

# SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT THE GREAT SCHISM

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*They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. (Acts 2:42, NASB)*

Is this not the fundamentals of church?

How is it then that there is so much strife within the church?

Should history teach us how not to make the same mistakes?

## **What Was The Great Schism Of 1054?**

The Great Schism of 1054 was a crucial moment in the history of Christianity, and the effects of this schism shaped the religious makeup of Europe for centuries.

A schism is a split that occurs based on differences of belief. This split created the distinction between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches.

## **Why Did The Great Schism Happen?**

The Great Schism is referred to as the East-West Schism because it took place along these geographical lines, ones that reference the division of the Roman Empire.

The Western Empire disintegrated in the 5th century, its lands were conquered and ruled by Germanic tribes, while the Eastern Empire lived on for hundreds of years.

As new states arose in the West and stability came back, the Roman Pope also grew in power. The Eastern Roman Empire simply lived on.

As Rome's political power increased in the West, the other patriarchal churches of the East resisted its growing sense of superiority over them.

## **Religious Differences**

There were theological differences that caused estrangement between East and West.

The West's addition of the Filioque clause into the Nicene Creed was one.

Eastern churches rejected the doctrine of purgatory that originated among Western churches.

In the East, there was a ban on holy images called icons for many years, whilst Western churches affirmed the sacredness of icons and their veneration.

The East also rejected the West's rules about celibacy among priests and the use of unleavened bread during the Eucharist.

## Papal Authority

Disagreements about Papal authority formed a major catalyst for the Great Schism.

In the ancient Christian church, five patriarchates were identified as preeminent leaders.

When Rome claimed universal authority over all churches, Constantinople and the other Eastern patriarchates rejected the assertion.

## Lessons Learned

- Power, politics, and control undermine the mission of the church
- The presenting problem is unlikely to be the real problem.
- We can learn from each other.
- There is a difference between the ideal and the real

*Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God. Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love. Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, in all, and living through all.*  
(Ephesians. 4:1-6, NLT)