

Lecture 14-Ambrose, Jerome, & Chrysostom

Church history in its totality is bigger than the Alps.
Benjamin Morgan Palmer

Remember your leaders, who spoke the Word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.
Hebrews 13:7

Assigned Reading

The Story of Christianity—chapters 21-23

Key Terms

Ambrose, Jerome, Vulgate, John Chrysostom

Objectives

- List the major theologians of the fourth century
- Describe the accomplishments of the theologians of the fourth century

Class Prayer

“O Lord, you who are all merciful, take away my sins from me, and enkindle within me the fire of your Holy Spirit. Take away this heart of stone from me, and give me a heart of flesh and blood, a heart to love and adore you, a heart which may delight in you, love you and please you, for Christ’s sake. Amen.”

Ambrose

Ambrose, Jerome, & Chrysostom

I. Ambrose (339-97)

A. Bishop of Milan

“Ambrose the Bishop, known throughout the world as among the best of men, devout in your worship.” Augustine, *Confessions* 5: 12

B. Preacher

Ambrose: “On my coming down [from the pulpit], Theodosius said to me, ‘You have been preaching at me today.’ I replied that in my sermon I had his benefit in view.”

C. Liturgist

1. “Come, Holy Spirit, who, ever one”
2. “O Splendor of God’s glory bright”
3. “At Cock-Crowing”

Augustine on the singing at Milan: “The tears flowed from me when I heard your hymns and canticles, for the sweet singing of your church moved me deeply. The music surged in my ears, truth seeped into my heart, and my feelings of devotion overflowed, so that the tears streamed down. But they were tears of gladness.”

Confessions 9: 6

II. Jerome (347-420)

A. Scholar

1. Vulgate (completed in 405)
2. Commentaries

Augustine to Jerome: “I bless you [for your writings], because He [God] has given someone like you to yourself, to me, and to all who read your works.” *Letters*, 45

B. "Monk"

1. Last 35 years of his life spent in a monastery at Bethlehem
2. The perpetual virginity of blessed Mary: "Is the sofa smooth? Is the pavement swept? Are the flowers in the vases? Is dinner ready? Tell me, where amid all this is there room for the thought of God?"

III. Chrysostom (345-407)

A. His mother—Anthonia - "What women these Christians have!"

B. Preacher of Antioch and Constantinople

1. Chrysostom preaching on Genesis: "I am expounding the Scriptures; yet you are all turning your eyes from me to the person who is lighting the lamps. What negligence! to forsake me, and fix your minds on him! For I am lighting a fire from the holy Scriptures, and in my tongue is a burning lamp for instruction."
2. C. H. Spurgeon preaching on "The Story of God's Mighty Acts" from Psalm 44:1— "And have ye never heard of the mighty things which God did by preachers [of old]. Hath it not been told you concerning Chrysostom, the golden-mouthed, how, whenever he preached, the church was thronged with attentive hearers; and there, standing and lifting up holy hands, he spake with a majesty unparalleled the Word of God in truth and righteousness; the people listening, hanging forward to catch every word, and anon breaking the silence with the clapping of their hands and the stamping of their feet; then silent again for awhile, spell-bound by the mighty orator; and anon carried away with enthusiasm, springing to their feet, clapping their hands, and shouting for joy again? Numberless were the conversions in his day: God was exceedingly magnified, for sinners were abundantly saved."
3. Kathleen Norris: "The language of the theologians...of the early church is remarkably vivid, energized by metaphors so grounded in earthly reality as to still be effective after more than a thousand years. John Chrysostom, for example, one of the most learned men of the fourth century, often speaks in a way that is thoroughly accessible to country people today. 'Pride is a rock,' he said, 'where wild beasts lurk that would tear you to pieces every day.' In coyote country, that image has real meaning." *The Cloister Walk*, p. 275

C. Exegete

1. Alexandrian (allegorical) school
2. Antiochene (literal) school

D. Pastor (On the Priesthood)

Questions for Consideration

Did Ambrose's dealings with Theodosius affect the papacy?

For Further StudyChrysostom. *On the Priesthood*.

Still an impressive treatment of the pastoral office, though at places needing correction in content and tone. Chrysostom discusses the qualifications for the ministry and the nature of the work—which can be summed up as (1) people and (2) preaching.

In warning against unprepared people taking up the office of minister, Chrysostom writes: "If anyone in charge of a full-sized merchant ship, full of rowers, and laden with a costly freight, were to station me at the helm and bid me cross the Aegean or the Tyrrhene Sea, I should recoil from the proposal at once: and if anyone asked me why, I should say, 'Lest I should sink the ship.'"

Chrysostom. *Grace and Blessing*.

How does the preacher use the word “grace”? What was good about the method of giving to the poor that characterized the early Christians? Note what Chrysostom says about slaves and the early Christians.

Chrysostom. *Homily on Philemon*.

How would you characterize his style? Does he have a proposition? Is he stronger on exposition, illustration, or application?

How does Chrysostom illustrate “The Importance of Preaching?” Why does he bring up the fact that “not so much as a trace” of the power of working miracles is left in the church?