

## SESSION 24: THE EAST UNDER THE TURKS & THE RISE OF PROTESTANTISM – CONTENT

In this last session we are going to look at the condition of the Eastern Orthodox under the Moslems (Ottoman Turks) after the fall of Constantinople, and then look at the beginning of Protestantism in the West, seeing that it quickly fragmented into many kinds of churches (denominations). The latter is perhaps important as many of us came to Orthodoxy from Protestant backgrounds.

1. Mohammed II, who had taken Constantinople, wanted the Orthodox to enjoy peace and prosperity and be an asset to his empire, but according to his rules. If a Christian city under Moslem siege surrendered they could retain their churches and worship. If they did not surrender, they lost all rights. Christians could not build new churches, and the Patriarch and local heads (priests and bishops) were held responsible for their group's behavior. Christians were heavily taxed, and clergy had to wear the black garments and hats of Moslem judicial officials. (From then until today that is a reminder of their subjugation to Moslem domination.) It was a time of turmoil in Eastern Orthodoxy, especially as subsequent, less tolerant Moslem leaders began persecuting the Orthodox, annexing their churches and increasing the forced conversion and subscription of their male youth. As Moslems dominated cities, centers of Christian, clerical education and learning disappeared. Universities in Venice and Padua developed as centers of education and preservation of Orthodox learning. The Moslem empire became increasingly dependant on Orthodox Christians as physicians and especially as merchants. The Phanar quarter was established around the Patriarch in Constantinople, consisting of a wealthy Orthodox merchant class known as "Phanariots". And the training of Orthodox clergy suffered, a great tragedy for Orthodoxy. From 1595 until 1695 there were 61 changes in the Patriarchate of Constantinople, among 31 individuals. Four were executed by the Moslems for treason. Attempts at unity with the Western church continued unsuccessfully, and there were even unaccepted attempts to seek unity with the growing Protestant movement.
2. Martin Luther was born in Germany in 1505, and became an Augustinian monk at 22. Pope Leo X had elevated Prince Albert of Brandenburg in return for his sale of indulgances to finance the completion of Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome. On October 31 of 1517 Luther posted 95 theses on the door of the church in Wittenburg, Germany. Luther wanted to remain in the Western (catholic) church, but he wanted a 'reformation' of the church away from abuses that his 95 theses addressed. In response to this Pope Leo directed that the Augustinians 'take care of Luther', but they sided with Luther, and Frederick of Saxony protected him. (Recall the earlier, unsuccessful efforts at reformation by Cluny and John Huss. In fact, the catholic representative John Eck soon debated Luther in Leipzig, getting Luther to agree to Huss' points that condemned him, thus condemning Luther.) Leo ordered that Luther's writings be burned and that he submit to papal authority within sixty days; Luther burned the order.
3. In The Papacy of Rome Luther intimated the pope should be called antichrist because, although he was supposed to be a vicar of Christ, he kept people from understanding and heeding the message of the gospel. In his Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation he appealed to leaders to throw off political and spiritual tyranny binding them to Rome. In his Babylonian Captivity of the Church he said that Christ authorized only three sacraments, baptism, the Lord's Supper and possibly confession. In a sermon on keeping children in school he said, "Parents who do not see to their children's education are no parents at all, but despicable hags and venomous beasts, devouring their own children." Luther is not remembered for propriety of speech! He said that final authority

rests in neither the Bible nor the Church, but in the words of Christ; that faith is a gift of God which the Church proclaims in baptizing infants, who are incapable of understanding.

4. King Charles V of Spain, the Holy Roman Emperor, visited Germany, convened the Diet of Worms on April 18 of 1521, and requested Luther's presence there to recant. Luther asked for a day, so on April 19 the following dialogue occurred:

Charles' representative (CR): "Come then, answer the question of his majesty, whose kindness you have experienced in seeking a time for thought. Do you wish to defend all your acknowledged books, or retract some?"

Luther (L): "My books are of three kinds. Some are works of simple piety that no Christian ruler or church official could possibly want to be withdrawn. A second category are works directed against the papacy and the affairs of the papists as those who both by their doctrines and very wicked examples have laid waste the Christian world with evil affects the spirit and the body." (A third category did contain some things that were overly harsh, which Luther was willing to consider retracting. "Therefore, I ask by the mercy of God, may your most serene majesty, most illustrious lordships, or anyone at all who is able, either high or low, bear witness, expose my errors, overthrowing them by the writings of the prophets and the evangelists. Once I have been taught I shall be quite ready to renounce every error, and I shall be the first to cast my books into the fire.")

CR: "Would you recant or not? Deal plainly, not with a horned or ambiguous reply."

L: "Since then your serene majesty and your lordships seek a simple answer, I will give it in this manner, neither horned nor toothed. Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason, for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience." Charles V had to tolerate Luther, as he needed Germany as an ally against the French and Turks.

5. Later, Luther and his successor Philip Melancthon made a serious mistake over an issue involving Prince Philip of Hesse, who was dissatisfied with his wife, mother of seven children, and wanted to marry a 17 year old girl. Philip appealed to Luther and Melancthon, who replied that polygamy was not a crime in God's eyes, but that the second marriage should be hidden as it would not sit well with the public. When this became known, Luther lost much credibility.
6. In 1545, looking back over those years since Worms, Luther wrote this witness: "Though I lived as a monk without reproach, I felt I was a sinner before God with an extremely disturbed conscience. I could not believe that He was placated by my satisfaction. I did not love, yes, I hated the righteous God who punishes sinners, and secretly, if not blasphemously, certainly murmuring greatly, I was angry with God, and said, 'As if, indeed, it is not enough, that miserable sinners, eternally lost through original sin, are crushed by every kind of calamity by the law of the decalogue, without having God add pain to pain by the gospel and also by the gospel threatening with his righteousness and wrath!' And thus I raged with a fierce and troubled conscience.

Nevertheless, I beat importunately upon Paul at that place, most ardently desiring to know what St. Paul wanted.

At last, by the mercy of God, meditating day and night, I gave heed to the context of the words, namely, ‘In it the righteousness of God is revealed, as it is written, ‘He who through faith is righteous shall live’’. There I began to understand that the righteousness of God is that by which the righteous lives by a gift of God, namely by faith. And this is the meaning: the righteousness of God is revealed by the gospel, namely, the passive righteousness with which God mercifully justifies us by faith, as it is written, ‘He who through faith is righteous shall live.’ Here I felt that I was altogether born again and had entered paradise itself through open gates. There a totally other face of the entire Scripture showed itself to me. Thereupon I ran through the Scriptures from memory. I also found in other terms an analogy, as, the work of God, that is, what God does in us, the power of God, with which he makes us strong, the wisdom of God, with which he makes us wise, the strength of God, the salvation of God, the glory of God.

And I extolled my sweetest word with a love as great as the hatred with which I had before hated the word ‘righteousness of God’. Thus that place in Paul was for me truly the gate to paradise.”

[Comment: It appears to me that Luther was indeed disturbed!]

7. In 1529 the German Reichstag held a council in Speyer, Catholics were in the majority, and the council ordered that no ecclesiastical changes could be made. The next day, reformers in the minority submitted a document titled *Protestatio*. From that point on the reformers were called **Protestants**.
8. On June 25 of 1530, at Augsburg, Melancthon presented a definition of Protestant beliefs to Charles V, who refused to accept it. This became known as the **Augsburg Confession**.
9. Luther and Melancthon were aware of the Orthodox Church and believed that it represented Christianity better than the papacy. In 1559 Melancthon communicated with Patriarch Joasaph II, who sent his deacon Demetrius Misos to Melancthon for 6 months. Misos was to take the Augsburg Confession to the Patriarch, but went to Romania instead. In 1573 the German embassy in Constantinople gave the Confession to Patriarch Jeremiah II. Jeremiah responded that there were points of agreement (truth of the Scriptures, Trinity, evil not from God, Christ has 2 natures, Christ head of the Church, second coming and last judgement, eternal life, no purgatory, no indulgances, no obligatory celibacy of clergy), and points of disagreement (Holy Tradition, filioque, predestination, number of sacraments, change of the eucharist, invocation of saints, veneration of relics and fasting). On June 18 of 1577 a response was sent to the Patriarch, espousing: 1) the standard for judging all dogma is Scripture only (i.e. *sola scriptura*, Church Tradition out), 2) the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and Son, 3) there are 2 sacraments only (baptism and communion, “If we wished to name all the Holy mysteries as sacraments there would be many more than seven.”), 4) triple immersion is OK, 5) Chrismation is superfluous, 6) “Our priests are appointed to preach, not offer the blood and body of Christ.”, 7) it is not necessary to enumerate all sins in confession to repent, 8) we do not approve of prayers for the dead, 9) we do not prevent fasting, but it is of the Old Testament and we do not require it, 10) the invocation of saints belongs to God alone, 11) we do not baptize infants (apparently this had changed), 12) we do not anoint with oil (“The gift of performing miracles has ceased.”). Patriarch Jeremiah’s response was to please refrain from writing us about dogma and write to us as friends. Some historians believe that, had Deacon Misos taken the Confession to the East – 14 year earlier – things might have been different, as Lutheran dogma might not have been so solidified.

10. Ulrich Zwingli, born in 1484, studied in Vienna and Basel and became a village priest in Switzerland in 1506. By 1518 he was a priest in Zurich, where he expelled the seller on indulgences from the city. Spain and France were at war; Switzerland sided with Spain, and the pope, who sided with France, demanded that Switzerland support France. Zwingli said this was an abuse of papal power. He preached against fasting and priestly celibacy and said that sacraments are only symbolic, that Scripture is the only authority, that the gospels did not derive their authority from the Church, that salvation is by faith alone, and that intercession of saints, monastic vows and purgatory are denied. He said there is no transubstantiation or veneration of images. In 1523 he did away with the Lenten fast. In 1524 he sponsored iconoclasm, the dissolution of monasteries, and the walling up of the great organ in Munster. In 1529 he debated Luther in Marburg. Luther said Christ is present in the Lord's Supper; Zwingli said it was only symbolic. Here it became apparent that there would not be simply a reformation of the Western church, but the creation of different churches. Zwinglian churches became devoid of vestments, instruments of worship and icons – very plain and undecorated. In 1531 Swiss protestants were defeated by catholics; Zwingli was killed, quartered, burned and mixed with dung.
11. Under the leadership of Balthasar Hubmaier, a group critical of Luther and Zwingli said one could not belong to the true church without a personal, conscious decision for Christ, thus there is no infant baptism. They said that pacifism is essential (unpopular in a Germany at war with the Turks), and they began rebaptizing their members. Thus their enemies called them **Anabaptists**. In 1525 Swiss catholics started killing them, and in 1528 Charles V ordered death for them all. There were more Anabaptist martyrs than there were martyrs in the 3 centuries before Constantine. In 1524 they had taken over the German city of Munster, expelling all catholics and moderate Protestants. The local bishop laid siege to Munster and killed them all. In 1536 the Dutch catholic priest **Menno Simons** embraced anabaptism, instituting foot washing and the avoidance of all oaths. His followers went to Northern Germany as **Mennonites**. Hubmaier went to Moravia (Lichtenstein) and ministered to thousands of anabaptist refugees. In 1527 he was taken to Vienna and burned while his wife was drowned in the Danube.
12. In 1564 John Calvin was born in France, but went to Basel, having been forced out because of his Protestant beliefs. He said, "As originally created, man was good and obedient, but with Adam's fall man is incapable of all goodness. All people are in a state of ruin, meriting only damnation. Since all good is of God and sinners are unable to initiate or resist their conversion, it follows that some are saved and some are lost by divine choice." Thus, predestination and **Calvinism**. Calvin started monthly communion and congregational singing.
13. In 1534 Henry VIII of England married Catherine of Aragon of Spain, to cement England's relations with Spain, against France. She bore Henry no children, so he chose to marry pregnant Ann Bolyn. This being against papal law, Henry and then his parliament instituted a law forbidding appeals for papal dispensation and the paying of taxes to the Roman church, declaring the king as head of the Church of England. Thus, the **Anglican Church**.
14. Scotland had aligned with France, while England was with Spain. Protestants in Scotland captured the castle of Saint Andrew and killed the archbishop there. John Knox was the tutor of the children of two men who had organized the capture. Knox became the spokesman for Scottish Protestants and formed the Reformed Church of Scotland, which evolved into the **Presbyterian Church**.

15. In France, Protestants were called **Huguenots**. On Saint Bartholomew's Day (24 August) of 1572, the catholic Duke of Guse killed 2,000 Huguenots. Pope Gregory XIII ordered a celebration on that day every year thereafter. But on April 13 of 1598 Henry II of France issued the Edict of Nantes granting Huguenots complete freedom of worship.
  
16. Of the Protestant Reformation, historian Williston Walker said, "It is clear the Reformation achieved great popular success because it satisfied, or promised to satisfy, the needs of many people who earnestly desired the consolations of the Christian religion. These people were not rapacious foes of the medieval church; they were seekers after salvation who looked for the church for succor, and not finding it there, turned against the traditional religion and its representatives, with all the anger of disillusioned love." In any event, as we can see, the Protestant Reformation gave rise to a plethora of beliefs and ultimately hundreds of denominations. A final note is that the Moravians of whom we spoke as successors to John Hus, had great influence in England upon brothers John and Charles Wesley, who founded the **Methodist Church** in the 1700's.