

# Survey of the History of the Catholic Church

---

## Unit 1: Church Beginnings to Constantine

# Course Overview

---

# What is This Course?

- A Six-Unit Survey Overview of Church History
  - Church Beginnings to Constantine
  - Roman Church and the Rise of the Papal State
  - Schism, Crusades, and the Middle Ages
  - Renaissance, Reform, and Counter-Reform
  - The Fortress Church: Revolution and the Industrial Age
  - The Church Today: Vatican II and the Rise of Modernism
- No session May 8, Unit 2 will be May 15
- Today's unit is #1: Church Beginnings to Constantine

# Course Structure

- Each Unit will be structured around major themes
  - **Geographic Extents of the Church**
    - Evangelization, growth, etc.
  - **Church Leadership**
    - Mostly focused on papal reigns
  - **Theological Evolution**
    - Church Councils/Synods
    - Heresies/Schisms
  - **Important Secular Events affecting the Church**
    - Important rulers and their views on Christianity
    - Other events
    - Format will vary from unit to unit



# Course Interaction

- Our ideal “class” will be more of a conversation than a presentation – please feel free to ask questions and share ideas
- Important note: Scripture scholars and theologians rarely agree on many details – I will try to focus on the consensus of Catholic scholars, and note where there is disagreement
  - All historians have bias
  - I will endeavor to be explicit when I present my own opinion and explain why I believe what I do

# Why these Breakpoints?

- Pentecost marks the beginning of the Church
- Emperor Constantine the Great transitioned the Church from being illegal and often persecuted to being the official state religion of the Roman Empire
- The fall of the Roman Empire led to the rise of the secular authority of the Church (the Papal State), leading to political divisions between East and West within the Church
- The end of the unifying factors of the Crusades led to periods of renaissance, reform, and counter-reform
- The rise of national identities and the growth of industrialism led to new challenges and a “Fortress Church” mentality
- The Second Vatican Council was a key transition point in forming the Church that exists today

# Geographic Extents of the Church

---

## Unit 1: Church Beginnings to Constantine

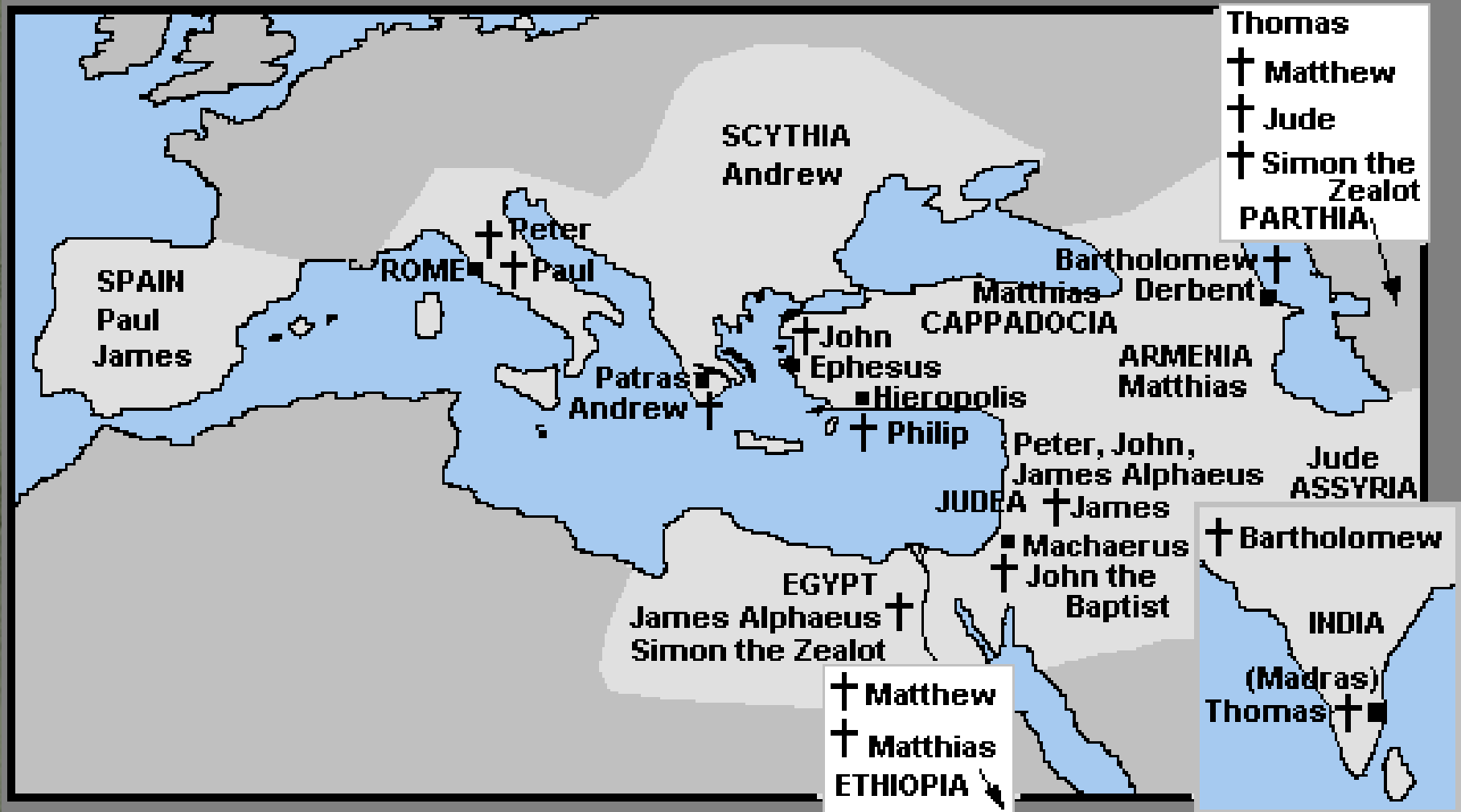


# It all began on Pentecost...





# Where did the Apostles Evangelize?



# The Missionary Journeys of St. Paul

THE MISSIONARY JOURNEYS OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

MAP 13





# How did the Apostles Die?

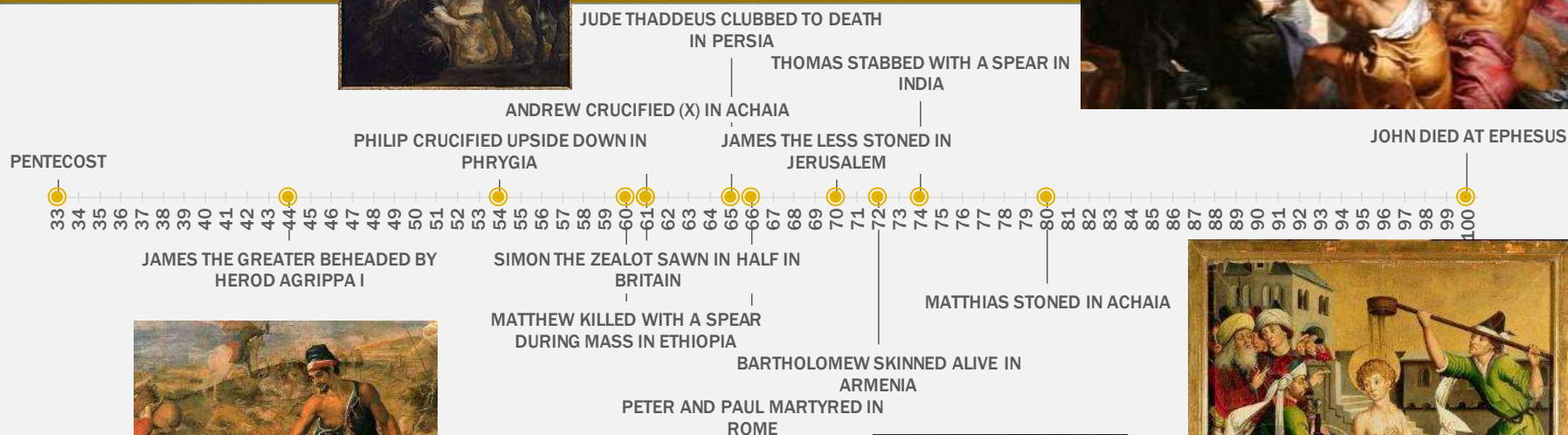
Rubens' "The Martyrdom of Saint Andrew"



Rubens' "Martyrdom of Saint Thomas"



## The Fates of the Apostles



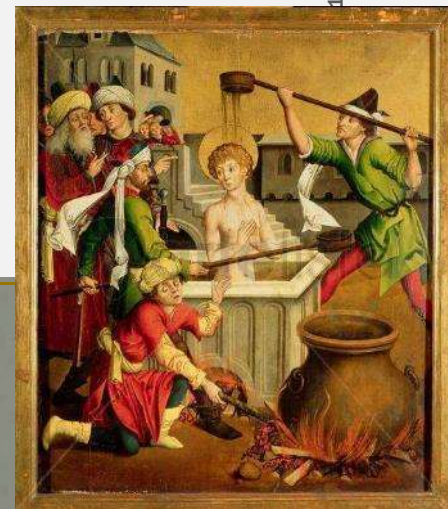
Navarrete's "The Martyrdom of St. James the Greater"



Caravaggio's "Martyrdom of Saint Matthew"



de Ribera's "Martiri de San Bartomeo"



Dürer's "The Martyrdom of Saint John"



# Churches Mentioned in Scripture

Steven Rudd Feb 2018

[www.bible.ca/maps](http://www.bible.ca/maps)

## Local churches of the Bible: 70 AD

### Regions of Churches

- A. Region of Phoenicia: Acts 11:19
- B. Region of Samaria: Acts 8:14, 25
- C. Churches of Judea: Gal 1:22
- D. Churches of Galatia: Gal 1:2
- E. Churches of Asia: 1 Cor 16:19
- F. Churches of Macedonia: 2 Cor 8:1

1. Antioch, Pisidia: Acts 13:14; Gal 1:2
2. Antioch, Syria: Acts 11:26
3. Athens: Acts 17:34
4. Babylon: (Symbolic of Jerusalem: 1 Pe 5:13; Rev 17:5)
5. Berea: Acts 17:11
6. Caesarea: Acts 10:1,48
7. Cenchrea: Rom 16:1
8. Colossae: Col 1:2
9. Corinth: Acts 18:1
10. Crete: Titus 1:5
11. Cyrene: Acts 11:20
12. Damascus: Acts 9:19
13. Derbe: Acts 14:20; Gal 1:2
14. Ephesus: Acts 18:19
15. Hierapolis: Col 4:13

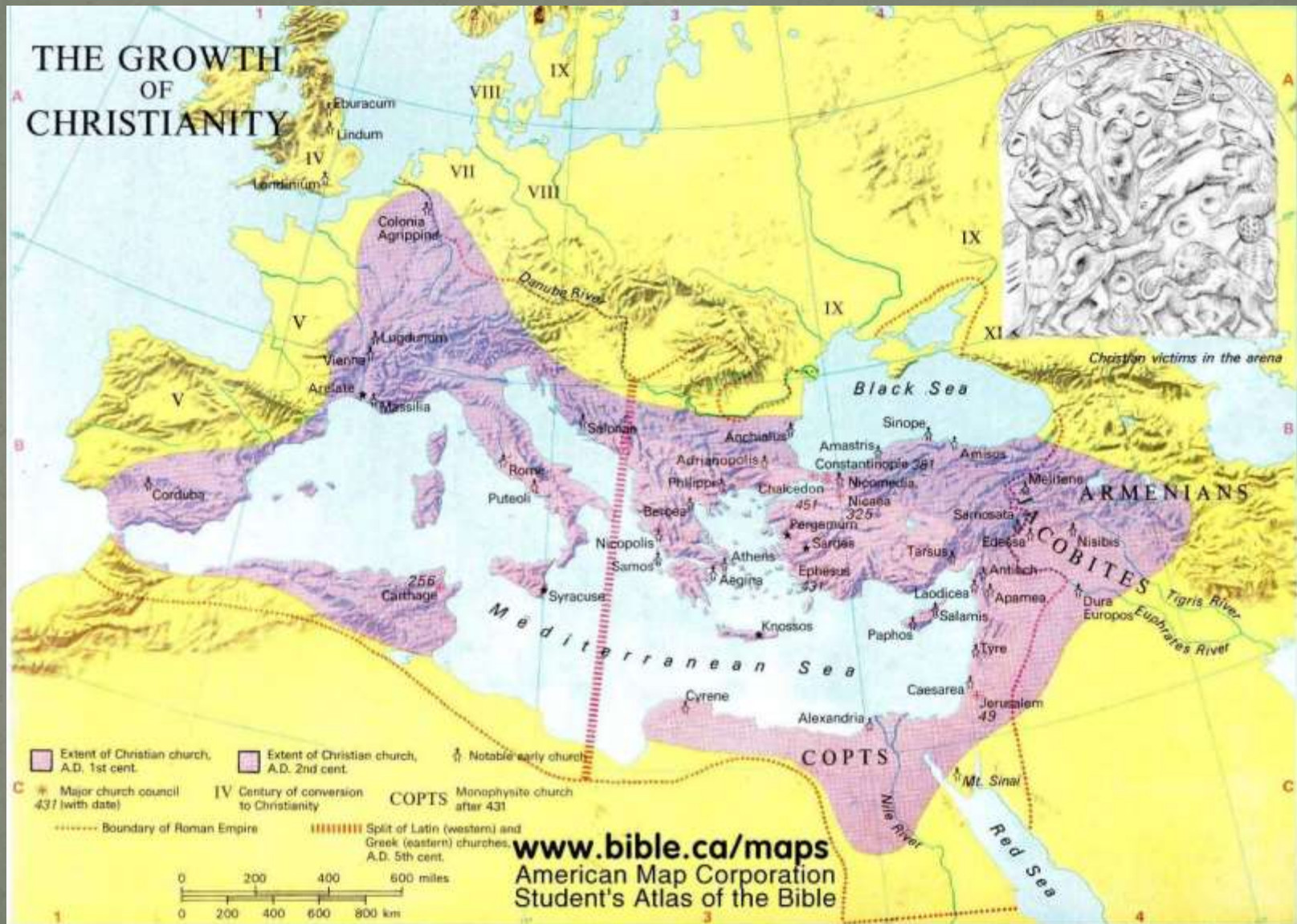
16. Iconium: Acts 14:1; Gal 1:2
17. Jerusalem: Acts 2:5
18. Joppa: Acts 9:36, 38
19. Laodicea: Rev 1:11, Col 4:15
20. Lydda: Acts 9:32
21. Lystra: Acts 14:6; Gal 1:2
22. Pergamum: Rev 1:11
23. Philadelphia: Rev 1:11

24. Philippi: 2 Cor 8:1
25. Puteoli: Acts 28:13-14
26. Rome: Rom 1:7
27. Sardis: Rev 1:11
28. Sharon: Acts 9:35
29. Smyrna: Rev 1:11
30. Tarsus: Acts 9:30
31. Thessalonica: Acts 17:1

32. Thyatira: Rev 1:11; Acts 16:14
33. Troas: Acts 20:6-7
34. Tyre: Acts 21:3-4



# Christianity by end of 2<sup>nd</sup> Century



# Church Leadership

---

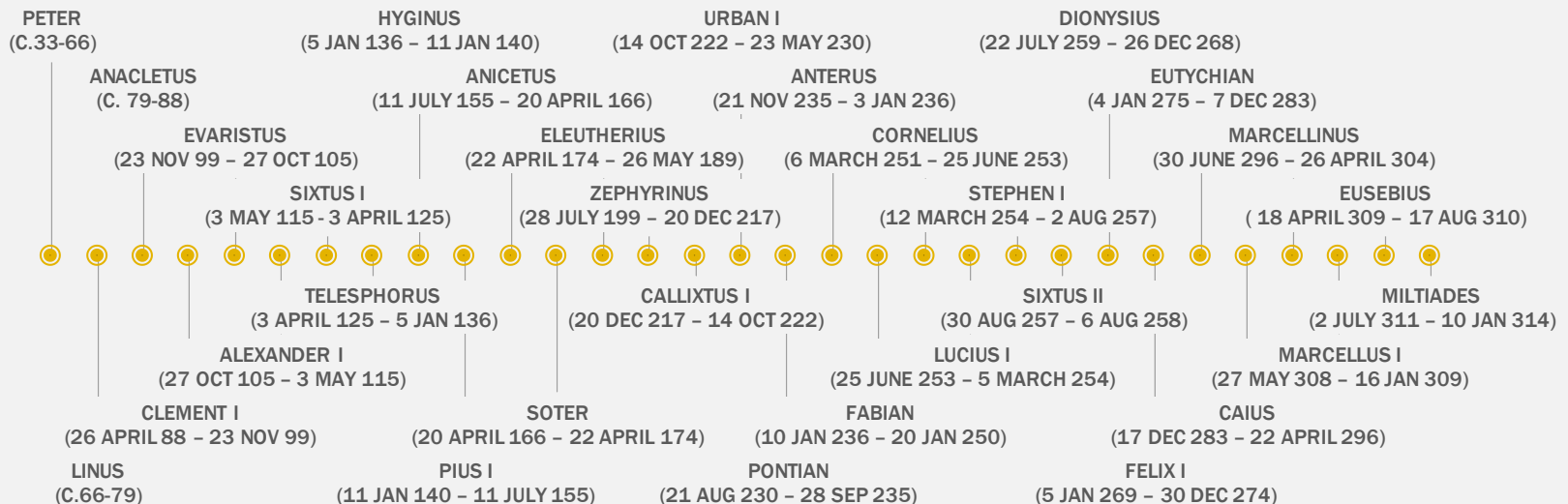
## Unit 1: Church Beginnings to Constantine



# Who was Pope?

- Peter: Longest “reign” as pope (34 – 37 years)
- Clement I: Established basis for apostolic succession (primacy of Bishop of Rome)
- Evaristus: Divided Rome into parishes
- Alexander I: Established tradition of blessing houses with holy water
- Anicetus: Syrian converted Jew

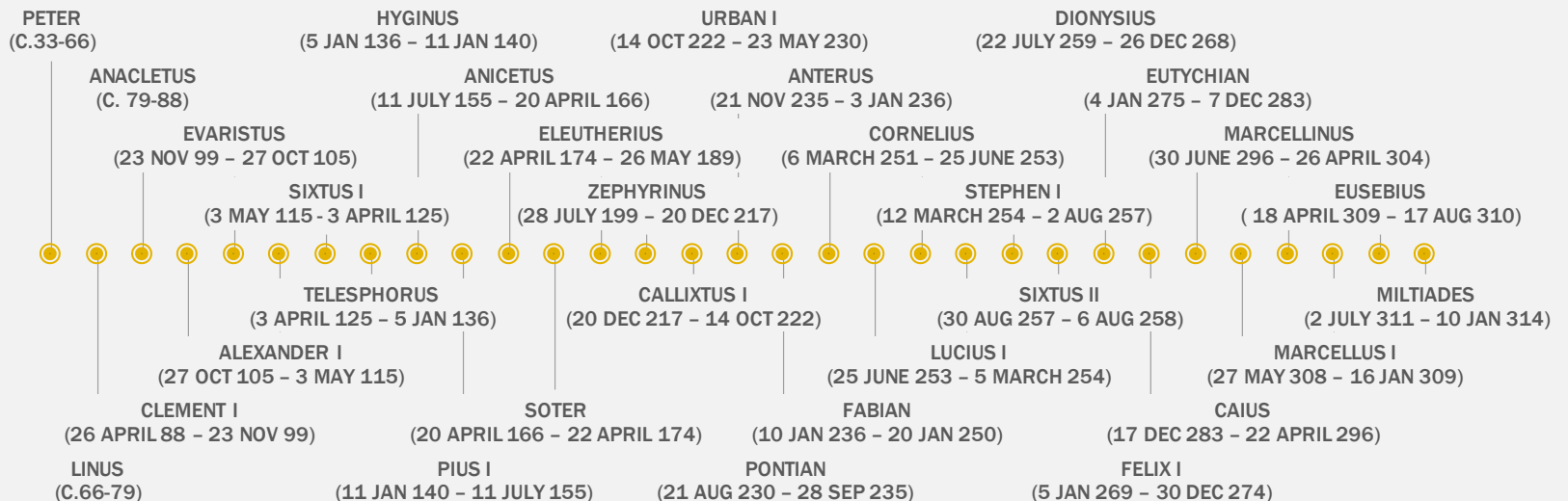
## Papal Reigns: St. Peter to St. Sylvester I



# Who was Pope?

- Soter: Established Easter as an annual festival
- Zephyrinus: First pope to be opposed by an antipope
- Pontian: First pope to abdicate (following exile by Emperor Maximinus made it impossible for him to minister to Rome)
- Miltiades: First African Pope. Presided over the Lateran Council of 313.

## Papal Reigns: St. Peter to St. Sylvester I



# Theological Evolution

---

## Unit 1: Church Beginnings to Constantine



# Early “Scripture” ...???

• 30-60	Passion Narrative	• 100-160	Gospel of the Nazoreans	• 150-200	Acts of Paul	• 180-230	Hippolytus of Rome
• 40-80	Lost Sayings Gospel Q	• 100-160	Shepherd of Hermas	• 150-200	Acts of Andrew	• 180-230	Sentences of Sextus
• 50-60	1 Thessalonians	• 100-160	2 Peter	• 150-225	Acts of Peter and the Twelve	• 180-250	1st Apocalypse of James
• 50-60	Philippians	• 100-200	Odes of Solomon	• 150-225	Book of Thomas the Contender	• 180-250	Gospel of Philip
• 50-60	Galatians	• 100-200	Gospel of Eve	• 150-250	Paraphrase of Shem	• 182-202	Clement of Alexandria
• 50-60	1 Corinthians	• 100-230	Thunder, Perfect Mind	• 150-250	Fifth and Sixth Books of Esra	• 185-195	Maximus of Jerusalem
• 50-60	2 Corinthians	• 101-220	Book of Elchasai	• 150-300	Authoritative Teaching	• 185-195	Polycrates of Ephesus
• 50-60	Romans	• 105-115	Ignatius of Antioch	• 150-300	Coptic Apocalypse of Paul	• 188-217	Talmud
• 50-60	Philemon	• 110-140	Polycarp to the Philippians	• 150-300	Prayer of the Apostle Paul	• 189-199	Victor I
• 50-80	Colossians	• 110-140	Papias	• 150-300	Discourse on the Eighth and Ninth	• 190-210	Pantaenus
• 50-90	Signs Gospel	• 110-160	Oxyrhynchus 840 Gospel	• 150-300	Melchizedek	• 190-230	Second Discourse of Great Seth
• 50-95	Book of Hebrews	• 110-160	Traditions of Matthias	• 150-350	Preaching of Paul	• 193	Anonymous Anti-Montanist
• 50-120	Didache	• 111-112	Pliny the Younger	• 150-350	Epistle to the Laodiceans	• 193-216	Inscription of Abercius
• 50-140	Gospel of Thomas	• 115	Suetonius	• 150-350	Questions of Mary	• 197-220	Tertullian
• 50-140	Oxyrhynchus 1224 Gospel	• 115	Tacitus	• 150-350	Allogenes, the Stranger	• 200-210	Serapion of Antioch
• 50-150	Apocalypse of Adam	• 120-130	Quadratus of Athens	• 150-350	Hypsiphron	• 200-210	Apollonius
• 50-150	Eugnostos the Blessed	• 120-130	Apology of Aristides	• 150-350	Valentinian Exposition	• 200-220	Caius
• 50-200	Sophia of Jesus Christ	• 120-140	Basilides	• 150-350	Act of Peter	• 200-220	Philostratus
• 65-80	Gospel of Mark	• 120-140	Naassene Fragment	• 150-360	Concept of Our Great Power	• 200-225	Acts of Thomas
• 70-100	Epistle of James	• 120-160	Valentinus	• 150-400	Acts of Pilate	• 200-230	Ammonius of Alexandria
• 70-120	Egerton Gospel	• 120-180	Apocryphon of John	• 150-400	Anti-Marcionite Prologues	• 200-230	Zostrianos
• 70-160	Gospel of Peter	• 120-180	Gospel of Mary	• 150-400	Dialogue Between John and Jesus	• 200-230	Three Steles of Seth
• 70-160	Secret Mark	• 120-180	Dialogue of the Savior	• 160-170	Tatian's Address to the Greeks	• 200-230	Exegesis on the Soul
• 70-200	Fayyum Fragment	• 120-180	Gospel of the Savior	• 160-180	Claudius Apollinaris	• 200-250	Didascalia
• 70-200	Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs	• 120-180	2nd Apocalypse of James	• 160-180	Apelles	• 200-250	Books of Jeu
• 73-200	Mara Bar Serapion	• 120-180	Trimorphic Protennoia	• 160-180	Julius Cassianus	• 200-300	Pistis Sophia
• 80-100	2 Thessalonians	• 120-180	Gospel of Perfection	• 160-250	Octavius of Minucius Felix	• 200-300	Tripartite Tractate
• 80-100	Ephesians	• 120-200	Genna Marias	• 161-180	Acts of Carpus	• 200-300	Hypostasis of the Archons
• 80-100	Gospel of Matthew	• 130-140	Marcion	• 165-175	Melito of Sardis	• 200-300	Prayer of Thanksgiving
• 80-110	1 Peter	• 130-150	Aristo of Pella	• 165-175	Hegesippus	• 200-300	Coptic Apocalypse of Peter
• 80-120	Epistle of Barnabas	• 130-160	Epiphanes On Righteousness	• 165-175	Dionysius of Corinth	• 200-330	Apostolic Church Order
• 80-130	Gospel of Luke	• 130-160	Ophite Diagrams	• 165-175	Lucian of Samosata	• 200-350	Holy Book of the Great Invisible Spirit
• 80-130	Acts of the Apostles	• 130-160	2 Clement	• 167	Marcus Aurelius	• 200-450	Monarchian Prologues
• 80-140	1 Clemen	• 130-170	Gospel of Judas	• 170-175	Diatessaron	• 203	Acts of Perpetua and Felicitas
• t80-150	Gospel of the Egyptians	• 130-200	Epistle of Mathetes to Diognetus	• 170-200	Dura-Europos Gospel Harmony	• 203-250	Origen
• 80-150	Gospel of the Hebrews	• 140-150	Epistula Apostoloru	• 170-200	Muratorian Canon	• 210-245	Lucian of Antioch
• 80-250	Christian Sibyllines	• 140-160	Ptolemy	• 170-200	Treatise on the Resurrection	• 217-222	Callistus
• 90-95	Revelation	• 140-160	Isidore	• 170-220	Letter of Peter to Philip	• 230-265	Dionysius of Alexandria
• 90-120	Gospel of John	• 140-170	Fronto	• 170-230	Thought of Norea	• 230-268	Firmilian of Caesarea
• 90-120	1 John	• 140-170	Infancy Gospel of James	• 175-180	Athenagoras of Athens	• 240-260	Commodian
• 90-120	2 John	• 140-170	Infancy Gospel of Thomas	• 175-185	Irenaeus of Lyons	• 246-258	Cyprian
• 90-120	3 John	• 140-180	Gospel of Truth	• 175-185	Rhodon	• 250-274	Gospel of Mani
• 90-120	Epistle of Jude	• 150-160	Martyrdom of Polycarp	• 175-185	Theophilus of Caesarea	• 250-300	Teachings of Silvanus
• 93	Flavius Josephus	• 150-160	Justin Martyr	• 175-190	Galen	• 250-300	Excerpt from the Perfect Discourse
• 100-150	1 Timothy	• 150-180	Excerpts of Theodotus	• 178	Celsus	• 250-350	Coptic Apocalypse of Elijah
• 100-150	2 Timothy	• 150-180	Heracleon	• 178	Letter from Vienna and Lyons	• 250-400	Apocalypse of Paul
• 100-150	Titus	• 150-200	Ascension of Isaiah	• 180	Passion of the Scillitan Martyrs	• 251-253	Pope Cornelius
• 100-150	Apocalypse of Peter	• 150-200	Interpretation of Knowledge	• 180-185	Theophilus of Antioch	• 251-258	Novatian
• 100-150	Secret Book of James	• 150-200	Testimony of Truth	• 180-185	Acts of Apollonius	• 254-257	Pope Stephen
• 100-150	Preaching of Peter	• 150-200	Acts of Peter	• 180-220	Bardesanes	• 259-268	Dionysius of Rome
• 100-160	Gospel of the Ebionites	• 150-200	Acts of John	• 180-220	Kerygmata Petrou	• 260-280	Theognostus

# What does this mean???

- There was no universally accepted canon of Scripture until much later (4<sup>th</sup> century)
- Letters of the Apostles existed first
- Then the four Gospels
- The earliest “catechism” (of sorts) was the Didache (dates to between 50 and 120)
  - 16 “chapters” describing core Christian teachings and beliefs
  - Believed lost for centuries except for other writings that referenced it, then a complete manuscript (in Greek) was found in 1873, and a manuscript of the first 5 chapters (in Latin) was found in 1900
- Important Catholic Conclusion: Without a canon of Scripture...Sacred Tradition existed first, strongly challenging the Protestant doctrine *sola scriptura*



# Important Theologians and Leaders

- St. Ignatius of Antioch
  - Born 35 AD (Syria)
  - Died 108 AD (Rome)
  - Bishop of Antioch 70 - 107
  - Seven authenticated letters of his writings
    - The Letter to the Ephesians
    - The Letter to the Magnesians
    - The Letter to the Trallians
    - The Letter to the Romans
    - The Letter to the Philadelphians
    - The Letter to the Smyrnaeans
    - The Letter to Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna
  - Wrote about ecclesiology, sacraments, and the role of bishops
  - Arrested in Antioch, transferred to Rome for trial (perhaps because he was a Roman citizen?), martyred in the Circus Maximus





# Important Theologians and Leaders

- St. Polycarp
  - Born 69 AD
  - Died between 156 and 177 AD (Smyrna)
  - Student of St. John the Evangelist and ordained by St. John as Bishop of Smyrna
  - Collaborated with Pope St. Anicetus in Rome to harmonize differences in practices between Rome and Asia
    - Came to agreement on many topics
    - Agreed to disagree about when to celebrate Easter
    - Pope Anicetus invited Polycarp to celebrate Eucharist in Anicetus' church – a great honor
  - Martyred for refusing to participate in the cult of the Emperor – different sources place the event at different dates



# Important Theologians and Leaders

- St. Justin Martyr
  - Born 100 AD (Flavia Neapolis, Judea)
  - Died 165 AD (Rome)
  - Prolific writer, many writings still exist
    - First Apology addressed to Antoninus Pius, his sons, and the Roman Senate
    - Second Apology of Justin Martyr addressed to the Roman Senate
    - Discourse to the Greeks, a discussion with Greek philosophers on the character of their gods
    - On the Sovereignty of God, treatise in which he makes use of both Christian and pagan authorities
    - The Psalmist
    - On the Soul
    - Dialogue with Trypho
    - On the Resurrection
    - And others attributed to him but either no longer available or since disproven
  - Quotes many works that are since lost to history, including references of memoirs of the Apostles
  - Documented many instances where Jesus as Messiah was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies
  - Scourged and beheaded, along with six of his students, by the prefect Rusticus for refusing to participate in the cult of the Emperor



© Orthodox Church in America



# Important Theologians and Leaders

- St. Irenaeus of Lyon
  - Born 130 AD (Smyrna, Asia Minor)
  - Died 165 AD (Lugdunum, Gaul)
  - Best known for *On the Detection and Overthrow of the So-Called Gnosis*, also called *Against Heresies*
    - Established three pillars of orthodoxy
      - Scriptures
      - Tradition handed down from the Apostles
      - Teaching of the Apostles' successors
    - Writings make implicit that the surest guidance comes from the Church of Rome
    - Earliest still-surviving witness to regard all four canonical gospels as essential
  - May or may not have been martyred – few records of his death
  - Tomb and remains destroyed by the Huguenots in 1562





# Important Theologians and Leaders

- Tertullian
  - c. 155 AD – 240 AD
  - Of Berber origin, from Carthage
  - First author to use the term Trinity
    - Tertullian's concept of trinity was Monarchist
    - This and other portions of his writings were not fully in line with orthodox teaching
  - Exceedingly prolific writer of over 31 works still extant with perhaps as many as 15 others now lost or available only as fragments
  - Despite being somewhat heterodox, his writings and teachings influenced many others



Public domain image

# Important Theologians and Leaders

- Origen
  - Born c. 184 AD (Alexandria, Egypt)
  - Died c. 253 AD (Tyre, Phoenicia)
  - In his youth, sought martyrdom with his father and allegedly castrated himself (unlikely, but claimed frequently by his detractors)
  - Wrote ~2000 treatises in multiple branches of theology
    - Acknowledged as a Father of the Church, but not as a saint
    - Made important contributions to the understanding of Trinity, although his views were Subordinationist (believed that the Father was superior rather than coequal with the Son and Spirit)
    - Not all of his teachings were orthodox
    - Only a tiny fraction of his writings still survive
      - Emperor Justinian I ordered all of Origen's writings to be destroyed
  - Traveled widely, at one point even teaching philosophy to Julia Avita Mamaea, mother of Emperor Severus Alexander
  - Was a catechist at the Catechetical School of Alexandria



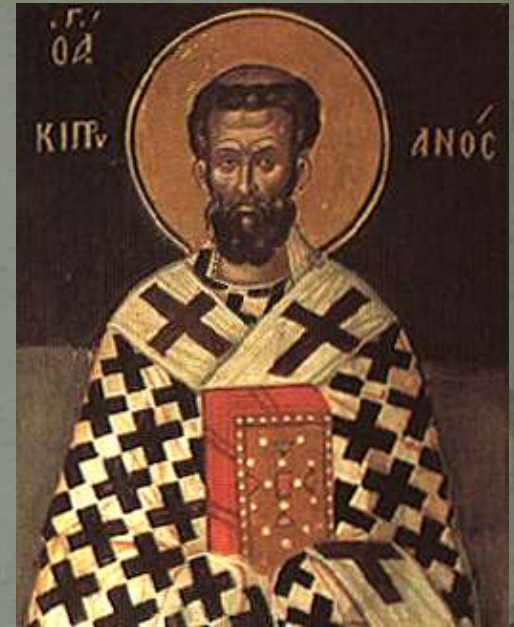
Public domain image



# Important Theologians and Leaders

- St. Cyprian

- Born c. 200 AD (Carthage)
- Died 258 AD (Carthage)
- Born into a wealthy, pagan, Berber family, took baptismal name Caecilius after the priest who converted him
- Accomplished lawyer and teacher of rhetoric before his conversion
- Student of and heavily influenced by Tertullian
- Elected Bishop of Carthage in 248/249 in a heavily contested election
- Had a moderate viewpoint toward the *lapsi* permitting readmittance into communion following heavy penance
  - However, he himself chose self-exile in hiding to avoid a particularly severe period of persecution
  - Absence from his diocese led to some of the former *lapsi* electing a different bishop (Felicissimus)
  - A council of North African bishops was called to resolve the schism, resulting in Cyprian being reaffirmed
- Martyred in 258 during a persecution for refusing to participate in the cult of the Emperor
- Wrote important treatises on ecclesial unity and on the Lord's Prayer



Cyprian von Karthago  
heiligenlexikon.de



# Important Synods

- Note: Synods usually attended only by local bishops, local in scope
- Synod of Jerusalem (c. 48-51)
  - Led by St. James the Just (James the Less), also called “the Brother of the Lord”
  - Other key figures included Peter, Paul, and Barnabas
  - Described in Acts of the Apostles
  - Determined that Gentile converts did not have to embrace Judaism to be Christians
- Synod of Carthage (251 – 256)
  - Led by St. Cyprian
  - Addressed the issues of the *lapsi* and the Novatianism heresy
  - Met for multiple years, and changed positions on some issues from year to year
  - Synod results inconsistent with teachings of Pope Stephen
  - Attempted to challenge the role of the Bishop of Rome as “bishop of bishops”
  - Pope St. Stephen and later Popes gradually won over the wider church, but issues from this synod had to be re-addressed in the Ecumenical Councils
- Synod of Elvira (c. 300-306)
  - First established celibacy for clergy
  - Forbade converts from heresy from becoming clergy

# Heresies

- Adoptionism

- Belief that Jesus was born as a mere (non-divine) man, was supremely virtuous and that he was adopted later as "Son of God" by the descent of the Spirit on him
- Theodotus of Byzantium excommunicated by Pope Victor I in 190
- Heresy revived later by Paul of Samosata, who was condemned by the Synod of Antioch in 268

- Arabici

- Belief that the soul perished with the body, and that both would be revived on Judgement Day
- Believers reconciled with the Church following a Council led by Origen in 250

- Docetism

- Belief that Jesus was pure spirit and His physical body, crucifixion, death, and resurrection was an illusion
- One of the Gnostic beliefs, continually rejected by ecumenical councils but not completely eradicated within Christianity until the Albigensian Crusade (1209 – 1229)
- Aspects of Docetism influence Islamic beliefs about Jesus



# Heresies

- **Marcionism**
  - Believed that the Old Testament God was separate from (and lesser than) the New Testament God
  - Subdivided further based on nuances of Gnostic belief, some believing that the Devil is also divine (but of lesser divinity)
- **Monarchism**
  - An overemphasis on the indivisibility of God (the Father) at the expense of the other "persons" of the Trinity leading to either Sabellianism (Modalism) or to Adoptionism
- **Montanism**
  - Founded by Montanus c. 135, who began to prophesy soon after his conversion to Christianity (some accounts of his life recount him as previously being a priest of pagan Apollo or Cybele)
  - Taught doctrine of new prophetic revelations rather than supporting belief that universal revelation ended with Jesus
  - Parallels have been drawn between Montanism and more modern spiritualist and charismatic movements that skirt (and sometimes cross) the line of orthodoxy with belief in personal revelation

# Heresies

- Novationism (See Antipope Novation)
  - Belief that readmittance to full communion of *lapsi*, those who deny their Christian faith during times of persecution, is not possible
  - Denies the limitless nature of God's love and mercy
- Patripassianism
  - Belief that the Father and Son are not two distinct persons, and thus God the Father suffered on the cross as Jesus
  - Crops up as a tenet of belief within Sabellianism (Modalism)
- Psilanthropism
  - Belief that Jesus is "merely human": either that he never became divine, or that he never existed prior to his incarnation as a man
  - Generally includes denial of the Virgin Birth
  - Crops up as a tenet of belief within many heresies throughout history, persisting to modern times



# Heresies

- Sabellianism (Modalism)
  - Belief that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three characterizations of one God, rather than three distinct "persons" in one God
  - First proposed by Noetus of Smyrna c. 190 and condemned by the presbyters of that church
  - Refined and promulgated further by Praxeas in Asia Minor c. 207 and Sabellius (location disputed) c. 210
  - Tertullian wrote *Adversus Praxeam* against this tendency and Sabellius was excommunicated by Pope Callixtus I in 220
- Quartodecimanism
  - Practice of always celebrating the Institution of the Lord's Supper on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the month, no matter what day of the week it fell on, causing an ecclesial controversy with those who felt that Easter should always be celebrated on Sunday

# Schisms

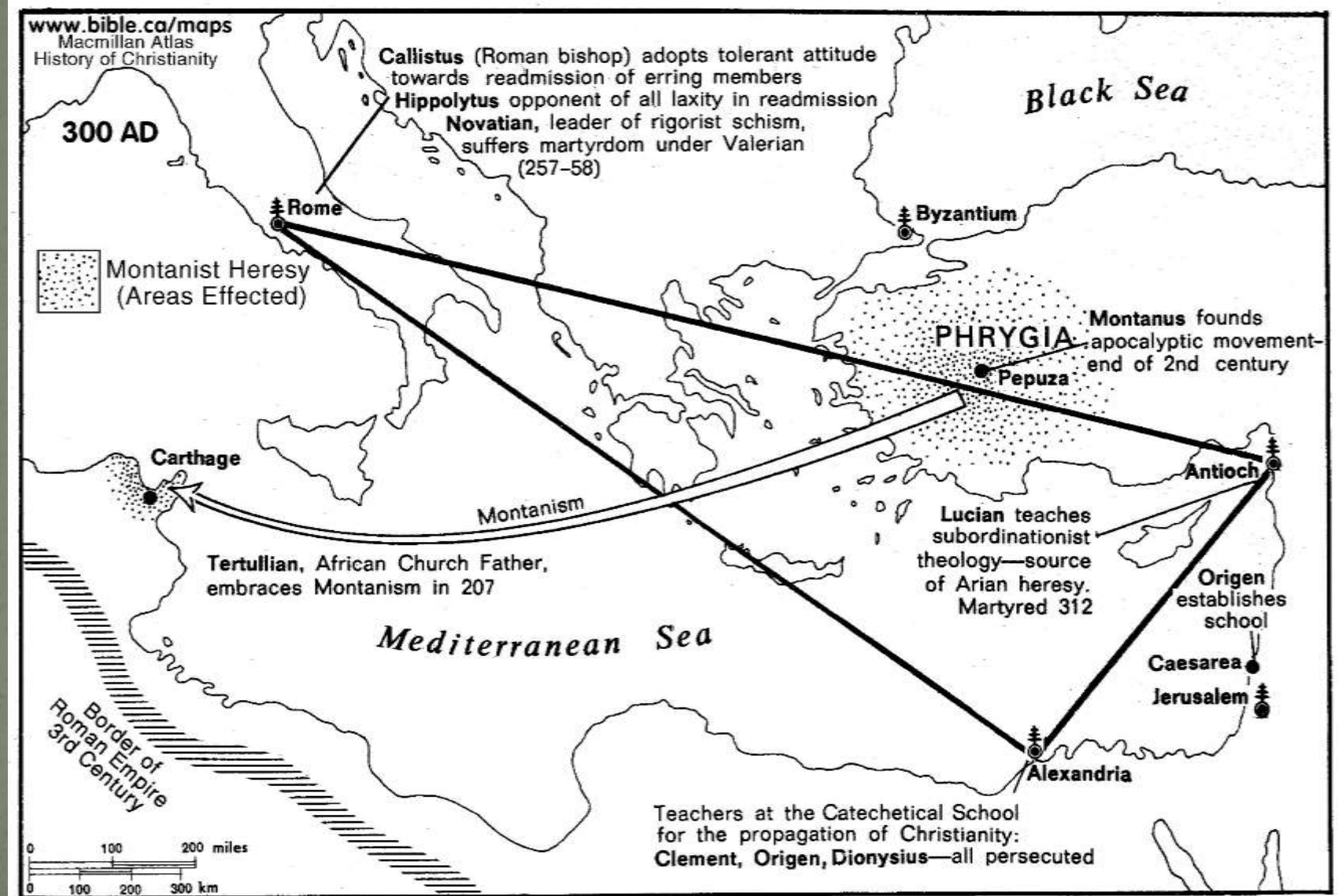
- Antipope Natalius
  - Declared Bishop of Rome by Adoptionists c. 199 who opposed the election of Pope Zephyrinus
  - After about a year, he repented, donned sackcloth and ashes, and begged for forgiveness and reconciliation
- Antipope St. Hippolytus
  - Very important and influential theologian, one of the most important theological thinkers prior to Origen
  - Accused Pope Zephyrinus of Modalism
  - Allowed himself to be elected Bishop of Rome and opposed the papacies of Callixtus I, Urban I, and Pontian
  - Reconciled with Pope Pontian not long before his death
  - Yes, when we sing “Hippolytus and Origen” in the *Litany of the Saints*, we’re singing about an antipope



# Schisms

- Antipope Novatian
  - Novatian was a prominent theologian in Rome and had been helping run the church in Rome following the death of Pope Fabian (January 250)
  - Due to the persecutions of Emperor Decius, it had not been possible to hold an election
  - Novatian taught that *lapsi*, those who renounced their Christian faith during persecution, could not be readmitted
  - Cornelius was a moderate Roman aristocrat who was able to rally the support of church leaders inside and outside Rome, leading to the Council of Carthage in 251 that declared Novatianism to be a heresy and excommunicated Novatian
  - Novatian remained in opposition until his death in 258

# Three Major Schools of Theology





# Schisms

- Schisms related to Heresies
  - Marcionist schism c. 150
  - Montanist schism c. 156
  - Monarchist schisms c. 100-200
  - Sabellianist/Patripassianist schism c. 200

# Important Secular Events

---

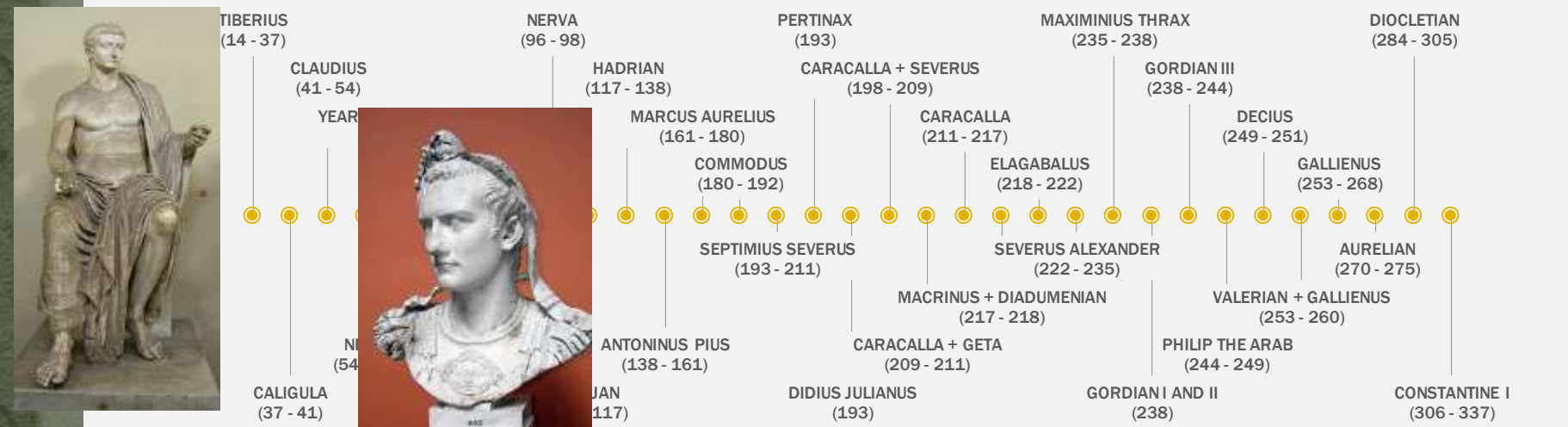
## Unit 1: Church Beginnings to Constantine



# Emperors, Their Views on Christians

- Tiberius
  - Execution of Lucius Aelius Sejanus in 31 AD and purge of Sejanus' supporters likely strongly influenced the actions of Pontius Pilate
  - Banished Jews from the city of Rome and ended a previous practice of exempting Jews from military service
  - Refused to permit the Senate to proclaim him divine while he lived.
- Caligula: Was especially suspicious of Jews, policies led to significant unrest, especially declaration as a living god

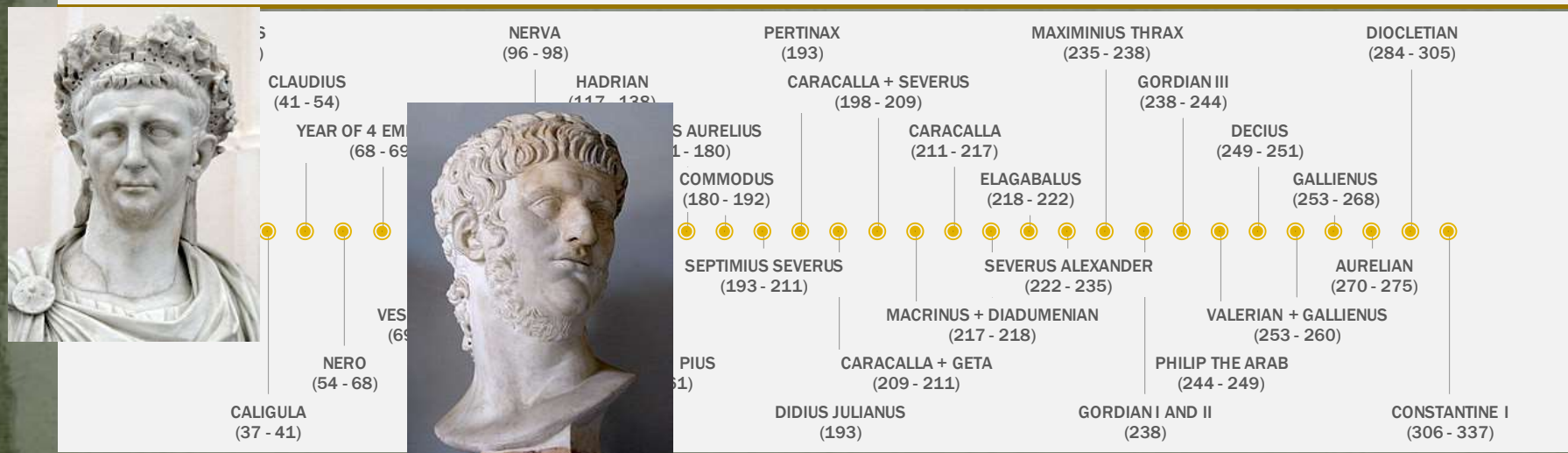
## Imperial Reigns: Tiberius to Constantine I (with some simplification)



# Emperors, Their Views on Christians

- **Claudius:**
  - Reaffirmed Jewish rights, generally tolerant of other religions except Druidism
  - Refused offers to declare him a god except for 1 temple in Britain
- **Nero:**
  - Great Fire of Rome (64) likely started to clear land for a building project, blamed on Christians, starting the first major persecution
  - First Jewish War (66-73) began during his reign

## Imperial Reigns: Tiberius to Constantine I (with some simplification)





# Emperors, Their Views on Christians

- **Vespasian:**
  - Declared Emperor by the Legions while commander in the First Jewish War – left his son Titus in command and rushed off to claim the throne and end The Year of 4 Emperors
  - Needed money and prestige (he was from an equestrian family)
  - Arch of Titus, Flavian Amphitheatre (Colosseum) built using plunder from Judea
  - Emperor during destruction of the Temple (70 AD)
  - First to recognize Christianity as separate religion from Judaism

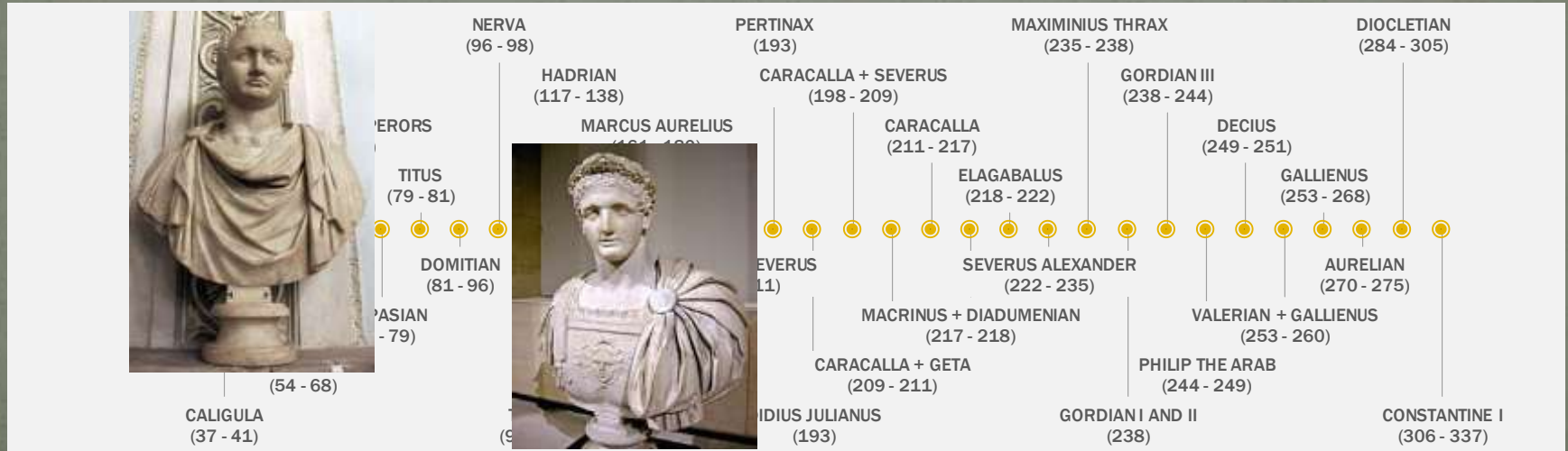
## Imperial Reigns: Tiberius to Constantine I (with some simplification)



# Emperors, Their Views on Christians

- Titus:
  - Conquered Judea and sacked Jerusalem during the reign of his father Vespasian, while having a long-running affair with Jewish Queen Berenice that only ended after he became Emperor
  - Revived the cult of the Emperor
- Domitian:
  - Judaism and Christianity heavily persecuted, tolerated others
  - Book of Revelation may have been written during his reign

## Imperial Reigns: Tiberius to Constantine I (with some simplification)

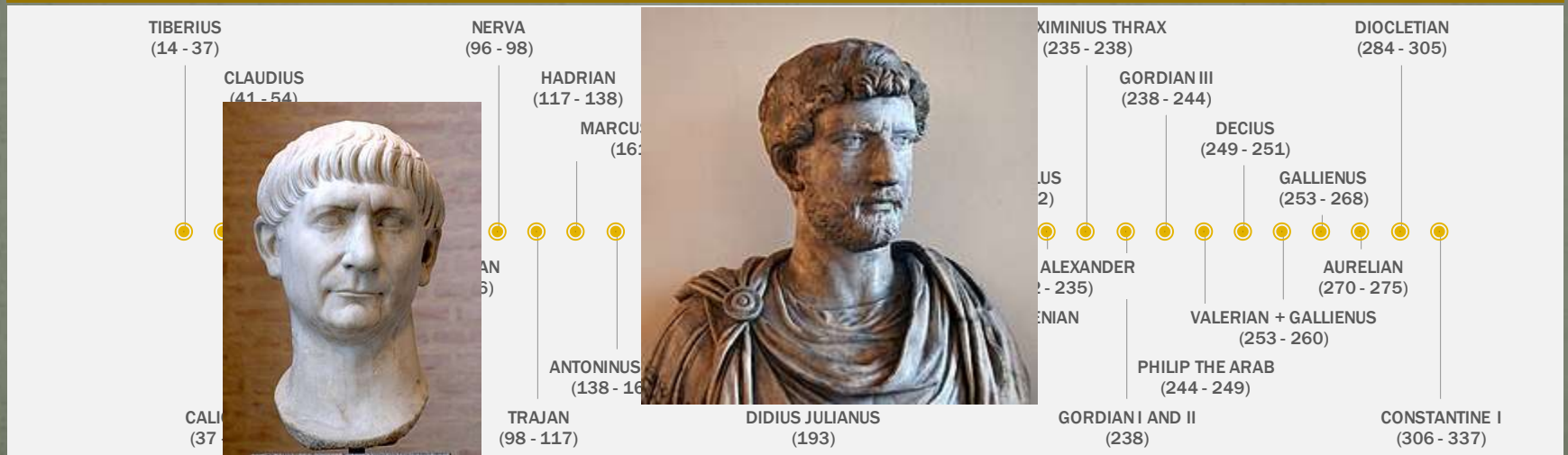




# Emperors, Their Views on Christians

- Trajan:
  - Considered a “virtuous pagan” by early Christians
  - Moderated persecutions, only allowed Christians to be punished for being Christians if they had also committed another crime
- Hadrian:
  - Continued Trajan’s policies toward Christians, anyone denouncing a Christian had to prove the case or be guilty of *calumnia*
  - Second Jewish War (132-136)

## Imperial Reigns: Tiberius to Constantine I (with some simplification)



# Emperors, Their Views on Christians

- Antoninus Pius:
  - Extended personal protection to Christians
  - *Apologia* of St. Justin Martyr addressed to him
- Marcus Aurelius:
  - Persecution of Christians increased, usually on the orders of local magistrates, Emperor's role (if any) in the persecutions disputed
  - Only member of the Antonine dynasty whose heir was not adoptive
  - During the Antonine Plague (165 – 180), Christians helped others

## Imperial Reigns: Tiberius to Constantine I (with some simplification)

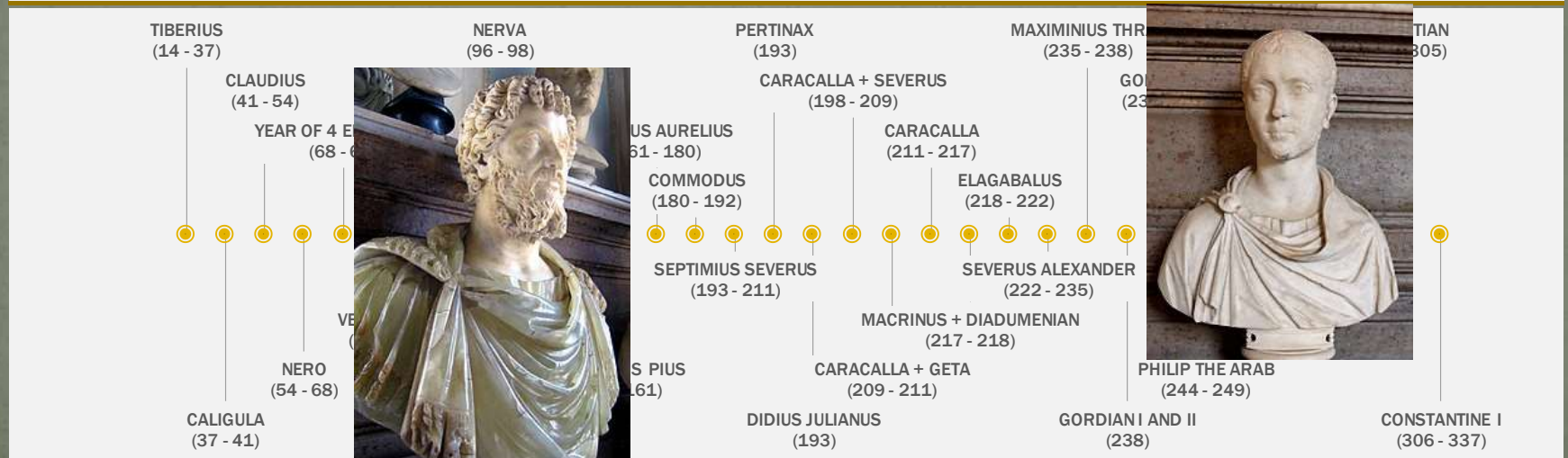




# Emperors, Their Views on Christians

- Septimius Severus:
  - Instances of local persecutions increased, Eusebius and Tertullian disagreed whether Septimius was involved
  - Policies toward Christianity unclear – histories disagree
- Severus Alexander:
  - Tutored in philosophy and Christian doctrine by Origen
  - Extremely tolerant toward Jews and Christians
  - Kept images of Abraham and Jesus in his oratory (with others)

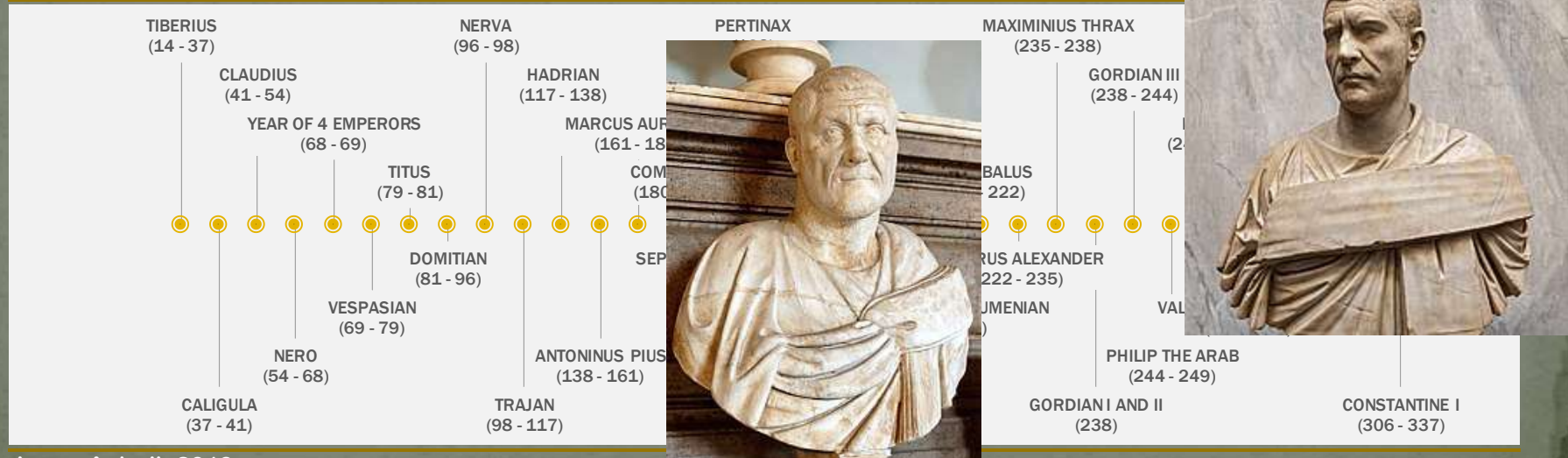
## Imperial Reigns: Tiberius to Constantine I (with some simplification)



# Emperors, Their Views on Christians

- Maximinus Thrax resumed persecution of Christians, largely because Severus Alexander had many Christians in the Imperial Household
- Philip the Arab:
  - Very sympathetic toward Christians
  - Some claims that he may have been baptized Christian and possibly participated in an Easter service (among the penitents) in Antioch

## Imperial Reigns: Tiberius to Constantine I (with some simplification)

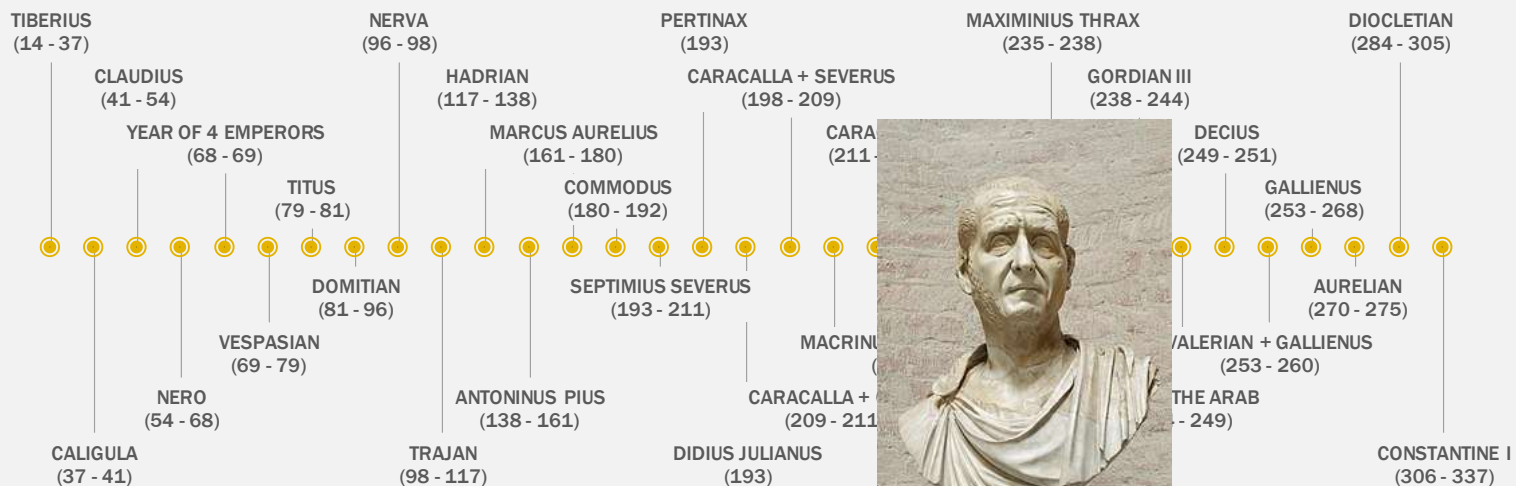




# Emperors, Their Views on Christians

- Decius:
  - Issued proclamation requiring participation in the cult of the Emperor, leading to one of the more organized and severe persecutions
  - Attempted to blame the “Plague of Cyprian” (249 to 262) on Christians
    - Net effect may have led to evangelization because many aristocrats fled the cities while Christian leaders stayed behind and ministered to the people
  - Official persecution policy continued under successors until 259

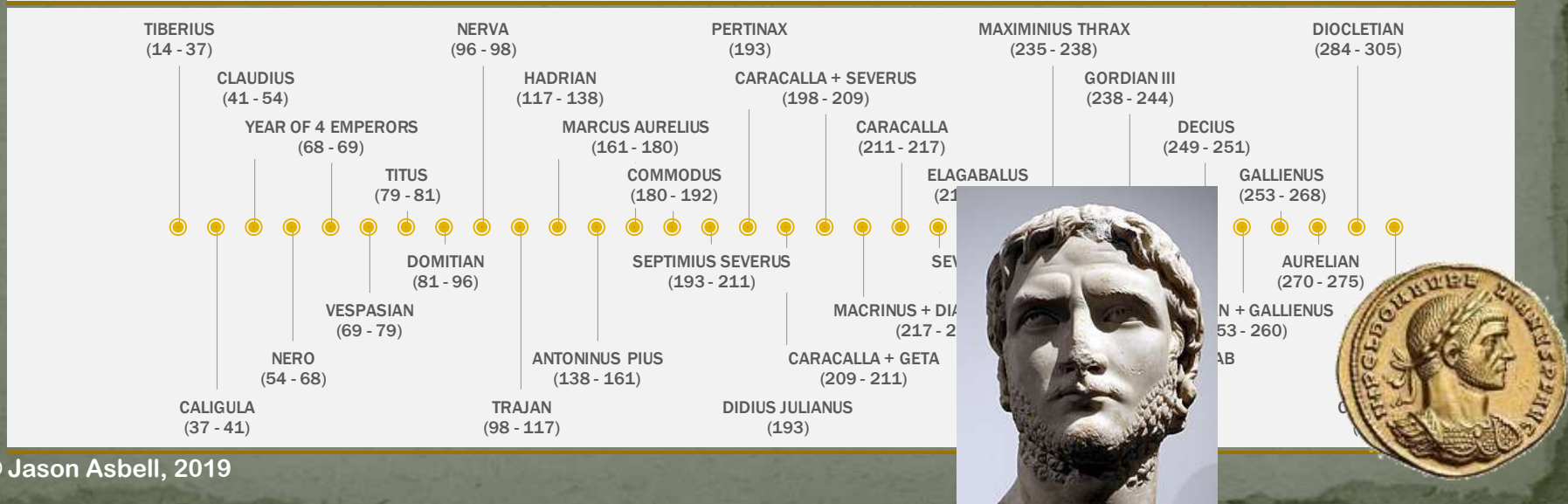
## Imperial Reigns: Tiberius to Constantine I (with some simplification)



# Emperors, Their Views on Christians

- Gallienus ended the persecutions begun under Decius and issued the first official declaration of tolerance with regard to the Christians, restoring their places of worship and cemeteries, therefore implying a recognition of the property of the Church
- Aurelian resumed persecutions attempting to establish “one faith, one empire” around Sol Invictus and the Imperial *deus et dominus natus* “God and Born Ruler”

## Imperial Reigns: Tiberius to Constantine I (with some simplification)

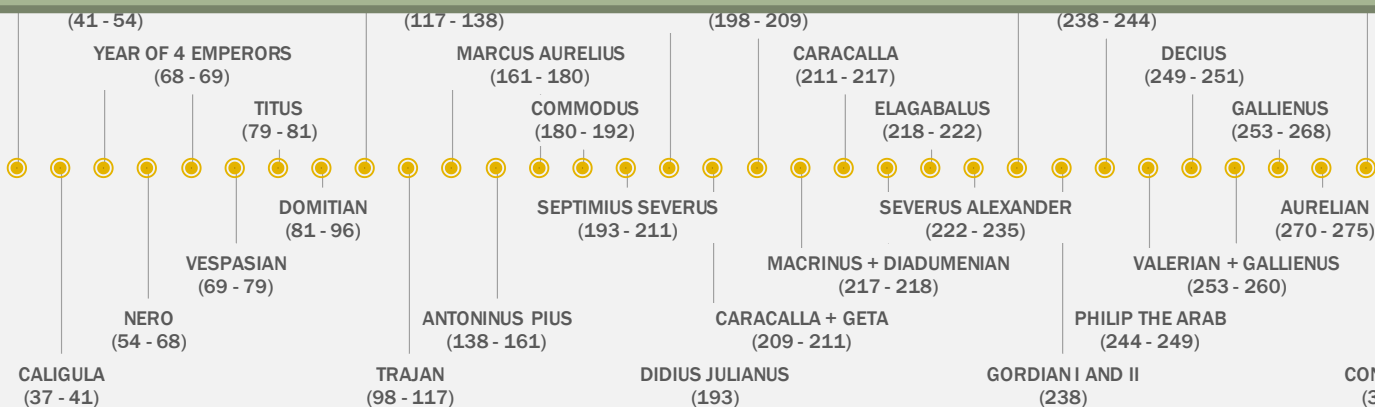




# Emperors, Their Views on Christians

- Diocletian:
  - Instituted extensive and officially mandated persecutions against Christians, who by this time numbered about 10% of the total population of the Empire, as well as other religions
  - By the time of Diocletian, the edicts of tolerance of Gallienus had

We will discuss Constantine  
Next Session!



# Announcement

No session on May 8  
We will resume on May 15 with  
Unit 2: Roman Church and the  
Rise of the Papal State



# For Further Reading

- Bibliography

- Crocker, H.W.; *Triumph: The Power and the Glory of the Catholic Church*; Crown Forum, 2001
- Rendina, Claudio; *The Popes: Histories and Secrets*; translated by Paul McCusker, Pharos Publications, 2002
- McBrien, Richard; *The HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism*; HarperSanFrancisco, 1995
- Johnson, Luke Timothy; *The Writings of the New Testament: An Interpretation*; Fortress Press, 2002

- Other Reading

- Weidenkopf, Steve; *Timeless: A History of the Catholic Church*; Our Sunday Visitor, 2018
- Schreck, Alan; *The Compact History of the Catholic Church*, Servant, 2009