



E U S E B I U S
P A M P H I L L U S
THE ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY

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BOOK ONE

CHAPTER 1

The Plan of the Work

1. It is my purpose to write an account of the successions of the holy apostles, as well as of the times which have elapsed from the days of our Saviour to our own; and to relate the many important events which are said to have occurred in the history of the Church; and to mention those who have governed and presided over the Church in the most prominent parishes,¹ and those who in each generation have proclaimed the divine word either orally or in writing.
 2. It is my purpose also to give the names and number and times of those who through love of innovation have run into the greatest errors, and, proclaiming themselves discoverers of knowledge falsely so-called² have like fierce wolves unmercifully devastated the flock of Christ.³
 3. It is my intention, moreover, to recount the misfortunes which immediately came upon the whole Jewish nation in consequence of their plots against our Saviour, and to record the ways and the times in which the divine word has been attacked by the Gentiles, and to describe the character of those who at various periods have contended for it in the face of blood and of tortures, as well as the confessions which have been made in our own days, and finally the gracious and kindly succor which our Saviour has afforded them all.⁴ Since I propose to write of all these things I shall commence my work with the beginning of the dispensation of our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ.
1. This is a reference to important Pastors and leaders in the church in different locations around the Roman world.
 2. This may be a reference to the Gnostics, who claimed a certain secret form of knowledge only available to an enlightened few.
 3. From the beginning, there have been heretics (or wolves) that have crept into the church. To understand these heresies and to avoid them is part of the Christian life (in our day as well).
 4. Eusebius also intends to include a full description of the persecutions and martyrdoms of the early church.

5. Eusebius confesses that he has little source material to work with.
6. This is a work no longer extant, except for a few fragments. It was a chronological timeline of the history of nations.
7. With Christ being the very centerpiece of history and the very Son of God come to earth, it is appropriate that a Church history begin with Him.
4. But at the outset I must crave for my work the indulgence of the wise, for I confess that it is beyond my power to produce a perfect and complete history, and since I am the first to enter upon the subject, I am attempting to traverse as it were a lonely and untrodden path. I pray that I may have God as my guide and the power of the Lord as my aid, since I am unable to find even the bare footsteps of those who have traveled the way before me, except in brief fragments, in which some in one way, others in another, have transmitted to us particular accounts of the times in which they lived. From afar they raise their voices like torches, and they cry out, as from some lofty and conspicuous watch-tower, admonishing us where to walk and how to direct the course of our work steadily and safely.⁵
 5. Having gathered therefore from the matters mentioned here and there by them whatever we consider important for the present work, and having plucked like flowers from a meadow the appropriate passages from ancient writers, we shall endeavor to embody the whole in an historical narrative, content if we preserve the memory of the successions of the apostles of our Saviour; if not indeed of all, yet of the most renowned of them in those churches which are the most noted, and which even to the present time are held in honor.
 6. This work seems to me of especial importance because I know of no ecclesiastical writer who has devoted himself to this subject; and I hope that it will appear most useful to those who are fond of historical research.
 7. I have already given an epitome of these things in the Chronological Canons⁶ which I have composed, but notwithstanding that, I have undertaken in the present work to write as full an account of them as I am able.
 8. My work will begin, as I have said, with the dispensation of the Saviour Christ—which is loftier and greater than human conception—and with a discussion of his divinity;
 9. for it is necessary, inasmuch as we derive even our name from Christ, for one who proposes to write a history of the Church to begin with the very origin of Christ's dispensation, a dispensation more divine than many think.⁷



6-1. *The Siege and Destruction of Jerusalem* by David Roberts

CHAPTER 2

Summary View of the Pre-existence and Divinity of Our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ¹

1. It is important to remember that this document comes before the Council of Nicaea, and yet Eusebius provides an orthodox view of the two natures and the divinity of Christ.

2. Reference to the two natures of Christ - Divine and Human.

3. Isaiah 53:8

4. Matthew 11:27

5. John 1:1

1. Since in Christ there is a twofold nature, and the one—in so far as he is thought of as God—resembles the head of the body, while the other may be compared with the feet—in so far as he, for the sake of our salvation, put on human nature with the same passions as our own—the following work will be complete only if we begin with the chief and lordliest events of all his history.² In this way will the antiquity and divinity of Christianity be shown to those who suppose it of recent and foreign origin, and imagine that it appeared only yesterday.
2. No language is sufficient to express the origin and the worth, the being and the nature of Christ. Wherefore also the divine Spirit says in the prophecies, “Who shall declare his generation?”³ For none knoweth the Father except the Son, neither can anyone know the Son adequately except the Father alone who hath begotten him.⁴
3. For who beside the Father could clearly understand the Light which was before the world, the intellectual and essential Wisdom which existed before the ages, the living Word which was in the beginning with the Father and which was God,⁵ the first and only begotten of God which was before every creature and creation visible and invisible, the commander-in-chief of the rational and immortal host of heaven, the messenger of the great counsel, the executor of the Father’s unspoken will, the creator, with the Father, of all things, the second cause of the universe after the Father, the true and only-begotten Son of God, the Lord and God and King of all created things, the one who has received dominion and power, with divinity itself, and with might and honor from the Father; as it is said in regard to him in the mystical passages of Scripture which speak of his divinity: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,

and the Word was God. . . . All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made.”⁶

4. This, too, the great Moses teaches, when, as the most ancient of all the prophets, he describes under the influence of the divine Spirit the creation and arrangement of the universe. He declares that the maker of the world and the creator of all things yielded to Christ himself, and to none other than his own clearly divine and first-born Word, the making of inferior things, and communed with him respecting the creation of man. “For,” says he, “God said, Let us make man in our image and in our likeness.”⁷
5. And another of the prophets confirms this, speaking of God in his hymns as follows: “He spake and they were made; he commanded and they were created.”⁸ He here introduces the Father and Maker as Ruler of all, commanding with a kingly nod, and second to him the divine Word, none other than the one who is proclaimed by us, as carrying out the Father’s commands.
6. All that are said to have excelled in righteousness and piety since the creation of man, the great servant Moses and before him in the first place Abraham and his children, and as many righteous men and prophets as afterward appeared, have contemplated him with the pure eyes of the mind, and have recognized him and offered to him the worship which is due him as Son of God.⁹
7. But he, by no means neglectful of the reverence due to the Father, was appointed to teach the knowledge of the Father to them all. For instance, the Lord God, it is said, appeared as a common man to Abraham while he was sitting at the oak of Mambre. And he, immediately falling down, although he saw a man with his eyes, nevertheless worshipped him as God, and sacrificed to him as Lord, and confessed that he was not ignorant of his identity when he uttered the words, “Lord, the judge of all the earth, wilt thou not execute righteous judgment?”¹⁰
8. For if it is unreasonable to suppose that the unbegotten and immutable essence of the almighty God was changed into the form of man or that it deceived the eyes of the beholders with the appearance of some created thing, and if it is unreasonable to suppose, on the other hand, that the Scripture should falsely

6. John 1:1, 3

7. Genesis 1:26. The key word in this passage is “us.”

8. Psalm 33:9, 148:5

9. Eusebius acknowledges the preexistence and revelation of the Son of God in the Old Testament times.

10. Genesis 18:25

11. Psalm 107:20

12. Genesis 19:24.

Eusebius is making a case for two distinct Persons, both referred to as Lord (in Old Testament passages).

13. Genesis 32:28-30

invent such things, when the God and Lord who judgeth all the earth and executeth judgment is seen in the form of a man, who else can be called, if it be not lawful to call him the first cause of all things, than his only pre-existent Word? Concerning whom it is said in the Psalms, “He sent his Word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.”¹¹

9. Moses most clearly proclaims him second Lord after the Father, when he says, “The Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord.”¹² The divine Scripture also calls him God, when he appeared again to Jacob in the form of a man, and said to Jacob, “Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name, because thou hast prevailed with God.”¹³ Wherefore also Jacob called the name of that place



6-2. Joshua and the Captain of the Lord's Hosts

“Vision of God,” saying, “For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.”

10. Nor is it admissible to suppose that the theophanies recorded were appearances of subordinate angels and ministers of God, for whenever any of these appeared to men, the Scripture does not conceal the fact, but calls them by name not God nor Lord, but angels, as it is easy to prove by numberless testimonies.¹⁴
11. Joshua, also, the successor of Moses, calls him, as leader of the heavenly angels and archangels and of the supra-mundane powers, and as lieutenant of the Father, entrusted with the second rank of sovereignty and rule over all, “captain of the host of the Lord,” although he saw him not otherwise than again in the form and appearance of a man. For it is written:
12. “And it came to pass when Joshua was at Jericho that he looked and saw a man standing over against him with his sword drawn in his hand, and Joshua went unto him and said, ‘Art thou for us or for our adversaries?’ And he said unto him, ‘As captain of the host of the Lord am I now come.’ And Joshua fell on his face to the earth and said unto him, ‘Lord, what dost thou command

14. These Old Testament theophanies (appearances of God to man), Eusebius believes to be the Son of God.



6-3. Moses and the Burning Bush

thy servant?’ and the captain of the Lord said unto Joshua, ‘Loose thy shoe from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy.’”¹⁵

15. Joshua 5:13-15

13. You will perceive also from the same words that this was no other than he who talked with Moses. For the Scripture says in the same words and with reference to the same one, “When the Lord saw that he drew near to see, the Lord called to him out of the bush and said, ‘Moses, Moses.’ And he said, ‘What is it?’ And he said, ‘Draw not nigh hither; loose thy shoe from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.’ And he said unto him, ‘I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’”¹⁶

16. Exodus 3:4-6

14. And that there is a certain substance which lived and subsisted before the world, and which ministered unto the Father and God of the universe for the formation of all created things, and which is called the Word of God and Wisdom, we may learn, to quote other proofs in addition to those already cited, from the mouth of Wisdom herself, who reveals most clearly through Solomon the following mysteries concerning herself: “I, Wisdom, have dwelt with prudence and knowledge, and I have invoked understanding. Through me kings reign, and princes ordain righteousness. Through me the great are magnified, and through me sovereigns rule the earth.”¹⁷

17. Proverbs 8:12-31 (selections)

15. To which she adds: “The Lord created me in the beginning of his ways, for his works; before the world he established me, in the beginning, before he made the earth, before he made the depths, before the mountains were settled, before all hills he begat me. When he prepared the heavens I was present with him, and when he established the fountains of the region under heaven I was with him, disposing. I was the one in whom he delighted; daily I rejoiced before him at all times when he was rejoicing at having completed the world.”

16. That the divine Word, therefore, pre-existed and appeared to some, if not to all, has thus been briefly shown by us.

17. But why the Gospel was not preached in ancient times to all men and to all nations, as it is now, will appear from the following considerations. The life of the ancients was not of such

a kind as to permit them to receive the all-wise and all-virtuous teaching of Christ.¹⁸

- 18.** For immediately in the beginning, after his original life of blessedness, the first man despised the command of God, and fell into this mortal and perishable state, and exchanged his former divinely inspired luxury for this curse-laden earth.¹⁹ His descendants having filled our earth, showed themselves much worse, with the exception of one here and there, and entered upon a certain brutal and insupportable mode of life.
- 19.** They thought neither of city nor state, neither of arts nor sciences. They were ignorant even of the name of laws and of justice, of virtue and of philosophy. As nomads, they passed their lives in deserts, like wild and fierce beasts, destroying, by an excess of voluntary wickedness, the natural reason of man, and the seeds of thought and of culture implanted in the human soul.²⁰ They gave themselves wholly over to all kinds of profanity, now seducing one another, now slaying one another, now eating human flesh, and now daring to wage war with the gods and to undertake those battles of the giants celebrated by all;²¹ now planning

18. Now Eusebius explains why the Gospel was not made available to the whole world until after Christ came.

19. Reference to the fall of Adam in the garden.

20. Reference to the pre-flood years.

21. Eusebius describes the state of the world in the most pagan, primitive locations, which usually include mass-murder, cannibalism, and homosexuality. He's juxtaposing what we have seen in post-flood history to pre-flood history.



6-4. Moses and the Ten Commandments

22. Eusebius combines the worldwide flood with other natural disasters that God has brought upon the world (most likely including the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah).

23. These appearances of Christ in the Old Testament are tokens of His love for us.

24. God gave His people shadowy lessons through external practices like circumcision, in order to teach them something of His truth. In the New Testament era, more of the mystery is revealed in Christ.

25. Eusebius argues here that there is some common grace that flowed into the pagans, especially those who were close to the trade routes that passed through Palestine. He believes this helped the Greeks and Romans, and perhaps also some from India, China, and Japan.

to fortify earth against heaven, and in the madness of ungoverned pride to prepare an attack upon the very God of all.

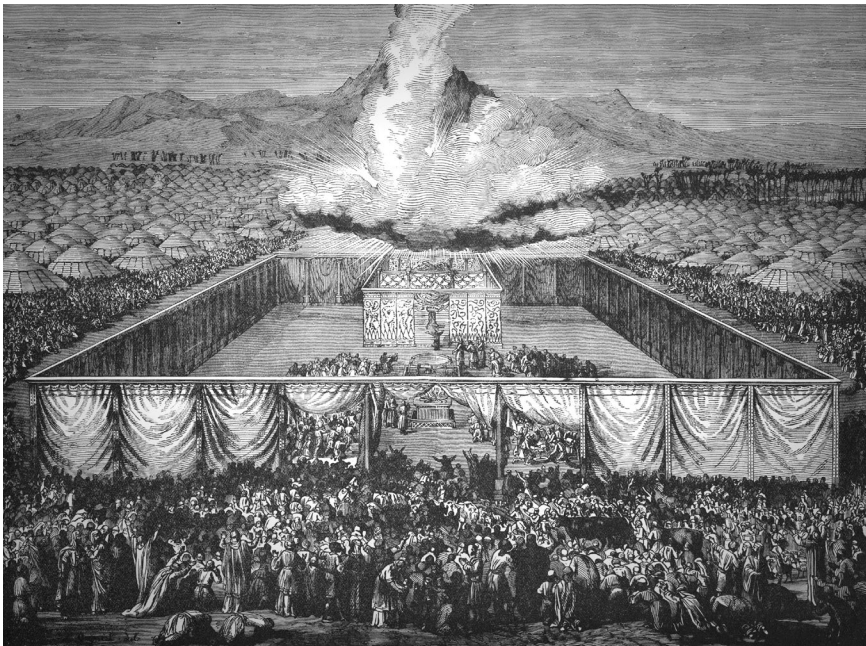
- 20.** On account of these things, when they conducted themselves thus, the all-seeing God sent down upon them floods and conflagrations as upon a wild forest spread over the whole earth. He cut them down with continuous famines and plagues, with wars, and with thunderbolts from heaven, as if to check some terrible and obstinate disease of souls with more severe punishments.²²
- 21.** Then, when the excess of wickedness had overwhelmed nearly all the race, like a deep fit of drunkenness, beclouding and darkening the minds of men, the first-born and first-created wisdom of God, the pre-existent Word himself, induced by his exceeding love for man, appeared to his servants, now in the form of angels, and again to one and another of those ancients who enjoyed the favor of God, in his own person as the saving power of God, not otherwise, however, than in the shape of man, because it was impossible to appear in any other way.²³
- 22.** And as by them the seeds of piety were sown among a multitude of men and the whole nation, descended from the Hebrews, devoted themselves persistently to the worship of God, he imparted to them through the prophet Moses, as to multitudes still corrupted by their ancient practices, images and symbols of a certain mystic Sabbath and of circumcision, and elements of other spiritual principles, but he did not grant them a complete knowledge of the mysteries themselves.²⁴
- 23.** But when their law became celebrated, and, like a sweet odor, was diffused among all men, as a result of their influence the dispositions of the majority of the heathen were softened by the lawgivers and philosophers who arose on every side, and their wild and savage brutality was changed into mildness, so that they enjoyed deep peace, friendship, and social intercourse.²⁵ Then, finally, at the time of the origin of the Roman Empire, there appeared again to all men and nations throughout the world, who had been, as it were, previously assisted, and were now fitted to receive the knowledge of the Father, that same teacher of virtue, the minister of the Father in all good things, the divine and heavenly Word of God, in a human body not at

all differing in substance from our own.²⁶ He did and suffered the things which had been prophesied. For it had been foretold that one who was at the same time man and God should come and dwell in the world, should perform wonderful works, and should show himself a teacher to all nations of the piety of the Father. The marvelous nature of his birth, and his new teaching, and his wonderful works had also been foretold; so likewise the manner of his death, his resurrection from the dead, and, finally, his divine ascension into heaven.²⁷

24. For instance, Daniel the prophet, under the influence of the divine Spirit, seeing his kingdom at the end of time, was inspired thus to describe the divine vision in language fitted to human comprehension: “For I beheld,” he says, “until thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as snow and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was a flame of fire and his wheels burning fire. A river of fire flowed before him. Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him. He appointed judgment, and the books were opened.”

26. Now we have arrived at the coming of Christ into the world during the reign of Caesar Augustus.

27. Eusebius is detailing the continuity between Old Testament revelation and prophecies and the New Testament fulfillment.



6-5. The Tabernacle

28. Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14.
Eusebius sees this referring
to the ascendance and
present Lordship of Christ.

- 25.** And again, “I saw,” says he, “and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and he hastened unto the Ancient of Days and was brought into his presence, and there was given him the dominion and the glory and the kingdom; and all peoples, tribes, and tongues serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom shall not be destroyed.”²⁸
- 26.** It is clear that these words can refer to no one else than to our Saviour, the God Word who was in the beginning with God, and who was called the Son of man because of his final appearance in the flesh.
- 27.** But since we have collected in separate books the selections from the prophets which relate to our Saviour Jesus Christ, and have arranged in a more logical form those things which have been revealed concerning him, what has been said will suffice for the present.