Church History

Mr. Myers

Chapt. 4

**Constantine**

1. Background
   1. Diocletian—emperor of late 3rd century who “grabbed the empire by the scruff of the neck and shook it into new life; tried to reinvigorate paganism and instigated a severe persecution of the church
   2. Galerius followed Diocletian and continued the persecution until his deathbed when he stopped the persecution
2. Constantine’s Rise
   1. In the vacuum of Galerius’s death, Constantine—military leader stationed in Gaul—moved on Rome to take power
   2. He met his rival Maxentius just north of Rome at Milvan Bridge; the night before the battle, Constantine saw a cross above the sun and the words “In this sign, conquer”; he took it for a Christian sign and won the battle in Christ’s name
   3. From then on, Constantine made Christianity a significant consideration (though not always supreme) in his life and political policy
   4. Edict of Milan (313)—Official acceptance of Christianity
   5. Constantine’s personal life:
      1. Maintained the title of *Pontifex Maximus (*pagan high priest)
      2. Had various potential competitors murdered, including his own son (probably)
      3. Continued to wage war
      4. Was baptized on his deathbed
   6. Detrimental results of the Constantinian shift:
      1. Many people entered the church who were not genuine Christians
      2. Political leaders exerted control within the church
      3. The church begins to adopt methods from the political world
   7. The Constantinian shift marks a turning point in the history of the church—after the Edict of Milan, the growth of the church skyrockets in terms of numbers but slides backward in terms of spirituality and faithfulness to Christ