AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Ashley M. Brydone-Jack for the degree of Honors Baccalaureate of Arts in History
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Gary B. Ferngren

St. Augustine was an influential member of the early Christian Church, establishing

many doctrines of the Christian faith. One of his most significant contributions to

Christianity was a Christian philosophy of history. Augustine defined the purpose of

history as God providing salvation to humanity after the fall of Adam. This salvation

is achieved through a conflict between two cities of people, the earthly city and the

City of God, which are defined by two separate loves. The earthly citizens love

themselves more than God, while the citizens in the City of God love God more than

themselves. Salvation is ultimately provided to the predestined citizens of the City of

God in the final judgment, while citizens of the earthly city are damned to eternal

punishment in a pit of fire. This philosophy of history broke with the classical

tradition history, which believed that history was cyclic, repeating continuously for

all eternity. Augustine defined history as having a distinct beginning and end,

through which God worked to provide salvation to humanity.

Key Words: St. Augustine, City of God, earthly city, salvation, predestination, final

judgment, philosophy of history

Corresponding e-mail: fickensa@onid.orst.edu

A Christian Philosophy of History: St. Augustine and *The City of God*

By

Ashley M. Brydone-Jack

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APPROVED:

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Mentor, representing History

_____

Committee Member, representing History

_____

Committee Member, representing Honors College

_____

Chair, Department of History

_____

Dean, University Honors College

I understand that my project will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University, University Honors College. My signature below authorizes release of my project to any reader upon request.

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Ashley M. Brydone-Jack, Author

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The Life of St. Augustine

Julius Caesar established the Roman Empire in 49 B.C. Under the republic, Rome had expanded its boarders in order to support a lavish life style for the members of the upper class.[1] The provinces were incapable of supporting this excessive spending, and if it were not for the foundation of the empire, Rome and all it stood for could have been destroyed.[2] Under Caesar, and Augustus after him, the provinces regained their prosperity, and the Pax Romana spread peace through much of the empire allowing it to flourish. Rome extended firm but not suffocating power over her empire and kept it united through the power of Roman armies, administration, and loyalty from local elites.[3] Such an extended empire and peace could not last, and during the third century A.D. everything seemed to go wrong. Barbarians were threatening the boarders, Roman troops were making and unmaking emperors on a daily basis, plagues and famines swept through the empire, and inflation was rampant causing financial ruin.[4] The high level of material culture that had prospered during the Pax Romana was built upon feeble foundations that could not sustain the lavish lifestyles that were common in the empire.[5]

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[1] Christopher Dawson, "St. Augustine and His Age" in *St. Augustine: His Age, Life, and Thought* (New York: Meridian, 1959), 17.
[2] Dawson, C. "St. Augustine and His Age," 18.
[3] Judith M. Bennett, *Medieval Europe: A Short History*, 11th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2011) 6.
[4] Bennett, J. *Medieval Europe: A Short History,* 8.
[5] Dawson, C. "St. Augustine and His Age," 21.

Diocletian and Constantine instituted large reform programs which rebuilt the empire into an autocracy supported by a huge army, a large system of bureaucrats, and awe inspiring emperors. They began to divide the empire, which began as an administrative matter in an attempt to make the empire easier to control, but after the death of Theodosius the split became permanent.[6] In the late fourth century A.D., the Western Roman Empire faced threats from barbarians on the Rhine and Danube rivers, and they had lost much of the wealth, which was centered in the Eastern half of the empire. By the time of St. Augustine's birth, Rome had started to crumble.

St. Augustine was born a Roman citizen in the city of Thagaste in North Africa on November 13, 354.[7] In Augustine's *Confessions*, he tells that his mother, Monica, was a faithful Christian, who attempted to raise Augustine in a Christian fashion. His father, who remains un-named throughout Augustine's *Confessions*, was a pagan for most of his life, converting to Christianity only shortly before his death. Augustine admits that he believed in the Christian faith as a child.[8] Though he believed, he was never baptized, as it was customary at that time to wait until the end of life in order that a majority of the sins of life could be washed away by the blessed waters of baptism. According to Augustine, there was a time where Augustine fell very sick,

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[6] Bennett, M. *Medieval Europe: A Short History*, 8.
[7] Henri I. Marrou, *St. Augustine and His Influence through the Ages* (London: Longmans, 1957), 8.
[8] Augustine, *Confessions*, I, xi, 17. Trans. Albert C. Outler (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2007).

and his mother still refused to baptize him, believing that the Lord would carry

Augustine through, and he would be baptized later in life.[9]

At a young age, Augustine was sent to school. His father was a lowly farmer,

but he understood the significance of a good education. It would provide Augustine

a chance for advancement in the world if he succeeded. Though Augustine admits

that he had no real liking for school at a young age, he excelled.[10] He was forced to

learn both Greek and Latin, and while he learned to quite enjoy his Latin work, he

never took a liking to the Greek, and through the end of his days he could never

grasp an understanding of the Greek authors in their native tongue.[11] As Augustine

continued in school, he quickly showed promise in memorization, speech, and

perception, though as his lessons progressed, Augustine's faith in God diminished.[12]

In Augustine's sixteenth year, his schooling had to be delayed for a year. His

father could not get the money together for an additional year at school, so

Augustine spent the year at his parents' house, taking a holiday from education.[13] In

his idle time, Augustine turned to deeds that he regretted in later life, which

consisted of being wasteful, lustful, and overall sinful. In his *Confessions*, Augustine

recounts a time during his year off when he and his fellows were out late one

evening looking for something to do. They came across a pear tree, which was

owned by one of the townsmen, and since they had nothing better to do, they

decided to steal pears off the tree. Upon obtaining the pears, they threw them to the

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[9] Confessions, I, xi, 17; trans. Outler.
[10] *Confessions,* I, xii, 19; trans. Outler.
[11] *Confessions,* I, xii, 20; trans. Outler*.*
[12] *Confessions,* I, xix, 31; trans. Outler.
[13] *Confessions,* II, iii, 5; trans. Outler.

hogs, for as Augustine states, "I did not desire to enjoy what I stole, but only the theft and the sin itself."[14] Augustine and his friends stole for the sheer joy of stealing, because that is what a sinful soul desires most of all, to enjoy the sin that it creates.[15]

The following year Augustine returned to school in Carthage. Carthage was full of more sinful temptations that Augustine was able to indulge himself with, and in his indulgence fell farther away from God. In his various actions, Augustine states that he was looking for love.[16] Since he could never quite find what he was looking for, he began to enjoy stage plays. Augustine states, "The plays…captivated me, with their sights full of the images of my own miseries: fuel for my own fire."[17] Since he couldn't find love, he decided to enjoy watching others become miserable in their own failed searches for love on the stage.

Augustine's studies were "…aimed at distinction in the courts of law…" and he quickly became a master in rhetoric.[18] After rhetoric, he decided to study eloquence, and in those studies, Augustine discovered Cicero's *Hortensius,* which Augustine greatly admired, and which persuaded him to look for a higher purpose for happiness.[19] Augustine turned toward Scripture, but was disappointed. "Truly they were of a sort to aid the growth of little ones, but I scorned to be a little one and, swollen with pride, I looked upon myself as fully grown."[20] The rhetorical style of Scripture was too simple, according to Augustine, and as such it was not really

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[14] *Confessions,* II, iv,9; trans. Outler.
[15] *Confessions,* II, ix, 17; trans. Outler.
[16] *Confessions,* III, i, 1; trans. Outler.
[17] *Confessions,* III, ii, 2; trans. Outler.
[18] *Confessions,* III, iii, 6; trans. Outler.
[19] *Confessions,* III, iv, 7; trans. Outler.
[20] *Confessions,* III, v, 9; trans. Outler.

worth consideration. The great works, which Augustine cherished at this time, were written in a strict rhetorical style, which required a rhetorical education to fully understand. Since Scripture did not adhere to a classical rhetorical style, it was not worth Augustine's study.

At nineteen, Augustine began to teach rhetoric in his hometown of Thagaste. His father had died a few years previously, and though his mother was able to finance his education for a little longer, as the head of household, Augustine was responsible for providing for his family. During this troublesome time, Augustine also took a concubine. They were never joined in marriage, though he remained faithful to her until he joined the church and took an oath of celibacy.[21]

Augustine was still spiritually troubled at this time, and he turned to a variety of sources to try and find what he though would bring him happiness. For a time, he turned to divination, asking several fortunetellers what they could tell him about truth.[22] A student convinced him that these were silly past times, and he eventually gave them up for the company of a friend.[23] This friend, whom Augustine never names, was Augustine's closest comrade. They were close to the same age, and had grown up as friends, close to one another's heart. When he returned to Thagaste to teach, they became as close as any two friends could be. Shortly thereafter, his friend became very ill. While these two had had similar beliefs previous to his illness, both rejecting Christianity, on his deathbed, Augustine's friend adopted Christianity and was baptized. Augustine could not understand his

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[21] *Confessions,* IV, ii, 2; trans. Outler.
[22] *Confessions,* IV, ii, 3; trans. Outler.
[23] *Confessions,* IV, iii, 6; trans. Outler.

friend's decision, and his friend died before he could fully understand.[24] The death

of his friend shattered Augustine's world. He descended into a deep depression and,

in an attempt to recover, Augustine moved to Carthage to continue his work as a

teacher.[25]

In his early years as a teacher, Augustine had adopted Manichaeism.[26]

Manichaeism began around the year 240 AD, when two angels allegedly revealed

the doctrine of Manichaeism to Mani, the originating prophet.[27] Manichaeism was a

dualistic religion, in which light and dark were thought to struggle against one

another. Light was considered the good, and thus the human soul made of light.

Darkness was evil, and all material things were considered dark. Humanity was

attempting to escape the material world of darkness, which could only be

accomplished though knowledge.[28] Knowledge and reason allowed humanity to

understand their own nature, the universe, and their destiny, which would allow for

the success of light in the final age.[29] Manichaeism taught that there are three ages

that comprise the entirety of all time: the first was the golden age before light and

dark mixed together, the second is the current age where light and dark are fighting

for control of the universe, and the third will be when good and evil are separated

once again, and peace returns to the universe.[30] Overall, Manichaeism viewed life on

earth pessimistically, believing that since the light of the soul has been trapped by

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[24] *Confessions,* IV, vi, 11; trans. Outler.
[25] *Confessions,* IV, vii, 12; trans. Outler.
[26] *Confessions,* V, iii, 3; trans. Outler.
[27] Glenn E. Yocum, "Manichaeism." Ed. Mircea Eliade and Charles J. Adams. *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, Vol. 9, (New York: Macmillan, 1987), p. 165-166.
[28] Yocum, G.E. "Manichaeism," *Encyclopedia of Religion,* 162-163.
[29] Yocum, G.E. "Manichaeism," *Encyclopedia of Religion, 164.*
[30] Yocum, G.E. "Manichaeism," *Encyclopedia of Religion, 162.*

the darkness, that is, matter, humanity suffers and is easy prey for evil, forgetting its true, light-filled origins.[31]

Augustine was drawn to Manichaeism because of its promise to obtain salvation by reason and knowledge alone.[32] It did not require any faith in God, just that people work to gain as much knowledge of the world as they could, to understand their purpose within it.[33] However, Augustine was troubled by many of the things the Manichaeans preached because they conflicted with what many prominent philosophers of the day said, and with what he had discovered by his own accord.[34] He was told to speak to Faustus, who was considered the eminent authority in Manichaeism. Augustine waited nine years for Faustus to come and settle his mind on many questions that were troubling him about the Manichean doctrine.[35] Augustine had heard of Faustus's prominence in education and speaking before he had arrived, and he was greatly impressed by his presentation and oratorical skills. However, Augustine found Faustus to be "...ignorant of those arts in which I had believed him eminent...".[36] After his conversation with Faustus, Augustine states that "...the zeal with which I had plunged into the Manichean system was checked, and I despaired even more of their other teachers, because Faustus who was so famous among them had turned out so poorly in the various matters that puzzled me."[37] Augustine attempted to solve his problems with the

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[31] Yocum, G.E. "Manichaeism," *Encyclopedia of Religion, 163.*
[32] *Confessions,* V, iii, 3; trans. Outler.
[33] Yocum, G.E. "Manichaeism," *Encyclopedia of Religion, 163.*
[34] *Confessions,* V, iii, 6; trans. Outler.
[35] *Confessions,* V, vi, 10; trans. Outler.
[36] *Confessions,* V, vii, 12; trans. Outler.
[37] *Confessions,* V, vii, 13; trans. Outler.

Manicheans through their readings, but ultimately gave up the faith upon his meeting with Faustus.

After his disappointing meeting with Faustus, Augustine moved to Rome because he wanted quieter students than the ones he was accustomed to in Carthage.[38] He fell in with the academic community in Rome, and was convinced to question everything that he heard. Hence he continued to reject Christianity, though he was beginning to see that his previous conceptions of it might have been wrong.[39] Shortly after his arrival in Rome, Milan asked for a master of rhetoric to be sent to the city. Augustine decided to go to Milan, where was introduced to St. Ambrose.[40]

In Milan, Augustine was drawn to St. Ambrose's lectures. Initially, it was not the content that intrigued Augustine, but the elegance with which Ambrose delivered them.[41] After some time, however, Augustine began to listen to what Ambrose was actually teaching, and slowly came to the conclusion that he had misjudged the biblical books. So Augustine turned to Scripture with a fresh eye.[42] As he began his study anew, Augustine concluded that there was some truth to the knowledge that Scripture imparted, though it was not enough fully to convince him to convert to the Christian faith.[43] Augustine continued his study of the Bible, and began to reflect on it.

Augustine's reflections led him to the realization that God was good, and that he had been rebelling against God and clinging to his sin which was weighing him

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[38] *Confessions,* V, viii, 14; trans. Outler.
[39] *Confessions,* V, xi, 21; trans. Outler.
[40] *Confessions,* V, xiii, 23; trans. Outler.
[41] *Confessions,* V, iv, 24; trans. Outler.
[42] *Confessions,* VI, iv, 6; trans. Outler.
[43] *Confessions,* VI, vi, 9; trans. Outler.

down.[44] He continued his studies, and came to realize that all things are good, but that they have been corrupted, which gave Augustine confidence and hope for himself.[45] Augustine came to fix upon the writings of Paul, which he had previously found contradictory, but came to accept them as the truth.[46]

During his reflections, Augustine had still not fully given up the sins he had previously enjoyed, though he came to tire of the life he was living.[47] In an attempt to quiet his soul, Augustine consulted with a variety of individuals, among them Simplicianus (Ambrose's mentor), and his friends Nebridius and Alypius. One evening while Augustine was discussing biblical passages with Alypius, he was struck by how awful his behavior was.[48] He attempted to reconcile and excuse his behaviors as he always had before, but this time Augustine could not find the argument.[49] Augustine led Alypius feverishly into a garden, where they sat together, and discussed and read Scripture, while Augustine attempted to calm his soul and his feelings.[50] Augustine examined all that was causing his soul misery in that garden, until he fled away from Alypius, and, as Augustine describes it, "I flung myself down under a fig tree…and gave free course to my tears."[51] Augustine was tormented by his sinful nature, and was looking for a way to escape it, wondering why God didn't just end his torment immediately. In the middle of his weeping, Augustine heard a small child chanting, "Pick up, read; pick up, read" (*Tolle lege;*

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[44] *Confessions,* VII, iii, 5; trans. Outler.
[45] *Confessions,* VII, xii, 18; trans. Outler.
[46] *Confessions,* VII, xxi, 27; trans. Outler.
[47] *Confessions,* VIII, i, 1; trans. Outler.
[48] *Confessions,* VIII, vii, 16; trans. Outler.
[49] *Confessions,* VIII, vii, 18; trans. Outler.
[50] *Confessions,* VIII, viii, 19; trans. Outler.
[51] *Confessions,* VIII, xii, 28; trans. Outler.

tolle lege) from the house next door. The call brought Augustine up short, and he immediately ceased crying in an attempt to understand why the child may be calling. He initially thought that it may have been a part of a game, but he could not remember any so he took it as a divine command to open the Bible and read the first passage he saw. Augustine returned to Alypius and opened the Bible, instantly alighting upon Romans 13:13 which stated "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh but to fulfill the lusts thereof." As soon as Augustine had finished the sentence, he states, "…there was infused in my heart something like the light of full certainty and all the gloom of doubt vanished away."[52]

Augustine fully accepted Christianity after his conversion under the fig tree, but he did not fully proclaim his conversion at that time. Augustine waited until he had finished his teaching requirement, before he joyfully moved on to the next section of his life.[53] Before his conversion, his mother had attempted to find him a wife to marry.[54] The woman Augustine had taken as a concubine was considered of too low a birth for someone like himself to marry, so she had left his life when the marriage was announced so Augustine would be free to marry the woman his mother had helped to pick.[55] Upon his conversion, however, Augustine felt called to become celibate so that he could focus his attention completely on the task of living for God.[56]

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[52] *Confessions,* VIII, xii, 29; trans. Outler.
[53] *Confessions,* IX, iv, 7; trans. Outler.
[54] *Confessions,* VI, xiii, 23; trans. Outler.
[55] *Confessions,* VI, xv, 25; trans. Outler.
[56] *Confessions,* VIII, xii, 30; trans. Outler.

Augustine's mother, Monica, was overjoyed by her son's conversion.[57] She had been praying to God since Augustine had left the church that Augustine might repent his of sins and return to the true God.[58] When he returned to Christianity, Augustine saw a providential spirit to his mother's prayers. In his early life, he had been taught Christianity by his mother, and God working though her had brought him back to the true way of life.[59] [60] Shortly after Augustine's conversion, Monica passed away after having lead a diligent Christian life, happy knowing that her son had returned to Christ.[61]

After his mother's death, Augustine lived in his own sort of monastery with his friends who had also come with him to Christianity, secluded on the outskirts of Hippo.[62] On occasion, Augustine would leave his secluded residence and venture into town to obtain something that they couldn't provide for in their little estate. On one such outing, Augustine was called by the people in Hippo to become the priest of their local church. While he initially was opposed to the idea, he eventually accepted the post, believing that doing so would allow him to better serve God and address the problems that Christians were facing in the world.[63]

The Doctrines of St. Augustine

In his post in the Church, Augustine contributed greatly to the corpus of knowledge that became the basis of Christian ideology. He wrote several works on

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[57] *Confessions,* VIII, xii, 30; trans. Outler.
[58] *Confessions,* III, xi, 19; trans. Outler.
[59] *Confessions,* I, xi, 17; trans. Outler.
[60] Augustine references God working through his mother several times in his *Confessions.* For example see *Confessions,* V, ix, 17; trans. Outler.
[61] *Confessions,* IX, xi, 27; trans. Outler.
[62] Marrou, H. *Augustine and His Influence Through the Ages,* 33.
[63] Marrou, H. *Augustine and His Influence Through the Ages*, 34*.*

the Trinity, helping to clarify what Christianity thought about the essence of God.

Augustine stated that God the Father, God the Son (Jesus Christ), and the Holy Spirit

are all three distinct individuals, which comprise the Trinity, which creates one

being, whom is God. Neither of these individuals is better or more powerful than

either of the other, they are all wholly equal. All of them are good, omniscient, great,

and most importantly they are all God. So Christianity does not believe in three

distinct Gods, but rather one God, in three parts. [64]

According to Benjamin Warfield, St. Augustine has provided two seemingly

inconsistent doctrines that have become central tenants of Christianity, his doctrine

of the church and his doctrine of grace.[65] In his doctrine on the church, Augustine

synthesized many of his predecessors' ideas and gave them the "...precision and

vitality that insured [their] persistence."[66] Cyprian was the first to identify the

church with the episcopate and the first to present the idea that outside the church

there was no salvation. Gregory the Great had developed the conception of the

church as a divine city, or as groups of citizens.[67] Additionally Warfield states that,

during his controversy with the Donatists, Augustine solidified these ideas and

made them a cornerstone of Christianity. The institutional church became the focus

of religious feeling. Additionally, the church became the sole distributer of salvation

and the sole mediator of grace.[68] Peter Brown states that though the church is

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[64] Augustine, "On the Trinity, VIII, Introduction" in *Augustine of Hippo, Selected Writings*, Trans. Mary T. Clark, (New York: Paulist Press, 1984).
[65] Benjamin B. Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine,* Ed. Samuel G. Craig (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Pub, 1956), 320.
[66] Warfield, B. *Calvin and Augustine.* 322.
[67] Warfield, B. *Calvin and Augustine,* 313.
[68] Warfield, B. *Calvin and Augustine,* 314.

imperfect here on earth, it is holy because it is doing its work with the guidance of

Jesus at its heart.[69] There are some predestined members who are at the core of the

church, but there are also many other members who are not pure members and

cloud the clarity of the church.[70]

According to Brown, Augustine eventually developed the idea of the church

as political system that will expand to take over the rest of the world.[71] The church

has been foreordained to expand to encompass the entire globe, at which point it

will have fulfilled the prophecy in the Bible of a Christian nation expanding from sea

to shining sea. With this expansion, the church performs the tasks that the state

currently performs, creating a new humanity in the process.[72] Augustine saw the

expansion of the church as the final way to remove the division of humanity that

arose in the tower of Babel incident, and bring humanity back to God.[73] In all,

Warfield argues that, Augustine "…gave the world the church as the authorities'

organ of divine truth and the miraculous vehicle of saving grace, through which

alone the assured knowledge of the revelation of God could be attained, or the

effective operations of His redeeming love experienced."[74]

Augustine's theory of grace arises from his conception of human nature.

Henry Chadwick states that according to Augustine, human nature is inherently

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[69] Peter Robert Lamont Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: a Biography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 221.
[70] Brown, P. *Augustine of Hippo,* 223.
[71] Brown, P. *Augustine of Hippo,* 221.
[72] Dawson, C. *St. Augustine and His Age,* 75.
[73] Dawson, C. *St. Augustine and His Age,* 76.
[74] Warfield, B. *Calvin and Augustine,* 315.

sinful.[75] Original sin, resulting from Adam's disobedience of God, is passed on to the

rest of humanity, and because of this inherently sinful nature, no one deserves

forgiveness from God.[76] Original sin has removed any ability from humanity to make

rational decisions. Every decision is driven by what provides one with the greatest

amount of delight.[77] These delights are only earthly wants and needs, so people

cannot willingly come to God unless He provides the inspiration to do so.[78] Thus,

humanity is entirely incapable of reaching God on its own.

Warfield argues, Augustine was one of the earliest Christian philosophers to

distinguish between a religion of faith and one of works.[79] A religion of faith places

all its hope on God, while a religion of works trusts in itself.[80] Members of the

religion of faith adhere to Augustine's conception of grace. Though people do not

deserve it, God extends forgiveness to those who place all their dependence upon

Him.[81] Maurice Blondel argues that these are the members of the church who

understand that they rely upon God to rise above themselves in order to regain the

wisdom and happiness lost in the fall.[82] According to Warfield, this sort of theology

"recalls man from all dependence on his own powers or merits and casts him

decisively on the grace of God alone for his salvation."[83] Grace becomes

indispensible in the salvation of humanity in the way Augustine defines it, because

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[75] Henry Chadwick, *Augustine of Hippo: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009), 153.
[76] Chadwick, H. *Augustine of Hippo: a life,* 154.
[77] Brown, P. *Augustine of Hippo,* 154.
[78] Brown, P. *Augustine of Hippo,* 155.
[79] Warfield, B. *Calvin and Augustine,* 319.
[80] Warfield, B. *Calvin and Augustine,* 320.
[81] Chadwick, H. *Augustine of Hippo: a life,* 154.
[82] Maurice Blondel, "The Latent Resources in St. Augustine's Thought." *St. Augustine: His Age, Life, and Thought* (New York: Meridian, 1959), 347.
[83] Warfield, B. *Calvin and Augustine,* 321.

the "...sinful man depends, for his recovery to good, and to God, entirely on the free grace of God...".[84] Augustine's ultimate belief in his doctrine of grace is demonstrated in his *Confessions* in several circumstances, and he ultimately intended it to show the grace of God.[85] For example, as Augustine is describing his state of mind in the beginning of book eight, he mentions all the mercies that God has extended to him despite the fact that he had been continuously sinful and rebellious against God's commands.

The doctrines of grace and the church vied for control in Augustine's mind. In his writings, he never distinguished which one he considered the most important; he left that for his successors to determine.[86] The Protestant Reformation solved this dilemma almost a thousand years later. Martin Luther and his successors ultimately decided that Augustine's doctrine of Grace was more essential for salvation than the doctrine of the church, while the Catholic Church decided that the doctrine of the church was more essential. They found such a difference in belief irreconcilable, and Luther decided to split away from the church. While both doctrines were important in Augustine's mind, he bequeathed the doctrine of the church to the Catholics, and he bequeathed the doctrine of grace, which was the doctrine of his heart, to the Protestants.[87]

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[84] Warfield, B. *Calvin and Augustine,* 322. For example see *Confessions* I, x, 16; trans. Outler.
[85] For example see *Confessions* I, x, 16; trans. Outler.
[86] Warfield, B. *Calvin and Augustine,* 322.
[87] Warfield, B. *Calvin and Augustine,* 381.

A Christian Philosophy of History

Augustine understood the significance of history for Christianity. Christianity was a religion which, according to R.A. Markus, "…based [its] faith on a particular group of historical events, in which they saw God's mighty acts for the salvation of man accomplished among his chosen people and brought to a consummation in Jesus Christ…"[88] If these events were proven unhistorical, Christianity would lose much of its basis. Thus a clear understanding of history, and a philosophy of history were important for Christians. However, the previous philosophies of history that had been promoted by the pagan philosophers before would not work to explain the historicity of Christianity for Augustine.

Greco-Roman historiography was very different from the conception of history that St. Augustine devised. R.G. Collingwood argues that Greco-Roman philosophy "…saw all nature as a spectacle of incessant change, and human life as changing more violently than anything else."[89] Greco-Roman philosophers had fully reconciled themselves to the conception that nothing in life was permanent. This continual change made it impossible to accurately represent the past, from a Greco-Roman standpoint. Greco-Roman philosophy believed the past was different from the present, in radical ways, and so it could not be accurately represented by those in the present because they could not experience what occurred in the past in the same way that the people then living could. This conception of history means that it was not determined. History was viewed as flexible and ultimately devised by the

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[88] R. A. Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988), 3.

[89] R. G. Collingwood and Jan Van Der. Dussen, *The Idea of History: With Lectures 1926-1928* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 22.

human will. The purpose of studying history, for the Greco-Roman historian was to determine what happened in cause and effect relationships. They viewed themselves as "...the teachers of sound principles by showing that in the general pattern of these changes certain antecedents normally led to certain consequents."[90] Divine intervention in the Greco-Roman historiographical tradition, meant that there would be more chaos added to life. Divine power "...rejoices in upsetting and disturbing things."[91]

Additionally, the Greeks believed that history was cyclic. Heraclitus thought that the world was periodically destroyed and restored by fire.[92] Pythagoras adopted a similar view, in which the world was repeatedly destroyed and then restored, but he also held that the same events would occur during each regeneration. The same people would do the same thing, repeated for all eternity as the Earth comes and goes.[93] Plato ascribed to a similar system, though he disputed the identity of the regenerations and argued for several ages that the earth would move through in each regeneration. The first cycle was the best, where god led the universe, the second god let go of control, which caused everything to run in reverse, and in the third cycle god came back, but this time around humans had to be self-sufficient, not just dependent upon god for everything.[94] Aristotle held that the earth must be eternal, because reason would dictate that something cannot be obtained from nothing, which would have to happen if the earth was created.

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[90] Collingwood, R.G. *Idea of History,* 23.
[91] Collingwood, R.G. *Idea of History,* 22.
[92] Grace Cairns, *Philosophies of History*, (New York: Citadel, 1962), 204.
[93] Cairns, G. *Philosophies of History,* 206.
[94] Cairns, G. *Philosophies of History,* 212.

Additionally, he agreed with the cyclical history of the earth because it matched what he saw in nature. There are continual moments of coming to be and passing away, which can be found in the seasons, social organizations, and many more natural creations, that suggest the earth would do the same.[95] In *The City of God*, Augustine moved away from Greco-Roman considerations of history in an attempt to describe the history in a way that was consistent with the Biblical descriptions of history.

In *The City of God*, Augustine defines a Christian philosophy of history. In 410, the Visigoths sacked Rome under the leadership of Alaric. This devastated an already weakening empire, and broke the spirits of the Roman citizens.[96] They began to look for a source to blame their anger and fears on, and Christianity became their target. The pagans in Rome began to accuse Christians for the attack on Rome because the Christianization of the empire had caused the temples to become abandoned. Since the citizens had abandoned the temples, it was believed that the gods had deserted Rome and allowed it to be sacked.[97] Augustine spends the first ten books of *The City of God* defending Christianity from pagan attacks, explaining that it was the pagans' fault that Rome had been sacked because they had become too complacent, luxurious, and immoral.[98] Books eleven through twenty-two define a new philosophy of history, that explains that Rome was bound to

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[95] Cairns, G. *Philosophies of History,* 216*.*
[96] Bennett, J., *Medieval Europe: A Short History*, 24.
[97] Augustine, *The City of God,* I, 1. Trans. Marcus Dods. (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2006).
[98] *City of God,* II, 3; trans. Dods.

perish because it was human, but if the citizens of Rome would look to God, they could obtain a kingdom that is eternal.

According to Augustine, the purpose of history is the salvation of humanity. In the fall, Adam rejected God, which then removed all of humanity from God's presence for eternity because of sin. In order to bring humanity back into Himself, God works through history to bring the members of the City of God into the true City of God in heaven. History is played out between two cities, the heavenly city, which loves God in place of itself, and the earthly city, which rejects God for love of itself. These two cities are caught in eternal conflict because their two loves cannot be reconciled. History will play out until the final judgment in which God will bring the citizens of the heavenly city to heaven where they can rejoice and glory in God for all eternity, and citizens of the earthly city will be damned to punishment for all eternity.

In contrast to the Greco-Roman conception of history, Augustine stated that history had a definite beginning and a definitive end. Since history is God's bringing humanity to salvation, history begins with the fall of man, because it is impossible to have any history before the fall.[99] Before the fall, humanity would have been living in God, and would not have required his grace to return, but since they rejected Him, humanity now requires salvation.[100] The end of history comes with the final judgment, and the placement of the peoples of the two cities in their respective

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[99] Markus, R.A. *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine,* 10.
[100] *City of God,* XII, 23; trans. Dods.

eternities. Those of the City of God will obtain eternal salvation, and those of the earthly city will receive eternal punishment.[101]

Augustine also rejected the cyclical doctrine of Greco-Roman historiography. He acknowledges that there could be some confusion in the Bible when it states that there will be no new and recent thing under the sun. This is fictitious, Augustine says, for Christ has come to save humanity, and since he died for humanity's sins once, the crucifixion and resurrection will never happen again. Christ's coming was prophesized, and happened as predicted, so now humanity has been provided with a way to salvation, and Christ's crucifixion need never be repeated. The wicked walk in circles "…because the path in which their false doctrine now runs is circuitous."[102]

Augustine concedes two sources for history: sacred history and secular history. Sacred history gives the story of God's work, the City of God on earth until the coming of Jesus, and prophesies the true City of God in heaven after the final judgment.[103] It is the supreme authority on all things and should be trusted over any other source because it was written by divine inspiration.[104] The Bible has also proven itself trustworthy and accurate through its fulfilled prophecy. All the prophecies that have been predicted in the Bible had come to pass, exactly as the Bible predicted. If a book can accurately predict what will happen in the future, it can most definitely accurately record what happened in the past.[105]

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[101] *City of God,* XX, 1; trans. Dods.
[102] *City of God,* XII 13; trans. Dods.
[103] *City of God,* XVI, 2; trans. Dods.
[104] *City of God,* XI, 3; trans. Dods.
[105] *City of God,* XII 10; trans. Dods.

Secular history is secondary to sacred history because it does not tell the story of God working in the world, though it does have a purpose in Augustine's definition. Augustine uses secular history to provide a time frame for biblical history. The Bible is dependent upon the historicity of its events in order to prove its veracity. Thus Augustine frames sacred history within secular history to prove the veracity of its events.[106] Secular history is also useful for Augustine in that it chronicles the story of the earthly city. The historians of various civilizations describe secular history, and it relates the rise and fall of various civilizations, as God saw fit. It chronicles all that happened in the world outside of the Bible, which is still God's work, and thus secular history is the only source for the history of the earthly city.[107]

Augustine describes the characteristics of the people of the two cities in depth by contrasting the characteristics of one with the other. The people in the City of God are defined "…by the love of God, even to the contempt of self."[108] All joy and happiness is found in God, with the understanding that nothing less will be capable of satisfying their souls.[109] They are humble enough to understand that they need to submit their souls to God in order to find true salvation, which makes them vessels of mercy. [110] Citizens in the City of God may suffer from vices in this world, but they

[106] Allan Fitzgerald and John C. Cavadini, *Augustine through the Ages: an Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1999), 432.
[107] Augustine chronicles much of "earthly history" in *City of Good* XVIII. For example *City of God,* XVIII, 2; trans. Dods.
[108] *City of God,* XIV, 28; trans. Dods.
[109] *City of God,* XI, 24; trans. Dods.
[110] *City of God,* XIV, 13; trans. Dods.

live by faith that God will relieve them of these sins in the next life.[111] They know

that the Bible is the ultimate source of truth and knowledge, which lifts them from

the confusion of this world and leads them closer to God.[112] They are able to

overcome their sin by rejecting it in deference to the will of God, and repent of it,

understanding that nothing here could be preferable to the love of God.[113] While

they have to endure life on earth, they are strangers in this world and are patiently

enduring until they can be returned to God after the final judgment.[114] Ultimately

citizens of the City of God reject life on this earth, understanding that nothing here

will ever be able fully to satisfy their soul and that the best on earth does not come

close to the what the eternal blessedness of the City of God will provide.

The citizens of the City of God are sharply contrasted with the members of

the earthly city. Citizens of the earthly city are defined "…by the love of self, even to

the contempt of God."[115] They reject God for the wants and things that can be found

on earth, and let pride take the place of God.[116] This makes them vessels of wrath.[117]

Their souls quickly become wicked by desiring inferior earthly goods, for only God

can truly sustain their souls.[118] Members of the earthly city think they can please

God without his grace, and are always craving to be more, but by not submitting to

God they only become less, and by always aspiring to be self-sufficing, they reject

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[111] *City of God,* XV, 6; trans. Dods.
[112] *City of God,* XVIII, 40; trans. Dods.
[113] *City of God,* XV, 7; trans. Dods.
[114] *City of God,* XV, 21; trans. Dods.
[115] *City of God,* XIV, 28; trans. Dods.
[116] *City of God,* XI, 1, 33; trans. Dods.
[117] *City of God,* XV, 2; trans. Dods.
[118] *City of God,* XII, 6; trans. Dods.

the only power that can truly sustain them.[119] They glory in their own sinfulness and are ruled by a vain human wisdom.[120] They become prisoners of sin by preferring it and defending it, gleefully choosing sin over God.[121] Earthly citizens war against one another in an attempt to gain earthly peace, never understanding that they will never be truly happy.[122] They are continuously at the mercy of philosophers who cannot agree, making it a confusing place to gain any amount of understanding; hence it is named *Babylon*, which means "confusion."[123]

Both cities are currently residing on earth together, and will remain until the final judgment.[124] It is not possible to tell who belongs to which city; only God is aware of that.[125] Citizens of both cities receive earthly blessings while on earth so that they are not encouraged to join the church for the promise of enjoying benifits here on earth.[126] The citizens of the heavenly city know not to rejoice over these small blessings, but the citizens of the earthly city find their only joy in earthly blessings.

St. Augustine defines seven ages, into which history is divided. The first age is from Adam to Noah; the second age is from Noah to Abraham; the third age is from Abraham to David; the fourth age is from David to the Jewish captivity; the fifth age is from the captivity to Jesus; the sixth age is from Jesus to the final judgment, which is the current age; the seventh, and final, age is after the final judgment when the

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[119] *City of God,* XIV, 13; trans. Dods.
[120] *City of God,* XIV, 28; trans. Dods.
[121] *City of God,* XV, 7; trans. Dods.
[122] *City of God,* XV, 5; trans. Dods.
[123] *City of God,* XVIII, 41; trans. Dods.
[124] *City of God,* XVIII, 49; trans. Dods.
[125] *City of God,* XVIII, 48; trans. Dods.
[126] *City of God,* XV, 22; trans. Dods.

members of the heavenly city will receive eternal salvation and the members of the

earthly city eternal punishment.[127] The first three ages are defined by Abraham's

sacrifice to God. God required that all the animals be three years old, which signifies

the division in to three ages.[128] In the first age, Israel was in its infancy, just learning

how to survive in the world. The flood drowned this age into oblivion, much as the

first ages of humans cannot be remembered. In the second age, the Hebrew people

learned to speak in the same way people do today. The third age was that of the

Israelites reaching adulthood. An abundance of sin arose among the people and the

earthly city could be found among the Hebrews.[129]

Before the first age God created the universe. Time started with Creation,

according to Augustine, because time implies movement.[130] In this process God

created one pair of humans, Adam and Eve, who gave rise to the rest of humanity.[131]

In their original state they were immortal and had control over their bodies, capable

of living as they wished, entirely free of sin.[132] When Eve ate of the apple tree and

convinced Adam to join her humanity as a whole fell, and the rest of the descendants

of man were infected with original sin, and they were fundamentally

changed.[133]After disobeying God, humanity became inherently sinful, and lost the

ability to live as it wished.[134] As an additional punishment for sin, humanity became

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[127] *City of God,* XXII, 30; trans. Dods.
[128] *City of God,* XVI, 24; trans. Dods.
[129] *City of God,* XVI, 43; trans. Dods.
[130] *City of God,* XI, 6; trans. Dods.
[131] *City of God,* XII, 21; trans. Dods.
[132] *City of God,* XIII, 19; trans. Dods.
[133] *City of God,* XIII, 3; trans. Dods.
[134] *City of God,* XIII, 13; trans. Dods.

mortal.[135] Since Adam sinned, all members of humanity are born into the earthly city and they can only be brought into the City of God by God's grace through Christ.[136]

After Adam and Eve were forced to leave paradise they had two children, Cain and Able. In his jealousy, Cain murdered Abel, signifying him as the founder of the earthly city.[137] Abel was a member of the heavenly city, and the conflict between Cain and Abel illustrates the hatred that will always exist between citizens of the two cities.[138] Since Abel was murdered, Seth became the founder of the heavenly city, and its line can be traced through him until the Flood.[139] Adam gave rise to both the cities, one in each of his sons, which will continue until the final judgment at the end of time. By the time of the Flood, the two lines had become so intertwined that God decided that all but eight people upon the planet deserved to die.[140] The sons of God had become so enamored with the daughters of men, that the sons of God, who were descendants of Seth, became members of the earthly city by forsaking God for earthly (i.e. sinful) women.[141]

After the flood, the two cities were born anew in Noah's sons. The Flood had destroyed all the old members of the earthly city, however, God saw fit to restore the earthly city after the flood. The earthly city will exist until the final judgment so

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135 *City of God,* XIII, 1; trans. Dods.
136 *City of God,* XV, 1; trans. Dods.
137 *City of God,* XV, 7; trans. Dods.
138 *City of God,* XV, 5; trans. Dods.
139 *City of God,* XV, 9; trans. Dods.
140 *City of God,* XV, 20; trans. Dods.
141 *City of God,* XV, 23; trans. Dods.

that God can use it to work his purposes for the members of the Heavenly City.[142] Members of the earthly city can be found among all three of the lines of Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japeth. Ham in particular gives rise to Cush, who begets Nimrod, who creates a massive kingdom, which includes Babylon, and altogether Nimrod has seven sons, which become seven nations, all of them earthly. Shem also gives rise to an earthly kingdom through Assur, who became the founder of the greatest earthly empire before Rome, Assyria.[143]

However, Shem's line is also carried on in the heavenly city. Shem also gave rise to Heber, who eventually gives his name to the Hebrew people.[144] The Hebrew people were the only people to remain free of punishment in the grand confusion of the tower of Babel. When God learned that the people on earth were attempting to build a tower to reach Heaven, God came down and scrambled the languages of the people. Augustine titles this the great confusion, and this confusion of the languages gives rise to the name *Babylon*, which means "confusion."[145] The original language of mankind was Hebrew, and the descendants of Heber were the only group who retained the original language. They were the only group to remain free of punishment because they were the only people who were members of the City of God. [146]

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[142] *City of God,* XV, 20; trans. Dods.
[143] *City of God,* XVI, 3; trans. Dods.
[144] *City of God,* XVI, 3; trans. Dods.
[145] *City of God,* XVI, 4; trans. Dods.
[146] *City of God,* XVI, 11; trans. Dods.

Abraham appears to be the next member of the City of God after Noah.[147] While the city of the wicked becomes readily apparent with the tower-of-Babel incident, because its citizens preferred their own pride to the command of God, the existence of members of the City of God cannot be confirmed or denied.[148] Abraham came from the family of Terah, who were God's only worshippers left on Earth, and thus the only people who retained the Hebrew language.[149] The promises God made to Abraham most openly explain the progression of the City of God. God promised that Abraham would become the spiritual father of all tribes, and in Jesus, this was fulfilled.[150] God also promised Abraham "...that both the nation of Israel according to the flesh, and all nations according to faith should be his seed, and the city of God, proceeding according to the order of time, will point out how they were fulfilled."[151]

Abraham had two sons, one by his wife's handmaid, and another by his true wife late in life. Hagar, the handmaid, gave Abraham his son Ishmael. According to Augustine, Ishmael was born of the flesh, and signifies the old covenant between God and the Israelites. In the Old Testament, God promises earthly things to the Hebrew people, for example being able to have their own land to call home.[152] Ishmael was an earthly desire for Abraham; it was human action revealed and given entirely by the flesh.[153] After Hagar and Ishmael were thrown out of Abraham's

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[147] *City of God,* XVI, 1; trans. Dods.
[148] *City of God,* XVI, 10; trans. Dods.
[149] *City of God,* XVI, 12; trans. Dods.
[150] *City of God,* XVI, 16; trans. Dods.
[151] *City of God,* XVII, 1; trans. Dods.
[152] *City of God,* XVIII, 11; trans. Dods.
[153] *City of God,* XV, 2; trans. Dods.

house, God promised her gifts, however the true Kingdom was reserved for
Abraham's true son.[154]

Sara gave Abraham Isaac, and Sara represents the new covenant with God.
The New Testament fulfills heavenly promises in the person of Jesus Christ, which
centers on salvation for humanity in the City of God for those who accept Jesus as
savior.[155] So Sara represents the Jerusalem above, or the City of God, because Isaac
was given to her by God's grace.[156] Isaac's birth was an example of divine kindness
or grace.[157] Thus Isaac came to represent the children of grace, and the citizens in
the City of God.[158]

Isaac received the kingdom of God, and he married Rebecca. Rebecca bore
twins, and it was said that the older would serve the younger. Augustine sees this as
symbolic of the coming of Christ, which symbolizes how the older covenant people,
the Hebrews, will serve the new covenant people, the Christians.[159] Jacob received
the blessing of Isaac, which meant that the City of God would be handed down
through him.[160] From Jacob, the blessing was given to Judah, and has continued to
Christ, who was from the tribe of Judah.[161]

The two promises made to Abraham were not fulfilled until long after
Abraham's death. Indeed, the first promise that the land of Israel would stretch from

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[154] *City of God,* XVI, 34; trans. Dods.
[155] *City of God,* XVIII, 11; trans. Dods.
[156] *City of God,* XVI, 31; trans. Dods.
[157] *City of God,* XV, 2; trans. Dods.
[158] *City of God,* XV, 3; trans. Dods.
[159] *City of God,* XVI, 35; trans. Dods.
[160] *City of God,* XVI, 38; trans. Dods.
[161] *City of God,* XVI, 41; trans. Dods.

Egypt to the Euphrates was not fulfilled until David, and Solomon after him.[162] Israel

had become a great nation by the time of David, and, as Augustine describes it, had

reached its adult age under David.[163] David was a member of the heavenly kingdom,

and his reign was a promise of what life will be like in the true and final heavenly

kingdom.[164] David was the last heavenly king to rule over Israel. Augustine says of

Solomon, "This man, after good beginnings, made a bad end."[165] Solomon fell into

temptation and allowed the worship of demons within his realm, and after Solomon

God saw fit to provide Israel with wicked kings because the people continued to

sin.[166]

Eventually, the kingdom of Israel was divided in two, into Judah and Israel, as

God had commanded.[167] This was done because Israel had become an earthly

kingdom. Augustine states that God had warned of the division of the earthly

peoples when Abraham had offered him sacrifice. God had ordered Abraham to

bring a heifer, which was a sign that the people would be put under law, a she-goat,

which symbolized that the people would become sinful, and a ram, which meant that

they would eventually reign. All of these animals were divided in the offering of the

sacrifice. The division of what Augustine terms the carnal animals is symbolic of the

fact that carnal men will be divided amongst themselves.[168] Abraham was also

ordered to bring two birds, a turtle-dove and a pigeon. The birds remained whole,

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[162] *City of God,* XVII, 2; trans. Dods.
[163] *City of God,* XVI, 43; trans. Dods.
[164] *City of God,* XVII, 14; trans. Dods.
[165] *City of God,* XVII, 20; trans. Dods.
[166] *City of God,* XVII, 23; trans. Dods.
[167] *City of God,* XVII, 21; trans. Dods.
[168] *City of God,* XVI, 24; trans. Dods.

symbolic of the people of the Heavenly City, who will remain whole even when the people in the carnal city become divided.[169] Since the Hebrew people had become earthly, they were bound to become divided, as God had promised, and divided they remained until they were lead into captivity.

After the Jews were released from captivity in Babylon and had completed the building of the second temple, they ceased to have prophets. Invaders continually plagued their nation and the temples were filled with idolatrous images. It was in this period that Christ came, under the rule of Harod. Jesus's arrival brings in the sixth age of humanity, which is currently progressing, and will continue to progress until the final judgment.

From Noah all the way to the last prophecies of the Old Testament, Augustine sees the coming of Christ predicted.[170] God's last promise to Abraham is fulfilled in Jesus, who came to die for the sins of humanity, so that they may gain forgiveness and admittance into the City of God.[171] Through Christ, the promise of the City of God continues, and now on earth it resides in the Christian Church.[172] The City of God will remain in the members of the Church on earth until the final judgment when they join God in His heavenly City.

There are some people who would have belonged to the City of God outside the nation of Israel. For example, Job, who is mentioned in the Bible as being a true believer of God, but who belonged to the Idumean race. Augustine admits that there could have been more; however, a majority of the elect would have been found

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[169] *City of God,* XVI, 24; trans. Dods.
[170] For example see *City of God,* XVII, 9; trans. Dods.
[171] *City of God,* XVII, 8; trans. Dods.
[172] *City of God,* XVII, 13; trans. Dods.

within the Hebrew people.[173] With that, we turn to the progression of the earthly city.

Following the Flood, the earthly city progresses at the same time and at the same rate as the heavenly city. The two cities share the first age together, and since the first age was destroyed, the two cities do not obtain separate histories until the second age. Though their histories split, God still controls both; He does not, however, make his will explicitly known in the progression of earthly history.[174] The rise and fall, war and peace, and the wealth and poor of all kingdoms is because God saw fit to provide it for them, even if He did not explicitly state that it was so.[175] God is ultimately in control of all events on Earth at all times. Thus God controls the rise and fall of kingdoms as well as sustains the Earth in its daily activity. Nothing on Earth happens unless God wills it to happen.[176]

Augustine follows the progression of the earthly city in time with the heavenly city so that his readers may compare the two versions of history.[177] Additionally, in his chronicling of earthly history, Augustine firmly grounds the stories of the Old Testament within secular history. They are not fables, like the tales of the Greek gods, but actual events that show what God was doing to bring salvation to humanity.[178] Augustine begins the earthly progression at the time of Abraham, during which there were three great kingdoms, Sicyon, Egypt and

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173 *City of God,* XVIII, 47; trans. Dods.
174 *City of God,* II, 23; trans. Dods.
175 *City of God,* II, 9; trans. Dods.
176 *City of God,* XXII, 2; trans. Dods.
177 *City of God,* XVIII, 1; trans. Dods.
178 *City of God*, XI, 3; trans. Dods.

Assyria.[179] Augustine is most concerned with chronicling the tales of Assyria, which

was the great earthly kingdom before Rome, and then picking up Greek history as it

appears, because Greece eventually led to Rome. Augustine's purpose is to show

that Rome is simply another earthly kingdom, and like the many that came before it,

Rome too will fall because that is the manner of earthly kingdoms.[180] At Abraham's

birth, Assyria was only just beginning with its second king Ninus who managed to

seize more than half the known world and expand the Assyrian kingdom. By the

time of Abraham's death, Assyria had its seventh king, progressing into a fully

formed empire.[181]

The kingdom of Assyria continued to grow and progress through the life of

Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, and by the time of joseph's death in Egypt, Assyria had

passed through twelve kings, and Greece had begun to cultivate crops on its

peninsula.[182] Moses was born two generations later, when Assyria had its

fourteenth king. By the time of the Exodus, Greece had invented many fables,

progressing toward stories of false gods, and Cecrops was the first king of Athens.[183]

At Moses' death, Assyria had its eighteenth king and Athens had its fourth.[184]

From the Exodus to the death of Joshua son of Nun, the Greeks instituted the

worship of their many false gods based upon the tales of people who had lived and

were said to have done many amazing things.[185] When the Hebrew people were

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[179] *City of God,* XVI, 3; trans. Dods.
[180] *City of God,* XVIII, 1; trans. Dods.
[181] *City of God,* XVIII, 2; trans. Dods.
[182] *City of God,* XVIII, 7; trans. Dods.
[183] *City of God,* XVIII, 8; trans. Dods.
[184] *City of God,* XVIII, 11; trans. Dods.
[185] *City of God,* XVIII, 12; trans. Dods.

ruled by the judges, the Greeks invented their fables about the Minotaur (who was

shut up in a labyrinth), Centaurs, Cerberus, the three-headed dog, Pegasus, and

many more tales promoted by the Greek people as truth.[186] Additionally, theological

poets arose in Greece, in the time of the Judges, who began to sing the praises of the

many false gods of Greece.[187]

The Latin kingdoms, Assyria, and Greece continued to prosper though the

times of the Hebrew judges.[188] When David ruled the Hebrews, Athens removed

their kings and became a republic. Following David, Solomon was king of Israel, and

Alba was king of the Latins. Solomon was followed by Rehoboam, under whom God

decided to divide the Hebrew people.[189] When Hezekiah ruled Judah, the Assyrian

kingdom was conquered by the Medes after almost 1305 years.[190] At this time

Romulus was founding Rome, and Hoshea ruled in Israel.[191] During the reign of

Romulus, the theological poets known as the seven sages gained prominence, and

the tribes from the people then called Israel were conquered by the Chaldeans and

lead into captivity.[192]

When the Hebrew people were lead captive into Babylon, Zedekiah was king

of the Hebrews, and Tarquinius Priscus was king of the Romans. At this time, five

sages prospered in Rome, the natural philosophers Anazimander, Anazimenes, and

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[186] *City of God,* XVIII, 13; trans. Dods.
[187] *City of God,* XVIII, 14; trans. Dods.
[188] *City of God,* XVIII, 19; trans. Dods.
[189] *City of God,* XVIII, 20; trans. Dods.
[190] *City of God,* XVIII, 21; trans. Dods.
[191] *City of God,* XVIII, 22; trans. Dods.
[192] *City of God,* XVIII, 24; trans. Dods.

Xenophanes prospered in Athens along with Pythagoras.[193] When the Hebrew people were freed from captivity under Cyrus king of Persia, the Romans expelled their kings, the last one being Tarquin, who was the seventh king of Rome.[194]

The Jews rebuilt the temple at Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity, but after that time they ceased to have prophets. Alexander soon conquered Palestine, and Ptolemy, son of Largus, succeeded Alexander and carried the Jews captive once more into Egypt. The Jews were released by Ptolemy Philadelphus, who commissioned the Septuagint version of scripture from the Hebrew people. The Jews fell under the control of many different people until they were conquered by Rome. When the Jews were under the control of Rome, with Herod installed as king in Judea, Jesus was born.[195] Caesar Augustus was emperor in Rome when Christ was born.[196] This completes the history of the earthly city as it progressed through the first five ages. In the sixth age, the only history is secular history, as God had ceased to provide people with any more direct guidance during the sixth age.

In the sixth age, God no longer directly reveals himself through special revelation. People will remain in this age until God comes to judge people in the final judgment. There have been many people over the course of history who have tried explicitly to state when this final judgment will arrive. However, Augustine states that since God had not stated when this time would be, people cannot know until it arrives. If God had wanted people to know when the final judgment was going to pass, he would have said it himself; however the estimates thus far "...use human

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[193] *City of God,* XVIII, 25; trans. Dods.
[194] *City of God,* XVIII, 26; trans. Dods.
[195] *City of God,* XVIII, 45; trans. Dods.
[196] *City of God,* XVIII, 46; trans. Dods.

conjectures, and bring forward, nothing certain from the authority of the canonical Scriptures."[197]

In the meantime, all of humanity is required to live out the rest of their life in what Augustine deems to be a rather miserable existence.[198]Life here is inescapable punishment, because it is full of temptation from the devil and earthly desires, which Christians try desperately to avoid.[199] Christians, while they are here, work to submit themselves to God and move every action to His glorification.[200] While they subsist on earth, those who truly live piously in Christ will suffer persecution by the hands of members of the earthly city.[201] Ultimately the members of the early city seek "…an earthly peace, and the end it proposes, in the well-ordered concord of civic obedience and rule, is the combination of men's wills to attain the things which are helpful to this life."[202]The members of the heavenly city follow the laws and use earthly peace so that they may live a life as free of sin on earth until they join God in heaven.

The members of the heavenly city understand that the peace attained here on Earth is nothing compared to what God has prepared in the City of God after the final judgment.[203] However, this peace is still useful for them to obtain the earthly sustenance they need. The members of the earthly city are used to glory God, and to

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[197] *City of God,* XVIII, 53; trans. Dods.
[198] Augustine describes the miserable situation of this life in many sections, for example see: *City of God,* XIX, 4; trans. Dods.
[199] *City of God,* XXI, 14; trans. Dods.
[200] *City of God,* XIX, 19; trans. Dods.
[201] *City of God,* XVIII, 51; trans. Dods.
[202] *City of God,* XIX, 17; trans. Dods.
[203] *City of God,* XIX, 27; trans. Dods.

encourage His true believers to look for true security in God.[204]The things provided here on earth are only temporary, and will not sustain people over the long term; only God can do that.

While on Earth all people are subject to unruly emotions and unstable relationships. Emotion guides the action of many people on earth because humanity lost its control over emotion in the fall. People are subject to feelings of anger and sorrow here on earth, which will drive some to action despite the fact that reason works against it. People can work against that emotion while on earth through the help of God and acceptance of Jesus. Men who never accept Jesus remain slaves to their emotions, eventually abandon all reason, and loose their humanity. After the final judgment, people in the City of God will be able to enjoy perfect blessedness and peace free from emotions, which make people act irrationally.[205]The relationships on earth are subject to these emotions and irrational wanderings of the soul. This makes relationships here unstable. People do not know who to trust, and once people decide to trust someone, they cannot remain confident that their trust will not be betrayed as is the nature of people while on earth.[206] Since people will not be able to have true and peaceable relationships until they are in the City of God, earthly citizens will never obtain these relationships. People always want the best for their friends and family; however, owing to the ills of this life, no one can

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[204] *City of God,* XIX, 10; trans. Dods.
[205] *City of God,* XIV, 9; trans. Dods.
[206] *City of God,* XIX, 5; trans. Dods.

rest peaceably about a friend until he or she finally passes away and reaches peace in death.[207]

Life on this earth is quite dismal in Augustine's view. However, he finds two points of light that remained from humanity's time in paradise. God left us the ability to reproduce, which was a blessing provided to Adam and Eve in paradise. This gift was still provided to humanity even though they disobeyed God. Additionally, God never abandoned the earth. God continues to sustain and provide for everything here on earth, including individual lives, while people live out their life on this earth. These two blessings from God, propagation and sustenance, give some hope to life on this earth while people live here.[208]

The last judgment will come when God sees fit. This does not mean that while people are living He provides no judgment, for people are always being judged and punished for their sins accordingly.[209]The last judgment differs from all the other judgments that God has given in that it is his final proclamation of individuals within humanity. In the final judgment the good will be permanently removed from the wicked, so that each may live in their respective eternities. People will be judged based upon their life as a whole at the end of their life. Their individual sins will be judged and punished while they live on earth, but the state of the person as whole will determine their fate in eternity.[210]

The last judgment was prophesized early in the tales of the earthly city when Abraham was offering sacrifice to God. When the sun set after Abraham had offered

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[207] *City of God,* XIX, 8; trans. Dods.
[208] *City of God,* XXII, 24; trans. Dods.
[209] *City of God,* XX, 1; trans. Dods.
[210] *City of God,* XVIII, 36; trans. Dods.

his sacrifice, there was fire jumping around between the various lamps he had set. Once the sun had set, Abraham became very afraid. Augustine believed that the fire signifies that the earth will be consumed by fire after the final judgment, taking the members of the earthly city with it. Abraham's fear of the darkness is symbolic of the dark reign of the Antichrist in the brief time before the final judgment, where all the members of the heavenly city will be subject to great persecution.[211]

Before God comes to make his judgment, the devil will be allowed to wreck havoc upon the earth for three years and six months. This will be done to prove the faith of the members of the holy city and to show the false members of the church for what they really are. The devil will be allowed to torment and tempt the members of the heavenly city, and God will seclude their most inner faith from temptation of the devil, but will let his members be outwardly tempted so that they may grow in grace. Thus the devil will not be allowed to tempt the true members of the church when he is allowed to rampage the earth, but only those who had falsely proclaimed belief will be tempted.[212]

God will save anyone who has repented before He comes to provide the final judgment.[213]However, the true members of the Church are predestined and elected before the foundation of this world. Since God is omniscient, He knows, before one is even aware of being able to make a decision, who will become members of the Church, and these people will be protected from the devil when he is released from

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[211] *City of God,* XVI, 24; trans. Dods.
[212] *City of God,* XX, 8; trans. Dods.
[213] *City of God,* XXI, 12; trans. Dods.

bondage.[214]Ultimately the devil will be prohibited from seducing any of the nations of God that he previously held control over.[215]

Derived from Paul's doctrine of Grace, Augustine's doctrine of predestination is essential in his conception of the salvation of humanity. Augustine saw mankind as having free will, however, all action originates from God.[216] The point of free will given to humanity is to react to external pressures and suggestions, which come from God. God causes His people to will to do the right things for Him.[217] Through His grace, God chooses some people that He will provide salvation for.[218] God alone determines the destinies of man, which is an expression of His great knowledge and wisdom. Any decision that a person makes is because of a divine push in that direction, and those who choose to seek God, only do so because He prepared those few to come to Him.[219] Such a conception meant that every action was an act of God, working toward the mercy of the elect in one instance, and toward judgment for the damned in another.[220]

After the devil has wrecked his havoc for three years and six months, God will come to judge the members of earth with his fire and sword.[221]After the judgment, the members of the City of God will enter into the true City in Heaven.[222] The devil will take control of the wicked, and together the earthly city and the devil

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[214] *City of God,* XX, 8; trans. Dods.
[215] *City of God,* XX, 7; trans. Dods.
[216] Chadwick, H. *Augustine of Hippo: a life,* 155.
[217] *City of God,* XXII, 2; trans. Dods.
[218] Chadwick, H. *Augustine of Hippo: a life,* 154.
[219] Brown, P. *Augustine of Hippo,* 399.
[220] Brown, P. *Augustine of Hippo,* 464.
[221] *City of God,* XX, 21; trans. Dods.
[222] *City of God,* XX, 25; trans. Dods.

will be thrown into a lake of eternal fire.[223] The earth will be entirely destroyed by this process.[224]

Everyone who does not repent is subject to eternal punishment.[225] They will be thrown into a furnace of eternal fire, where their bodies will constantly be writhing in pain.[226]Augustine argues that God will change the bodies of the wicked men so that they will burn forever, with no opportunity of escape.[227] These people will be subject to two deaths. The first death is the natural death, where the soul is thrust out of the body against one's will. The second drives the soul into its new body after the final judgment, and then keeps it there against its will.[228] The first death cuts earthly citizens off from the moral city, and the second cuts them off from the immortal city.[229]

These souls will be in a constant state of anguish over repenting too late.[230] Though they will be able to burn continuously, they will be essentially dead because their soul has rejected God.[231] This will make these people hate the citizens of the City of God even more because of their own alienation from God.[232] The citizens of hell will be in a constant state of unhappiness and pain after the final judgment, and they will remain this way for all of eternity.

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[223] *City of God,* XX, 7; trans. Dods.
[224] *City of God,* XX, 18; trans. Dods.
[225] *City of God,* XXI, 12; trans. Dods.
[226] *City of God,* XXI, 1; trans. Dods.
[227] *City of God,* XXI, 8; trans. Dods.
[228] *City of God,* XXI, 3; trans. Dods.
[229] *City of God,* XXI, 11; trans. Dods.
[230] *City of God,* XXI, 9; trans. Dods.
[231] *City of God,* XXI, 3; trans. Dods.
[232] *City of God,* XX, 7; trans. Dods.

The members of the heavenly city will join God in heaven after the final judgment. These are the people who have given up all earthly things, willingly and without looking back.[233] The story of Lot warns the members of the heavenly city not to look back on their old ways if they want to escape judgment. Lot's wife looked back and was turned into a pillar of sand because God had ordered them to leave without looking back. The members of the heavenly city should take warning from her tale.[234]

The saints of God have made a covenant with Him that their works of mercy will be accepted as sacrifices. These works of mercy will lead them to the grace of God, and God in exchange will provide His saints with the promises of the New Testament.[235]This covenant does not extend to those who are performing alms to buy future sins. They are not members of the true City of God. Citizens in the City of God understand that their good works can help to relieve sins that they may have committed in the past, but they should not seek to sin. As true members they seek to glorify God, which means they try to sin as little as they can.[236]

So those that have given up earthly wants for Jesus, and have been working to glorify God, will receive eternal blessedness in the reign of God after the final judgment. Since the members of the earthly city were removed from the population, the people in the City of God will be free from the contamination of earthly men and from earthly wants.[237]There will be no more pain or sorrow felt by the members of

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[233] *City of God,* XXI, 26; trans. Dods.
[234] *City of God,* XVI, 30; trans. Dods.
[235] *City of God,* XX, 24; trans. Dods.
[236] *City of God,* XXI, 27; trans. Dods.
[237] *City of God,* XX, 25; trans. Dods.

the heavenly city once they join God.[238] No one will desire any more than they have, removing any and all envy that people may have had on earth.[239] The negative emotions that drive many of the interactions on earth will no longer plague the members of the heavenly city, and they will be able to live a perfectly blessed life directed to the glory of God.[240]

The members of the heavenly city undergo two resurrections. The first happens in their life on earth: it is a resurrection of the soul by faith in Jesus. The second resurrection is a resurrection of the body after the final judgment.[241]The new bodies of the citizens of the heavenly city will be comprised of the same matter as their earthly bodies, but will be perfected.[242]God will collect all the physical substance of their bodies, no matter where it may have been spread or consumed, and then He will reconstruct it in a new form.[243] Their new body will be reconstructed when the members of the earthly city were at the height of their youth, which Augustine describes to be around the age of thirty. Thirty is the last age where people are fully grown, but have not yet started to decline.[244]These bodies will be perfect, so if there was any imperfection with a person's body on earth, the part of the body that caused the imperfection will be spread out over the rest of their body. In this way, none of the original substance of a person's body will

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[238] *City of God,* XX, 17; trans. Dods.
[239] *City of God,* XXII, 30; trans. Dods.
[240] *City of God,* XXII, 1; trans. Dods.
[241] *City of God,* XX, 6; trans. Dods.
[242] *City of God,* XXII, 19; trans. Dods.
[243] *City of God,* XXII, 12; trans. Dods.
[244] *City of God,* XXII, 15; trans. Dods.

be left unused, but the new body will still be perfect.[245]The new bodies will be

spiritual bodies, clothed in incorruption and immortality.[246]In this way, people in

the City of God will no longer have to fight against the vices of the flesh. Their bodies

will have the substance of flesh without any fleshly corruption.[247]

No one will be able to sin in the City of God as a gift from God. However,

members will retain free will. The soul will forget all the evils of the past, which will

be a gift from God. Not in that it is unaware of ever having committed them, but

rather it remembers them as if it had learned it in a book, not in having committed

the action itself.[248]This leaves citizens in the City of God to turn all their actions

toward the glory of God.

This brings every one into the seventh age and the end of history. God will

rest and he will give everyone else rest in himself. Christ will bring repose for both

the body and the spirit as members in the Heavenly City rejoice in his rule.

[249]Currently, Christ and his saints are reigning over earth from heaven.[250] After the

final judgment, Christ will rule directly over his kingdom providing peace and

eternal happiness for members in the heavenly city on Earth in the seventh age.

According to Vernon Bourke, Augustine doesn't make it clear what his climax

in history is. The climax of history is the whole point around which all other events

revolve, and in Augustine's writings two different climaxes of history can be found.

The first possible historical climax could be found in Christ. Everything was leading

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[245] *City of God,* XXII, 19; trans. Dods.
[246] *City of God,* XXII, 21; trans. Dods.
[247] *City of God,* XXII, 24; trans. Dods.
[248] *City of God,* XXII, 30; trans. Dods.
[249] *City of God,* XXII, 30; trans. Dods.
[250] *City of God,* XX, 9; trans. Dods.

up to Christ and since He has come, everything else is just being played out until the members of the City of God can join God after the final judgment. The second possible climax is the final judgment. Everything is leading up to the final judgment, when people's fates are decided and they are thrown into eternal punishment, or blessed by joining God in his Kingdom.[251]

The first view, that the climax is found in Christ, is supported by Augustine's descriptions of the Old Testament. Everything in the Old Testament foretells Christ's coming. "...All hold it certain that these things [written in Scripture] were neither done nor recorded without some foreshadowing of future events, and that they are to be referred only to Christ and His church, which is the city of God, proclaimed from the very beginning of human history by figures which we now see everywhere accomplished."[252] Thus most of the important events in the Old Testament point to the coming of Christ and the development of His church. After Christ, Augustine states that there is no more sacred history, and people no longer have any insight into how God is acting out his plan on earth. Augustine seems to suggest that the climax could be in Christ because sacred history is essential for people on Earth to find salvation. Christopher Dawson supports this view, stating that Augustine describes the coming of Christ as the turning point in history and that mankind entered a new phase after He came.[253]

The other climax, found in the final judgment, is supported by Augustine's descriptions of the end of the two cities. The two cities will not end until God comes

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[251] Augustine and Vernon J. Bourke, *The Essential Augustine* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1974), 221.
[252] *City of God*. XVI, 2; trans. Dods.
[253] Dawson, C. *St. Augustine and His Age,* 46.

to judge the members of Earth. Then people in the heavenly city will finally be able to rest in peace, and the members of the earthly city will receive the punishment they deserve. Everything done on earth is building to this point, and nothing will be fully decided until God makes his ultimate judgment on people's souls. As Augustine states, "Therefore 'in the midst of the Earth,' that is, while our soul is shut up in this earthly body, judgment and justice are to be done, which shall be profitable for us hereafter, when 'everyone shall receive according to that he hath done in the body, whether good or bad.'"[254]R. A. Markus supports this view of the climax of history, arguing that all of God's workings, both hidden and revealed, are leading up to the final judgment.[255]

In all, both these arguments are strongly supported in Augustine's writings, and there are historians on both sides that will argue for either view. When he is describing the Old Testament, Augustine seems strongly to suggest that Christ is the ultimate course of history, but in his discussions of the sixth age and the final judgment, Augustine additionally seems to suggest that this may be the climax. Both are valid, and decisions made by historians on the topic really depend upon where they have been studying in *The City of God* and their personal bias.

Augustine ultimately provided a new way of viewing history. Under the classical cyclic view of history life had very little meaning. Life was a series aimless revolutions and pointless repetitions in the cyclic view. Augustine fundamentally challenged this view. He gave history meaning. History was working toward a definite end, whereby God would bring his elect members into the City of

[254] *City of God*. XVII, 4; trans. Dods.
[255] Markus, R.A. *Saeculum: History and Society in the theology of St. Augustine,* 53.

God.[256]Augustine's description of history also changed humanity's place within it. People are not merely slaves to time in Augustine's conception of history, but the creators of history. They are able to make decisions that influence the progression of history. History is a creative process, and on this view progress is possible. People and life can get better.[257]

Augustine provided Christians with a new view of history that made progress possible and was consistent with the Bible. History was no longer viewed as meaningless repetitions of circles, the same thing happening over and over again without any meaning. Rather it was God's working through time and history to bring His creatures back into Himself, so that they would finally be able to live in the blessed peace they lost in the fall.

St. Augustine's Lasting Influence

Augustine's philosophy of history had a lasting influence on Western conceptions of history. In combination with the work done by St. Jerome and St. Ambrose, a Christian historiography arose that redefined the way people thought about history.[258] According to Collingwood, this historiography has four defined principles that it is based upon. First it must be universal. A universal history encompasses the entire history of the world going all the way back to the beginning of man.[259] Secondly, events are ascribed to the workings of providence, not to the wisdom of the people involved in the events. While people may participate in history, they are not the ultimate causes of history. Thirdly, it will provide a clear

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[256] Herbert Butterfield, *The Origins of History,* (New York: Basic, 1981), 184.

[257] Dawson, C. *St. Augustine and His Age,* 71.

[258] Collingwood, R.G. *The Idea of History,* 48.

[259] Collingwood, R.G. *The Idea of History,* 49.

pattern for historical events, and in particular, the historical life of Christ will be of central importance to the pattern. Traditionally it involves the initial division of history into two parts, the time before Christ when humanity looked forward to his coming, and the time after Christ where humanity looks back at Christ's life. Lastly, history will be divided again into smaller subsections, which are not as important as the life of Christ, but provide a reference to understand when events occur.[260]

Collingwood also argues, providence within history became commonplace, though it may not always be attributed to God.[261] Students of history are often told tales of conquest as thought the conquerors planned it that way. In reality the conquerors had very little plan, if any, in mind at all, but looking back on the conquest, they appeared to have a plan and it is taught that way because of Christianity's view of history.[262] A central revolving point, such as Christ, is also common in historical understanding today. History is taught as revolving around some key point in time, such as the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, or any other significant time in history. Additionally, history is commonly divided into periods that are ascribed their own character in order to clearly understand the events in that period. People do not commonly think about these events today because they are so commonly used to explain the world, but these ideas were completely new in Greco-Roman thought, and they shaped the way the Western world considers history.

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[260] Collingwood, R.G. *The Idea of History,* 50.
[261] Collingwood, R.G. *The Idea of History,* 51.
[262] Collingwood, R.G. *The Idea of History,* 52.

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