**Gnosticism, Persecution, and Jewish Revolts**

85 – Domitian enforces collection of taxes from Jews.

90 – Gnostic heresies arise within the Church. Some Gnostics deny Jesus’ humanity (Docetism). Gnostics claim secret knowledge beyond divine revelation.

Christianity spreads to Egypt (Mark), Sudan (Ethiopian eunuch), Armenia (Thaddeus and Bartholomew), Western Europe, Iraq, Iran, and India (Thomas), Eastern Europe (Titus) Asia Minor, Libya, and Tunisia.

95 – John is given and writes down the Revelation.

96-98 – Domitian assassinated by his closest associates. Nerva briefly is Emperor and persecution is lightened.

98 - Trajan becomes Emperor of Rome. Persecution is increased again, especially in Galatia, Asia Minor (now central Turkey), Pontus, and Bithynia (now northern Turkey). *See 1 Peter 1:1-7 (A.D. 63 or 64); Revelation 2-3 - 7 churches of Asia (A.D. 95).*

100 – Death of John, the only Apostle to die a natural death.

85-100 – The writings of the “Apostolic Fathers”

Clement of Rome was probably an Elder of the church in Rome. He wrote letters to churches. In a letter to the Corinthian church he writes, “Have we not one God, and one Christ, and one Spirit of Grace poured out upon us?” (1 Clement 46:6). He also writes extensively of the connection of Christianity to Judaism, citing that Jesus, in flesh, descended from Jacob, thus Christianity descends from the Levitical priesthood.

Ignatius of Antioch was a student of the Apostle John, and probably an Elder of the church in Antioch. He wrote seven letters encouraging churches, and strongly teaching against Judaism. “it is monstrous to talk of Jesus Christ and practice Judaism” -Ignatius’ letter to the church in Magnesia

Polycarp of Smyrna was probably an Elder of the church at Smyrna. He wrote a letter to the church in Philippi, in which he indicates that the four Gospels, 1 Peter, the Pastoral Epistles, Hebrews, and at least some of Paul’s letters were being read in church. He refers to these writings as “Scripture”. He also presents a close knit, well organized spiritual community with Elders, Deacons, “widows”, and “young men”.

107 – Ignatius is martyred in Rome (killed by lions). Trajan hosts 123 days of games with 10,000 gladiators.

111-113 – Pliny the Younger is procurator (governor) of Bithynia. Pliny and Trajan correspond about the Christians. They agree that Christians should be punished if known, but not hunted down.

“You have adopted the proper course…in your examination of the case of those who were accused to you as Christians…They are not to be sought out; but if they are accused and convicted, they must be punished – yet on this condition, that whoso denies himself to be a Christian, and makes the fact plain by his action, that is, by worshipping our gods, shall obtain pardon on his repentance, however suspicious his past conduct may be.” – an excerpt from Trajan’s written reply to Pliny

117 – Hadrian becomes Emperor of Rome. He continues Trajan’s policy of granting Christians “due process”, and not hunting them down.

115-118 – Jewish rebellion in the provinces *outside* Israel (esp. Cyrene (N. Africa), Egypt, Cyprus, and Mesopotamia), but is defeated by the Romans.

125 – Gnosticism spreads.

132-135 – Second Jewish rebellion led by Bar Kachba (son of star). The rebellion is defeated, Jerusalem is destroyed and renamed as a Roman colony, and Jews are forbidden to live there. Most of the population of Jerusalem dies or flees. Remaining Jews are sold into slavery.

138 – Antonius Pius becomes Emperor of Rome.

139 – Romans rename Judea “Syria Palestinia”.

155 – Polycarp is burned at the stake under Antonius Pius for refusal to serve pagan gods. Justin Martyr writes his first Apology, a rebuttal of Greek philosophers.