

B. The Fathers and the Development (or Defining) of Doctrine: i.e. Christian Truth

1. The initial premises:

- a. The Bible is our source book--what we need to know of truth is there--what is required at this point is definition for understanding.
- b. The Holy Spirit is the Great Teacher and we are the learners, but---we easily reverse this fact and that becomes a major problem.
- c. Through the ages dependent saints have outlined programs of truth and hence have developed doctrinal statements and positions.
- d. The core truths are the same in every age but varied emphasis is applied as societal interest increases. (For example: the interest in the "end times" today)
- e. The "Fathers" therefore are the outliners and protectors of truth. And take a quick note on Matthew 23:9. When we speak of them as such we are referring to persons used of God in the establishment of the body politic and the maintenance of its order. They are divided into these groups: The Ante-Nicene (to 325), the Nicene (325-400), and the Post Nicene, (to 476). The dates are approximations and the term "Nicene" refers to the Council of Nicaea in 325..the great legal council early in the days of a legalized Christianity....called by Constantine to settle the Arian question among other things.

Mc 1:22

*1. 1. 11
2. 1. 7
3. 1. 2*

2. The early church (33AD until about 150...more or less)

- a. The church began as a body politic at Pentecost with the coming of the Holy Spirit and the fulfillment of the promise the Lord in Acts 1. It was a noble company: witnessing and growing and caring for one another in a dramatic fashion. It was surrounded by pagan philosophy: Stoicism, Platonism, Epicureanism, etc. and the idolatrous worship of that time
- b. There was soon an increase in cults that blended Christianity and Judaism (the Ebionites, etc.) and who borrowed freely from pagan ideas.
- c. It was a surprisingly literate world. The Hebrew