

Lecture 24- The Late Middle Ages: The Third Five Hundred Years

*We must see through many ages before we see through our own distinctly.
Walter Savage Landor*

Plague went before him; pestilence followed his steps. He stood and shook the earth; he looked and made the nations tremble.

Habakkuk 3: 6

Assigned Reading

The Story of Christianity—No reading assigned for this lecture

Key Terms

Investiture controversy, fourth Lateran council

Objectives

- Describe and evaluate the “heresies” of this period
- Understand why Christianity spread during the second century (the historical context which made it spread as it did)

Class Prayer

*“Creator of the stars of night,
Thy people’s everlasting light,
O Christ, thou Saviour of us all,
We pray thee, hear us when we call.*

*Come in thy holy might, we pray;
Redeem us for eternal day
From every power of darkness, when
Thou judgest all the sons of men. Amen.”
Sarum plainsong*

The Late Middle Ages: The Third Five Hundred Years

I. Christianity in Africa

- A. Egypt
- B. Nubia
- C. Ethiopia

II. Christianity in Asia

- A. China
- B. Persia

III. Eastern Orthodoxy

- A. The conversion of Russia (988)
- B. The fall of Constantinople (1453)

IV. Roman Catholicism

- A. The Diversity—*Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer (1343-1400) “Unexpected Companions”
- B. The struggle with Islam
“As late as 1490 it would have seemed that in the eight-centuries-old struggle between the cross and the crescent, the latter was on the way to final triumph.” (Kenneth Scott Latourette)

C. The investiture controversy

D. The achievements

1. Christendom

- a. Theology
- b. Piety

2. Culture

a. Rise of the universities (12th century)

Robert de Sorbon's (1201-74) rules for study: First the student is advised to dedicate a certain hour to a specified piece of reading and to fix his attention on what he is going to read and not to pass on to something else lightly, "for there is the same difference between mere reading and studying as there is between a host and a friend, between a salute exchanged in the street and an unalterable affection." The student should also extract each day, one thought, one truth, and engrave it in his memory with special care. He should be sure to write down summaries, "for unwritten words are blown away as dust before the wind." He should join with his companions in disputations or talk over class matters with them in familiar conversation, for this helps to clear up the various doubts that have been left in the mind after reading. Lastly, the medieval student is exhorted to prayer, which "avails much for learning." The good student should imitate Christ among the doctors of the law, by hearing many masters, always seeking out the best students, and not paying regard merely to fame or place of birth. Furthermore, he should listen as well as ask questions, and not be like those students who cry out before the end of the sentence, "I know what you mean." (*The Medieval University*, 173-74)

b. Cathedrals

c. Literature

E. Reform movements

1. The papacy

- a. Gregorian reform-Gregory VII (pope 1073-85)
- b. 4th Lateran Council (1215)

2. The orders

- a. The old orders
- b. The new orders

3. The "heretics"

- a. Cathari
- b. Waldensians
- c. Wycliffe and the Lollards
- d. Huss
- e. Savonarola

Questions for Consideration

1. How did African and Asian historians view the development of the Church in those areas?
2. What kind of gospel was being preached during the third 500 Years?

For Further Study

Read "Unexpected Companions." Why did medieval pilgrims go to Canterbury? Note the differences in the religious views of the four pilgrims selected for this article.