

# HISTORY OF THE EARLY CHURCH

## THE SECOND CENTURY



- The desire by many gentile Christians to separate from anything that they saw as Jewish.
- Acceptance of Hellenistic religion.
- The influence of **Gnosticism**.

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**Polycarp** (c. 60-156 AD) one of the Apostle John's disciples who followed in his mentor's footsteps by observing Passover on the 14th day of the first month of the Hebrew calendar.

**Polycrates** (c. 130-196 AD) succeeded Polycarp as the leader of the churches in the area. The Passover/Easter controversy again became critical. Christians who observed Passover were called **Quartodecimans** meaning those who observed the 14<sup>th</sup>.



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Henry Chadwick: "it was impossible in so weighty a practical question for diversity to be allowed, but there can be little doubt that the **Quartodecimans** were right in thinking that they had preserved the most ancient and apostolic custom. They had become heretics simply by being behind the times."



# HISTORY OF THE EARLY CHURCH

## A NEW ORTHODOXY

In 331 BC **Alexander the Great** supervised the surveying of a new port city he envisioned on the Egyptian shore of the Mediterranean sea. The city would bear his name—**Alexandria.**





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## A NEW ORTHODOXY



The Ptolemaic rulers transformed Alexander's port into the center of **Hellenistic** culture.

When Julius Caesar marched into town, Alexandria housed the greatest library and museum in the ancient world. During his visit the library burned.

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## A NEW ORTHODOXY

**Clement of Alexandria** (c. 153-217 AD) viewed Greek philosophy as a schoolmaster to bring the “Hellenic mind” to Christ much the same way Paul said the law was given to bring Jews to Christ.





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## A NEW ORTHODOXY



**Clement's** most famous pupil was **Origen** (c. 185-254 AD). Origen was a prolific writer who is considered one of the greatest scholars of the first Christian centuries.

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## A NEW ORTHODOXY

Theologians from the school in Alexandria weren't the only ones involved in the development of Hellenized orthodoxy. **Tertullian** (c. 160-220 AD) from Carthage was the first major author to present Christian ideas in Latin and is considered one of the founders of Latin Christianity.





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## A NEW ORTHODOXY

On March 7, 321 **Constantine** issued one of his most famous edicts: “all judges, city-people and craftsmen shall rest on the venerable day of the sun, but countrymen may without hindrance attend to agriculture, since it often happens that this is the most suitable day for sowing grain or planting vines, so that the opportunity afforded by divine providence may not be lost, for the right season is of short duration.”

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## A NEW ORTHODOXY

Constantine would wield powerful influence over the formation of Christian doctrine as he helped shape **Hellenized orthodoxy** into a **Catholic Church**. For this undertaking, history would crown him **Constantine the Great**.

