

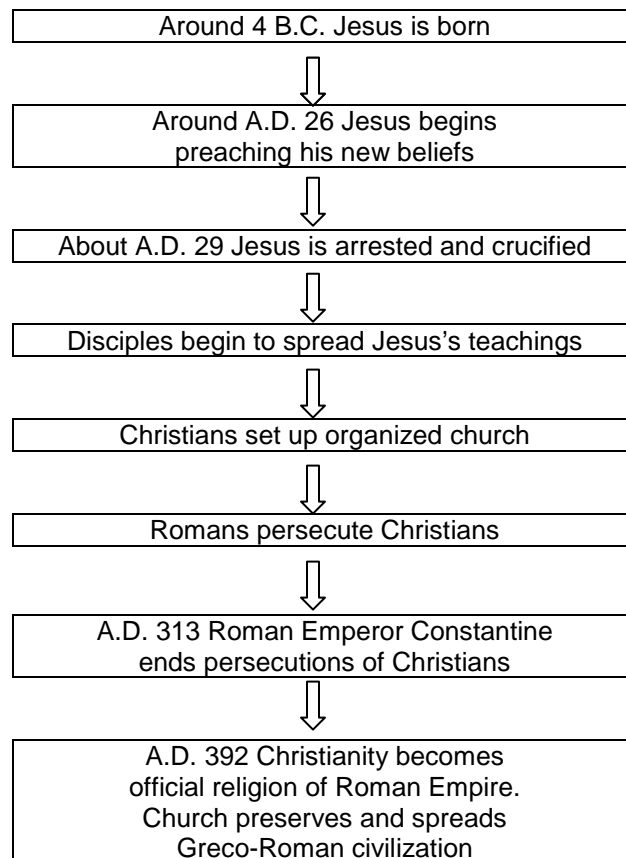
Christianity

In General, the Romans allowed its citizens to worship as they pleased. However, Jewish reformers called **Zealots** wanted independence. When the Jews revolted, the Romans drove them out of their homeland.

During these difficult times a new religion emerged. Its founder was a Jew named **Jesus**. Jesus was born around 4 A.D. He called himself the Son of God and said that he was the **messiah** (savior) sent by God. He believed in the Jewish idea of one God and accepted the Ten Commandments. Jesus also preached new ideas. He claimed that he was “**Christ**,” that is, the promised savior who would save mankind from its sins. Many Jews and Romans worried that Jesus was dangerous. Arrested by the Romans, he was tried and executed Roman-style which was nailed to a cross and left to die.

After Jesus died his followers (Disciples or Apostles) spread his teachings. They became the first Christians. At first Rome persecuted the Christians. Still, Christianity continued to spread. Many people found comfort in the belief that Jesus redeemed them from sin and offered them the possibility of a better life after death. Jesus had welcomed all people, including the poor and the troubled. In A.D 313, Emperor Constantine ended the persecution of Christians. Some eighty years later, Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire.

Growth of Christianity



CHRISTIANITY

ORIGINS	Palestine, 1 st century B.C. Founder: Jesus of Nazareth
SACRED TEXTS	Christian Bible Both Old and New Testaments
ORGANIZATION	Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches have hierarchal rule by a chief bishop:- Pope for Roman Catholic Church Patriarch for Eastern Orthodox Church
BELIEFS	Monotheistic. Jesus was the Messiah or Christ promised by God in the prophecies of the Old Testament. He freed his believers from sin and offered resurrection and salvation in an afterlife. The Trinity (one God in essence) is viewed as 3 personifications: Father (Creator) Son (Redeemer) Holy Spirit (Sustainer)
PRACTICES	The Principle Rights (Sacraments) are: Baptism – anointed after birth Confirmation – around 12 or 13 as an adult member of the church Service – prayers, chants, scripture readings and a sermon Eucharist – Reenactment of the Last Supper Bread – the body of Christ Wine – the blood of Christ
DIVISIONS	Eastern Europe – Byzantine (The Orthodox Church) Western Europe – Latin Church The Western church was divided in the 16 th century into the Roman Catholic Church (ruled by the Pope in Rome) and the Protestant Church, a large number of smaller churches that “protested” and wanted reforms within the Latin Church during a period called the Protestant Reformation. It began in Germany and Switzerland then spread across Northern and Western Europe and eventually became worldwide. The larger divisions within the Protestant Church are Lutheran, Anglican, Calvinist (Reformed), Sectarian, Methodist, and Baptist.
HOLY DAYS	Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches – Most sacred day is Christmas – the birth of Christ but they also celebrate Good Friday (the death of Jesus on the cross) and Easter Sunday (when Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into heaven). Several Catholic countries, especially in Latin and South America, also celebrate “Little Christmas” or “The three Kings day ” which was when the three wise men arrived in Bethlehem from the east after following the star that appeared in the sky indicating the birth of Jesus. Eastern Orthodox – Most sacred day is Easter, then Good Friday. Both Catholic and some Protestant Churches (Anglican, Episcopalian) also celebrate various Saints – those who performed at least three miracles in their lifetimes.

The New Testament is about the life of Jesus, from his birth, his teachings, his actions, his betrayal by one of his 13 disciples, his crucifixion and resurrection into heaven. The New Testament is a compilation of stories told about the life of Jesus by his Apostles, those closest to him that after he died who went in all directions spreading his word and converting people to Christianity.

There are four sections to the New Testament

1. The Gospel (or the Word of the Lord)

There are four sections, each written by the Apostles Matthew, Mark, Luke and John

2. The Acts of the Apostles

This covers the Beginnings of the Church, How the Church Moves Outward, How the Church Breaks barriers and finally who took and how the religion spread from Jerusalem to Rome

3. This section is called the Letters. They are teachings based on letters written by the Apostles about the word of Christ, his teachings and conversions

4. Finally the last section is the Revelation of John or “Revelations”

- The first section is a Message to the Churches.
- The second section is The Opening of the Sealed Book
- The third section is The Powers of Darkness Conquered
- The Fourth and final section is Visions of the End – how the world will end.

Officials of the Church

Pope	The head of the Roman Catholic Church in Rome. The Bishop of Rome. He is elected by Cardinals in an elaborate ceremony immediately after the death of the last Pope.
Cardinal	High ranking member of the Pope’s chief advisory council
Archbishop	The chief bishop of an ecclesiastical province, e.g. the Archbishop of Canterbury or York or New York
Bishop	A high ranking Christian official who supervises a number of local churches. His job is also to run the schools for priests in the cathedrals.
Priest	The person who holds or runs the services in the local community, village, town etc. He can also be called a pastor. His role is religious teaching, baptism, Holy Communion – the Eucharist, confirmations, performing weddings, and funerals.
Monk	Religious men who devote their lives to prayer and labor for the church. They live in a monastery
Nun	Religious women who devote their lives to prayer and labor for the church. They live in a convent.
Canon Law	The body of laws governing the religious practices of the Christian Church

A Christian Worldview

The Christian population has spread south from Europe and North America over the last century.

<u>Year</u>	<u>World Population</u>	Christians
1900	1.6 billion	0.6 billion
2000	6.1 billion	2.0 billion

Christians as a percentage of the total population

	<u>1900</u>	<u>2000</u>
Africa	9.2%	45.4%
Asia	2.3	8.5
Europe	94.5	76.9
Latin America	95.2	92.7
North America	96.6	83.0
Oceania	77.5	82.3
WORLD	34.5%	33.0%

Within the Faith – Denominations as a percentage of Christians

	<u>1900</u>	<u>2000</u>
Roman Catholics	50.8%	50.2%
Orthodox	22.1	10.2
Protestants	19.6	16.2
Anglicans	5.8	3.8
Independents (Baptists, Methodists)	1.5	18.3
Others	0.2	1.2

Source – Sarah Slobin/the New York Times