

# Smoky Mountain Bible Institute

## History 136 The Great Schism

Before we address the Crusades, there was a window of relative calm in Church history between 787 (when the last official worldwide Christian council met) and The Great Schism between east and west in 1054. By calm, I do not mean peaceful; I mean relatively uneventful from a church perspective. During this time, there was much fluctuation in borders as fiefdoms rose and fell, expanded and retreated within what was once the Roman Empire in the west and what remained of it in the east. For example, Roman Britain went through many changes; first the Anglo-Saxon invasion, then Christianization followed by the Viking challenge and the rise of Wessex. For a short time, the kingdom was a unified England, then there was a Danish and Norman conquest, followed by Plantagenet reign and the Magna Carta in 1215. So, while quite a bit happened as borders and cultures of the west came to be as we know them today, the church was generally unified on a world scale; there was one Holy Catholic Church.

So, let's talk briefly about the Schism, or split, between eastern and western Christianity and briefly summarize the major doctrinal differences between eastern Christianity (which from the point of the split is called Orthodoxy, Greek for straight or right practice) and Catholicism of the west (which is called Roman). First, as I mentioned two months ago, the synod of Toledo in Spain officially accepted the "filioque" "and the Son" phrase in the Nicene Creed in 589. This was the first seed of major disagreement between east and west. Then in 1054, Rome claimed papal supremacy and the split became the state between east and west. This is often referred to as the "Great Schism". Other points of disagreement between east and west that have developed over the years are as follows:

Doctrine	East	West
Marriage of clergy	yes (only before ordination)	no
Purgatory	no	yes
Papal infallibility	no	yes
Immaculate conception	no	yes

While things continued to get worse between eastern and western Christianity, the straw that broke the veritable camel's back (in essence insuring that east and west would no longer be in dialogue or even attempt to in some way reconcile their differences) was the sack of Constantinople. In essence, the capitol of eastern Christianity in 1204 was Constantinople, and the 4<sup>th</sup> crusade conquered and pillaged the city of all its wealth and holy relics. While the east and west acknowledge each other as creedal Christians they have functioned separately for the most part for most of the last 1000 years.

Now that we have a brief sketch of the religious and cultural context in which the crusades existed we can begin with an introduction next month as we kick off with the first crusade in 1095.

Till next month  
In Christ Pastor Portier