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Christian History Made Easy (Rose Bible Basics)

13. What You Should Know About Christian History (496–1291)

A quick-reference chapter for the medieval church. It lists the key events, people, and terms a student should recognize from roughly 500 to 1300 AD, spanning the last church councils, the rise of papal power, and the Crusades.

Key takeaways

- Church councils kept settling debates about Jesus: the Third Council of Constantinople (681) affirmed Jesus had two wills, human and divine, that never disagreed; the Second Council of Nicaea (787) was the last general council and allowed revering icons but not worshipping them.
- Popes gained worldly power: Pepin's Donation (754) gave the pope Italian lands (the papal states), a forged Donation of Constantine backed papal claims, and Innocent III claimed authority over all secular rulers.
- The Investiture Dispute (1076–1123) was a power struggle over who appointed bishops; the Concordat of Worms settled it, giving the church control of selection.

- Key figures shaped the era: Clovis became Christian, Charles Martel stopped the Muslim advance, Alcuin drove the Carolingian Renaissance, and Crusaders held a kingdom in Palestine until Acre fell in 1291.
- Terms to know: Transubstantiation (the bread and wine become Christ's body and blood), the Albigensians/Cathars (a Gnostic heresy condemned in 1215), and the Holy Roman Emperor title.