



# Church History

*From  
Apostolic to Modern Ages*

**Pure Doctrine Preserved  
Through The Centuries**

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## Introduction

It is recorded in Matthew 16:18-19, that Jesus said, "...upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. In this study we will cover seven periods of outstanding events that were involved in the church's quest to reach the whole world with the whole gospel. The 1<sup>st</sup> period is dedicated to development of apostolic leadership and doctrine, with the 7<sup>th</sup> period dealing with the restoration of apostolic doctrine. The modern church is the flip side of the apostolic church – each must mirror the other

We must remember that the development and implementation of the church deals with people, real people who were involved as individuals in their particular era of time. They carved out of the raw materials at hand what we observe only through the windows of history. Is God allowing us to understand that each of us can create another tremendous period for those who follow to read?

### What Was Apostolic Doctrine

Jesus established the doctrine of the future church during His earthly ministry, and the apostles implemented with specifics what He had poured into them. It was given the term "Apostolic Doctrine" in Acts 2:39 as the church came to birth. In the biblical record, wherever a church was founded, or an evangelism campaign of reaching the lost in His world was recorded with the activity explained in detail, these principles became a part of the church's normal operation. The doctrine consisted of the Dual-nature of Jesus Christ that underlined the Oneness of God of the Old Testament, and affirmed in the New Testament by Jesus; Repentance, Baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit baptism with the evidence of speaking with tongues.

The church functioned with this doctrine as the basic fundamental truth until the death of John (c. Ad 100). During the closing Apostolic Period the apostles warned repeatedly that false teaches would find their way into influential levels of the church and attempt to subvert the doctrines that had been taught by them. As the church entered the Post-Apostolic Period, unscrupulous church leaders did emerge that endeavored to change the doctrinal path of the church. After the death of John, the Post-Apostolic Period gave birth to a time of persecution by the Roman government who had executed James by an order of Herod Agrippa, and beheaded Paul in Rome. Other apostles met similar judgment as the church conflicted with Rome's polytheistic mentality. The Apostle John was the only apostle to escape the bitter taste of martyrdom, but survived to protect "that form" of doctrine that had been established by Jesus and confirmed by the apostles. As a result the leaders who had been tutored by the apostles, and in turn poured into their generation the legacy they had received, were able to withstand the influence of false teachers.

### Apostolic Doctrine A Majority

For over three hundred years after the death of the Apostle John in 100 A.D., the church held with tenacity what had been established as apostolic doctrine. All modern theologians agree that the doctrine known as Trinitarian was not established as doctrine until the 4<sup>th</sup> century, not the 1<sup>st</sup>.

To go from the heroes of the Post-Apostolic Period, such as Ignatius, Polycarp and Clement of Rome, to the present-day church is to traverse a radically changing society, and the way the church was viewed.

Enter Tertullian, a lawyer converted to Christianity (died c 225 A.D.), was the first to use the term 'Trinity' in reference to doctrine. He attacked the 'dual nature' of Jesus Christ with a condescending spirit, misquoted those who opposed his theories, and misguided the church officials during trials, labeling holy men as *heretics*, an action that often resulted in their martyrdom. His written attack against Praxeas, a prominent Oneness teacher, "*Against Praxeas*," is a well documented tirade, and a mockery to biblical scholars. Hippolytus, a contemporary of that time, also wrote a treatise "*Hippolytus Against Noetus*," Even though their actions resulted over time in established doctrines being eventually modified, the word of God is forever settled in heaven and remains unchanged.

When modern church theologians study the fact thoroughly, it cannot escape the fact that this doctrine survived every attack that was pitted against it, and was believed and practiced by a vast majority through the Post-Apostolic Period. This was acknowledged by Tertullian in above stated thesis "*Against Praxeas*." Rome could do nothing to quell the rapid growth of the church, so finally subtly introduced a marriage of church and state to involve the great numbers of Christians into a common ground with the empire. The persecution was then pitted against those who espoused the Apostolic Doctrine by the emerging church that used the Trinitarian doctrine as the compromise for peace.

In the eyes of the Trinitarian theologians, the martyrs of the post apostolic-church activity that taught the apostolic doctrine were not heroes but rather label such teachers as "heretic." The mass murder of so many of those who stood for the doctrine that was established by the apostles, first by the Roman Empire, and later by the evolving church founded on the theology of Tertullian, resulted historically in each martyr to become a legend that passed a legacy for future spiritual sons and daughters to read.

The mood began to change in the nineteenth century as courageous leaders of many variegated doctrinal groups began to expound their confidence in the early church teaching, and initiated an open door to a full restoration during the 1900s. The church that had closed the Bible to the common believer was then questioned and a new generation of leadership had arrived. With the coming of the printing press and the acquisition of a Bible to study ignited a clear view of biblical doctrine. True believers were not to be denied.

With the explosive movement of the Irvinites of Scotland and the Welch revival of Wales, a spiritual hunger for truth gave birth to a new generation. Inspired doctrinal reform sent shock waves around the world as sincere teachers took a closer look at what was indeed taught by the apostles.

You will find the content of this study carefully documented. While the writings of the Oneness leaders were more often than not, confiscated and burned, leaving obscure the paper trail other than biblical facts, their teachings can be found in the writings of those who opposed them. This study will explore the historical details of those days and establish that the Apostolic Doctrine was valued by those who died to protect it through every difficult historical valley the church traveled, restoring it for the benefit of the modern church.

-- Daniel Scott  
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