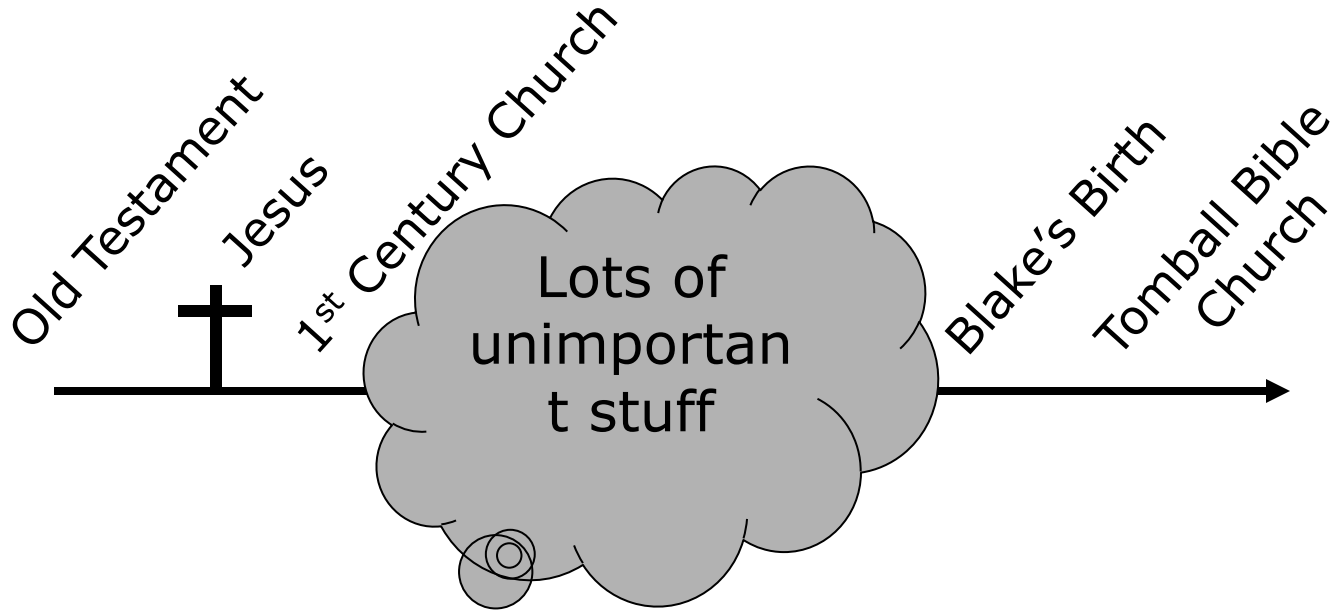


Retro CHURCH



UNDERSTANDING HOW WE GOT HERE

Blake's Church History



Why Study Church History?

1. Humbles
2. Warns
3. Guides
4. Encourages

Ground Rules

- This is PROTESTANT church history
- Historical transition came gradually
- Doctrine only developed as need arose
- Beliefs of past leaders must be analyzed in their context
- I am NOT a historian... learn from my teachers

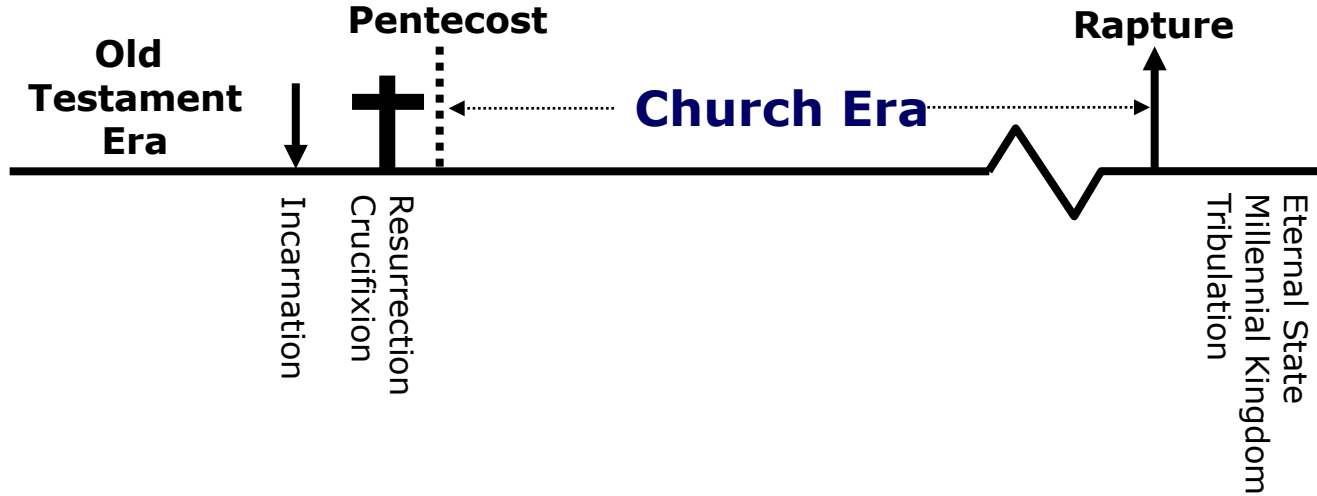
My Teachers

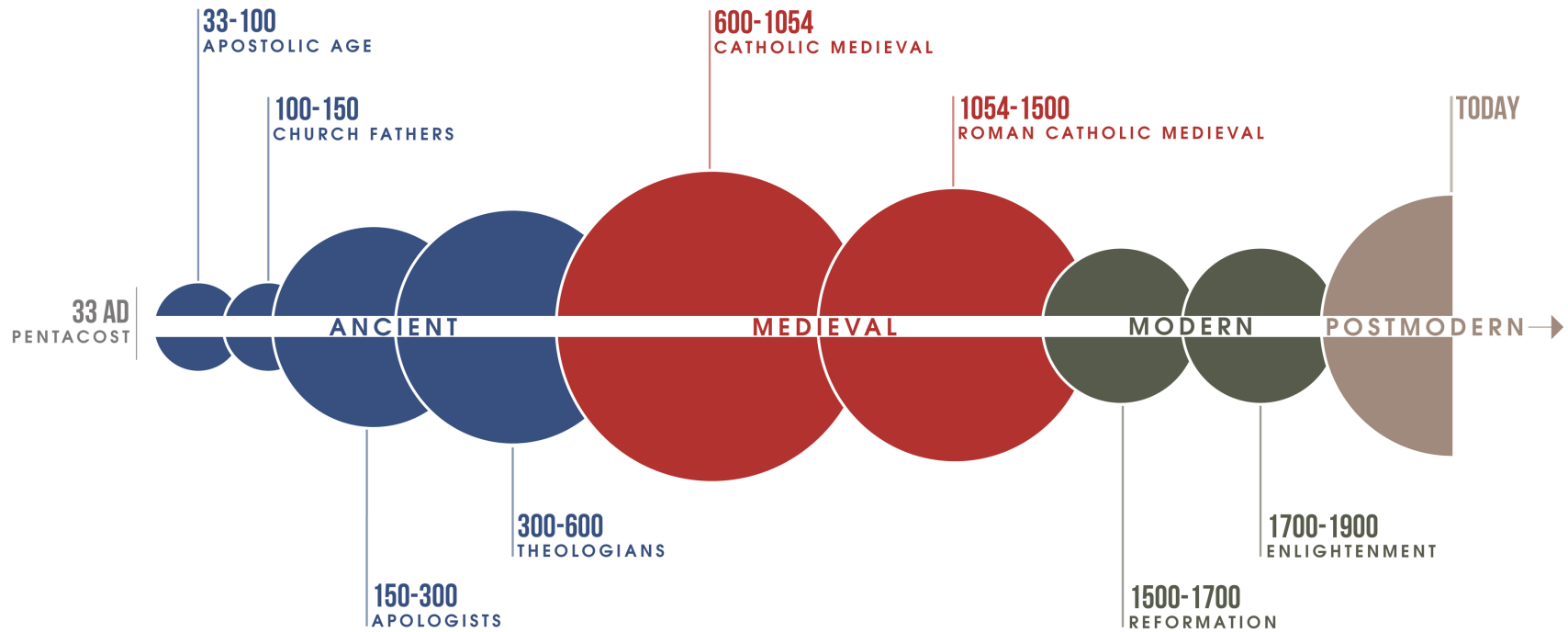
“Church History in Plain Language” by
Bruce Shelley

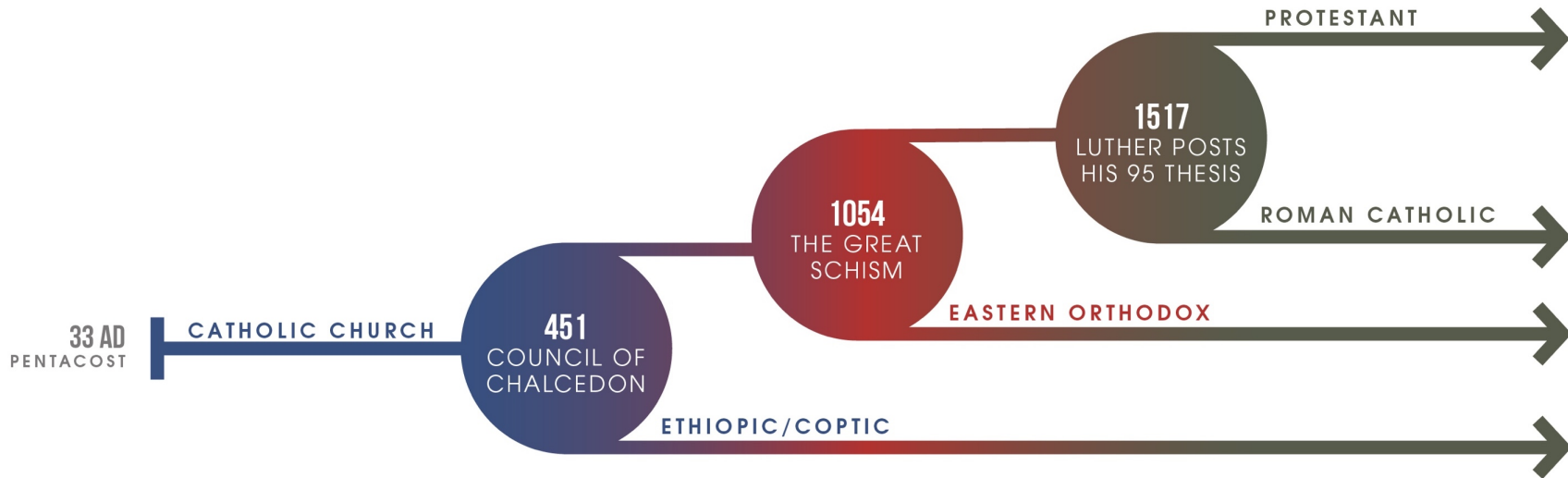
“The Story of Christianity” 2 vols by Justo
Gonzalez

“Our Legacy: The History of Christian
Doctrine” by John Hannah

Outline of Church History

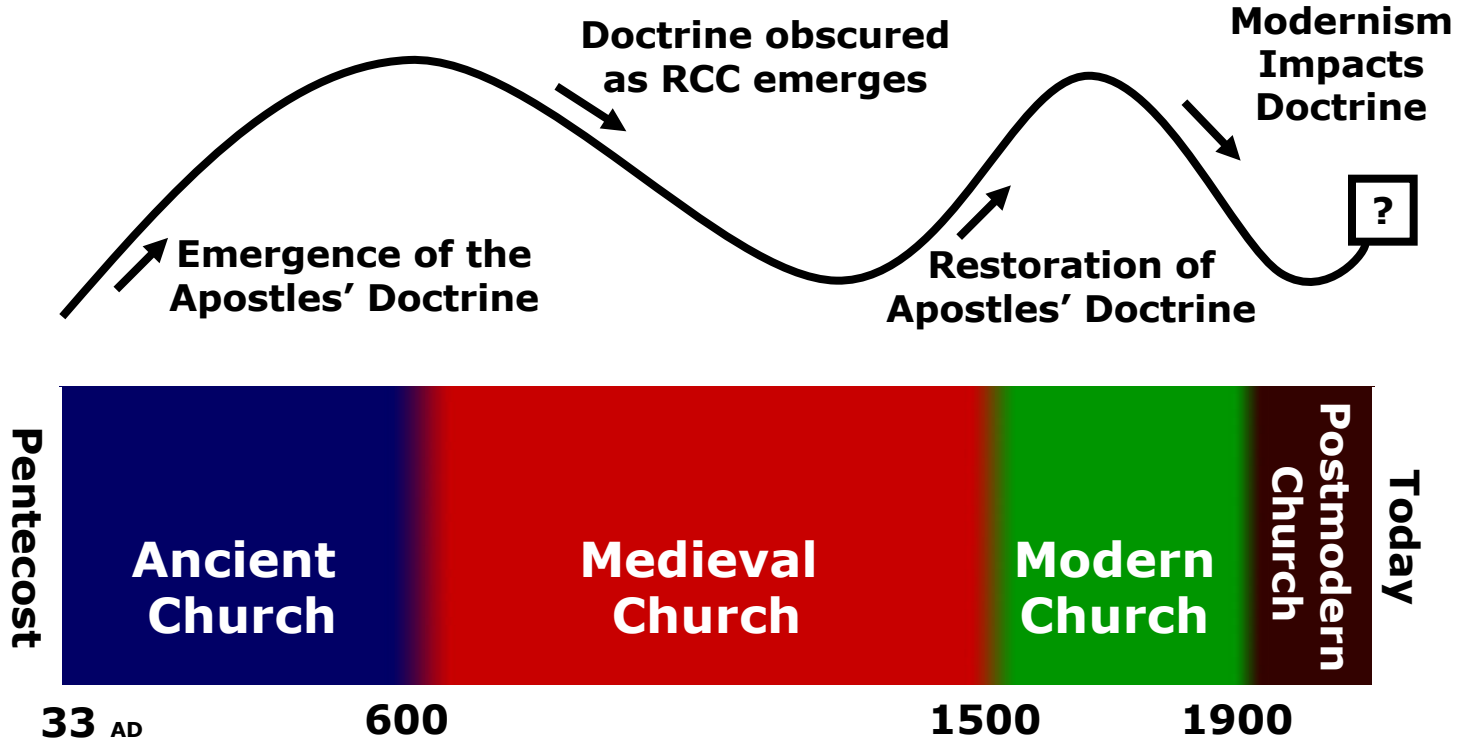






Flow of Church History

Theological Development from a Protestant Perspective



Apostolic Age (Pentecost-100)

- This is the age of the New Testament letters.
- The apostles:
 - lead the various churches
 - wrote letters that came to be viewed as scripture
 - trained up the leaders who would follow them in the age of the Church Fathers.

Church Fathers (100-150)

Issues Facing the Church

- Lack of New Testament canon to guide the church
- As in the apostles' days:
 - **False teachers** threatened the church
 - Envy and pride **divided Christian** communities
 - **Christians were persecuted**



Church Fathers (100-150)

Who led the Response?

The Church Fathers → Writers and bishops (leaders) of the churches directly following the apostles

Clement, bishop of Rome

Ignatius, bishop of Antioch

Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna



Church Fathers (100-150)

Characteristics of these Bishops

- Not apostles & not scripture
- Primarily pastoral writings
- Kept Jesus at center
- Theology not developed or systematized
- Joyfully embraced persecution and martyrdom



Apologists (150-300)

Issues Facing the Church

- Increased Roman persecution
- Increased Theological Threat both Inside & Outside

Apologists (150-300)

Who led the Response?

The Apologists → Writers who defended Christianity against false accusations, Roman intellectuals, and heretics

Irenaeus

Tertullian

Justin Martyr

Clement of Alexander

Origen

Apologists (150-300)

The Church's Response

- Gradual recognition of the NT canon
- Creation of the earliest creeds to define the faith

APOSTLES CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of the saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Apologists (150-300)

The Church's Response

- Gradual recognition of the NT canon
- Creation of the earliest creeds to define the faith
- Rise of the Bishop and Apostolic Succession
- New apologetics wedding Greek philosophy and Scripture
- Development of the major churches: Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople, and Rome
- Reverence of martyrs

Theologians (300-600)

Issues Facing the Church

Triumph under Constantine (313)

Persecution yields to acceptance & finally dominance

- New opportunities: Coverts, Councils & Missions
- New challenges: Secularism & Heresy

Theologians (300-600)

Who led the Response?

The Theologians → Bishops & writers who clarified core Christian doctrines in the face of various heretical teachings

Athanasius
Three Cappadocians
John Chrysostom
Jerome
Augustine

Theologians (300-600)

The Church's Response

- To Heresy: **Councils** called by gov't to resolve theological issues
 - Nicea (325) → Trinitrianism

NICEAN CREED EXCERPT

...We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father...

Theologians (300-600)

The Church's Response

- To Heresy: **Councils** called by gov't to resolve theological issues
 - Nicea (325) → Trinitrianism
 - Constantinople (381) → Trinitarianism part 2
 - Chalcedon (451) → Christology (but leads to 1st split)
- To Secularism:
 - Many withdraw to **monastic** life
 - **Bishops** are given more power to enforce orthodoxy