian, Eusebius is, at the very least, forgetful of St. Paul’s words: “And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.” (Colossians 1:18) No second place there.

d. What is “this saving sign” inscribed on the victory statue of Constantine?

The “saving sign” is likely the symbol of the “Chi-Rho,” though it could possibly be a cross. (p. 294)

2. When Constantine assumed power, he encouraged and funded the building of churches—not just any churches, but ones worthy of both the dignity of the Christian God and the dignity of Rome. In Eusebius’ *History*, Bk. 10.4 (pp. 306-322), we find a dedication speech by Eusebius himself, which was given for one of these churches built in the region of Tyre (near the see of Eusebius in Caesarea). In this speech we find not only a beautiful “theology of architecture,” so to speak, but also a thesis on how Christian persecution was understood in light of its new, more privileged place under Constantine. Read the given passage above and answer the following questions.

a. To what does Eusebius compare the church building, and by extension the Church, at the beginning of his speech?

He makes the comparison between the Church and a city, the “new-made city built by God.” (p. 307)

b. How does Eusebius describe the human state before the healing work of Christ?

Comparing Jesus to a physician, Eusebius states that this physician does not merely heal the sick, but raises from the dead. For, before Christ, man is “not merely sick ... but actually lying among the dead.” (p. 308)

c. What biblical analogy does Eusebius make concerning the people of the Church?

As St. Peter does in 1 Peter chapter 2, Eusebius calls Christians “the house of living and immovable stones,” which is the true “living temple of a living God.” (p. 310)

d. What word picture does Eusebius use to describe the persecution, and later peace, of the Church?

He speaks of the Church as a flower growing from desolate land, and despite being stomped on and her fruit being taken, “by the miraculous power of Christ ... she has become like a lily.” (p. 313)

e. What was the design for the entrance of the church meant to recall?

It was meant to signify and recall personal transformation. The distinction between the outside world and the adorned church, the light moving into the church: Eusebius deems these things symbols of how one transforms from mere clay to an adorned child of God. (p. 314)

- f. What was the overall adornment of the church meant to symbolize?
The present adornment of the church was meant to foreshadow the coming glory in Christ. Just as the Christian awaits the restoration of the body in resurrection, so the splendor of the church must reflect a greater glory. (p. 316)
- g. To what does the church building “pale” in comparison?
However marvelous an adorned church may be, it is not comparable to the beauty of the soul restored and adorned in Christ. (p. 318)
- h. What is the church building overall meant to reflect?
The church, in a sense, is supposed to be a physical representation and pattern of heavenly things. As in the incarnation the Son revealed the Father, so the church building in one sense makes tangible heavenly realities. (p. 321)
3. The Downfall of Licinius: 10.8-9 (pp. 328-333)
- a. What apparently caused the conflict between Licinius and Constantine?
Eusebius suggests that Licinius harbored subversive plans, maybe to overthrow Constantine. These plans were found out and Constantine responded with war. (pp. 328-329)
- b. What vile acts did Licinius commit before going to war with Constantine?
Licinius began a systematic persecution of Christians. First he pursued the “ministers of God among his subjects,” then he kicked out those Christians who served in his household and punished those who remained Christians in the army. Licinius would also punish those who showed pity towards Christians. Additionally, not to limit his own madness, Licinius sought to rescind Roman laws (likely those laws relating to religious toleration), and stole men’s wives for his own pleasure. Lastly, Licinius took action specifically against the bishops before moving to “indiscriminate persecution” against all of God’s faithful. pp. 329-331)
- c. What was the result of this conflict and war?
Constantine’s victory “won back their own eastern lands and reunited the Roman Empire into a single whole.” This unification brought peace to the Christians by purging the tyranny which had sought to crush them. (p. 332)

IV. QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER THOUGHT AND DISCUSSION:

1. Constantine is an oft-debated figure in the history of Christianity. Some have praised him greatly for his work and influence (like Eusebius of Caesarea), some have wished it never happened. Discuss the person and influence of Constantine and evaluate the pros and cons of his role in the history of Christianity.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX A: Reading 1

CHRISTIAN PERSECUTION:

The Correspondence of Pliny the Younger and Emperor Trajan

Pliny the Younger to the Emperor Trajan

It is my practice, my lord, to refer to you all matters concerning which I am in doubt. For who can better give guidance to my hesitation or inform my ignorance? I have never participated in trials of Christians. I therefore do not know what offenses it is the practice to punish or investigate, and to what extent. And I have been not a little hesitant as to whether there should be any distinction on account of age or no difference between the very young and the more mature; whether pardon is to be granted for repentance, or, if a man has once been a Christian, it does him no good to have ceased to be one; whether the name itself, even without offenses, or only the offenses associated with the name are to be punished.

Meanwhile, in the case of those who were denounced to me as Christians, I have observed the following procedure: I interrogated these as to whether they were Christians; those who confessed I interrogated a second and a third time, threatening them with punishment; those who persisted I ordered executed. For I had no doubt that, whatever the nature of their creed, stubbornness and inflexible obstinacy surely deserve to be punished. There were others possessed of the same folly; but because they were Roman citizens, I signed an order for them to be transferred to Rome.

Soon accusations spread, as usually happens, because of the proceedings going on, and several incidents occurred. An anonymous document was published containing the names of many persons. Those who denied that they were or had been Christians, when they invoked the gods in words dictated by me, offered prayer with incense and wine to your image, which I had ordered to be brought for this purpose together with statues of the gods, and moreover cursed Christ—none of which those who are really Christians, it is said, can be forced to do—these I thought should be discharged. Others named by the informer declared that they were Christians, but then denied it, asserting that they had been but had ceased to be, some three years before, others many years, some as much as twenty-five years. They all worshipped your image and the statues of the gods, and cursed Christ.

They asserted, however, that the sum and substance of their fault or error had been that they were accustomed to meet on a fixed day before dawn and sing responsively a hymn to Christ as to a god, and to bind themselves by oath, not to some crime, but not to commit fraud, theft, or adultery, not falsify their trust, nor to refuse to return a trust when called upon to do so. When this was over, it was their custom to depart and to assemble again to partake of food—but ordinary and innocent food. Even this, they affirmed, they had ceased to do after my edict by which, in accordance with your instructions, I had forbidden political associations. Accordingly, I judged it all the more necessary to find out what the truth was by torturing two female slaves who were called deaconesses. But I discovered nothing else but depraved, excessive superstition.

I therefore postponed the investigation and hastened to consult you. For the matter seemed to me to warrant consulting you, especially because of the number involved. For many persons of every age, every rank, and also of both sexes are and will be endangered. For the contagion of this superstition has spread not only to the cities but also to the villages and farms. But it seems possible to check and cure it. It is certainly quite clear that the temples, which had been almost deserted, have begun to be frequented, that the established religious rites, long neglected, are being resumed, and that from everywhere sacrificial animals are coming, for which until now very few purchasers could be found. Hence it is easy to imagine what a multitude of people can be reformed if an opportunity for repentance is afforded.

Trajan to Pliny the Younger

You observed proper procedure, my dear Pliny, in sifting the cases of those who had been denounced to you as Christians. For it is not possible to lay down any general rule to serve as a kind of fixed standard. They are not to be sought out; if they are denounced and proved guilty, they are to be punished, with this reservation, that whoever denies that he is a Christian and really proves it—that is, by worshiping our gods—even though he was under

suspicion in the past, shall obtain pardon through repentance. But anonymously posted accusations ought to have no place in any prosecution. For this is both a dangerous kind of precedent and out of keeping with the spirit of our age.

– Pliny the Younger, *Letters* 10.96-97

From Early Christian Writings: <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/pliny.html>

TESTS & KEY

TEST I: Chapters 1-4

Name: _____ Date: _____ Score: _____

TERMS: Write the appropriate term for the given definition in the space provided.

1. Settled largely in caves near the Dead Sea. _____
2. Claimed that Jesus only *seemed* to be a man. _____
3. Refers to the wide emigration of Jews from the area of Palestine. _____
4. Insisted that Christianity is a completely new revelation from the true god and thus must cleanse itself from any association with the Old Testament. _____
5. The love of wisdom. _____
6. Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures written in the 3rd century B.C. _____
7. A diverse, heretical sect concerned primarily with "knowledge." _____
8. One who gives witness to something. _____
9. A compilation of the four canonical Gospels made into one harmonious narrative. _____
10. The "reason" which explained how the pagan world could speak and understand, though in part, Christian truth. _____

PEOPLE: Write the appropriate name for the given definition in the space provided.

1. Philosopher turned Christian apologist in the second century; known for the notion of the "Logos." _____
2. Bishop of Caesarea; the most important and influential historian of the early Church. _____
3. The bishop of Lyons; exercised great influence in the Gnostic debates. _____
4. Primarily known for his work *Apostolic Tradition*. _____
5. Second-century critic of Christianity; wrote a work named *True Doctrine*. _____

SHORT ANSWER: Answer the following questions in the space provided.

1. According to Chadwick, how did Greco-Roman society largely treat the Jews?

2. What was the predominant controversy concerning the Christian mission to the Gentiles?

3. What was the Christian stance toward the Gentile authorities of the Roman Empire?

4. What, in general, was the Roman policy concerning other religions?

5. Primarily, what was the nature of Christian persecution?

6. What were the Gnostics generally trying to achieve?

7. How were the Scriptures corrupted, according to Marcion?

8. What was the Gnostic view of nature?

9. What were the three “weapons” against the heresies of Gnosticism and Marcionism?

10. What was the most important cause of Christian success?

11. How did the early Christians meet the challenge of slavery and status of women?

12. What would gain Jews more favor than Christians from the pagan world?

13. What was the “best” argument in support of the divine origin of Christianity?

14. What was Justin’s evaluation of philosophy?

15. What is “recapitulation” as described in the book?

16. How does Irenaeus understand history?

17. What was Irenaeus’ main argument against the Gnostics?
