

1 **Augustine of Hippo**

2 **Biographical Sketch**

- Augustine was born in North Africa in 354 to a Christian mother and a pagan father.
- He lived in sensuality as a youth.
- He felt unfulfilled and sought meaning in pagan philosophy and Gnostic-like beliefs.

3

- He moved to Italy in 384 and was impressed by the preaching of Ambrose, bishop of Milan.
- He began reading the New Testament and was converted, being baptized by Ambrose in 387.
- In 391 he was ordained a priest in the North African city of Hippo and soon became a bishop.
- Augustine died in 430 during a barbarian siege of Hippo.

4 **Augustine and the Donatists**

- The Donatists were a large faction of Christians in North Africa who believed the Catholic church had been corrupted.
 - Donatists stressed the purity of the true church.
 - They believed that some bishops had apostatized by giving Bibles up for burning during persecution before Constantine's time.
 - They viewed the Catholic church as being corrupted by these bishops.
 - Priests and bishops ordained by these apostates were not "real" priests and bishops.
 - Sacraments administered by such priests were not valid.

5

- Augustine argued against the Donatists.
 - Augustine interpreted passages such as Matt. 13:24–30, the parable of the wheat and the tares, to argue against the claim that the church is pure.
 - Augustine argued that a priest is merely a channel of God's grace when he administers the sacraments, and his personal spirituality is irrelevant.
 - Augustine eventually supported the use of force to suppress "heresy" like Donatism.

6 **Augustine's views of sin and grace in the debate with Pelagius**

- Pelagius was a monk who taught that all people have the power to choose sin or righteousness.
 - Most people sin, but can be forgiven by God through faith.
 - Christians can live righteously by their own efforts.

7

- Augustine argued that we have all inherited a profound sinfulness from Adam.
 - We are spiritually dead and bound by sin.

- It is impossible for us to do good through our own efforts.
- God predestines some to receive His grace from Christ through the church and overcome sin.

8 ***The City of God***

- Like many in his time, Augustine was troubled by the decline of the Roman Empire.
- In *The City of God*, Augustine contrasts the temporary glory of sinful human empires with the eternal glory of God's kingdom, represented on earth by the church.
- The church is therefore superior to the state, and the state must submit to it.