

III. THE CHURCH SURVIVES

Ante-Nicene Period
150-325 AD

A. **The Trials of the Church**

When we speak of the church surviving we have reference to the fact that there were many things that stood against it or sought to impede its progress. We will mention these in three general areas.

1. Imperial Policy

Whether the widespread Roman polytheism had many sincere followers or not...the Roman position was to view the emperors as being "divine" and being promoted to the pantheon of the gods at death. To disagree with this broad policy was to make one subject to persecution and depending on the feelings of the emperor, the intensity would vary from place to place, time to time.

2. Persecution

I have noted the earlier persecution on page 23 and following. During this period there were many localized persecutions and two that were intended to eliminate the church altogether. Our major attention is on these.

a. The Persecution under Decius Trajan and his immediate successors..249-251, etc.

- The aim
- The Method
- Libelli and Traditors
- Effect on the church

b. The persecution under Diocletian 300-305

- The rationale
- The implementation
- Effect of Empire division
- Seeing the Obvious