

Harmony 1.8 – Political Events from Nicaea to Constantine’s Death (325-337)

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Last updated 2/2/17

Socrates	Sozomen	Theodoret
325 – Constantine’s legislation and building projects		
<p>1.18.1 After the Nicaean Council the emperor became increasingly attentive to the interests of the Christians and abandoned heathen superstitions. He abolished gladiatorial combats and set up his own statues in the temples.</p>		
<p>1.18.13 It would not, I conceive, be out of place here to describe the emperor’s diligence in rebuilding cities and converting many villages into cities; as for example Drepanum, to which he gave his mother’s name, and Constantia in Palestine, so called from his sister. [January 328]</p>		
<p>1.16.1 After the Synod the emperor spent some time in recreation, and after the public celebration of his twentieth anniversary of his accession, he immediately devoted himself to the restoration of the churches. This he carried into effect in other cities as well, as in the city named after him, which was previously called Byzantium. He enlarged Byzantium, surrounded it with massive walls, and adorned it with various edifices. After rendering it equal to imperial Rome, he named it ‘Constantinople,’ establishing by law that it should be designated ‘New Rome.’ This law was engraved on a pillar of stone erected in public view in the Strategium, near the emperor’s equestrian statue.</p> <p>1.16.2 He built also in the same city two churches, one he named ‘Irene’ and the other ‘The Apostles.’</p> <p>1.16.3 He not only improved the affairs of the Christians, as I have said, but he also destroyed the superstition of the heathens. For he brought forth their images into public view to ornament the city of Constantinople and set up the Delphic tripods publicly in the Hippodrome. It may indeed seem now superfluous to mention these things, since they are seen before they are heard of.</p>		

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<p>1.16.4 At that time the Christian cause received its greatest enhancement. For Divine Providence preserved very many other things during the times of the emperor Constantine. Eusebius Pamphilus has in magnificent terms recorded the praises of the emperor, and I considered it would not be ill-timed to advert thus to them as concisely as possible.</p>		
<p>332 – Constantine decrees that all Christians must maintain fellowship in the catholic church</p>		
	<p>2.32.1 Although many people zealously supported the doctrine of Arius in the debates, they still had not formed a separate group under his name. Everyone assembled together and was in communion with each other at the same time, with the exception of the Novatians, those called the Phrygians, the Valentinians, the Marcionites, the Paulianians, and a few others who followed heresies which had already been established.</p>	
	<p>2.32.2 Concerning those people, however, the emperor passed a law commanding them to abandon their own houses of prayer and to meet in the churches and not to assemble for church either in private homes or public places. He thought it was important to maintain fellowship in the catholic (καθόλου) church and instructed them to gather together within her walls. Because of this law, I believe, almost all heresies disappeared.</p> <p>2.32.3 During the reign of the previous emperors all people who worshipped Christ, regardless of any discrepancy in teachings, were considered the same by the pagans and were equally persecuted. Because of their common suffering, Christians were not able to closely investigate their differences. For this reason it was easy for each side to gather together and have church by themselves and associate with each other in groups. so that even though they were few in number, they were not dispersed.</p> <p>2.32.4 But after this law was passed, they could neither gather in public, because it was forbidden, nor assemble in secret, because bishops and clergy in each city were watching. As a result, many of the separtists joined the catholic church out of fear. Those who held on to their original position died and had no successors left to carry on</p>	

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	<p>their heresy, because they were not able to come together in the same place or safely teach those who held the same position. From the start—either because of the ridiculous teachings or the ignorance of those who came up with and taught them—there were never very many followers of each heresy.</p>	
Exceptions to Constantine’s decree		
	<p>2.32.5 But the Novatians, because they had good leaders and held the same beliefs about the divinity as the catholic church, were numerous from the beginning and remained so; this law did not hinder them. The emperor, I believe, intentionally relaxed the law; he only wanted to terrify them, not actually subject them to mistreatment. Acesius, who was the bishop of their heresy in Constantinople, was held in high regard by the emperor because of his good life. Most likely the church he governed was afforded protection for his sake.</p>	
	<p>2.32.6 The Phrygians suffered the same treatment as the other heretics in all the Roman provinces, except Phrygia and the regions around it. Since the time of Montanus, a large number of them had existed there and still do to the present day.</p>	
333 or 335 – Maximus succeeds Macarius as bishop of Jerusalem		
	<p>2.20.2 Maximus succeeded Macarius in the bishopric of Jerusalem. It is said that Macarius had ordained him bishop over the church of Diospolis, but that the members of the church of Jerusalem insisted upon his remaining among them. For since he was a confessor, and otherwise excellent, he was secretly chosen beforehand in the admiration of the people for their bishopric, if Macarius should die. The dread of offending the people and exciting an insurrection led to the election of another bishop over Diospolis. Maximus remained in Jerusalem and exercised the priestly functions conjointly with Macarius. And after the death of this latter, he governed that church. It is, however, well known to those who are accurately acquainted with these circumstances that Macarius agreed with the people in their desire to retain Maximus, For it is said that he regretted the ordination of</p>	

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	<p>Maximus and thought that he ought necessarily to have been reserved for his own succession on account of his holding right views concerning God and his confession, which had so endeared him to the people.</p> <p>2.20.3 He likewise feared that, at his death, the adherents of Eusebius and Patrophilus, who had embraced Arianism, would take that opportunity to place one of their own views in his see. For even while Macarius was living, they had attempted to introduce some innovations. But since they were to be separated from him, they on this account kept quiet.</p>	
February 6, 337 – Julius succeeds Mark as bishop of Rome		
	<p>2.20.1 About this time Mark, who had succeeded Silvester and who had held the episcopal sway during a short period, died, and Julius was raised to the see of Rome.</p>	
Constantine's three sons and heirs		
<p>1.38.12 Constantine was also glad because of his three sons. He had proclaimed them Caesars, one after each successive decade of his rule. After the first decade, he assigned the administration of the western parts of the empire to his eldest, Constantine, whom he named after himself.</p> <p>1.38.13 After the second decade, he appointed his second son, Constantius—named after his grandfather—as Caesar in the eastern division. And in the thirtieth year of his reign he gave Constans, the youngest, similar authority.</p>	<p>2.34.1a The emperor had already divided the empire between his sons, who were named Caesars. He gave the western regions to Constantine and the eastern region to Constantius.</p>	<p>1.32.1b As heirs to the imperial throne, he left his three sons, Constantine, Constantius, and Constans, the youngest.</p>
337 – Constantine travels to Helenopolis because of his illness		
<p>1.39.1 When a year had passed and Emperor Constantine had just entered the sixty-fifth year of his life, he fell ill. So he left Constantinople and made a voyage to Helenopolis to make use of the medicinal hot springs nearby.</p>	<p>2.34.1b Because he had an illness and had to bathe regularly, he travelled to Helenopolis, a city of Bithynia.</p>	
Constantine's baptism in Nicomedia		
<p>1.39.2 But when he realized that his condition was deteriorating, he stopped using the baths and moved from Helenopolis to Nicomedia. He took up residence in the suburbs there and received Christian baptism.</p>	<p>2.34.1c When his illness took a turn for the worse, however, he travelled to Nicomedia and was initiated into holy baptism in one of the suburbs of that city. After the ceremony he was filled with joy and gave thanks to God.</p>	<p>1.32.1a A year and a few months after the emperor banished Athanasius, he became sick at Nicomedia, a city of Bithynia. Knowing the uncertainty of human life, he received the blessing</p>

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		of holy baptism. He had put it off up to this point because he wished to be baptized in the Jordan river.
Constantine's will		
<p>1.39.3 After this he was in good spirits. He wrote his will, appointing his three sons as heirs to the empire. He gave each one of them their share, according to the arrangements he had made while still alive.</p> <p>1.39.4 He also granted many privileges to the cities of Rome and Constantinople. He entrusted his will to a presbyter, the one who had been instrumental in the removal of Arius, which we already mentioned above. Constantine charged him not to give it to anyone besides his son Constantius, whom he had set up as ruler in the East.</p>	<p>2.34.2 He then confirmed the division of the empire among his sons, according to his former allotment, and bestowed certain privileges on old Rome and on the city named after himself. He placed his testament in the hands of the presbyter who constantly extolled Arius and who had been recommended to him as a man of virtuous life by his sister Constantia in her last moments. Constantine commanded him with an added oath to deliver it to Constantius on his return, for neither Constantius nor the other Caesars were with their dying father.</p>	
		1.32.2 He ordered that the great Athanasius should return to Alexandria and expressed this decision in the presence of Eusebius, who did all he could to dissuade him.
May 22, 337 – Constantine's death		
<p>1.39.5 After Constantine made his will, he survived a few days until he died. None of his sons were present at his death, so a courier was immediately sent to the East to inform Constantius of his father's death.</p>	<p>2.34.3a After making these arrangements, Constantine only survived a few more days.</p>	<p>1.34.1a The emperor now was carried from his earthly dominion to a better kingdom.</p>
<p>1.40.3 The Emperor Constantine lived sixty-five years and reigned thirty-one. He died during the consulate of Felician and Tartan, on the twenty-second of May, in the second year of the 278th Olympiad. So this book, encompasses a period of thirty-one years.</p>	<p>2.34.3b He died at the age of sixty-five, in the thirty-first year of his reign.</p>	
Constantine's funeral and burial		
<p>1.40.1 The body of the emperor was placed in a coffin of gold by close friends and then transported to Constantinople. There, it was laid out on an elevated platform in the palace, surrounded by a guard and treated with the same respect as</p>	<p>2.34.5a After the death of Constantine, his body was placed in a golden coffin, brought to Constantinople, and displayed on a platform in the palace. Those in the palace showed him the same level of honor and respect he had received while still alive.</p>	<p>1.34.1b The governors of the provinces, the military officers, and the other officers of the state put him in a golden coffin and carried him to Constantinople. The whole army followed, bitterly</p>

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when he was alive. This was done until one of his sons arrived.		mourning their loss. Constantine had been like an affectionate father to them all.
1.40.2 When Constantius arrived from the eastern parts of the empire, he honored the body with an imperial burial and deposited it in the church called ‘The Apostles.’ Constantine had it constructed so that the emperors and priests might receive a level of respect that would be just a little lower than what was paid to the relics of the apostles.	2.34.5b After hearing of his father’s death, Constantius, who was in the East at that time, hurried to Constantinople. There, he took care of the body with royal magnificence and laid him in the tomb in the Church of the Apostles, which Constantine himself had prepared for his burial.	1.34.2 The body of the emperor remained in the palace until the arrival of his sons, and it was shown great honor. But I do not need to give a description here since others have written full accounts. Their works, which are easy to access, show how greatly the ruler of all honors his faithful servants.
	2.34.6 From this time, it became the custom to lay the bodies of subsequent Christian emperors in the same place in Constantinople. Bishops were also buried here, I suppose, because the office of the priesthood is equally important as the imperial office, and even takes a higher position in sacred places.	1.34.3 If anyone does not believe these things, let him now look at the tomb and statue of Constantine and let him believe what has been written, in what the Ruler said, ‘I will honor those who honor me, and those who disgrace me will be disgraced.
Author’s opinion of Constantine		
	2.34.3c He was a powerful protector of the Christian religion and was the first of the emperors who began to be zealous for the Church and to make great contributions to her. 2.34 In everything he put his hand to, he was more successful than any other ruler, because he did not work at anything—I am convinced—without God. He was victorious in his wars against the Goths and Sarmatians and, truthfully, in all of his military campaigns. With similar ease he changed the form of government after his own design, creating another senate and another imperial city, which he named after himself. He set his hand against the pagan religion and suppressed it quickly, even though it had been the prevailing religion among the princes and the people for a long time.	1.33.1 No one should be surprised that Constantine would be deceived into banishing so many great men; he believed bishops who all had good reputations, but had hidden their evil and lied to him. Those who are familiar with the Sacred Scriptures know that holy David, even though he was a prophet, was deceived. 1.33.2 I will add that the one who deceived David was not a priest, but a commoner, a slave, and a scoundrel. I am talking about Ziba, who deceived the king by lying about Mephibosheth and seized his land. 1.33.3 I do not say this to accuse the prophet, but to defend the emperor by showing the weakness of human nature. I also say it to teach that it is not necessary to believe only those who bring an accusation, however worthy of trust they may seem. One ear should be left open to protect the accused.