

Christianity

“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah...”

Jeremiah 31:31

The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies...He shall judge among the heathen, *he shall fill the places with the dead bodies; he shall wound the heads over many countries.*

Ps. 110:2-6 (KJV)

Christianity is born in the Roman Empire – Pax Romana – Roman peace (overhead map)

Time of greatness – cities built without walls, trade and commerce over the many roads and sea routes. Possibly the only time in history the Mediterranean is cleared of pirates. Massive aqueducts bring water to the cities. Public baths, libraries, police and fire departments, sewage and sanitation. It was a time of literature, poetry, theatre, gladiatorial matches and chariot races and above all peace.

Tolerant empire – Rome doesn't care about your lifestyle or religious practices. Whatever gods you worship you must also simply say a prayer for the emperor and for the gods of Rome.

All is gravy but for the Roman province of Judea; the promised land of the former Hebrews who we will now call the Jews. The land Moses, Samson, King David and Solomon of the Old Testament called home.

The Romans do not interfere with Judaism and they make many improvements to the cities and the land, but the Jews resent the Romans and yearn to be free. Romans even exempted the Jews from worshipping the Roman gods, but the Jews hate Rome. Given this the Jews revolt several times and each time are savagely crushed by the legions.

Despite this the Jews never will give up hope. Just as YHWH sent Moses to free them from Egypt so He will send a warrior to deliver them from the Romans. A warrior-king to be called the

Messiah (Christ): anointed one. Foretold messenger sent by YHWH to free the Jews from the Romans. God on earth.

Messenger foretold in Old Testament prophecy. He will come just a matter of when. False messiah's come and go while the Jews desperately wait God's chosen.

Jesus of Nazareth: former carpenter preached of God's love and forgiveness and believed by some to be the messiah. Historically existed but events of his life we are unsure of. Only source is the Bible in the Gospels.

Gospels: ("Good news") Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, the first four books of the New Testament. Four biographies of the life of Jesus.

Twelve disciples: dozen chosen followers of Jesus who assist him and spread his teachings.

He taught using **parables**: stories which had other, moral meanings.

He claimed to be the messiah but only one problem: HE DIDN'T PREACH REVOLUTION OR REBELLION

When asked if a man should pay taxes to hated Rome Jesus said,

"Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's: and unto God the things that are God's."

Matthew 22:21

"Put your sword back into its place; for **all who take the sword will perish by the sword.**"

Mat. 26.51-52 (KJV)

"But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also... I say unto you, **Love your enemies, bless them that curse you,** do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;"

Mat. 5.38-41 (KJV)

" Judge not, lest ye be judged."

Mat. 7.1

"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you."

"Love thy neighbor"

- Jesus was a disappointment to Jews wanting a warrior to fight Rome but was very well received by the poor. Jesus taught that if one accepted God and renounced sin that they would be rewarded in the afterlife --- HEAVEN

II. Crucifixion in Jerusalem

Jesus travels throughout Canaan eventually coming to Jerusalem. By this time he's made powerful enemies. Those that believe he's the messiah are excited and may begin a new revolt. Other Jews are afraid he will lead a revolt and bring the Romans upon them again. Others are angry he won't lead a revolt and instead is preaching peace. Things aren't going well in Jerusalem and Jesus sits down to have a meal with his disciples.

The Last Supper: Jesus breaks bread and pours wine for disciples saying this is his body and blood.

"One of you will betray me." Disciple Judas leaves dinner and brings Jewish authorities to arrest Jesus.

Jesus is turned over to Roman authorities for crime of claiming to be the messiah

Pontius Pilate: Roman governor of Judea. According to the Bible, he considers letting Jesus off as he's not preaching rebellion.

Because it's Passover he offers to free a prisoner Barabbas or Jesus. Barabbas captured in a past rebellion against Rome. Crowd wants Barabbas. Pilate is still reluctant to execute Jesus. According only to Matthew, impatient crowd shouts out. Historical truth?

"Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children."

Mat. 27.25

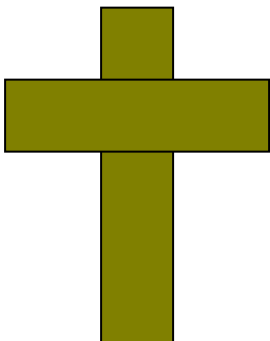
Pilate then has Jesus beaten and crucified.

Crucifixion: execution on the cross. Die of suffocation, thirst or exposure. Tied or nailed on the cross.

Jesus made to wear a crown of thorns. Inscription INRI THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

Holy lance: soldier pierces Jesus' side to assure he's dead.

Holy grail: Jesus' cup at the last supper and caught his blood on the cross.



If he's the messiah why didn't he save himself. In Christian belief, Jesus sacrificed himself for the sins of humanity and thus through him all of us can attain salvation and go to Heaven. Thus the cross is the symbol of Christianity as a reminder of God's sacrifice.

According to the New Testament though Jesus isn't done yet. His body is taken from the cross and placed in a cave on Friday. Three days later on Sunday he arises again and hangs out on earth for another forty days before rising into Heaven.

Day Jesus is crucified is Friday, the day he rises is Sunday. Celebrated today as Good Friday and Easter Sunday

Jewish followers now convince more than ever that Jesus was the messiah and call him such

Jesus Kristus – Jesus Christ – Jesus the messiah

At first followers call themselves Jews but soon refer to themselves as followers of the Christ or as Christians. Other Jews think the whole thing faked and they work against this new faith.

Holy Communion: bread and wine are miraculously transformed into the blood and body of Jesus.

III. Spread of the faith

After Jesus' passing the disciples work to spread the teachings with little success. Until...

Paul: (Saul) along with Jesus, the co-founder of Christianity. Traveled tirelessly throughout the Empire bringing the faith to non-Jews.

- Former Jewish lawyer who persecuted early Christians until Jesus appeared to him in a blaze of light to tell him to stop.
- Brought the faith to non-Jews (Gentiles). Hope of heaven and afterlife appealed greatly to the poor. Christian community started wherever he began. Wrote letters (epistles) to guide these communities. These letters make up much of the New Testament.
- Beheaded in Rome for being a nuisance.

IV. Persecution of Christianity: Faith grows and as it does the empire takes notice.

64 A.D. Great Fire in Rome – massive fire in Rome burns down most of the city probably set by the emperor Nero. Fire spared the Christian parts of the city so he blames them. **THROW THE CHRISTIANS TO THE LIONS.**

All citizens have to worship the emperor as a god. Only exemption to this is the Jews. Well at first the empire assumes the Christians are Jews but they insist they are not. So the Empire asks them to worship the emperor but they refuse. Treason!

- 1) Refused to worship the emperor as a god
- 2) Wouldn't serve in the Roman army
- 3) Criticized the Roman games and the gods
- 4) Engaged in cannibalism and sexual misconduct (blood/body)
(kiss of peace) (brother, sister)
- 5) God was an executed Roman criminal

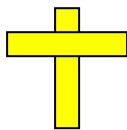
For the next two hundred years the empire attempts to wipe out Christianity. Christians not afraid to die and they are crucified, eaten, burned, and beaten. Romans almost destroy it but faith gains more and more followers. Why?

Empire suffering from invasion and chaos. Christians willing to die for their beliefs. Wow! Not only that the afterlife of the Roman gods is Hades – a gray, dull place. Roman poor and slaves attracted to Christianity and its promise of Heaven.

V. Triumph of Christianity

Constantine the Great: Roman emperor legalized and promoted Christianity. Also built city of Constantinople.

Claimed that as a general God spoke to him in a dream with a blazing cross and these words blazoned across the sky. When he awoke he ordered his men to paint the cross on their shields and his men won a great battle.



“In hoc signo vinces”

By this sign you shall conquer.

Later emperors made Christianity the official religion of the empire. Pagan temples were burned, looted and destroyed. Christians now persecuted pagans until the old gods were nothing but a memory.

VI. Birth of the Catholic Church

Catholic Church: (Universal Church) – the one and only Christian church. The only Church of the Empire and the Middle Ages. Educated the faithful and assured their passage to Heaven.

Catholic clergy hierarchy (churchmen)

Patriarchs - oversaw archbishops, reported to God – Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem.

Archbishops - oversaw bishops, reported to patriarchs

Bishops - oversaw priests, reported to archbishops

Priests - watched over his congregation, reported to bishops

Bible: Old and New Testament. New Testament include gospels and letters of Paul. Jews ignore New Testament.

Doctrine: correct belief, official teachings of the Church – Heaven

Heresy: incorrect belief, wrong teachings - Hell

Worked well, but soon the patriarchs began to argue with one another about who was most important. Rome the capital. Also the place where Paul beheaded. Also the place where Peter was crucified upside down.

“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven...Mat 16.18-19

Roman patriarch began to take the title of Pope and claimed all Christians look to him. None of the other patriarchs agree. Soon the western churches look to the Pope and the eastern churches look to Constantinople.

