

- I. Antecedents to the Rise of Scholasticism
 - A. Fall of Rome and the Advent of the Middle Ages:
 1. Western Roman emperors puppets of Germanic tribal leaders after 395 AD. By 476, Ostrogoths ended western Roman emperors. Eastern Roman emperors continued in Constantinople.
 2. Middle Ages 500-1500 AD; Dark Ages 500-800 AD or 500-1050 AD:
 - a. Dark Ages 500-800 – focuses on renaissance brought about by Charlemagne.
 - b. Dark Ages 500-1050 – focuses on intellectual revival brought about by Scholasticism.
 - c. Dark Ages – complete collapse of social and bureaucratic institutions of Roman Empire caused by victory of Germanic tribes in contrast to previous centralized, bureaucratic structure of Roman Empire
 - d. Stabilizing factors of the early Middle Ages:
 - 1) Monasteries – maintained classical knowledge and were instrument of conversion of Germanic tribes. Benedict of Nursia (480) – gave rise to western monasticism. Benedictine rule – permanence (remain at monastery for life), obedience, physical labor, prayer, abstinence.
 - 2) Papacy – Pope Leo the Great (452) – first of the “modern” popes in sense he combined political and religious power (stopped Attila the Hun); Pope Gregory the Great – (540-604) – developed doctrines of purgatory, contrition, confession, penance, priestly absolution of sin.
 - 3) Role of saints – perfected intermediaries to God.
 - e. Charlemagne – crowned Holy Roman Emperor by Pope Leo III on Christmas 800 AD.
 3. Social Structure and Changes c. 1000 AD
 - a. Collapse of power of kings leading to increased power of lords – feudalism.
 - b. Laws took on patrimonial (protective) character, customs based on transactions. Status gained by giving.
 - c. Shift of inheritance customs – prior to 1000 inheritance was through daughters (cognatic); after 1000 inheritance through sons (agnatic).

- d. Theological implications: Salvation seen as a transaction or exchange, payment of a debt. Honor due based on person's position. Religious emphasis – shame not sin; atonement not repentance. Sin was an act against the entire community. Penance – repaying a debt owed to God for sin.
- B. Contrasts from Late Antiquity to the early Middle Ages:
1. From secular/sacred worldview to sacralization of all of life.
 2. From Christianity to Christendom – membership in society meant membership in church (infant baptism). Intermingling of functions of church and state.
 3. From bureaucratic govt. of Late Antiquity to regional tribal govt. of early Middle Ages based on allegiances and clan relationships.
 4. Shift from diverse intellectual strains to a single conduit of authoritative knowledge until birth of Scholasticism.
 - a. Basis of study –authorities of written texts from previous centuries
 - b. Form of study in monastic & cathedral schools – Influenced by Augustine – *trivium* (grammar, rhetoric, dialectic); *quadrivium* (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music). Late 12th c monastic schools lost dominance due to forbidding of child oblation.
- C. Rise of cathedral schools associated with large city like Paris, predecessor for universities.
- D. Feudal ideas:
1. Transactional/bartering society. Service for service, honor due based on person's position, status gained by giving.
 2. Theological implications: Salvation understood as a transaction/exchange, i.e. the payment of a debt. God's honor based in His position/authority in Middle Ages in contrast to His character in Late Antiquity (Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*).

- II. Scholasticism (1050-1300s):
 - A. Applying reason to questions of faith
 1. Distinction between scholastic approach to reason & later Cartesianism. Anselm – *credo ut intelligam* (“I believe in order that I may understand”) and *fides quaerens intellectum* (“faith seeking understanding”) vs. Descartes’ later *cogito ergo sum* (“I think therefore I am”).
 2. Point: Scholasticism posits faith first and assumes it can be explained reasonably. Cartesian thought preferences reason above all else, eventually giving rise to skepticism and scientific worldview that sometimes opposes unexplainable aspects of faith.
 - B. Two primary methods of reasoning in Scholasticism:
 1. Realism – based on Platonic ideals/universals – Anselm of Canterbury (1060). Example: Ontological argument for the existence of God “that than which no greater can be thought.”
 2. Nominalism – denied real being of universals on grounds that a general word doesn’t imply that the thing it names actually exists (William of Ockham).
 - C. Thomas Aquinas – Dominican monk (*Summa Theologiae* 1265)
 1. Based on Aristotelian reasoning (sense perception)
 2. Five arguments for the existence of God:
 - a. Change/motion – God as Prime Mover
 - b. Cause – God as first efficient cause of all effects
 - c. Necessity – God as that which is necessary in itself (first necessity)
 - d. God as most perfect essence (essence of good/perfect)
 - e. Design – logic and order of universe proof of God
 3. Challenges to Christianity posed by some Christian scholars’ use of Aristotelian thought (called Averroists):
 - a. Some said reason and philosophy were not constrained by faith or theology, allowing them to accept conclusions which contradicted traditional Christian doctrine.
 - b. Some Averroists accepted Aristotle’s view that matter is eternal which contradicted the Christian doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* (creation out of nothing).

- D. Anselm's Major doctrinal contribution – *Cur Deus Homo* (Why God Became Man) – doctrine of Christ's incarnation (*substitutionary atonement*).
1. Satisfaction ought to be in proportion to the sin (Book I.xx). In medieval worldview, the severity of a sin is determined by the status of the person against whom the sin was committed.
 2. Satisfaction must be paid to God by someone with something that is greater than all that is beside God.
 3. Since humanity sinned, payment of debt of sin should be made by a man.
 4. Since only God can pay for sin, and only man ought to make satisfaction for sin, then the one who must make satisfaction must be both God and man.
 5. Will later be basis of theology of indulgences – excess of Christ's gift of love, good works, and purity of saints creates a treasury of merit which can be drawn upon for forgiveness.

Further Reading:

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- Gonzalez, Justo L. *The Story of Christianity*, vol. 1. New York: Harper-Collins Publishers, 1984, 1985, repr. 1999, 232-248, 311-319.
- McGrath, Alister E., ed. *The Christian Theology Reader*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1998, 7-12.
- Nelson, Janet. "Society, Theodicy, and The Origins of Heresy: Towards a Reassessment of the Medieval Evidence" in Derek Baker, ed., *Schism, heresy and religious protest; papers read at the tenth summer meeting and the eleventh winter meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972, 65-77.
- Spickard, Paul A. and Kevin M. Cragg. *A Global History of Christians*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic: 1994, repr. 2003, 98-101.