

In this period the church had faced three large challenges:

- 1) persecution
- 2) morality
- 3) ethics

In the second of these it needed to show a difference between itself and the world about it while in the third it needed to find a way of demonstrating truth in distinction from the philosophical systems of its time.

In spite of the oppressions, etc., the church produced a literature that would gird it up in succeeding centuries. And we may note in conclusion, that having been founded by Christ, the church was empowered with the Spirit and given the strength of the sovereign God. It was apparent by 150 AD that as a societal force it could not be stopped.

### III. The Pre-Nicene Period

### III. THE EARLY CHURCH: THE PRE-NICENE PERIOD.

#### III. 1 Historical Background

#### HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

#### The Roman Emperors

#### III.1.a Roman Emperors

As in the previous period, the "civilized" world is governed by Rome. During this period the long power of Rome will begin to erode as the slavery and societal ills begin to gnaw at the Roman republic. To a large extent the Romans will be fighting to keep what they have gained and will begin to see bits and pieces of their empire fall to others. As a general rule the western portion of the Empire suffered greater political disruption while the eastern south to continue expansion in wars with the Persians, et al. But throughout the period, in spite of weakness of varying sorts, the Empire held together and continued to provide the sort of governmental image of oneness that appealed to the church.