

Final Class Discussion for Medieval (500-1500) Church History Class

Most Frequently Consulted Sources (complete list available online at site shown in the footer of this document):

- [Ancient & Medieval Church History](#) - Lectures 19 - 35 from Dr. David Calhoun, Covenant Theological Seminary, 2006. Available on Apple iTunes U and The Covenant Theological Seminary web site.
- [The Story of Christianity Volume I – The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation](#) – Justo Gonzalez, Ph.D. (Yale), 2010
- [Church History in Plain Language: 4th Edition](#) – Dr. Bruce Shelley (Denver Theological Seminary), 2013
- [The Holy Bible](#) – both the King James Version and the Douay-Rheims Version of the Vulgate
- [A World History of Christianity](#) – Multiple authors, edited by Adrian Hastings (University of Leeds), 1999
- [Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages](#) – R.W. Southern (Oxford), 1970
- [Medieval Christianity a New History](#) – Kevin Madigan (Harvard), 2015
- [A History of the Popes Volumes I&II – Origins to the Middle Ages](#) – Wyatt North Publishing, 2015
- [The Christian Tradition a History of Development of Doctrine Volume 3: The Growth of Medieval Theology \(600-1300\)](#) – Jaroslav Pelikan (Yale), 1978
- [The Great Courses: Great Minds of the Medieval World](#) – Lectures from Dorsey Armstrong (Purdue), 2014
- [Itunes U Early Middle Ages](#) – Lectures from Paul Freedman (Yale), 2012
- [NewAdvent.org](#) – Online Roman Catholic Encyclopedia

Questions from last week:

1. Where did the Waldensians stand on presence of Christ in the eucharist?
2. Was Savonarola's effort to establish Florence as a godly city influenced by reading Augustine's *City of God*?

Topics we didn't cover

- The Mystics – Focus on how you love vs. what you know (scholastics). Union with God, love of Christ, denial of self.
 - o Johannes Eckhart [Sermons](#) – “A flea to the extent that it is in God ranks above the highest angel in his own right. Thus, in God, all things are equal and are God Himself.”
 - o Walter Hilton [Ladder of Perfection](#) – Knowledge of God by study → Transitory love of God → Subtle love of God → Knowledge and love of God
 - o Julian of Norwich [The Revelation of Divine Love](#) – “So all things hath being by the love of God. In this little thing [a hazelnut] I saw three properties. The first is that God made it, the second is that God loves it, the third is that God keeps it.”
- The Inquisitions – Madden handout posted on web site

Topics we rushed through

- The Crusades – Madden handout posted on web site
- Thomas Aquinas
 - o Summa Theologiae had profound impact in Medieval times and continues as an influential work within the Roman Catholic Church today
 - o Used Aristotelian methodology but disagreed with Aristotle that philosophy (logic and senses) could know everything. Revelation is also required.

This Handout, Slides, and Links to Main Sources for this Medieval class available at <http://rpchurchmanassas.org/drupal/MedievalChurch>

Other topics of interest to the class (can't do justice in subset of 45-minute session)

- Scientific discoveries and did they impact Christianity / the Church in any way?
- What went on in the Byzantine Empire (in more detail than the one discussion we gave it)?
- What went on in lands, religions surrounding the western Europe we covered (e.g., Islam)?

Discussion questions:

1. The western Medieval Church equated the Church with the *visible* [Roman Catholic] Church. Today we emphasize the invisible church consisting of all believers across a multitude of visible denominations. The New Testament (Philippians for example) urges unity among Christians.
 - a. How do we show unity with other denominations? Or is the New Testament teaching just referring to unity within each congregation?
2. The Benedictine Rule allocated specific time slots throughout the day for prayer and the reading of scripture. While not many would argue they are called to withdraw to a monastery ...
 - a. Is the setting aside fixed time for focus on God's Word and prayer something we can model?
 - b. How often do you / I spend reading God's Word? How much time reflecting and meditating on it?
3. The Scholastic theologians emphasized theology – learning about God. The mystics emphasized loving God and others.
 - a. Which is more important?
 - b. Are you / I / our denomination more inclined toward one or the other?
 - c. What can we do to improve in the weaker area?
4. The Church had an on again, off again relationship with secular power throughout the Medieval period often with sub-optimal results. Waldo, among others, was appalled at the (wealth and) secular power of the church. Savonarola briefly held power in Florence and attempted to establish it as a godly city but was cast aside fairly quickly.
 - a. What is the proper involvement of the Christian church in politics today?
 - b. What is the proper involvement of a Christian individual in politics today?
 - c. Is Savonarola's effort in Florence something we should emulate?
5. The Church and secular royalty dealt (sometimes harshly) with heresies in Medieval times. During this period heresy was defined (for better or worse) top down from the Pope and church hierarchy.
 - a. What constitutes heresy today as opposed to acceptable doctrinal difference? Who decides?
 - b. How do we deal with heresy within our congregation? Within our presbytery?
 - c. Do we have any obligation to address heresy in other congregations or denominations?