Lesson 18 The Age of Christian Empire: Augustine on the Millennium, St. Patrick, and the Fall of Rome

Augustine on the Millennium

- As we have seen before in a previous lesson one of the affects of Constantine's Edit of Malian and the union of church and state had upon many believers was that their future hope in Christ's coming was lost.

- The Christian community lost site of the return of Christ by teaching that the church had replaced Israel and thereby applying the prophecies regarding the second coming to the first.

- Those familiar with Christian theology will recognize this view which denies the future reign of Christ on earth as a-millennialism. A-millennialism simply means no millennium.

Augustine on the Millennium

- Utilizing the allegorical method of interpretation advocated by his predecessor Origen, Augustine firmly cemented the allegorical method into mainstream Christian thought and used it to deny the millennial reign of Jesus Christ.

- As we studied last week, due to his enduring influence, once Augustine denied the millennium subsequent generations followed suit. (See quote)

- Philip Schaff, a committed post-millenarian painfully admits that the pre-millennial view was the wide spread view of the Church before the council of Nicea. (See quote)

Augustine on the Millennium

- This reality lends some historical creditability to the general order of departure from Pauline truth presented in Lesson 7.

Pauline Truths Lost (Order of Loss)

- First—The Distinctive Message and Ministry of the Apostle Paul
- Second—The Pre-Tribulational Rapture of the Church the Body of Christ
- Third—The Difference Between Israel and the Church, the Body of Christ
- Fourth—Justification by Grace Through Faith Alone, in Christ Alone (Lewis, 1)

Augustine on the Millennium

- While allegorizing virtually everything, He stated that the 1,000 years of Revelation 20 was the literal amount to time between the first coming and the second coming of Christ (i.e., the present church age).

- Augustine asserts without scriptural foundation that only carnal believers would believe in the Millennium. (See quote)

- By the 11th century it was clear that Augustine was wrong. Consequently, the theologians of the 11th century had to correct Augustine. They do so by saying that the 1,000 years were only a symbolic representation of the amount of time between the two advents of Christ. (Barlow, 176)

Augustine on the Millennium

- R. Dawson Barlow is convinced that the reason why Augustine rejected the literal nature of the Millennium is because resurrected saints will be able to eat and drink. As we have already seen the above quote, Augustine maintained that who believed that people are able to eat and drink in their resurrected bodies are carnal. Meanwhile, those who believed resurrected saints could not eat or drink where spiritual. (Barlow, 179)

- After reading the biographical information about Augustine, Barlow concluded that Augustine's logically extrapolated that if the resurrected saints can eat and drink, they will also carry on other normal bodily functions such a sexual activity.

Augustine on the Millennium

- Augustine by his own admission struggled with his sexuality fathering at least one child out of wedlock and having at least one possibly two mistresses throughout this life. (Barlow, 179)

- Therefore, the proposition of struggling with this issue that had for so long troubled him after the resurrection was too much for him to bear thereby causing Augustine to deny the millennium. (Barlow, 179)

The Real St. Patrick
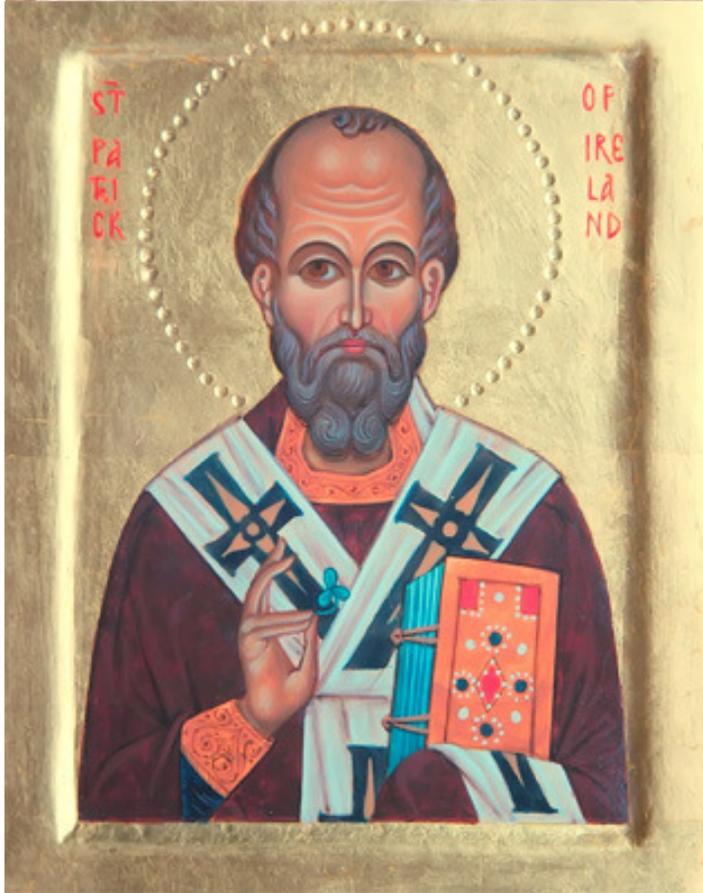
- Patrick was born in 372 on the banks of the Clyde in Scotland.

- His parents were earnest Christians; his father was a deacon, and his grandfather was a presbyter.

- His mother, who sought to instill into his heart the doctrines of Christianity, was sister to the celebrated Martin, archbishop of Tours.

- At the age of 16, Patrick and his two sisters were captured by Irish pirates who sold them as slaves in Ireland

The Real St. Patrick

- While suffering the hardships of slavery and reflecting upon some great unidentified sin, Patrick remembered the teachings of his mother and turned to Christ.

- In time Patrick secured his liberty and returned home to his family.

- Once home, Patrick felt the desire to return to Ireland and preach the gospel to the pagans among whom he had found Christ.

- After this he is known as Saint Patrick. He devoted the remainder of his life to the Irish. The conversion of Ireland is ascribed to his means. The year of his death in uncertain
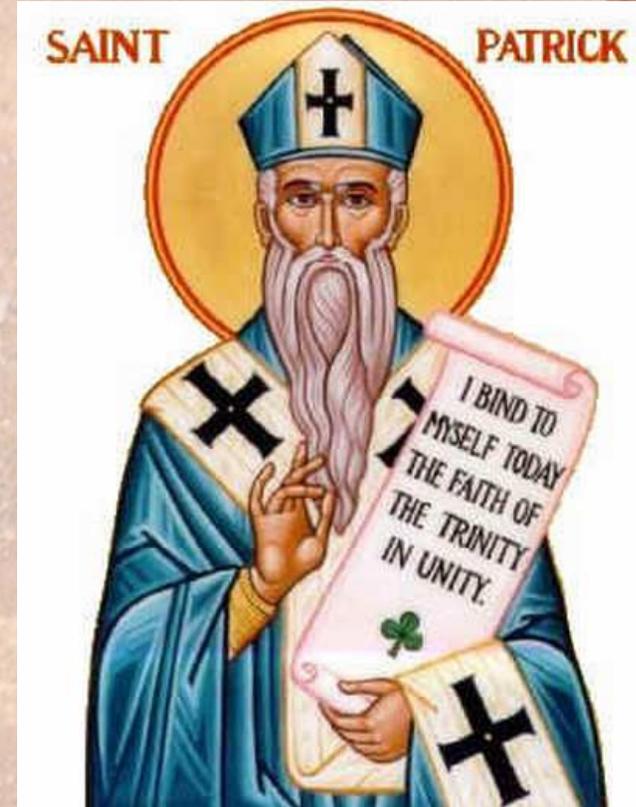
The Real St. Patrick

- Based upon Patrick's letters (*The Confession*, 25 chatpers; *The Letter to Corocticus*, 10 chapters; and hymn written in ancient Irish) he is clear on the following facts:
    - He was not an Irishman
    - He never mentions Rome or the pope in connection with anything Biblical or Christian.
    - He was not born on March 17
    - He was not canonized (made into a saint) until four centuries after his death
    - He recognized only the Scripture as the final authority in matters of faith and practice and never appealed to a bishop, council, pope, or king fro any religious advice regarding any spiritual issue.
    - He speaks of having baptized thousands of grown men (Ruckman, 266)

The Fall of the Western Roman Empire

- Rome had been fighting the barbarians (anyone who did not speak Latin or Greek) for as long as the empire had existed. In the 3rd century (200s) Rome saw renewed attacks from Germanic tribes to the north of the western empire. Their homelands were getting crowed and people began to move into new lands within imperial borders. (Hill, 93)

- The 250s Franks crossed the Rhine and the Alamanni were invading northern Italy and the Goths were moving into Greece but Rome held them off. (Hill, 93)

- Strong emperors such as Diocletian and Constantine were able to temporarily reverse the trend and keep the empire together.

Invasions of the
Roman Empire
100 - 500 CE

Western Roman Empire

Eastern Roman Empire

Constantinople

Rome

Carthage

Chalons 451

Adrianople 378

Hun Capital

Jutes

Angles

Saxons

Franks

Goths

Vandals

Huns

Huns

Ostrogoths

Ostrogoths

Ostrogoths

Visigoths

Visigoths

Visigoths

Vandals

	Angles, Saxons
	Franks
	Goths
	Visigoths
	Ostrogoths
	Huns
	Vandals
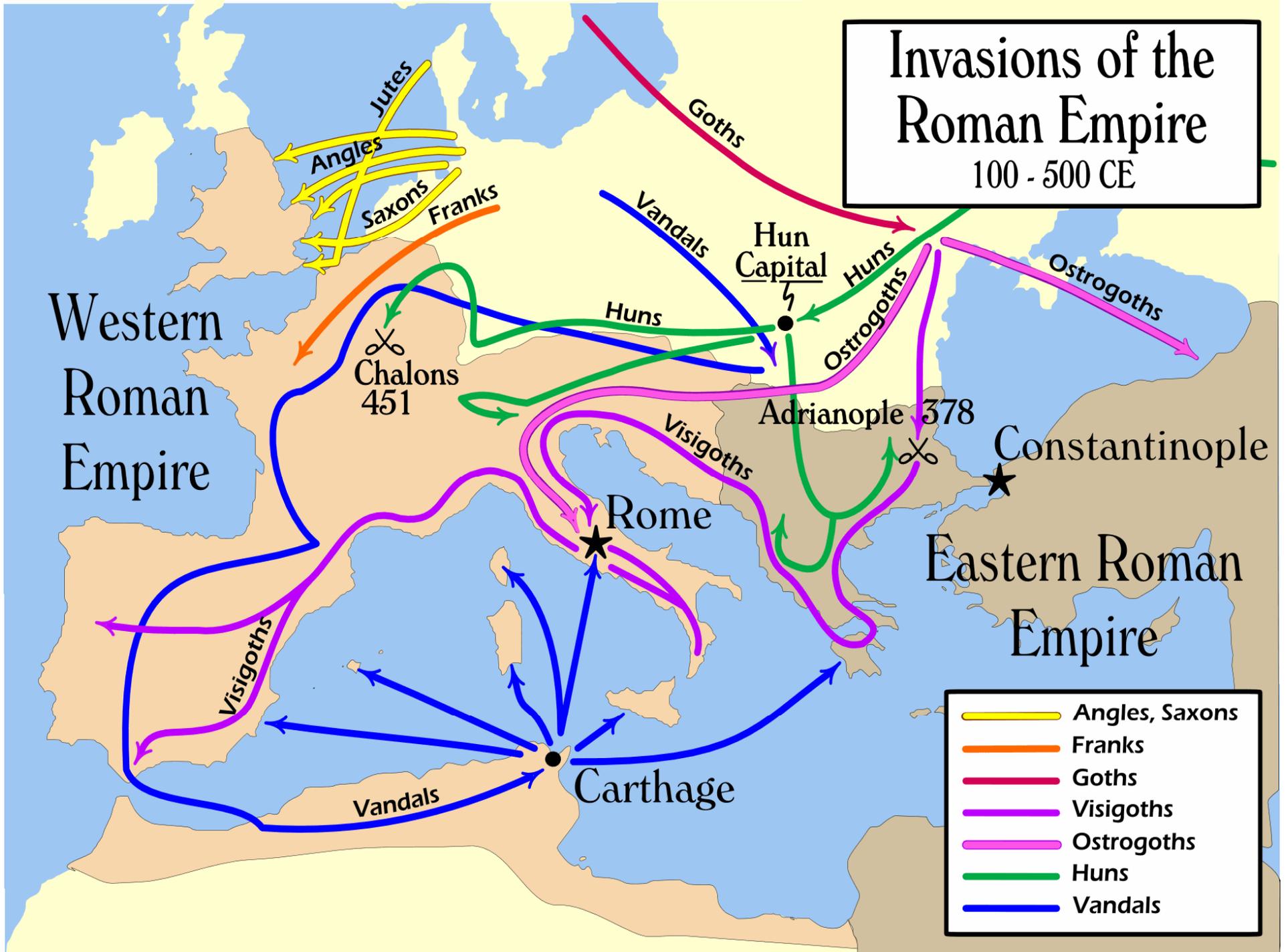
The Fall of Rome and Papal Power

- Leo's (the so-called Great) ability to persuade Attila the Hun not to sack Rome increased the political position of the emerging papacy immeasurably.

- "Leo took every opportunity to underline the supremacy of the bishop of Rome, especially after 451, when the bishops at the Council of Chalcedon had voted that the city of Constantinople be regarded as second only to Rome." (See quote)

- "Successive popes made ever more explicit claims to their universal role as chief pastor of the church. The fact that the emperors continued to endow the papacy with funds, despite the threats to the empire, demonstrates the high esteem in which the papacy was held." (Price and Collins, 71)

SAINT LEO
THE GREAT
OF ROME

The Fall of Rome and Papal Power

- "During his reign, Constantine had organized the church along the lines of his civil administration with territories divided up into areas called dioceses, each one supervised by a bishop. The bishops resided in a tow, and the building – called a cathedral - where his 'see,' or official seat was located was a place not only of worship, but of bureaucratic power." (Price and Collins, 72)

- "With the breakdown of civil administration during the 5th century, people turned to the bishop and his court for help. The church was the only institution that would defend and sustain them." (Price and Collins)

- More on the power of the Papacy next week.

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