

<p>I PERSECUTION</p>	<p>6. In spite of persecution the church continued to grow</p>	<p>2. Dealing with these controversies, errors and heresies forced the church to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) officially identify the Canon of the New Testament → the authoritative book for faith and practice b) identify authoritative Christian doctrine → it created a creed, an authoritative statement of belief c) on the basis of the authoritative Scripture to contend earnestly for the faith → powerful apologists arose in the church <p style="text-align: center;">III CHANGES IN ORGANIZATION</p>
<p>1. Because the church, as Jesus said, is in the world but not of the world, it has always faced hatred and persecution from the world (Jn 15:18-19; 1 Jn 3:13) (See Death of the Apostles Chart)</p> <p>2. For the first decades persecution came mainly from the Jewish religious and political leaders but eventually it became a matter of empire wide policy by the Roman government (See PERSECUTIONS Chart)</p> <p>3. Christians were charged with a variety of crimes and unacceptable practices throughout the various times of persecution and disdain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) atheism – had only one GOD, no idols b) cannibalism – the body and blood of Christ c) sacrificing and eating their children d) incest – believers are “brothers and sisters” e) upholding equality of all – threatening the power and influence of the higher classes f) threatening the economy – idolatry was big business <p>4. Because the Christians refused to worship other gods they were often blamed for causing natural disasters, plagues, famines and even civil unrest</p> <p>5. Emperor Decius wanted to destroy Christianity because he blamed it for the decline and fall of the Roman Empire (249-251 AD)</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <p><i>“The oftener we are mown down by you, the more in number we grow; the blood of Christians is seed.”</i> - Tertullian (Apology, 50)</p> </div> <p style="text-align: center;">II HERESIES WITHIN</p> <p>1. While experiencing attacks from without, the church also had to fight numerous heresies that arose from within</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) by Jewish converts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → Legalism = salvation by works → e.g. circumcision for salvation b) by Gentile converts – philosophies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → e.g. Gnosticism = a clear separation between the material (evil) and the spiritual (good) = knowledge is limited to only some elite → e.g. Docetism = Jesus was a “phantom” with the seeming appearance of a physical body c) theological issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → the nature of God and Jesus → denial of the Trinity d) other controversies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → e.g. what is the proper date of Easter 	

d) require obedience to the principal bishops, among whom the Roman bishop took pre-eminence

3. By the time the church was granted full freedom and authority by Emperor Constantine (313AD)

- a) the “doctrine of apostolic succession” was fully accepted
- b) binding legislation of church belief and practice was made by holding synods or church councils of the leading bishops
- c) very quickly there were doctrinal deviations including for e.g. infant baptism (175AD)
- d) all these became canons and were received as coming from the Holy Spirit