

The History of Christianity

(taken from Eerdmans' Handbook to the History of Christianity)

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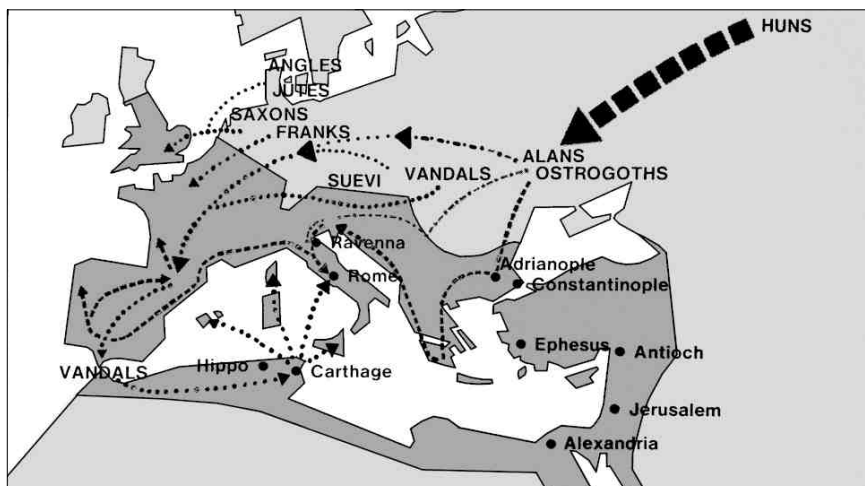
Introduction: The Christian Centuries, Part 4

(excerpts from Robert D. Linder's introduction)

A golden twilight. The 4th Century marked a major turning-point in the history of Christianity. It saw the beginning of a new age of theological sophistication and of the rapid growth of the institutional church. It is in this period that the Western Christians began to lose contact with many of their fellow-believers in the East.

But before Christianity entered a period of spiritual recession in the early Middle Ages, there occurred a kind of golden twilight. Ambrose (c. 399-37), Augustine (345-430), and Pope Gregory I (540-604) the last of the Church Fathers in the West, contributed greatly to the theological and spiritual development of the institutional church. The 4th and 5th centuries also saw the stronger growth of a hierarchy among the clergy, an increasing emphasis on liturgical worship, and more and more stress on the sacraments—especially baptism—in the process of salvation in the church.

But the Roman Empire, having surrendered to Christianity in the 4th century, collapsed from the twin diseases of internal decadence and invasion in the 5th & 6th centuries. The power of Christianity could not prevent decay from eroding the foundations of the Mediterranean world.



The barbarian invasions of the 4th & 5th centuries

“The Impact of Heritage”

Hebrews 12:1-3

July 13, 2025

Hartford Bible Church

Associate Pastor Duane Cline

- 1) **HOMEWORK!** Read the scripture passages given, and ponder them.
- 2) **HEBREWS 11:1-2, HEBREWS 11.** Read them together.
- 3) **JOSHUA 1+12.** Be strong! Young or old.
- 4) **HUDSON TAYLOR AND WILLIAM CARY.** Putting faith into action.
- 5) **COL. CHAMBERLAIN AND COL SHAW.** Acting on belief to make change.
- 6) **WHAT ABOUT YOU?**