

Study Guide

3rd-4th c. Persecutions

Assignment

Christianity in Late Antiquity pp. 8-18 (end of chapter 17)

Chadwick, *The Early Church*, 116-24

New Eusebius, selections

Important terms and names

Decian persecution (basic events, characteristics)

Great Persecution of Diocletian (basic events, characteristics, consequences for the church)

Cyprian

Novatian controversy and schism

Apostate

Libellus

Martyr

Confessor

Baptism

catholic

Important themes

Martyrdom and persecution

Role of the bishop

Repentance and sin

1) How were the persecutions of the emperors Decius and Diocletian similar to or different from the persecutions we've already studied? Think in terms of the actions and policies of the government and in terms of the reactions of Christians to the persecution.

2) One of the critical issues the church had to deal with in response to these persecutions was how to deal with Christians who lapsed (by sacrificing to the pagan gods) but then wanted to return to the church. What were the different positions different church leaders took on the issue of the lapsed? What ramifications did this controversy over the lapsed have for the organization of church communities and the administration of sacraments, such as baptism?

3) How are the *Acts of Felix* different from other martyr texts you read this semester? How are they similar?

4) The *Deaths of the Persecutors* is written by a CHRISTIAN after the fact, so consider: how does it portray Diocletian? What is it trying to emphasize? (It has an agenda; it's not an objective "history".)