The first period in Church history can simply be characterized by the phrase *fully purposed*. These Christians (Acts 11:26) were for the most part doctrinally sound. They received the Word of God in its original form, as the canonization of Scripture by the middle of the 2nd Century A.D. (1 Thessalonians 2:13). And they fully realized that this latter portion of the great commission had been accomplished without the presence of any original manuscripts. In short, these Believers had been entrusted with the entire collection of books (Bibles) that others would eventually receive in the centuries yet to come.

The next period saw the development of two main schools of biblical thought. Antioch had become the model church for sound doctrine and world missions. (Acts 13:1-3) records that Paul and Barnabas were sent out from here 100 years earlier to preach the gospel to the uttermost part of the world. Alexandria, on the other hand, had become the model for false doctrine and heresy! (One should note the contrast of these two cities in Acts 6:3-13, when they are mentioned in the Bible for the first time.) Believers throughout Asia Minor experienced severe persecution (Revelation 2:10) with several million saints being martyred in the first 70 years! (Revelation 18:4) From the crashing and resounding of myrrh brings forth a sweet smelling aroma, so likewise did the crushing of these saints. (Ephesians 5:2)

In the third era of Church history a problem was exposed that would plague Christianity for centuries to come. Due to the influence of the Alexandrian school of thought, doctrinal compromise began to take root in the Church. The system of beliefs stemming from Antioch clashed with the teachings of Alexandria. The compromise was so severe that the Emperor Constantine ordered all church documents to be gathered, a task to be held at Nicaea in 325 A.D. for the purpose of settling the major issues. Afterwards, Constantine began to force Christianity upon his subjects, although he himself was not truly born again. It was becoming more evident that Satan's new seat of authority was now located in the city of Rome. (Revelation 2:15; 17:18)

The fourth and fifth periods of Church history covered the 1,000 year period known by historians as the Dark Ages. Bible-believing saints experienced severe persecution as they began to speak out against the Roman Catholic system which by now was taking over Europe. The focus of the attack was against the Bible, and made the decision to leave. (Revelation 18:4) As the Cathol...
In 1582 the Catholic Church had no choice but to make the Douay Rheims Bible her official English translation. More key teachings were made official during this time period as well, including the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. Those who taught otherwise were branded as heretics, and spitefully given the distinction of being Ana Baptists by the Catholic Council of Trent. And the forbiddance of clergy marriage, along with the commandment to abstain from the eating of meat during Lent, only served to further reveal who was really controlling this church. (I Timothy 4:1-3)

While Believers were busy being persecuted for their faith, other professing Christians were busy critiquing God's Word. In 180 A.D., a man by the name of Pantaenus established a school in Alexandria, Egypt to do just that. The school continued after his death, and a few years later a man came along named Origen who assumed the leadership role from 203-231 A.D. Origen (known as the father of critical investigation) was influenced by a Jewish philosopher named Philo (Colossians 2:8) who was well versed in the teachings of Plato, Socrates, and Aristotle. The school of Alexandria took shape under Origen and adhered to his Gnostic system of teaching and reasoning. And when Scripture did not agree with Alexandrian doctrine, the text was conveniently altered or omitted.