

# Rise of Christianity -- Day 1

## Religion in the Roman Empire

**Polytheistic**  
& based  
upon the  
Greek gods

Romans were  
not very  
emotional  
about their  
religion



# RISE OF CHRISTIANITY

**Christianity** created a “**Cultural Revolution**” in the Roman Empire

- **Christians and Roman Empire held different views on “life”**
  - Rome – “live the good life”**
  - Christianity – “life was a pit stop for life after death”**

## Birth of **Jesus Christ**

- Joseph / Mary
- Bethlehem – Matthew 2
- age 30, began preaching what would become Christianity

# TEACHINGS OF JESUS

## New Testament

☐ Life and teachings of Jesus Christ found in the

## Gospels (“Good News”)

- ☐ Jesus was God’s son
- ☐ Matthew, Mark, Luke, John
- ☐ teaching based on Jewish Law, but taught followers to live “Ethically” not just to observe the laws **(Legalism)**
- ☐ “invitational style of teaching”
- ☐ Parables
- ☐ Miracles
- ☐ “Jesus lived his teachings” (sinless, humble, selfless, loving,)

# TEACHINGS OF JESUS

## “Sermon on the Mount”

□ Moral and ethical teachings of Christianity

❖ “Beatitudes”

**B**lessed are .....  
the spiritually hungry  
those who mourn  
the gentle in spirit  
those who seek justice  
those who show mercy  
the pure in heart  
the peace-makers  
the persecuted


“Lord’s Prayer”

“Golden Rule”

Forgiveness and Love

**MISSION: Bring “Spiritual Salvation” to believers**

# THE APPEAL OF JESUS' TEACHINGS

- 1) **Gave life meaning and purpose**
- 2) **Promise of "Eternal Life"**
  - **Roman Religion = Fatalism**
- 3) **Christian** 
  - Regardless of "social barriers"**
- 4) **Joy of following Jesus**
- 5) **Martyrs**
  - "Blood of the martyrs is the seed of Christianity"**
  - NO ONE EVER DIED TO SAVE SOMEONE**
    - ❖ **Sacrifice of Jesus**

# CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS

## Judas Iscariot

- ❑ 1 of 12 Apostles
- ❑ Garden of Gethsemane

## Pontius Pilate

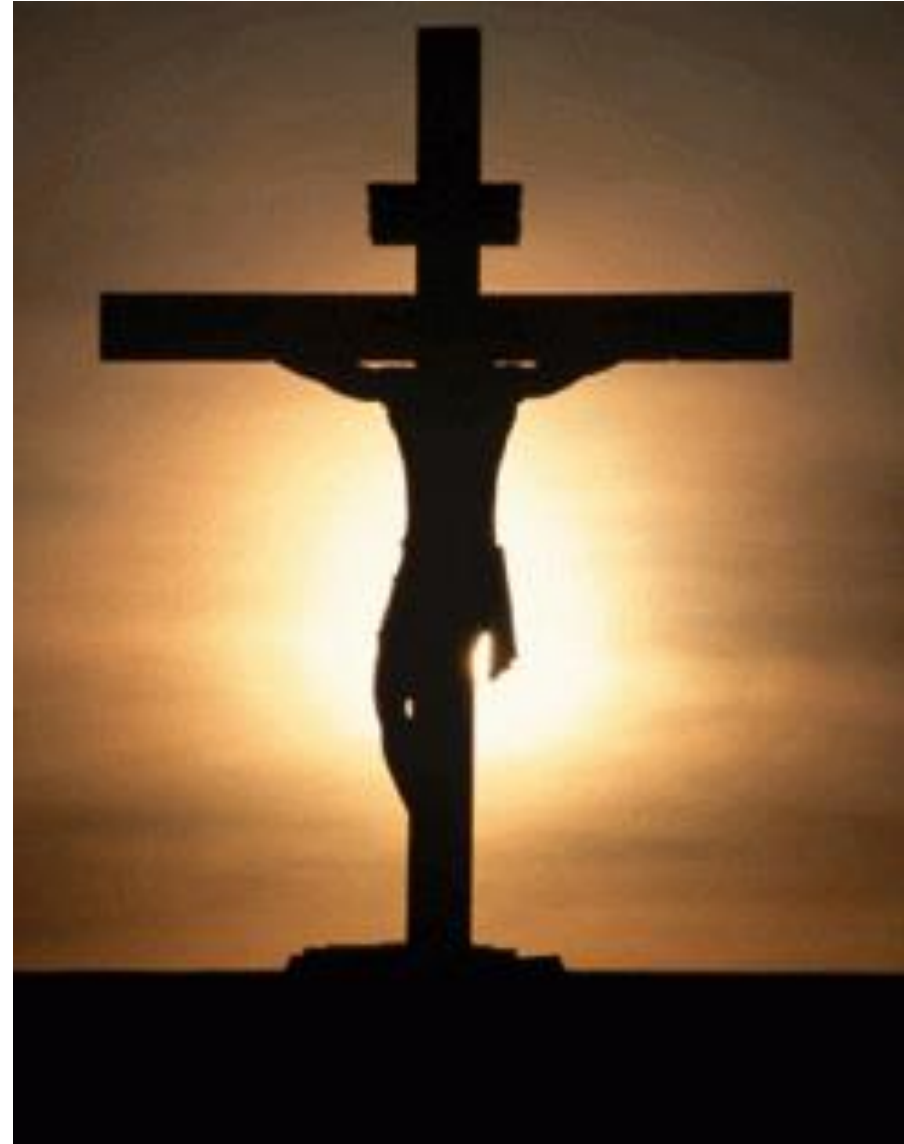
- ❑ Roman Governor allowed Jesus to be crucified

## REASONS FOR CRUCIFIXION

1) BLASPHEMY

2) PLOTTING TO BECOME KING

3) FEAR OF INCITING REVOLT



# **CORE REASONS FOR CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS**

## **POWER**

**Jesus would weaken Judaism and power of High Priest, Pharisees, and Temple**

## **MONEY**

**Rome wanted to keep its steady stream of TAX \$\$**

# RESURRECTION OF JESUS

**Jesus** arose **3** days later

☐ **Easter**

❖ **Christians believe in Jesus' resurrection**

☐ **Jesus = Messiah**

**THE RESURRECTION OF  
JESUS IS THE DEFINING  
POINT OF CHRISTIANITY**



# THE 12 APOSTLES

Name of Apostle	Cause of Death
Simon Peter	crucified upside down
Andrew, Peter's brother	crucified
James, the son of Zebedee	beheaded by Herod Agrippa I
John	exiled, died of old age (brother of James)
Matthew	died a martyr in Ethiopia
Bartholomew	beaten then crucified. (aka Nathanael)
Philip	crucified
Thomas	speared to death
Simon, the zealot	crucified
James	stoned to death
Thaddaeus	stoned to death. (aka Judas son of James)
Judas Iscariot	suicide by hanging
	--> Matthias replaced Judas (Acts 1:26)

# PETER

**Peter** spread Christianity to **Rome**

☐ recognized as 1<sup>st</sup> **Pope** of Christian Church

## **PETRINE DOCTRINE (Matthew 16:18)**

☐ *“You are Peter; and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”*

Rise of “**Catholic Christianity**”

- Catholic = “**Universal**”

Crucified upside down during reign of **Nero**



# PAUL – “13<sup>th</sup> Apostle”



- ❑ persecuted followers of Jesus
- ❑ blinded by God on road to Damascus – Jesus asked “why are you persecuting me?”
- ❑ becomes **Paul**
- ❑ **Roman citizen**
  - could travel freely throughout the empire
- ❑ Spread to **Gentiles**
- ❑ **Christianity growing rapidly**



# ROMANS DISLIKE OF CHRISTIANITY

- 1) Did not worship Roman Emperor as a god
- 2) Did not worship Roman gods
- 3) Secret meetings

ROMAN GODS WERE PUNISHING THE EMPIRE  
FOR ALLOWING CHRISTIAN IMPIETY

**CHRISTIANS BECAME THE  
"SCAPEGOAT" FOR ROME'S PROBLEMS**

# ROMAN EMPIRE HELPED CHRISTIANITY GROW

1. **Security** of the Roman Empire allowed citizens and ideas to “freely” move around
2. **Common language of Greek** (Alexander the Great)
3. **Road system**
4. **Fatalism** of Roman Religion
  - Hope** of Christianity
  - “heavenly” afterlife
5. **Persecution** of Christians
  - “*blood of the martyrs is the seed of Christianity*”
  - 64 Nero
  - 249 Emperor Decius

# CHRISTIANITY REPLACES ROMAN PAGANISM

## 312 **Constantine**

- ☐ becomes 1<sup>st</sup> Christian Emperor
  - Battle of Milvian Bridge

## ☐ **Edict of Milan**

## 380 **Theodosius**

- ☐ makes Christianity official religion of the Roman Empire