

50+ Sunday School Class

All Saints Presbyterian Church
Austin, TX

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Influential Leaders in Church History

All Saints Presbyterian Church, Austin, TX
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Summer 2020

Taught by Rev. Craig Chapman

Influential Leaders in Church History

- Introduction

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- John 16:7-8, 12-13

It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment...

¹² “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³ When the Spirit of truth comes, ***he will guide you into all the truth***

Influential Leaders in Church History

Class Schedule – Summer 2020

New Series – Influential Leaders in Church History

- May 31 – 1: *Athanasius*
- June 7 – 2: *Augustine*
- June 14 – 3: *Thomas Aquinas*
- June 21 – 4: *Martin Luther*
- June 28 – 5: *John Calvin*

Influential Leaders in Church History – May 31 - Athanasius

- Apostles to Athanasius
 - By 100 AD, all the apostles had died and all NT books were written and acknowledged (informally, by use) as authoritative and equivalent to the Old Testament.
 - By 150 AD, Christianity was seen as ... clearly distinct from Judaism ... but also a threat (by many)
 - Christianity's zealous evangelism and explosive growth seemed a threat to both Judaism & Rome
 - Jews saw Christians as idolaters because they worshipped a human (Jesus), not the one, true, invisible God Yahweh
 - Rome saw Christians as atheists because they wouldn't worship the Emperor or Roman gods

Influential Leaders in Church History – May 31 - Athanasius

- Apostles to Athanasius

150 – 300 AD – Age of Apologists

- Threats to Christianity emerged from the Outside
 - Roman Empire (persecutions)
 - Pagan Philosophers
- Threats to Christianity emerged from the Inside
 - Erroneous teaching by those claiming to be Christians
- Christianity was under duress and in survival mode
- *Apologetics* = a reasoned defense of the faith
 - ... to show that it's truthful and intellectually credible
- Apologists: Justin Martyr ... Irenaeus ... Tertullian
 - ... Clement of Alexandria ... Origen

300 – 600 AD – Age of Theologians

Influential Leaders in Church History – May 31 - Athanasius

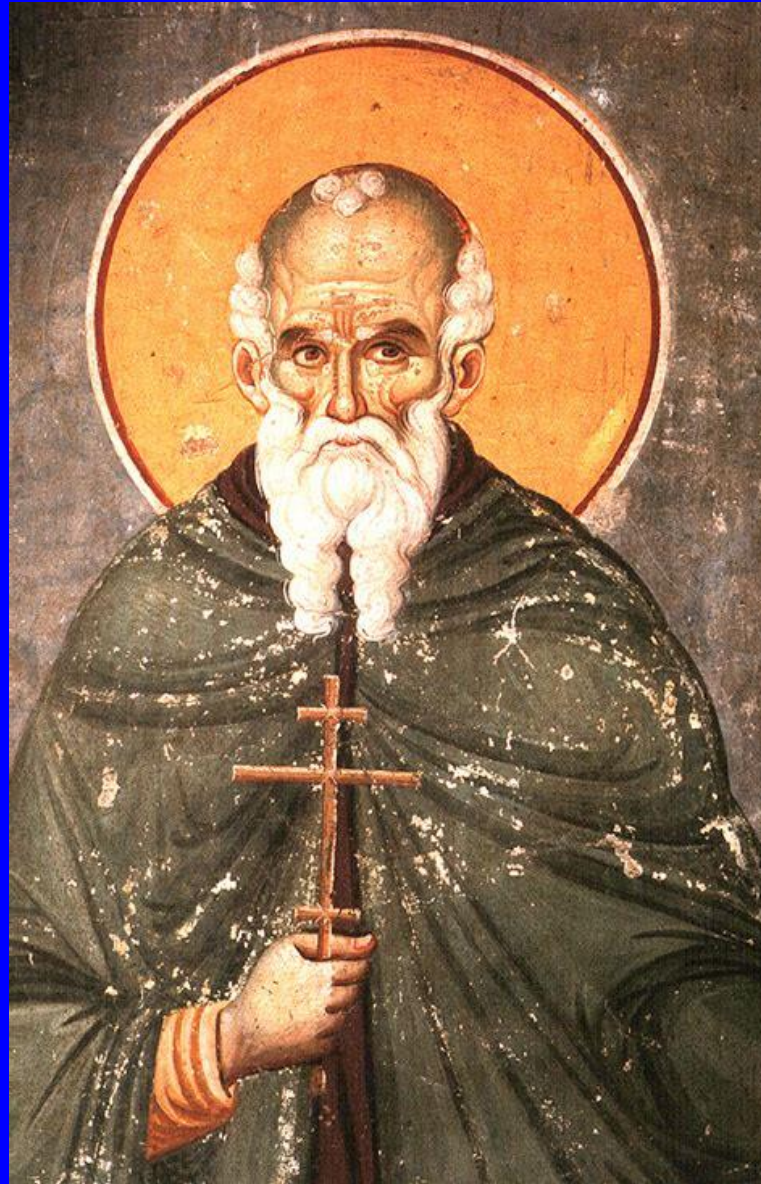
- Context
 - Constantine
 - Roman Emperor in 312 AD
 - Edict of Milan in 313 AD
 - Controversy
 - Arius of Alexandria (Egypt)
 - God ... the Father ... the Son
 - John 14:28
I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I
 - John 3:16
God gave his only begotten Son
 - Colossians 1:15
He is the ... firstborn of all creation

Influential Leaders in Church History – May 31 - Athanasius

- Context
 - Council of Nicea
 - 325 AD – Nicene Creed
... “We believe in ... one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten from the Father ... begotten *not made*, of *one substance* with the Father ...”
 - However, Arianism did not go away (alive thru song)
 - Bishop Alexander attended, and brought his assistant, Athanasius.
 - Bishop Alexander died in 328 AD ...
 - At almost age 30, Athanasius succeeded him ...

Influential Leaders in Church History – May 31 - Athanasius

- **Athanasius**
(295-373 AD)
- Black African
- Bishop of Alexandria
... for 46 years
- Exiled and brought back 5 times due to his defense of The Trinity



Influential Leaders in Church History – May 31 - Athanasius

- Contributions
 - Instrumental in developing the *Nicene Creed* (325 AD)
 - *On the Incarnation of the Word [Logos]*
... argues for the full deity of the Son
 - *Against the Arians* ... refutes Arianism
- His Arguments
 - Nature of God is *community in unity*
 - Scripture presents God having *always* been Father and the Son having *always* been; thus, the Son is also God
 - “*Begotten*” is a biblical trait of the Son (John 3:16)
 - Not: *brought into existence* or *created at a point in time*
 - *Making* results in something of a *different* sort
 - *Begetting* results in something of the *same* kind
 - Nicene Creed: “... *begotten not made.*”

Influential Leaders in Church History – May 31 - Athanasius

- Contributions

- Nicene Creed

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the *only-begotten* Son of God, *begotten of the Father* before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; *begotten, not made*, being of one substance [*homoousios*] with the Father, by whom all things were made.

- Greek: *homoousios* = “of the same nature, being, essence, or substance”
- Arians: this is not a biblical word
- Athanasius: true, but it’s a biblical *concept* (as is *Trinity*)

Influential Leaders in Church History – May 31 - Athanasius

- Contributions
 - **God's Unchanging Nature**
 - Doesn't The Incarnation jeopardize this? ...
 - Athanasius' Argument: No! ...
 - The Son's fully divine nature was not changed through the Incarnation
 - A human nature was added to the Son's unchanging divine nature
 - What about ...
 - John 14:28 – “The Father is greater than I” ...?
 - When Jesus is described as hungry or tired?
 - Athanasius:
...these apply to his *human* nature, not his divine nature

Influential Leaders in Church History – May 31 - Athanasius

- Contributions
 - **Why is all this so important?**
 - Without the *full deity* of Christ, the salvation of humanity is impossible because *only God* can save
 - Sin resulted in death. Thus, true salvation requires (among other things) the giving of life.
 - Only the source of life (God) can give life.
 - Such salvation is a sharing in the divine nature
 - Salvation brings together humanity and deity, which sin separated.
 - Only God can accomplish such salvation—particularly, only the One in whom both deity and humanity have already been brought together: Jesus Christ

Influential Leaders in Church History – May 31 - Athanasius

- Contributions
 - ***“He was made man that we might be made God”***
– Athanasius, *On the Incarnation of the Word*, 54.3
 - Doesn't mean salvation makes humans equal with God
 - 2 Peter 1:3-4
[God's] divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, ⁴by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become *partakers of the divine nature*
 - This is Jesus' goal when he prayed in John 17:21-23:
... that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us ... I in them and you in me

Influential Leaders in Church History – May 31 - Athanasius

- Contributions
 - 367 AD
 - Athanasius wrote his *Easter Letter*
 - Listed the Old and New Testament canonical books
 - Council of Laodicea
 - Reacted to the heretical music of Arius by forbidding congregational singing in the churches
 - ... which lasted until the Reformation

Influential Leaders in Church History – May 31 - Athanasius

- Question:
What difference should this make on Monday?

Prayer Requests

Next Week

- June 7 – Augustine