

The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine Study Guide

**The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine
by Eusebius of Caesarea**

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Plot Summary

The History of the Church was written by Eusebius of Caesarea (263 - 339). The Catholic Church refers to him as the Father of Church History because he is known as one of the most important historians of the Christian Church. The book covers the history of Christianity's first three centuries, from Christ's birth, death and resurrection to Emperor Constantine's legalization of Christianity. Eusebius refers to numerous important documents, monuments, events, acts and extracts. He records lineages of Roman Emperors, and the various key bishoprics in the Christian Church, particularly those in Alexandria, Jerusalem, Antioch and Rome.

Eusebius's goals, however, are not merely to record church history; he aims to record successions of various seats to avoid deceit. He is interested in following the development of church doctrine and the history of heresies in order to preserve the purity of Christian doctrine. Eusebius aims to properly record Jewish history as well and the relationship of the Christian church to the Jews and to "heathens." Finally, he is very concerned not to let the martyrs of the Christian church be forgotten, so he spends ample time recording records of their suffering.

Eusebius's work is composed of ten books. The first book is a detailed introduction to Jesus and his apostles. He is concerned to defend the events of Christ's life as told in the Gospels, which he does by referring to other texts concerning the period. He also argues on behalf of Christ's divinity and records the early travels of the apostles during and following Jesus' death. As further proof, he looks to the Old Testament for proof texts concerning Jesus' divinity. The second book covers the period from Tiberius to Nero, covering the works of the apostles and their martyrdoms. Book three runs from Vespasian to Trajan, discussing the creation of the gospels and the successors to the apostles. He records the first persecutions and discusses early heresies. Book four covers the period from Trajan to Marcus Aurelius, focusing in particular on the bishopric succession lines, the writings of the bishops and further martyrdoms. Book five runs from Marcus Aurelius to Severus, covering much of the same information, but focusing in particular on the heresy of Marcion and the resolution of the Easter Festival dispute.

Book six runs from Severus to Decius, focusing on the life of Origen in detail and recording his contemporaries. The seventh book covers the period of history between Gallus and Gallienus; it focuses on the writings of Cyprian and Dionysius and the important heresies of the day. Book eight covers the period from Diocletian to Maximian, recording the most brutal attacks on Christians up to that time; whereas, the ninth book covers more of the same, particularly Maximian's renewed attacks and the end of his persecution of the church. Book ten records the coming of peace to the Christian church that Constantine gave to them and lauds Constantine for his victories over the tyrants who persecuted them.



Chapter 1, The Nature and Work of Christ

Chapter 1, The Nature and Work of Christ Summary and Analysis

At the start of the first chapter, Eusebius discloses his plan for his history of the church. He wants to (a) describe the line of succession from Christ's apostles, (b) give the names and dates of heretics, (c) discuss the calamities faced by the Jews following their conspiracy against Christ, (d) recount the terrible campaigns against the gospel by heretics and the heroism with which the church fought against them, and (e) record the stories of the great martyrs. He will begin with the story of Jesus; he apologizes for his modest talents in historical writings.

Eusebius will demonstrate both the divine and ancient features of Christian origins. He will start with Christ but cannot find adequate words to describe Him. He cites Christ's greatness and claims the Old Testament points toward Christ and that greatness. He affirms various traditional Christian doctrines, that Christ is the son of God sent into the world to redeem mankind, and so on. The first pages are full of Old Testament exegesis intended to show that Christ is the messiah.

Christ's doctrine contains nothing novel or strange and neither does his religion. His initial followers were unusually blessed, as the Scripture taught they would be. And only as of late, in Eusebius's time, have Christians become widely known. Nonetheless, the core Christian doctrines lie implicit in the Old Testament, which is neither new nor odd.

Christ was recorded in the census of Augustus's forty-second year as Caesar, twenty-eight years after the conquest of Egypt and the death of Antony and Cleopatra. Quirinius was the Syrian governor. And the Jewish historian Josephus records related details that can be used to affirm these dates.

Herod at the time was the first foreign king of the Jewish people, which fulfills a Mosaic prophecy. He had a son named Herod, who was king during Jesus' time. Because the Jewish people had a foreign king, when Herod Sr. died, the leadership of the Jews was thrown into confusion, to which Josephus testifies. Herod Jr. took control.

Some claim that the two genealogies of Christ - in Matthew and Luke - have discrepancies. But this is false because one genealogy traces Christ's lineage by law and the other by nature. Eusebius quotes a letter from Africanus to Aristides on this matter. He showed that Mary and Joseph belonged to the same tribe in this way.

Herod, as many know, heard of Christ's birth from the three wise men and sought to have him killed. He ordered Bethlehem destroyed, expecting Jesus to be killed, but an angel helped Jesus' family to escape. Herod paid a terrible price afterward, the murder



of his wife and children, among other things. Herod grew sick and died. Eusebius cites Josephus's recounting of Herod's sufferings. Around the time he died, he ordered the execution of many of his sons. Everyone who sought to have Christ killed eventually died.

Next Eusebius covers Pontius Pilate, who was appointed to govern Judea during the twelfth year of Tiberius Caesar. Four years later, Christ was beginning his mission at age thirty and started to preach the gospel. Annas and Caiaphas were high priests at the time. Jesus's teaching lasted only four years. In that time, Jesus called twelve apostles; to them alone he gave the name of apostles. Christ then appointed seventy others.

Josephus helps to confirm the story of Herod and his daughter's role in the beheading of John the Baptist. John was a man of great virtues, according to Josephus; John also speaks well of Jesus. Christ's apostles are listed in the Scriptures, but the names of the seventy have been lost. Clement also speaks of the apostles. Christ had other apostles as well that are mentioned. In the next section, Eusebius digresses into a story about the Prince of Edessa. He ends citing some (apparently apocryphal) letters between Jesus and Abgar the Toparch.



Chapter 2, Tiberius to Nero

Chapter 2, Tiberius to Nero Summary and Analysis

In Book 2, Eusebius has compiled the works of Clement, Tertullian, Josephus and Philo to tell a story about the time between Tiberius and Nero Caesar, which covers the period from the appointment of Matthias to replace Judas to the deaths of Peter and Paul. First, Eusebius discusses how the apostles lived after Christ's ascension. Soon after Christ's death, St. Stephen was martyred, the first Christian to die for Christ. Paul still persecuted the Church and the disciples of Jesus had been dispersed. The Church entered a new stage when Saul became Paul.

The story of Christ's ascension spread across the world quickly, and people discussed it all over Palestine. Even Emperor Tiberius heard of it. The Roman senate considered recognizing Jesus as a god but declined. Tertullian recorded this. The Gospel message was off to a good start and the apostles went all over the world; the church quickly expanded and miracles were everywhere. Polytheism was rejected and the gospel was preached to the Gentiles.

Tiberius died after twenty-years in power in 37 A.D. Gaius was next Caesar and appointed Agrippa ruler of the Jews. Philo became known as a great scholar during this time and lived in Alexandria. He could hold his own with anyone and was a great fan of Plato. Philo wrote a history of the time and much of it concurs with Josephus. The Jews were ruthlessly persecuted by Gaius. One of the most influential men in the Roman court, Sejanus, sought to exterminate the Jews. Eusebius argues that the Jews suffered mercilessly for their crucifixion of Jesus. Even Pilate participated.

Gaius was replaced after four years by Claudius and under his reign famine came to the empire. Agabus had predicted this in the book of Acts. Herod made many attempts on the Apostle's lives, but his suffering began. He was struck down in a harangue against the Christians which is testified to by Josephus.

Simon the Magus came to Rome during this time and led many people astray; people claimed he could work magic and was regarded as a god. Irenaeus in his Heresies Answered addressed Simon's horrible teachings, which Eusebius declines to repeat.

Simon apparently originated every heresy. They engaged in idol worship, used incense, sacrifice and libation in their practices and degraded themselves with unspeakable sins. But Simon failed to organize a body of believers. Peter exposed his sins and Simon fled. Claudius, who Eusebius praises, chose Peter as spokesman for all the other Christians. Peter helped spread the gospel and Simon was destroyed. Christians influenced by Peter pressed Mark to record a gospel from Peter's experiences. Mark is also thought to have established the Church in Alexandria.



Philo gave an account of the Egyptian ascetics. According to record, Philo visited Rome to speak with Peter. He described the lives of Christian ascetics in detail and wrote on the contemplative life. He emphasizes that they gave up property to pursue philosophy. Christians at the time thus often cloistered themselves. These were the first monasteries and at them, the cloistered ones interpreted the Scriptures, looking for hidden meanings with philosophical methods. They composed hymns and poems as well. The first monks rigorously regulated their behavior; women often joined them in this. Philo gives account of other rituals as well, such as vigils. Philo's books were numerous and covered many topics, many with which Eusebius was familiar.

Passover under Claudius one year brought disaster. Thirty-thousand Jews trampled each other to death under Agrippa the Younger, who Caludius forced to appoint Felix the procurator of Judea. When Claudius died, Nero replaces Felix. Fights broke out among the Jewish priests. A false prophet led thirty-thousand Jews to assault Jerusalem, but Felix anticipated them and the group were nearly all killed.

Festus followed Felix under Nero's direction. Paul was tried during this time and imprisoned in Rome, along with Aristarchus. Luke ends Acts at this point saying that Paul freely preached at that time. Paul was rescued from death on various occasions. James was martyred, however. Eusebius reproduces Hegesippus's account of the martyrdom, but the authenticity of the story is doubted given that few refer to it.

In Nero's eighth year as Caesar, Annianus replaces Mark as the Bishop of Alexandria. Nero consolidated power and started to war against the people of God; he had become insane and was full of blood lust, killing even his closest family members. Tertullian recorded his insanity. Paul was beheaded in Rome because of him, and Peter was crucified as well. Their grave sites are still known. The Bishop of Corinth, Dionysius, records this as well. Eusebius ends the chapter where he writes of the last Jewish war against Rome. Jews in high authority were whipped by Florus, the procurator between 64 and 66 A.D. After the Jewish revolt in Palestine, confusion followed and the streets were full of the dead and wounded.



Chapter 3, Vespasian to Trajan

Chapter 3, Vespasian to Trajan Summary and Analysis

Various apostles are scattered throughout the world, Thomas for Parthia, Andrew for Scythia, John for Asia, and so on. Peter ended his days in Rome, as did Paul. The Bishop of Rome following Paul and Peter was Linus. Paul mentions him. Eusebius claims that only Peter's first epistle is undoubtedly genuine, but the second is noncanonical. But the Acts and the Gospel are reliable. This observation begins Eusebius's discussion of which texts are canonical. Paul wrote fourteen epistles, although some rejected Hebrews, due to the testimony of the Roman Church. Paul's preaching to the Gentiles laid the foundations for the churches outside Jerusalem. Luke was Paul's companion during this time and wrote both the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts. Paul often referred to Luke. Linus also accompanied Paul. Clement was Bishop of Rome after Linus. Dionysius the Areopagite who was Paul's first convert in Athens, was appointed Bishop of Athens.

Vespasian became Emperor after Nero, in part due to his campaigns against the Jews, leaving his war to Titus, his son. The Jews had devised various plots against the Christians, such as stoning Stephen to death, along with James, and beheading John's brothers, among other things. The Jews in Judea were driven to disaster, and Eusebius reviews some of the relevant events. He then cites an extended passage from Josephus recounting the matter.

Eusebius then reports that Christ's predictions in the Gospels came to pass as he foretold. Apparently, over one million Jews died, according to Eusebius, all over the Roman Empire; these persecutions occurred under Vespasian; Christ had predicted it and wept over it. He warned the Jewish people to repent and Josephus recounts their sufferings (again, Eusebius quotes him).

Eusebius recounts Josephus's life and writings next. He sought to write a whole history of the Jewish people. Josephus wrote dozens of historical works. It is noted that after James was killed and Jerusalem captured, tradition holds that the remaining apostles and disciples gathered to choose a successor to James, who they eventually decided would be Symeon, son of the Clopas in the Gospel. Next Vespasian tried to wipe out the entire Davidic line. After ten years, Titus replaces his father and Linus yielded the Roman Bishopric to Anencletus two years later. After two years and two months, Titus was replaced by his brother Domitian and four years after that, Avilius became Bishop of Alexandria. Twelve years after Domitian became emperor, Clement became the Bishop of Rome and left one epistle.

Eusebius reviews Domitian's persecution of John and Christ's relatives. John was confined to the Isle of Patmos, where he wrote Revelation. Domitian also pursued the extinction of the Davidic line. Nerva followed Domitian after fifteen years of rule and John returned to Ephesus. Cerdo succeeded Avilius as Bishop of Alexandria and



Symeon follows as Bishop of Jerusalem. Then a story about John the Apostle is recounted.

The order of the Gospels is discussed, and Eusebius has already accounted for their origins. He affirms the authorship of the Gospels and argues that the writers were either eyewitnesses or associates with eyewitnesses. Many writings were accepted as sacred, but others were not and were disputed, such as James, Jude, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John. Others were spurious, among which was the Revelation of John. Eusebius then describes the heresies of Menander the impostor, the successor to Simon the Magus, the heresies of Cerinthus, and Nicolaus from the Ebionite Sect. He notes that many of the Apostles were married, such as Peter and Philip. The deaths of John and Philip are discussed and were reported by Polycrates. Symeon, the Bishop of Jerusalem was martyred. Emperor Trajan ordered the ending of the persecution of the Christians. Three years into Trajan's dominion, Celment died and Evarestus became the Bishop of Rome. Symeon in Jerusalem was followed by Justus, a Jew.

Polycarp was a famed companion of the apostles. Ignatius was tied to him and later become the Bishop of Antioch. Ignatius may have died being eaten by wild animals on the way to Rome, but Ireanaeus claims he was martyred along with Polycarp. He was followed as Bishop of Antioch by Heros.

Many evangelists were famous during this period, such as Quadratus who had the gift of prophesy. Many were inspired by God to lay the foundations of the Church. Clement, Eusebius claimed, was a great evangelist, but had only one epistle, despite the claims that other works were his. Papias's writings are also discussed. Papias testified to the Johannine authorship of Revelation. He also gives accounts of the origins of the gospels.



Chapter 4, Trajan to Marcus Aurelius

Chapter 4, Trajan to Marcus Aurelius Summary and Analysis

Primus, the fourth from the apostles, became the Bishop of Alexandria, twelve years into Trajan's reign. And after eight years as the Bishop of Rome, Evarestus ceded to Alexander as the successor to Peter and Paul. The Jewish tragedy continued, while Christianity expanded.

After nineteen years of rule, Trajan was replaced by Aelius Hadrianus as Emperor; Quadratus sent Hadrianus a document defending his religion against its accusers. Aristedes also left behind a defense of the faith. Xystus replaced Alexander as Bishop of Rome three years after Alexander's appointment. Justus succeeded Primus after twelve years in Alexandria. There is little evidence of the succession of bishops in Jerusalem. The Jews were assaulted against by Rufus, then governor of Judea. The Jews fought under Bar Cochba, a bloodthirsty bandit, against their rulers. In Hardian's eighteenth year of ruling, the war came to a head and the Jews were forced into Diaspora. The Romans changed Jerusalem's name to Aelia and the Church was composed of Gentiles.

Many heretics mentioned in the last chapter were influential such as Saturninus from Antiochus and Basilides of Alexandria. Irenaeus has already refuted them; Eusebius possesses some of the important refutations from Irenaeus and others. Hegesippus was prominent in fighting the heresies, and Eusebius discusses some of his arguments. Hadrian prevented Christians from being executed without trial; the letter is printed in the text.

Hadrian ruled for twenty-one years and Antoninus, known as Pius, became the Roman Emperor. Telsphorus died after eleven years and Hyginus took over for him. Valentinus introduced a heresy and Cerdo introduced the Marcionite heresy. Mark follows Eumenes as Bishop of Alexandria; Pius was Roman Bishop for fifteen years and Anicetus replaced him. Justin was active in battling against Marcion. He sent a defense of the faith to Emperor Antoninus Pious and the Roman Senate.

Eusebius recounts that Polycarp became Bishop of Smyrna and lived to old age. He died a martyr and his martyrdom was unusually powerful—he was burned alive but for a time resisted the fire and glowed from it. Eusebius prints the original account of the story. Polycarp refused to renounce Christianity and the Romans and Jews burned him alive.

Justin the Philosopher was martyred in Rome due to the Cynic Crescens who devised a plot against him. Justin himself records the names and stories of many martyrs. And Eusebius claims to possess many of Justin's writings, including his defense of Christianity.



Anicetus died after eleven years as Bishop of Rome; Soter followed him. After fourteen years, Celadion ceded the bishopric of Alexandria to Agrippinus, and in Antioch, Theophilus was Bishop. Many writers flourished during this period in Church History, especially Irenaeus. Hegesippus left behind five short works. He also left accounts of the heresies of the day, of which there were many. Further, the Jews had various sects that he listed. Bishop Dionysius left a variety of epistles behind and fights against the Marcionite heresy. Eusebius discusses his writings.

He next covers Bishop Theophilus of Antioch, who wrote three rudimentary treatises. He was succeeded by Maximin. The writings and actions of Philip, Modestus and Melito are discussed. Melito wrote numerous books and Eusebius discusses their contents. Apolinarius and Musanus fought Tatian's heresy, which Irenaeus records. Finally, Bardaisan the Syrian fought heretics in Mesopotamia (although he doubted the resurrection of the body). Soter, the Bishop of Rome dies, and this event closes the chapter.



Chapter 5, Marcus Aurelius to Severus

Chapter 5, Marcus Aurelius to Severus Summary and Analysis

Bishop Soter was followed by Eleutherus, the twelfth Roman Bishop since the apostles, and the year was the seventeenth of the reign of Antoninus Verus, or Marcus Aurelius, in A.D. 177. Persecution of the Church flared up and many martyrs "came to their glory."

Gaul had numerous martyrs; Eusebius describes it as a faraway country, whose capital cities are Lyons and Vienne on the Rhone. An account of the martyrs was sent to Asia and Phrigia. Eusebius then prints the account. In other provinces similar martyrdoms occurred.

Another story is worth repeating, concerning Alcibiades who lived in extreme poverty but later gave this up. At that time, he, Montanus and Theodotus gained a reputation for prophecy. The Gallic Christians sent reports on these matters to Christians in the East and praised Irenaeus. In a war when Aurelius's men were parched, the Melitene Legion, who were Christians, prayed for rain and God answered them.

Eusebius then lists the order of the Roman Bishops: Linus, Anencletus, Clement, Evarestus, Alexander, Xystus, Telesphorus, Hyginus, Pius, Anicetus, Soter and Eleutherus by the twelfth generation. Even in the twelfth generation, believers still exercised miraculous powers; however, they fell short of what they once were. They could not raise the dead through prayer as the apostles did. But prophesy and tongues persist. Irenaeus wrote a commentary on the Holy Scriptures that Eusebius covers; in it, Irenaeus covers the arguments about which books belonged in the canon of Scripture and which did not.

Marcus Aurelius reigned for nineteen years, then Commodus took the Emperor's throne; Julian became Archbishop of Alexandria following Agrippinus. Pantaenus, a philosopher, was prominent in the Alexandria Church, which had a strong tradition of learning. He was associated with Stoicism and had traveled the world, even to India. He discovered that Bartholemew had preached in India and that some had copies of the Scriptures. During this time, the lineage of the Jerusalem Bishopric was rediscovered. Narcissus was fifteenth in line from the siege of the Jews during Hardian's reign. The bishops, in order, were Mark, Cassian, Publius, Maximus, Julian, Gaius, Symmachus, Gaius II, Julian II, Capito, Valens, Dolichian and Narcissus.

The era brought the great debate with Marcion, who denies that the God of the Old Testament is the same as that of the New. Rhodo, a disciple of Tatian, wrote books against the Marcionites. Eusebius covers his arguments. He introduces a heretic, Apelles, and the heretic Montanus in Rome who had prophetesses Priscilla and Maximilla. Florinus was another heretic along with Blastus, who led many men away from the church.



Apolinarius combated the Phrygian heresy and Eusebius reviews the arguments in his books against these heretics. Miltiades wrote books against the Montanist heresy as well. Apollonius refuted the Phrygians and Eusebius reviews his arguments as well. Serapion was the fourth major church intellectual to argue against the Phrygians. Eusebius then reproduces Irenaeus's correspondence with Roman schismatics who followed Blastus and Florinus.

Eusebius covers various other events briefly, which include but are not limited to Apollonius's martyrdom in Rome, a list of important bishops in the church, a controversy over which day to celebrate Easter and the resolution of the dispute, a list of the works of Irenaeus that Eusebius possesses, works of Irenaeus's contemporaries, and a discussion of the propagators of Artemon's heresy and details on these men's character.



Chapter 6, Severus to Decius

Chapter 6, Severus to Decius Summary and Analysis

Severus persecuted the Church in his time, which produced further "glorious" martyrdoms. Most of these occurred in Alexandria, one example being Origen and his father Leonides. Origen is an important church father, so he is discussed at some length. Origen was born ten years after Severus became Roman Emperor; Demetrius was bishop.

Origen observed martyrdoms as a child and vowed to charge headlong into the fight for the faith. He was deeply devoted to God; when his father was martyred, he was seventeen with his mother and at least six younger brothers. They were impoverished but were helped by a wealthy heretic woman. However, she was devoted to Origen, despite his telling her that he was devoted to orthodoxy. As he grew up, he was dedicated to good Christian teaching and taught Plutarch, a Pagan, among others. He succeeded Demetrius as Bishop of Alexandria. He was considered a great teacher and theologian. However, he was plotted against by unbelievers and had to move from house to house but still led thousands of men to Jesus. Pupils came to him often and he pursued philosophy at great length and engaged in ascetic practices.

Many of his students became martyrs, like Potamiaena, Plutarch, and Heraise. Marcella and her mother were burned alive. Basilides was responsible for much of this persecution.

Origen took up instructing the Church in Alexandria but engaged in the shocking act of castrating himself and tried to hide it. Eusebius calls this act "headstrong." Many were impressed by this.

In 231, Severus died and his son Antoninus became the Emperor of Rome. Alexander became Bishop of Jerusalem, while Narcissus was still alive. Narcissus is thought to have wrought many miracles, some of which Eusebius recounts; he produces a letter from Alexander where he claims Narcissus lived to be 116.

In Antioch, Serapion was followed by Asclepiades. Serapion wrote a work himself, as did a later Clement, whose works were numerous. When Zephyrinus was the Roman bishop, Adamantius, also known as Origen, aimed to translate Scripture. One of his translators was an Ebionite named Symmarchus. Ambrose is noted; he believed the heresy of Valentinus, a second-century Gnostic. But Origen convinced him to come to orthodoxy. Ambrose devoted himself to philosophical pursuits. Origen was widely known and was cited by Greek philosophers of his day. A man, Porphyry, sought to refute Origen; a passage of his refutation is reproduced. Origen defends his Greek philosophical training.



Eusebius lists a variety of notable and learned bishops during this period. Antonius was replaced by Macrinus as Roman Emperor, but he lasted only a year and was replaced by another Antoninus, known as Elagabalus. Zephyrinus was the Roman Bishop and after eighteen years Callistus followed him; after his years, Urban followed him. Alexander then became the only ruler of the Roman Empire, after four years of Antoninus. Philetus succeeded Asclepiades as the Bishop of Antioch.

Origen wrote a detailed commentary on Scripture, due to Ambrose's insistence. After eight years as Roman Bishop, Urban died and Pontian followed him. Zebinnus followed Philetus at Antioch, and Origen left for Greece to settling important questions related to the church. He was ordained presbyter by the Palestinianin bishop. He wrote commentaries at Alexandria and referred to the Scriptural Canon.

Ten years after Alexander became Emperor, Origen moved from Alexandria to Caesarea and Heraclas became responsible for education there and later followed Demetrius as Alexandrian Bishop. Many bishops admired Origen. Maximin Caesar followed Alexander as Roman Emperor thirteen years after he came to power. Persecution of the Church resumed and Origen wrote a book on martyrdom. But Maximin's reign lasted only three years.

Gordian came after Maximin and Anteros followed Pontian after six years to become the Roman Bishop. But after a month, he died and was replaced by Fabian. God chose Fabian miraculously. Babylas became the Bishop of Antioch. Eusebius notes Origen's other students.

After this, Eusebius hits on a variety of issues quickly, including Africanus, more of Origen's commentaries, Beryllus's deviation, Philip's reign as Roman Emperor and Dionysius succession following Heraclas, other works that Origen wrote, the Helkesaite heresy, what occurred under Decius (when Origen survived persecution), and what happened to Dionysius.

Following this brief list, Eusebius reproduced a document Dionysius wrote to Bishop Fabius of Antioch about those who died as martyrs in Alexandria due to Decius. He discusses Novatus's heresy and his character, citing Cornelius's accounts of these events. The chapter ends with two brief sections concerning Dionysius's account of Serapion and his letters to Novatus and others.



Chapter 7, Gallus to Gallienus

Chapter 7, Gallus to Gallienus Summary and Analysis

Eusebius will draw primarily from Dionysius, the Bishop of Alexandria, for his history of the period between Gallus and Gallienus. Emperor Decius had reigned less than two years, but he and his sons were murdered. Gallus became Emperor and Origen, who was seventy, died. Cornelius was Bishop of Rome for three years and Lucius replaced him. But he died in a little over seven months and Stephen became the Roman Bishop.

Dionysius wrote a letter to Stephen on baptism; a fight had sprung up over the issue of whether those people who abandoned a heresy should be baptized. Cyprian, pastor of Carthage, maintained that heretics should be re-baptized, but Stephen thought innovation that defied tradition was wrong, and he protested. In the letter, Dionysius points out that since the persecutions died down, Novatus's heresy had died along with his. Stephen died two years later and Xystus followed him (Sixtus II as Pope). Dionysius then wrote another letter, recording Stephen's view and indicates that the Sabellian heresy was widespread. In a third letter to Philemon, Dionysius wrote about the origins of the heresy and wrote a fourth letter, arguing that those re-baptizing heretics had perverted baptism.

Gallus and his associates disappeared after two years; Valerian and his son Gallienus took over the Roman government. Eusebius reproduces what Dionysius said about him. Valerian persecuted Christians, and Aemilian, the governor, forced Dionysius out of Alexandria to a Libyan city known as Cephro. The number of martyrs was significant and many presbyters went underground. Eusebius then notes that Maximus followed Dionysius as Bishop of Alexandria and Faustus, who followed Dionysius; Maximus survived until a persecution during Eusebius's time.

Eusebius then skips through a variety of small issues, including martyrdoms at Caesarea in Palestine, the peace under Gallienus and the contemporary bishops, the martyrdom of Marinus at Caesarea, the story of Astyrius, the statue of the woman with a hemorrhage, and the throne of Bishop James in Jerusalem (which has been preserved to Eusebius's day). Eusebius covers Dionysius's views on the Easter festival and tried to calm a developed schism over the matter. An epidemic brought many problems, but in general peace was had under Gallienus. Nepos, a heretic, produces a schism at the time. And Dionysius affirms the canonicity of Revelation against many Christian critics; he maintains that the text cannot be read in the literal sense. Dionysius wrote many other letters as well.

Xystus, the Bishop of Rome for eleven years, was followed by another Dionysius. Paul of Samosata followed Demetrian as Bishop of Antioch, but Paul of Samosata held heretical opinions, such as that Christ was a mere man. The pastors of the day dealt with him. Eusebius lists the famous bishops of the day, noting that Maximus followed Dionysius as Bishop of Rome and that Claudius, fifteen years after Gallienus's



ascension, became Roman Emperor; after two years, he died and the throne went to Aurelian.

Paul of Samosata had to be dealt with; the Bishops met at a synod, discussing his heresies, and decided to excommunicate him. The letter was "nominally" addressed to the Bishops of Rome and Alexandria but was sent to all the provinces. Domnus then replaced Paul, but Paul refused to give the church over. Emperor Aurelian was appealed to; he awarded the building to the bishops as a whole. And while Aurelian was kind to them at that time, his advisers turned him against them. Yet just before Aurelian undertook a persecution, he relented, and six years after his rule, Probus followed him, and after six more years, he was followed by Carus; after three years, Diocletian followed him (at this point the year is 284 A.D.). The persecutions of Eusebius's time occurred under Diocletian. And Dionysius, after nine years as Roman Bishop, was followed by Felix.

At this time, the famous heretic Mani arose, announcing himself to be the Holy Ghost and imitated Christ by assembling twelve disciples. He made a patchwork of heresies and his followers were called Manichees, and they exist to this day. Eusebius then lists the distinguished churchmen of his day. Eutychian followed Felix as Roman Bishop and was followed within a year by Gaius, Eusebius's contemporary, who ruled for fifteen years. Marcellinus was Roman Bishop next, but was killed under the persecution. Antioch's bishopric went to Timaeus, then Cyril, and then Tyrannus. Other details are given. At the end of the chapter, Eusebius notes that he has covered the period from 3 B.C. to 303 A.D. The history now passes into his day.



Chapter 8, Diocletian to Maximian

Chapter 8, Diocletian to Maximian Summary and Analysis

Eusebius opens by heaping praise on his contemporaries and then describes the destruction of the churches of his day. In the nineteenth year Diocletian was Emperor, the persecutions began and he ordered Christian churches to be razed and the Scriptures destroyed. Christians must be imprisoned or killed. Eusebius lists various martyrs, including those in Nicomedia, imperial palaces, Phoenicia, Thebais, among others. Eusebius prints Phileas the martyr's written account of the persecution in Alexandria. The martyrs in Phrygia are covered and next Eusebius lists various Church leaders who were martyred, such as the Bishop of Nicomedia, Anthimus among many, many others. Peter, the Bishop of Alexandria, was martyred as well. But things changed for the better at the end of the tenth year. The rulers and persecutors changed their minds towards Christians and ended the persecutions quickly; no human initiative brought this about, Eusebius argues.

Diocletian became mad and Maximian replaced him, and Christians came to be treated differently in the East and the West. Constantius came next who was kind to Christians and their doctrines. He appointed his son Constantine Emperor and Augustus in his place; he died in 306 A.D. and was proclaimed a god by the Romans. Eusebius thought him a great emperor. Emperor Constantine was proclaimed Supreme Ruler and God Himself but he followed his father's tolerance and friendliness to Christian teaching. Licinius was Emperor between Constantius and Constantine, however (not the only one, as records show), and Maximin usurped the imperial throne from Licinius. Maxentius ordered the Christian persecutions to end when he was Emperor. Despite trying to appear gentler than his predecessors, he descended into depravity beyond description.

At this time, the empire has two junior emperors, one in the east and one in the west, both of which often had rights of succession. Maximian and Maxentius made an alliance and devoted themselves to persecution. This period of persecution lasted ten years, and the Roman Empire endured internal dissension among its rulers. The Emperor then recanted for his crimes against Christians; he died soon afterward. Many Christian soldiers in the Imperial Army had been wronged, persecuted and killed by the Emperor, and Eusebius ends the chapter in an appendix discussing them.



Chapter 9, Maximin's Renewed Attacks on the Church

Chapter 9, Maximin's Renewed Attacks on the Church Summary and Analysis

The recantation of persecution spread throughout the empire. As the persecutions ended, the churches overflowed with parishioners and the non-believers were amazed and many converted. However, Maximin could not tolerate an end to persecution for longer than six months. He looked for pretexts to harass Christians. Eventually persecution broke out again, with Maximin producing awful blasphemes and idols. Eusebius discusses the martyrs of the day and reproduces Maximin's rescript justifying his persecution of Christians.

Famine, pestilence and war struck quickly after one another. The tyrant had to fight a war against the Armenians, who were Christians. The tyrant forced them to sacrifice to idols and demons, which had turned them into enemies. The war destroyed food supplies and everyone people begged and starved to death. This suffering was Maximin's reward for persecuting Christians.

But God restored peace in the election of Constantine, along with Licinius. Constantine caused Maxentius to fall in Rome; Maximin survived Constantine's rule only briefly as Licinius brought about his death. Constantine felt pity for the Christians and took up arms against Maxentius, who had fortified his troops in Italy. Maxentius was defeated—Eusebius likens it to the Jews' victory over Pharaoh. Maximin defended his actions in a dishonest letter which Eusebius reproduces. He then recounts the deaths of the tyrants and the churches were then reestablished. Enemies of Christians were executed, Maximin's sympathizers. These included Maximin's top officers and his sons.



Chapter 10, Peace and Recovery of the Church

Chapter 10, Peace and Recovery of the Church Summary and Analysis

Eusebius opens thanking God for the return of peace to the church and instructs Paulinus to put the seal on the book and tells him that the book is dedicated to Paulinus. The churches are all reestablished and dedication ceremonies are held in all the churches. Church community was reestablished as well, the "Body of Christ" was reborn. The Bishop of Tyre, Paulinus, received a festival oration that Eusebius records from an unknown man. The speech is extended and full of praise for God and the Church; it is also full of allusions and quotations from Scripture.

Eusebius next reproduces the imperial ordinances from Constantine and Licinius, which he has translated. The ordinance, as one would expect, protect Christians from persecution. Various letters are issued to the churches, two of which order a Synod in Rome for "unity and concord of the churches." The Emperor commands a second synod to heal divisions. Money is granted to the churches and the heads of the churches are made exempt from public duties in order to secure their consciences.

Eusebius praises the great blessings showered upon the Church, but he must tell the story of Licinius, who went the way of Maxentius and Maximin. He was envious of his master Constantine and launched an "unholy, all-out war against him." He plotted against Constantine, dismissed Christians from his house and demanded demonic sacrifice, but these were only a small portion of Licinius's evils. He changed marriage law, among other laws and took women for his wives. Later he plotted against the Bishops and put the most influential one to death. Licinius was jealous of the Church that prayers were not offered on his behalf.

Constantine was victorious over Licinius; he was determined to rescue Licinius's victims. Constantine and his son Crispus set to battle Licinius and won quickly. They reunited the Eastern lands to the Empire and men were no longer afraid.



Characters

God, Jesus and the Apostles

Eusebius's history covers three centuries and as such does not really have main characters. The focus on any particular character is brief, as Eusebius has a long span of time to cover. However, he focuses far more on some figures than others. The primary characters, then, are (those Eusebius considers to be) the founders of the Christian religion: God, Jesus and the apostles. Book one discusses the establishment of the Christian church and praises God and Jesus at great length. He vigorously defends the divinity of Christ and argues at great length that secondary sources and the Old Testament testify to the historicity of the Gospels. As one would imagine from a Christian historian in the third century, Eusebius holds to all major Christian doctrines developed in his day and as such attributes them all to Jesus.

The apostles are also covered in some detail. Eusebius records their selection, their authority, and their travels following Christ's ascension into heaven. James became the first bishop of Jerusalem and Peter the first bishop of Rome. Eusebius touches on the martyrdoms of the apostles, focusing in particular on the deaths of Paul and Peter in Rome. Eusebius follows the lines of their direct successors and the other disciples Jesus left behind. Eusebius records their travels, the churches they founded and the bishoprics set up in those places. God is also attributed a hand in most of the book's major events - the persecutions, Eusebius argues, were due partly to God punishing the church for internal dissension, and the Jews were destroyed, on Eusebius's view, because they killed Jesus and would not repent.

The Roman Emperors

Many groups that extend across centuries feature prominently in The History of the Church; these include the bishoprics of various major cities, such as Rome and Alexandria, but the real source of movement and power is the Imperial Throne, or the Roman Emperor. Roman Emperors played an extremely important role in formation, survival, persecution and triumph of the early Christian church. The books begin and end with the ascension or death of various Roman Emperors. Caesar Augustus was Emperor when Christ was born and Herod was King of Judea under him. Pontius Pilate was the famous Roman governor in the area. Tiberius was relatively tolerant of Christians, but Caligula, Claudius and Nero persecuted the Christian Church violently, particularly in Rome.

Vespasian was Emperor when the Jewish Temple in Israel was destroyed forcing the church in Jerusalem to go partly or largely underground. Domitian was particularly brutal as well. When the Tetrarchy was formed in the late 3rd century, Diocletian became emperor and viciously persecuted the Christian church, as did Maximian after him. Constantine I is greatly praised by Eusebius, however, because he declared the Edict of



Milan in 313, proclaiming religious toleration across the empire. Constantine I empowered Christianity throughout the empire; however, it is hard to trust Eusebius's account of him because Eusebius is so strongly biased in favor of Constantine I. Eusebius also praised Constantine the II. Both of these men were thought to be Christians by many, although whether their conversions were genuine is disputed.

The Bishops of Rome

The Roman Bishopric was among the most important in the Christian Church and continues to be to this day. It was founded by Peter, who was the first Bishop of Rome. The line of succession in the Roman Bishopric all played important roles in the survival and spread of Christianity in Europe.

The Bishops of Alexandria

Church tradition holds that St. Mark, the writer of the Gospel of Mark, founded the Bishopric of Alexandria. It is perhaps even more important than the Roman Bishopric in Eusebius's mind in the history of the Church. The Bishops of Alexandria play an important role throughout the book.

The Bishops of Antioch

Peter was also thought to found the Bishopric of Antioch, which plays a similarly important role in early church history but is not as prominent as the Alexandrian and Roman Bishoprics.

The Bishops of Jerusalem

Thought to be founded by James, the half-brother of Jesus, the Bishops of Jerusalem were important early in church history before the conquest of Jerusalem. Eventually, it was reestablished but by that time its prominence was diminished.

Heretics

Eusebius covers many heresies and the lives of heretics in *The History of the Church*. One of his aims in the book is to document them.

Martyrs

Eusebius sets out to record the testimonies and histories of various church martyrs.

The Church

The story of The History of the Church is the story of the Christian Church as a whole.

Origen

One of the great early Christian theologians who Eusebius honors but has come to be seen as a heretic.

Constantine

The great Roman Emperor, Constantine, proclaimed the Edict of Milan in 313 that legalized Christianity in the Roman Empire. He was also thought to be a Christian.



Objects/Places

Jerusalem

The holy city of Israel where Christianity began.

Rome

One of the most important cities in history and Christian history, it contained the Roman Bishopric, which was among the most important offices in the early church.

Alexandria

The seat of the Bishopric and Church of Alexandria.

Antioch

The seat of the Bishopric and Church of Antioch.

Corinth, Tyer, Caesaria and other minor Dioceses

Other major cities in the Roman Empire had important early Christian Churches.

Synods

Meetings of the great bishops of the Christian religious where doctrinal disputes would be resolved.

Sacred Scripture

The books of the Bible, many of whose reliability were disputed during the entire span of Eusebius's history.

Heretical Tracts

Heretics published various important works defending their heresies.



Anti-Heretical Tracts

Orthodox Christians responded to the heretical tracts with tracts of their own.

The Bishopric

The office of Bishop, the highest office in the Christian church until the Archbishopric and eventually the Papacy were created.

Martyrdom

Martyrdom is achieved when someone is killed for believing their religion; Christian martyrdoms were considered great honors.

The Imperial Throne of the Roman Empire

The office of Roman Emperor, which is perhaps the most important office in the book.

Succession

The process of selecting a replacement emperor or bishop, a process important to the book.

Miracles

Eusebius claims that various miracles surrounded the practices of the early church.

False Idols

The Roman Emperors often tried to force Christians to worship and sacrifice to Roman Idols. Christians were killed en masse for refusing.

Forced Sacrifice

A practice of forcing sacrifice to Roman Gods; Christian refusal to comply with forced sacrifice got them killed.

Ordinances, Edicts and Decrees

Orders from the Emperor, prominent Bishops or a Synod, which established new laws, doctrines, etc.



Themes

God's Triumph over Evil

Eusebius's History of the Church presumes the truth of Christian doctrine. As such, Eusebius believes that the hand of God is deeply involved in the sufferings and triumphs of the church. Christ was sent by God to die for the sins of all; he selected apostles, founded the Church and ascended into heaven. And his apostles then went out and founded the major Christian churches. If God's hand was in these events, then it stands to reason that God would continue to guide the Church through her trials and tribulations.

God's hand was presumed to be involved in the selection of Judas's replacement, Matthias. He was involved in all the miracles performed by the apostles - healings, exorcisms, and tongues, prophesy and so on - by means of the Holy Spirit. Eusebius believed that God actively punished and rewarded various groups of people on earth. For instance, Eusebius held that Christian persecution was God's punishment for dissension among the churches. And he also believed that the Jewish persecutions were due to God's punishment of them for crucifying Christ.

Eusebius even saw the Emperors as being judged, anointed and overthrown by God. He claims that Maximin and Maxentius were destroyed by God for their wickedness. And he argues that Licinius fell into jealousy and corruption due to sin and that Constantine was given victory over him. Constantine was seen practically as a prophet and saint (he still is viewed this way in the Eastern Orthodox Christian churches to this day). The running theme of the History of the Church is the interaction between God and His people.

Persecution and Martyrdom

Eusebius cites his purposes in writing The History of the Church at the very beginning of Book One. One of those purposes is to record the persecutions of the Christian church and to tell the stories of the various martyrs who died for their Christian faith. These stories litter the book, many of which are communicated through recorded accounts such as letters Eusebius has come to possess.

The early church had thousands upon thousands of martyrs. Its first three centuries were rife with persecution; until the Edict of Milan in 313, the persecutions ebbed and flowed and martyrs were made in spades. Eusebius gives special praise to martyrs, often seeing the opportunity for martyrdom as a gift from God to receive a special honor on behalf of the faith.

The worst persecutions occurred in the first and third centuries. Claudius, Caligula (known as Gaius) and Nero tried to wipe Christianity off the face of the earth. They regarded Christians as dangerous to the social order because they refused to pay fealty



to Roman deities and even they denied that such deities existed. Christians were the "atheists" of their day.

While persecutions filled the second century, the third century brought the brutal persecutions of Diocletian, Maximian and Maxentius, which were so terrible that they produced a reaction in the next Emperor, Constantine I, who was thought to be a Christian himself. With Constantine, Christianity began its ascendancy in the Roman Empire.

Church Unity and Heresy

One of Eusebius's most important aims in writing *The History of the Church* is to promote church unity by recording the various heresies that were brought against the church during its first three centuries. Eusebius speaks against the heretics with scathing remarks, referring to them as the spawn of Satan, as mad, philandering, vice-filled monsters who Satan ordained to destroy the Christian church. There is no sense that heretics are to be tolerated or even treated as human. When a heresy arises, Eusebius is keen to ruin the reputation of whoever the heretic was.

A range of heresies arose during the first three centuries, but those that were most influential were the Gnostics, Manicheans, and Marcionites. The Gnostics believed various different doctrines but often affirmed the idea of a secret knowledge that was involved in Christian practice. The Manicheans followed Mani in affirming that two gods exist, an evil god and a good god that counterbalanced one another. The Marcionites followed Marcion in affirming that the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament were different and that the Old Testament could be rejected. Paul of Samosata was the Bishop of Antioch who came to affirm Monarchianism, the view that Christ was not God, but merely a divine man. He had to be deposed by other bishops.

Related issues surrounding church unity and heresy included disputes about holy days, such as the date of the Easter Festival - which was a serious controversy lasting quite some time - or which books of the Bible were authentic and which were not (widely debated in Eusebius's time until the Council of Nicea which antedates the book).

Style

Perspective

Eusebius's perspective is that of a 4th century Christian strongly committed to his faith and representing it in the best light possible. As a result, his history cannot be seen as objective. Its biases are not even subtle, rather they are easy to detect. First, Eusebius affirms all the core Christian doctrines of his day (some of the current ones had yet to be articulated). He begins Book One with an extended praise of God and a detailed attempt to vindicate the claim that Jesus is the Messiah.

He is biased against the Jews but not because of race. He is fine with Christian Jews, or Jews not directly involved in the persecution and murder of Jesus. He believes the Jews of the 1st century were brutally persecuted, killed and dispersed because they crucified Christ. He also believes God judged the Christian churches because of their internal dissension; their punishment was harsh as well - persecution en masse.

Eusebius has no patience for heretics. In fact, this is putting it lightly. Eusebius engages in extended diatribes against the character of the heretics he discussed and hurls epithets at them, seeing them as the agents of Satan and as morally debased and sexually perverse. He rarely even names their heresies openly, finding them too abominable to repeat. He heaps praise on those who tortured themselves by reading the heretical tracts the heretics circulated in order to respond to them.

Finally, at the end of Book Ten Eusebius paints the triumph of Constantine as the triumph of God Himself through Constantine. He completely whitewashes everything Constantine did and practically regards him as a saint. Eusebius must be understood as deeply partial towards his social group in order to find truth in the book.

Tone

The tone of *The History of the Church* has several elements, all reflecting Eusebius's sense of his times, his church, and its past and import. Eusebius believes God Himself founded a church a mere three-hundred years before his own time. He knows many men that play the same roles as the apostles of Jesus did during Christ's time on earth and the period following it. Until his time, few histories have been written concerning Christians, and Eusebius is the first to write a comprehensive work on Christian history. As such, he wants to vindicate the church's claims, its essential goodness and the justice of its cause.

As such, *The History of the Church* has a triumphant, dramatic and deeply Christian tone. It is triumphant because Eusebius is writing in a period of triumph after Constantine has legalized Christianity in the Roman Empire. He often speaks of God having warriors or martyrs chosen to fight for Him, pointing towards a triumphant future where the Church no longer has to exist underground. As one might expect, the prose



has a dramatic force. Eusebius often references poetry and Scripture; he reprints texts of first-person accounts of martyrdom and persecutions and speaks with florid language about the beastliness of heretics, the tyranny of Roman Emperors and the great glory of God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

The tone has Christian elements not merely because it concerns Christianity but because it speaks in a Christian way with Christian concepts. Eusebius often speaks of atonement, redemption, God's providence, salvation, sacrifice and other concepts that, while not particular to Christianity, feature prominently within that religion.

Structure

The History of the Church is a historical document, covering Christian history from the beginning of the first century A.D. to the beginning of the fourth century A.D. The work is divided into ten books, which divide these three centuries of history into roughly ten periods. The superstructure of the book is to cover Christian history, but the structure of the chapters cover various events related to church history almost clumped together to fit them within a single chronology. Each book discusses the succession of bishops, Roman emperors, controversies within the church, martyrdoms and persecutions, heresies and heretics fought and people evangelized and churches planted. Each book skips around quite a bit as a result, smashing these distinct events into a single narrative of the period that does not always flow together well.

Book one introduces Christ's nature and work and His disciples, whereas Book Two covers the works of the apostles after Christ's death until their martyrdoms. Book two begins to divide periods by their beginning and ending Roman Emperors; it covers the period from Tiberius to Nero. Book three runs from Vespasian to Trajan, covering the writings of the apostles and those who followed them in church offices. Persecutions are discussed in more detail, as are heretics. Book four records the events of the period between Trajan and Marcus Aurelius and discusses the succession of bishops, their writings, and martyrdoms. Book five runs from Marcus Aurelius to Severus, covering many of the same issues, but introduces the Marcionite heresy and the Easter Festival controversy.

Book six runs from Severus to Decius, covering Origen's life and work and the spread of persecution. Book seven runs from Gallus to Gallienus, discussing the work and lives of Church fathers Cyprian and Dionysius, along with various heresies, whereas Book eight covers the intense persecutions wrought by Diocletian and Maximian, ranging over the periods of their rule. Book nine is about the new persecutions of Maximin and the end of persecution, and Book ten discusses the Christian Church's recovery and Constantine's victory.



Quotes

"Could I do better than start from the beginning of the dispensation of our Savior and Lord, Jesus the Christ of God?" (32)

"I trust that kindly disposed readers will pardon the deficiencies of the work ..." (32)

"The next stage began when Paul, the chosen vessel - neither from men nor through men, but through revelation of Jesus Christ Himself and God the Father who raised Him from the dead - was appointed an apostle, receiving his call through a vision and the heavenly voice that accompanied the revelation." (74)

"Our Saviour's marvelous resurrection and ascension into heaven were by now everywhere famous ..." (75)

"These earnest disciples of great men built on the foundations of the churches everywhere laid by the apostles, spreading the message still further and sowing the saving seed of the Kingdom of Heaven far and wide through the entire world." (148)

"For eighty-six years, I have been His servant, and He has never done me wrong: how can I blaspheme my King who saved me?" (171)

"At that period in some parts of the world the persecution of the Church flared up again more fiercely, and as the result of mob onslaughts in one city after another countless martyrs came to their glory, as can be gathered from what happened in a single province. Fortunately for posterity it was all written down, and it certainly deserves a permanent place in history." (192)

"About the same time, while responsible for the instruction at Alexandria, Origen did a thing that provided the fullest proof of a mind youthful and immature, but at the same time of faith and self-mastery." (247)

"... a lively controversy had arisen at that time as to whether those who abandoned heresy of any kind ought to be cleaned by baptism." (288)

"... the manic whose name reflected his demon-inspired heresy was arming himself with mental derangement, since the demon, God's adversary Satan himself, had put him forward for the ruin of many." (320)

"In these books I have dealt fully with the subject of the successions from our Savior's birth to the destruction of our places of worship, a story covering 305 years. Well now, for the information of future generations, I had better next record the continual and terrible ordeals of those who in my time fought so manfully for true religions." (326)

"Thus Constantine, an emperor and son of an emperor, a religious man and son of a most religious man, most prudent in every way, as stated above - and Licinius the next in rank, both of them honored for their wise and religious outlook, two men dear to God -



were roused by the King of kings, God of the universe, and Savior against the two most irreligious tyrants and declared war on them." (368)

"Together with my prayers I now add Book 10 of the History of the Church to its predecessors. This I shall dedicate to you, my most worshipful Paulinus, calling on you to set the seal on the entire work." (380)

"Thus all men living were free from oppression by the tyrants." (382)

"Thus all tyranny had been purged away, and the kingdom that was theirs was preserved securely and without question for Constantine and his sons alone. They, having made it their first task to wipe the world clean from hatred of God, rejoiced in the blessings that He had conferred upon them, and, by the things they did for all men to see, displayed love of virtue and love of God, devotion and thankfulness to the Almighty." (414)



Topics for Discussion

Is Eusebius's history reliable? What are the biases that might have corrupted him?

Is Eusebius unfair to "heretics" mentioned in the book? How so?

What are Eusebius's aims in writing his history?

What is the significance of the Roman Emperor in the book?

What is the significance of the major Bishops in the book?

What is Eusebius's aim with respect to Christian martyrs in the book?

Who are among the most important Bishops?

What is Eusebius's opinion of Constantine I and II? Why does he hold this opinion?