

(Christian History) 5. the Roman Catholic Church & the Papacy

by David Guzik

The sermon explores the rise of the Roman Catholic Church and the institution of the papacy, from the early church period to the fall of the Roman Empire.

Scripture: Acts 2:42

Topics: "Church History", "Papal Authority"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the papacy of Innocent III and his assertion of power over nations and kingdoms. The Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 declared transubstantiation as the official church doctrine, which is the belief that the bread and wine in communion actually become the body and blood of Jesus Christ. The Magna Carta was denounced and the Inquisition was established during this council as well. The speaker also mentions Pope Boniface VIII and his issuance of the papal bull Unum Sanctum in 1302.

Transcript

As we begin this fifth lecture in our Church History series, we're talking more about this period that we've called the Christian Empire period. Of course, we started talking about the Apostolic Church, that's the Church of the New Testament, of the Book of Acts, and a little bit beyond, because, of course, New Testament history extends a little bit beyond the Book of Acts. Then we talked about the Early Church period, from the time of approximately the death of the last Apostle, which we believe to be the Apostle John, until the conversion of Constantine, because things changed pretty radically for the Church in the whole social environment, and how the Church connected to the culture and to the social environment, with the conversion of Constantine, and the eventual making of Christianity a favored religion within the Roman Empire, which Constantine did not do officially.

You could very well make the argument that he did it unofficially, yet nevertheless, his successors certainly did it officially. And so, as we considered some themes in our last lecture, we considered that first, Christianity became officially allowed, then officially supported by the Roman Empire. Secondly, we spoke about the phenomenon of Christianity sort of retreating to the monastery, and how the monastic movement was both good and bad, but it was also useful for the Church.

And we talked about some of the good points of the monastic movement, and some of the bad points of the monastic movement. Thirdly, in our series just sort of looking at general trends and characteristics of the Christian Empire period, we want to look at the emergence of the Roman Catholic Church and the institution of the papacy. It's really amazing, isn't it? You go to Rome, and you visit the Vatican City, and you see what an amazing splendor there is in the papacy.

You walk through St. Peter's Basilica, and it's absolutely stunning. I'll tell you my own personal feelings in going through the Vatican and going through St. Peter's Basilica. I went through it, and I was absolutely impressed by the glory of man.

To me, it seemed like a supreme monument to the glory and the artistic ability and the ingenuity of man to make such a place. I can't say I really felt much of anything about God there at all, but it certainly was an amazing testimony to the splendor, to the ingenuity, to the glory of man. Now, when you consider and sort of look at this, how did the church get from this persecuted group, sometimes on the edge of destruction in the early church period, to the amazing splendor and power and political authority demonstrated by the papacy and the Roman Catholic Church through church history, and then in some ways even to today? You say, how did it get from point A to point B? How did it make that journey? Well, we sort of want to consider that right now.

First of all, we would have to consider in our minds this whole phenomenon that we spoke of in a previous lecture about the patriarchal cities of the early church period. Do you remember that when we spoke about that, how there were four patriarchal cities? Actually, nobody sat down on a piece of paper with a map and said, well, let's make four patriarchal cities. These developed in a very natural way to prominence, right? We can understand why Jerusalem was prominent, among other cities.

We understood why Antioch was prominent, being sort of the home church and the home city of Paul. We understood why Alexandria was prominent, because it being a major intellectual center. And then, of course, well, Rome was Rome.

Of course it would be prominent. And so these four patriarchal cities developed an authority over the rest of Christianity, and they rose to this prominence. Now, it's interesting to see how the bishop or the patriarch of Rome emerged as the leading figure of the church, at least in the West.

You see, this is what you have to understand about the pope. Do you understand what the pope's most fundamental title is? His most fundamental title is he's the bishop of Rome. That's it.

But it's the fact that he's the bishop of Rome in Roman Catholic theology and thinking that gives him this authority over all of Christianity, that gives him the keys to the kingdom, as they envision Peter receiving the keys to the kingdom. But remember that his fundamental title is he's just a bishop, just as the bishop of Spital, as we mentioned before, sort of comically, you know, the bishop of this city, the bishop of that city. But the fact of the matter is, is in the political environment of the Christian empire period, and actually leading up to it before, if I could put it sort of in a slang kind of term, the bishop of Rome had juice.

He had authority. He had power. And he tried to exercise it.

Now, at a time, the idea was that the bishop of Rome was equal in authority and power in sort of a rough kind of arrangement between these other patriarchal cities, Alexandria, Jerusalem, and Antioch. But over time, the bishop of Rome was successfully able to exert his prominence over those other places. For

example, Pope Innocent I, this is in the year 402, he ruled that no important decision could be made in the church, or at least by the churches in the West, without the knowledge and the approval of the bishop of Rome.

I should really go back to our map just for one moment and ask you to consider something about the way that this is arranged. Okay, if you take a look at our map here and notice, geographically, you certainly have an arrangement, right? All these three patriarchal cities are sort of grouped together in the East, and there's only one patriarchal city in the West. So there's really no doubt which one would sort of have a natural prominence among all the Western churches.

By the way, we can say that the area of most successful expansion of Christianity was both West, in the Roman Empire, and North. It certainly did expand to the East and to the South somewhat, but by far, its most successful expansion was all this way. So Rome became the center of something that very naturally gave it more authority over all of Christendom than these three cities, Alexandria, Jerusalem, and Antioch, much more in the East.

In any regard, Pope Innocent, in the year 402, made this declaration that no important decision could be made by churches in the West without the knowledge and the approval of the bishop of Rome. Now obviously, that's just sort of a very, I don't know if you want to say naked power play, right? He's saying everything has to go through me, everything has to go through Rome. Now following him, another pope named Pope Zosimus said, no one can question a decision of the bishop of Rome.

And so that's another step in establishing the authority. First, everything has to go through me, and then second, his successor said, nobody can question our decisions. And then later, in the year 590, Pope Gregory the Great had a huge political, religious, and cultural influence.

Now this is what I want you to notice here. Pope Innocent II, 402, that's really before the total collapse of the Roman Empire. It's certainly teetering at this time, but the Roman Empire is still existing.

It's even before the sack of Rome in, what was it, 410, I believe. Then Zosimus, following him, again, we're still talking about there still being a Roman Empire, even though it's tottering even more. But by the time you get to Pope Gregory the Great, what year is that? That's 590, right? The Roman Empire is gone, gone, gone.

And that whole administrative and organizational infrastructure has disappeared from the face of the earth regarding the Roman Empire. But what institution is there on the earth that has the sort of administrative and organizational structure? Well, it's the church. And so in a lot of ways, we can see that the popes stepped into the vacuum created by the fall of the Roman Empire.

Gregory I, also known as Gregory the Great, he not only led spiritually, but also politically. He organized the defense of Rome against attacking enemies. He also appointed bishops for other cities as his deputies and representatives, and he gave them a special robe to show themselves as his associates.

Gregory also influenced the church music so much that almost all the church music of the Middle Ages is called what? Gregorian. It's after Pope Gregory I. Gregory had an important role in popularizing and legitimizing the teachings of, for example, the worship of the saints, purgatory, and the celebration of masses for the dead in purgatory. I don't know if you understand the idea of purgatory or not.

If you don't, hold on. We're going to explain it very well when we get up to the period of the Reformation. And so Gregory was a hugely influential character at this time when the West was feeling the absence of the Roman Empire.

It's as if Gregory, who seemed to be a brilliant and capable man, and a spiritual man as well, but he seemed to step into the void, this vacuum that was left by the disappeared Roman Empire. There's sort of a well-known story of Gregory's effort to evangelize the English. They say he was at St. Andrew's for the second time, that St. Gregory had a famous meeting with English slaves.

He was at the Roman Forum there in Rome at the Church of St. Andrew, and he came upon some tall, blonde youths as they were being sold, and he asked from where they came. Now, you know the general appearance of many of the English. You know, they can be blonde and quite pale in their complexion, right? And so they asked him, well, where did these people come from? And they said, they are Angles, describing their Germanic tribe that they came from, from the British Isles.

And then Gregory said, Angles? He said, say rather that they're angels. What a pity that God's grace does not dwell within those beautiful brows. I mean, he thought they're so fair.

They're so white, so to speak. They shine almost like angels. Well, why shouldn't we evangelize them? And so he purchased all of those slaves, and he brought them back to his monastery.

He cared for them. He instructed them. He baptized them.

And then finally, he was so taken that he burned to be off on a mission to convert their whole country. And he was actually able to win the permission of Pope Pelagius II. Of course, all this happened before Gregory himself was pope.

And he set out with some of his monks to England in spite of the fact that he was a very valuable servant to the pope, having at some time been Pelagius' chief advisor, and for all practical purposes, his secretary. In other words, he seemed to be a godly man filled with a missionary heart. But later on, when he came back, he established himself very much as the pope.

So these different things that I've listed, the works of Pope Innocent, the work of Pope Zosimus, the work of Pope Gregory I, each of these things, plus hundreds of smaller events, you could say they sort of consolidated the power of the Bishop of Rome, converting the Bishop of Rome to the pope, right? Isn't there a difference between the two titles? We don't call the present one Benedict what, the 16th, something like that. We don't call Benedict, we don't call him Bishop Benedict, right? Everybody calls him Pope Benedict. So that transition from the Bishop of Rome to pope came with this greater consolidation of power.

Examples of this trend are found in the edict in support of papal authority by Emperor Valentinian III in July 8, 445, and a sermon also from Pope Leo, he reigned from 440 to 461, regarding the authority of the pope. So let's take a look at those together here. We have, first of all, this statement from Emperor Valentinian III.

He says, now again, I want you to notice the date, 445. The Roman Empire is teetering, it's crumbling, but it certainly hasn't fallen yet, okay? This is what the emperor says. But in order that not even the least disturbance may arise among the churches, or the discipline of religion appear in any instance to be weakened, we decree by this perpetual edict that it shall not be lawful for the bishops of Gaul or of any other provinces, contrary to the ancient custom, to do aught without the authority of the venerable pope of

the eternal city.

And whatsoever authority of the apostolic sea has enacted, or may hereafter enact, shall be the law for all. Do you see that? Basically what he's saying is the emperor is saying that the pope has complete authority over the churches. Now he specifically mentions the bishops of Gaul, probably because they were having a problem with these French bishops, but he says not just the Gaul, not just the West, shall be the law for all.

This was the declaration of the Roman Empire. Then again, we have another statement from Pope Leo, who reigned about the same time. This is what he said about the authority of the pope from a sermon.

He says, And the blessed Peter, persevering in the strength of the rock, which he has received, has not abandoned the helm of the church which he undertook. For he was ordained before the rest in such a way that from his being called the rock, from him being pronounced the foundation, from him being constituted the doorkeeper of the kingdom of heaven, from his being seated as the umpire to bind and loose, whose judgment shall retain their validity in heaven, from all these mystical titles we might know the nature of his association with Christ. You see, what he's doing is, first of all, you have to play up the role of Peter, right? You have to make Peter something absolutely great, and that's why in Roman Catholic art, Peter is always pictured with the keys.

That's what they want to emphasize. Peter is the gatekeeper. Peter is the guy with the keys.

Notice this. He's the rock. He's the foundation.

He's the doorkeeper of the kingdom of heaven. He's seated as the umpire to bind and loose. You attribute all this power to Peter, and then what you do? You say, I am Peter's successor.

So that's exactly what Leo was doing in this. So as the popes gain more and more power, and again, I want you to notice the date on this. This was before the fall of the Roman Empire, but certainly as the foundations of it were crumbling.

So you can just imagine that when the Roman Empire truly fell, it was even more dramatic, the power that was placed into the hands of the pope. The pope became even more of a political ruler after the fall of the Roman Empire. You see, here we see that the church stepped into the vacuum left by the fall of the Roman Empire, and that leadership role of Gregory I was just the beginning.

As the church assumed this power vacuum that was left by the fall of the Roman Empire, in the late 8th century, Charles the Great of France, who we also know as Charlemagne, right? That just means Charles the Great. He was crowned emperor of the Roman Empire in the year 800. Now, I think this is one of the most interesting and significant events of medieval history.

You see, Charlemagne, for perhaps the first time in many hundreds of years, Europe seemed to have stable leadership under Charlemagne. He was a great king over the Frankish, or over the French people. And so on Christmas Day in the year 800, Charlemagne was crowned not just king, but emperor.

And who was he crowned by? Who put the crown upon Charlemagne's head? It was put on there by Pope Leo II. Now, I want you to think of the absolute significance of that, the idea of a pope putting a crown upon a king and declaring him the heir of the Roman Empire. This is very significant.

And it was significant to Charlemagne because he called himself, after that, Charles, by the will of God, Roman emperor. In this sort of artistic depiction, you see here the pope putting the crown upon Charlemagne's head right there. I got to say, my memory's failing me just a little bit.

But I've been in some church. It's crazy because I've been in a lot of cathedrals and churches all over Europe. But was it indeed perhaps in Rome, I suppose, where I went? Or it could have been in Paris.

I got to say, I've got a terrible memory for such things. If my wife was here, she could tell me exactly where it was. But there is preserved in a church, and I can't remember again if it's in Rome or if it's in Paris or wherever, where the exact spot, the exact stone upon which this great symbolic act happened, where Pope Leo II put the crown upon Charlemagne's head.

That was an amazingly significant event. It was a significant event politically. It was significant because it had spiritual ramifications.

But it was also an amazingly significant event symbolically. Because I want you to think about this. You see, if the pope claims the authority to put a crown on an emperor's head, doesn't he also have the authority to take the crown off the emperor's head if the emperor starts acting in a way that's disobedient to the point? To the pope.

This was the beginning of what we call the Holy Roman Empire. And this is sort of why I title this broad section of Christian history, the Christian Empire. Although this specific phrase, the Holy Roman Empire, I think it might have been Mark Twain who observed, it was not holy, it was not Roman, nor was it an empire.

But that's what they called it, the Holy Roman Empire. And basically, in the beginning, here you see the Christian Empire at 600 AD. You see this great Frankish Empire here ruled by Frankish kings.

But then, going on there, you see the Christian Empire in 800 AD with Charlemagne. And here you have the Frankish Empire which assumed the idea of the Holy Roman Empire there in this great period of church history. You see, as things developed, there would be a constant tension between the emperor and the pope, right? I want you to always think back in your mind that picture of Pope Leo II putting the crown on Charlemagne's head.

Because that picture there between king, or you might say emperor, between king and pope, there was a constant rivalry. It didn't begin with those two. But it continued on with greater and greater strength.

Who would really have authority in the world, in the Western world? Would it be the kings, or would it be the popes? You see, the pope claimed authority over the emperors because he put the crown on their emperor's head. The emperors usually felt more powerful than the popes did, and so it was a constant struggle. Now, in the midst of all this kind of political struggle, it does not surprise us at all that the papacy became a highly political office, and therefore was often filled by corrupt men.

One of these men was Pope John XII. He reigned from the year 955 to 963. He was charged by a council of bishops with almost every imaginable crime.

He was said to have toasted the health of the devil, and to have invoked the power of pagan gods to help him in his gambling. The whole council agreed that he was a very corrupt man, but when the council came against him and said, you're a sinful, immoral, corrupt man. You need to leave the office of the papacy.

This is what Pope John XII replied. He said, if you wish to set up another pope, by almighty God, I excommunicate you so that you will not have power to perform mass or to ordain anyone. See, here's the problem, right? When you put, so to speak, the power of those keys in the hands of a man, right? If the man is corrupt, or if the man becomes corrupt, then he just looks at you, and he shakes the keys in your face, and he says, don't you get in my face.

I'll excommunicate you. Other popes were similar in wickedness. Pope Boniface VII came to office by strangling his predecessor in the year 974.

He was described by a council of bishops as a papal monster, who an abject depravity exceeds all mortals. Now, again, we look at this, and we might be shocked, but we should not be shocked, because as the papacy became more and more of a political office, more and more men whose interest and whose heart was in politics assumed that very office. And so this development of papal power continued right through the Middle Ages, even up and through the time of Pope Gregory VII, who, again, was another very notable pope.

In the year 1073 through 1085, Pope Gregory VII, who was also known as Hildebrand, showed both the height of papal power, but also, remember these years, 1073 to 1085, it also was the beginning of the decline of papal power. Hildebrand, or Gregory VII, issued a very famous document titled *Plenitudo Potestatis*, which declared the pope to be the vicar of Christ, and not the vicar of Peter. Do you know the distinction between these? Do you know what a vicar is? Have you ever heard the term vicarious atonement? Do you know what that term means? The term vicarious atonement means atonement standing in the place of another.

When I say I believe in the vicarious atonement of Jesus Christ for me, I mean that I believe that Jesus Christ stood in my place as if he were a guilty sinner. A vicar is a representative of somebody. It's somebody who stands in the place of somebody else.

Now, the original title that the popes took upon themselves was vicar of Peter, right? I am Peter's representative upon the earth. Peter held the keys, therefore I hold the keys, right? That's a familiar picture to us already from some of the things we've already seen. Vicar of Peter.

Hildebrand, or Gregory VII, in those years, he said, listen, the pope isn't just the vicar of Peter, the pope is the vicar of Christ. Do you understand the radical difference between the two? It's a pretty big jump to say I am Peter's representative on earth to saying I am the representative of Jesus Christ on this earth. But that title still clings to the popes today.

They still consider themselves the vicar of Christ. And Gregory VII made this declaration in this papal bull titled *Plenitudo Potestatis*. Now, in this whole struggle between Gregory VII and the kings of his day, the great battle there was between the German and Frankish king, Henry IV and Gregory VII.

It was a great battle. It was a great struggle between the two here, between Henry IV and Pope Gregory VII, also known as Hildebrand. You see, the emperor and the pope both claimed the right to appoint men to politically and financially important offices.

You see, you just got to understand how this worked in the Middle Ages. Oh, man. I don't know if I can describe this well enough.

Let me just try. Church offices had an income associated with them, right? If you were a bishop, there was an income associated with that office of bishop in that region. And it was kind of connected with the amount of tithes and offerings that would come into the church.

The bishop received a substantial cut of that. And it was sort of the bishop's job to make sure that there were individual priests in the individual churches. And the bishop would return, supposedly, some of that to the individual priests.

But there was a financial reward attached to the office of bishop, attached to the office of cardinal, attached to the office of monsignor, whatever, whatever the specific office was. Now, whenever an office was vacant, the issue was who is going to appoint the successor to that office, right? Who's going to fill that office? So they need a bishop in Shpital, right? Who's going to appoint the bishop of Shpital? Well, here's the thing. That office of the bishop of Shpital has two important associations.

Number one, it has political associations, right? Because the church is a very political institution at this time. And so it's politically important who the next bishop of Shpital is. Secondly, it has financial implications, right? Because whoever is appointed, the bishop of Shpital is going to start making a pretty good living.

Therefore, it's important who appoints the successor to the bishop of Shpital. And you can see why the pope said, I want to appoint that man. And you can see why the king over this area would say, I want to appoint that man, right? Now, the reason why especially they wanted to appoint him was number one, they wanted to appoint somebody who would be politically friendly to them.

That makes sense, right? If you're the pope, you want somebody who's politically friendly to you, being the bishop of Shpital. If you're the king, you want somebody politically friendly to you. But that wasn't just it.

It was also the money. Because essentially, if you're the pope or if you're the king, you sell the office of the bishop of Shpital, right? Because you want to be the bishop of Shpital because that's a secure income for you. So you say to me, either the king or the pope, Well, I'll give you this much amount of money.

The typical amount to pay was you would pay what the first year's income would be. So let's say, I don't know what units of money, you know, let's just say that the yearly income was 10 gold pieces for being the bishop of Shpital. Well, then you would be obligated to pay the king or the pope or whatever 10 gold pieces.

And of course, for a lucrative office, there would be sort of a bidding war, right? The price might get higher and higher than the normal going rate. But that money would go into the pocket of the king or the pope. Now you can understand why it was such a big deal, this great question, who is going to appoint the successors to these empty offices.

This was the whole point of the debate between Henry IV and Pope Gregory VII or Hildebrand. They debated what turned out to be this very important issue of who was going to fulfill these political offices. And so Gregory VII said, the emperor has no right to appoint anybody to a church office.

Henry ignored the Pope's decrees and Gregory summoned the emperor to Rome, okay? So it starts out with Henry, the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. He says, all right, I'm the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. I'm going to start filling these offices.

And Gregory says, you don't have the right to do that. And Henry says, who cares? Take a hike, Pope. I'm going to do it anyway.

And then Gregory VII says, listen, Henry, I'm calling you. You come to Rome right now and do what I tell you to do. Well, Henry refused to come to the Pope.

But what Henry did was Henry declared Pope Gregory VII to be deposed. He said, listen, Pope, you're no longer the Pope. So what did Gregory do? Gregory responded by excommunicating Henry and declaring him deposed.

This was quite a battle going back and forth. And you know what's really interesting is to read some of the correspondence between the two. Look at this letter of Pope Gregory VII to Henry IV, the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, okay? December 1075.

Bishop Gregory, servant of the servants of God, to King Henry, greeting an apostolic benediction. That is, if he be obedient to the apostolic chair, as is fitting for a Christian king. Since you do confess yourself to be a son of the church, it would have been fitting for your royal dignity to look more respectfully upon the master of the church, that is, Saint Peter, the chief of the apostles.

Pretty heavy, right? Well, what did King Henry, what did Emperor Henry respond back to him? Here, January 24, 1076. Henry, king, not through your usurpation, but through the holy ordination of God to Hildebrand, at present not pope, but false monk. Such greetings as this, you have deserved through your disturbances inasmuch as there is no area of the church which you have failed to make yourself a partaker, not of honor, but confusion, not of blessing, but of curses.

You think that's, Henry's just getting warmed up. He says, thou therefore, this is the emperor speaking to the pope. Thou therefore, damned by this curse and the judgment of all our bishops and by our own, descend and relinquish the apostolic chair which you have usurped.

Let another ascend to the throne of Saint Peter, who shall not practice violence under the cover of religion, but shall teach the sound doctrine of Saint Peter. I, Henry, king by the grace of God, do say unto thee together with all our bishops, descend, descend to be damned throughout all ages. Do you get a feeling of sort of this sort of controversy between the kings and the popes, right? Now, in light of all this, how did it all end up? Pope Gregory VII forced, so to speak, Henry IV to humbly submit in light of his disobedience to the papal power.

And submit he did. You see, you might say, well, what possible power does the pope have over the king? I'll tell you what power the pope has over the king. The pope has the power to issue a decree and say, I declare this king to not be a Christian.

And because I declare him to not be a Christian, no one in his country has to obey him or pay taxes to him. The pope had that power. And Henry knew it, right? I mean, Henry could talk big, but at the end of the day, he knew that the pope had the power to do that.

And so Pope Gregory VII demanded that Henry repent. And so what did he do? Henry said, you want repentance, pope? I'll show you repentance. You see, traveling with his wife and his child, Henry set out and crossed the Alps in the middle of the winter to come to the pope's residence and humble himself at the pope's feet.

But Gregory would not receive Henry. And he made him wait outside his door in the snow in the courtyard of the castle. For three days, Henry waited outside in the courtyard, begging the pope to let him come in and beg for forgiveness.

On the fourth day, Gregory relented and let him in and restored him, repealing his excommunication. Do you see how this went? The pope excommunicates Henry. And then Henry says, I'll get him.

I'm going to repent. And so he goes and makes this very dramatic show of repentance, right? Waiting in the snow. And you just think of Pope Hildebrand, Gregory VII, pacing back and forth in his castle at Canossa there.

He's thinking, my gosh, he's got me, right? If I receive him and repent him, you know, then he's going to keep doing whatever he wants against me. But I can't refuse him. Everybody knows he's waiting out in the snow.

And so he was in such a dilemma. He waited and he waited, just waiting, hoping that Henry would go away, that Henry would give up. Henry just sitting there in the courtyard.

No, Pope, I'm going to get you on this. I'm going to wait you out. You're not going to beat me on this one.

And finally, the pope gave in. He received Henry. He forgave him.

And listen, you know, the whole times Henry had his fingers crossed behind his back when he said, I humbly repent, so forth and so on. He didn't really mean it. It was all just for show.

But he had him. And this was the promise that Henry made. Henry there outside the snow at Canossa.

This is what he said in his offer of obedience to the pope. He said, being admonished to do so by the counsel of our faithful ones, I promise to observe in all things the obedience due to the apostolic sea and to thee, Pope Gregory, and will take care devoutly to correct and to render satisfaction for anything whereby a derogation to the honor of that sea or to your honor has arisen through us. But listen, it was really all just for a show on both sides.

Seven years later, Henry's armies marched into Rome and drove Pope Gregory VII into exile. Overall, kings from this point on, from this point, about 1076 on, kings started to exercise more and more of the upper hand in their struggle against the popes. So you might see it sort of on a track, right? From maybe the year 600 all the way up to the year almost 1100, it seems that the popes are gaining more and more power over the kings, but then approximately at the year 1100, it was actually a little bit before that, but approximately at the year 1100, from then on, the kings begin to exercise more and more power over the popes.

I like this little woodcut of there Henry standing outside with his wife and children in the snow, waiting for Hildebrand to answer the door. And there was this very humble, humble sort of repentance before the pope. Well, again, even though the whole debacle with Emperor Henry IV and Gregory VII or Hildebrand marked sort of the end of the, or I shouldn't say the height, I should say the end, I should say the height of papal power.

This is what Gregory declared in official papal decree a few years later. These were many of the points within his papal decree. He said, first of all, the Roman church is founded by God alone.

Secondly, that the Roman pontiff alone can rightly be called universal. What's another word for universal there? Catholic, right? Can be called Catholic. Catholic is just another way of saying universal.

The third, that he alone can depose or reinstate bishops. Fourth, that among other things, we ought not to remain in the same house as with those excommunicated by him. In other words, if the Pope excommunicates you, everybody else has to treat you as if you're excommunicated.

Next, that he alone may use the imperial insignia. Next, that of the Pope alone, all princes shall kiss the feet. Next, that his name alone shall be spoken in the churches.

Next, that this is the only name in the world. Again, I just want you to get a feel for this. This is a Pope, right? Speaking of his power here, and this was really the height of papal power, but here the roller coaster just reached the top.

I mean, after this, it's going to decline more and more, but this really is the top here. He says that it may be permitted to him to depose emperors, that no chapter and no book shall be considered canonical without his authority. That he himself may be judged by no one.

That the Roman church has never erred, nor will it err to all eternity. The scripture bearing witness that the Roman pontiff, if he has been canonically ordained, is undoubtedly made a saint by the merits of St. Peter. Next, that he may depose and reinstate bishops without assembling a synod.

That he who is not at peace with the Roman church shall not be considered Catholic, and that he may absolve subjects from their fealty to wicked men. Again, remember that one, fealty, that's another word for obedience. That he may absolve subjects, in other words, citizens of a kingdom, from their obedience to wicked men, namely bad kings like Emperor Henry IV, right? That was the Pope's power there to be able to say to Christendom, I no longer consider this king a Christian.

He is excommunicated here. So again, do you get the feel of this? Here is sort of, you know, this flexing of papal muscle showing how strong and how mighty the Pope is, especially in comparison with the kings. Well, it sort of continues on along with the track with the Pope being increasingly be able to say big things, but not having the political or the social power to back them up.

For example, we have Pope Innocent III in what's known as the Fourth Lateran Council in the year 1215. Innocent III set the theme for his papacy with Jeremiah 110. This is what he said.

See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms to pluck up them, break down, to destroy and to overthrow it, to build and to plant. Do you see that? He came to power saying, this is my mission. I am over nations and over kingdoms.

Now, Innocent in his day, in effect, he practiced and flexed his muscles over the kings of his day. And he left no doubt, at least in his time, that in the dance between kings and popes, that when there was a strong pope, he would do his best to lead the kings. So at this council, the Fourth Lateran Council, transubstantiation was declared to be the official church doctrine.

By the way, do you know what the idea of transubstantiation is in the Roman Catholic Church? It's that doctrine that holds that the wine and the bread of communion celebrated at a Roman Catholic Mass actually become, they're actually transformed into the blood and the body of Jesus Christ. Now, I want you to notice that didn't happen until the Fourth Lateran Council in the year 1215. This was, you know, some

1200 years after the beginning of the church.

And so at that council again, transubstantiation was declared to be the official church doctrine. The Magna Carta, which had just been established in England was denounced. And the Inquisition was also established at that Fourth Lateran Council in 1215.

Then another notable Pope, Boniface VIII, he issued, of course, the papal bull Unum Sanctum in the year 1302. This was in response to his struggles with King Philip of France. Now a papal bull, don't think that they called it that because it was full of bull as we might say, you know, in a slang terms.

No, bull is from the Latin word bulla, which means seal. It just means the sealed document such as that, such as a fancy seal upon the document. So a Latin term, bulla gave the idea to the papal bull.

It just means an official document or an official proclamation of the Pope or of the Roman Catholic Church. In this very important document, Unum Sanctum, written by Boniface VII, or excuse me, Boniface VIII in 1302. He said that there is one holy and Catholic apostolic church outside of which there is neither salvation nor remission of sins.

Now, again, you need to understand this. When they said things like this, for example, at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, where they established the idea of transubstantiation. Don't think that they created the idea of transubstantiation at the Fourth Lateran Council, right? The idea was already current within the Christian community.

That just solidified it with a papal decree. It's the same idea. The idea that there is only one holy Catholic and apostolic church outside of which there is neither salvation nor remission of sins.

That didn't begin with Unum Sanctum in 1302, but it was officially codified by that papal bull. Now, I want you to think about this because actually we must say, we must admit, that the Roman Catholic Church believes this to this day. The Roman Catholic Church, their official doctrine says that there is one way for a person to be saved and that one way is for them to be attached to the Roman Catholic Church.

Now, do they believe that some people are attached to the Roman Catholic Church who aren't necessarily, you know, active members of it? Yes, they do. They would say that, you know, people can be saved as separated brethren, is what they call them since I believe the Second Vatican Council. But here, Unum Sanctum was a very important statement with that.

But it also made other points. It also said that both the spiritual and temporal swords belong to the Pope as the vicar of God. Again, here's the idea that the Pope is not just the vicar of Peter, but he's the vicar of Christ or the vicar of God.

Again, a very big idea. So I want you to think about this. What does it mean the two swords? Well, they had the idea that there was a sword of spiritual power, right? That was basically the power of excommunication, right? But then they also said that there was a sword of temporal power.

Do you know what I mean by temporal power? We mean earthly power, right? A sword of earthly power. And he said that sword also belongs to the Pope. Now, it's true that the Pope didn't swing the sword of earthly power, right? The Pope wasn't out there executing kings and criminals and all that.

But what the Pope thought was, he said, I have authority over all earthly power and I'll give that sword to an earthly magistrate to carry out what God wants him to do. But the authority of that sword is actually in me, the Pope, not in the earthly magistrate who holds it. So this was a very big proclamation.

Thirdly, they said salvation is only possible when a person is submitted to the Pope. You can see what a big idea this whole papal bull *Unum Sanctum* was. Let me read to you a section from *Unum Sanctum*, again, from Pope Boniface VIII in the year 1302.

He says, Therefore, if the earthly power err, it shall be judged by the spiritual power. But if the lesser spiritual power err by the greater. But if the greatest, it can be judged by God alone, not by man bearing witness.

Basically, what he's saying there is nobody can judge the Pope. Nobody. The Pope answers to God alone and to nobody else.

He says, A spiritual man judges all things, but he himself is judged by no one. This authority, moreover, even though it is given to man and exercised through man, is not human, but rather divine, being given by divine lips to Peter and founded on a rock for him and his successors through Christ himself, who he has confessed, the Lord himself saying to Peter, whatsoever you bind, etc. Whoever therefore resist this power, thus ordained by God, resist the ordination of God.

Indeed, we declare, announce and define that it is altogether necessary to salvation for every human creature to be subject to the Roman Pope. Listen, in response, King Philip of France, to whom this papal bull *Unum Sanctum* was written against. In response, King Philip questioned Boniface's legitimacy on the papal throne and he ordered him arrested and put on trial.

Boniface escaped, but he died on the run from the armies of King Philip. Listen, this is the strange dichotomy about a man like Boniface who made such, I mean, listen, he's roaring like a lion, right, with his *Unum Sanctum*, right? But it is said of Boniface that he roared like a lion, but he died like a dog. He died on the run from the armies of the very king whom he threatened with this papal decree.

You see what I'm saying? So you have this strange period in church history where the popes are making these great decrees against the kings. And for a lot of the time, not all the time, but a lot of time, the kings are saying, who cares? I've got the armies, Pope. See what you can do.

See what your decrees can do against my armies. Now, Boniface's successor, that is Clement V, he tried to appease the kings that he had struggles with, even by moving the papacy to the French-ruled city of Avignon to please Philip. I want you to think about that.

There was a time when the headquarters of the pope and the Roman Catholic Church moved from Rome to the French city of Avignon, which by the way, is a beautiful city on the Mediterranean. I don't blame the popes for wanting to live there. But listen, do you see what that does? That says, yes, Philip, we will accommodate you, King Philip of France.

We will even move the headquarters of the papacy from Rome to France to accommodate you. This moving, this geographical moving, of the papacy from Rome to Avignon was an admission that the popes were in some way under the powers of the king. And in this sense, under the power of the French king.

You might call this period the Great Schism. And the controversy caused by this sort of capitulation. After all, if you were an Englishman, let's say that you were an English king or an English church leader and your country was constantly at war with France, how would you feel knowing that the pope was now under the control of the French king? How would that make you feel about the pope? What Englishman wanted a French pope? You see, eventually, this led to what is known as the Great Schism, where opposing parties supported different popes.

Do you understand? At times during this time of the Avignon papacy, there were three supposed legitimate bishops of Rome. The consular movement tried to solve the problem also. You see, let me explain how the problem would arrange.

The pope would escape to Avignon, right, and set up his headquarters there and essentially be under the domination of the French king. Well, the English wouldn't like that. The English were at war with the French.

And so the English said, forget it, you're an illegitimate pope. We're going to set up our own pope. And so they set up a rival pope.

They elected a rival pope. So at that time, there's two popes. And then a third group says, a pox on both your house.

This French pope isn't any good. And the English pope is no good. We're going to make a third pope who will settle all the arguments.

And each one of the popes are excommunicating each other. Each one of the things, it's all this rival political thing. It was the kind of mess there was in the Middle Ages.

Again, all because of the political power of the church. You see, in all of this, this is the common thing that we can say, that the church became more powerful and more important than Jesus. In the minds of most people, please understand this, about medieval theology, understand this about the thinking of the common man in the medieval world, right? The common man who wanted to be saved and wanted to go to heaven.

In his mind, salvation came through the church, not through Jesus. Do you see the big difference there? You see, in the Roman Catholic Church, they developed a very neat theological package based on the idea that salvation was by God's grace alone, but only the papal church could make God's grace available to man. And that the church made this grace available to man, how? Through the sacraments.

Their thinking was sort of this. How was a man saved, or a woman, saved by grace, right? How does a person receive grace? They receive grace by the church. The church gives them grace, okay? This was the Roman Catholic thinking, medieval thinking especially, okay? The church is sort of like a bank of grace.

The church receives grace. Who from? From the excess merits of the saints. In other words, the saints were greater than they had to be, right? The saints were better than... So they had extra grace.

They made deposits into the bank of grace, okay? You need to make withdrawals from the bank of grace in order to get saved. Who's the teller at the bank of grace? It's the individual priest that you deal with, right? You could say the pope is the president of the bank of grace, right? So you go, you get your grace

from the church, through the priest, through the sacraments. Do you know what the sacraments were? Well, what are the sacraments? There's seven of them.

Let's see if we can remember all of them. Number one, there's baptism, right? Number two, there's communion. Number three, there's penance.

Number four, there's confirmation. Number five, there's marriage. Number six, there's holy orders, which of course not everybody takes, only the ordained people.

And then number seven, there's last rites. Those seven sacraments are the way in Roman Catholic and medieval thinking, the way somebody received the grace unto salvation. Now, isn't this great? Because this way you can know whether or not you're saved, right? Have you been baptized? Yes.

Do you take communion? Yes. Do you go to penance? Yes. Did you get married in the Catholic church? Yes.

Are you going to receive last rites when you're dead? Yes. Bingo, you're saved. It's a very neat theological package where everybody can just check off the boxes and know that they're saved.

Unfortunately, what does it do? It doesn't have anything to do with having a real life towards God or being born again, right? It has to do with receiving grace through these sacraments. In all of this, I want you to see, do you see how it's very true that the church became more important than Jesus? And in the minds of most everybody, you receive salvation from the church and not from Jesus. You see, if grace can only be received through the agency of the church, then all of this system makes sense.

But if the believer can come to Jesus and receive grace directly, right? That's what we would say. That's what the Bible says. You don't have to go to the church or through the church or through the priest or through anybody else through the sacraments to receive grace.

You can receive grace directly by dealing with Jesus Christ directly. Then all the sacramental system makes no sense at all, even though it's pleasing to the flesh because it provides such a neat, certain and achievable package. Understanding this Roman Catholic conception of salvation is essential to understanding the whole manner of the medieval church and how it functioned.

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