

EARLY CHRISTIANITY OUTLINE

Judea under Roman Rule

- A. **63 BCE Herod the Great as King (Hellenized and Romanized)**
 - i. **Torn Between the Roman Empire and Jewish people**
 - ii. **Rules firmly but builds great works for Jewish people**
 - iii. **Jewish revolt against empire upon Death of Herod 3 BCE**
- B. **Herod Antipas given rule of Judea**
 - i. **Zealots and Scarri “Dagger Men”--assassins (Judas Iscariot?)**
 - ii. **Goal is to depose Rome and Antipas and restore royal Davidian line of Judea**
 - iii. **Messianic “Christos” (Savior=Greek) heightens hopes during revolution**
 - iv. **Dozens of [self]proclaimed Messiahs offer deliverance (Barabas & John the Baptist)**
 - v. **Yeshua (Aramaic) (Joshua=Hebrew) (Jesus=Greek) [born 6-4 BCE] of Nazereth claims decedency of David through Father, Joseph**
 - vi. **Ministry begins about 30AD**
 - vii. **Proclaims “the Kingdom is at hand.” Interpreted differently:**
 - 1. **Jewish Christian Church of Jerusalem claims Yeshua as the rightful King of Judea**
 - 2. **Gentile Pauline Church teaches that Jesus was claiming the Spiritual Kingdom of God and he was the living son of God**
 - viii. **Yeshua prophesies destruction of Jerusalem for lack of faith (Pauline)**
 - ix. **Yeshua put on trial and like other Messianic dissenters is crucified**
 - x. **Two schools of thought on the reason for execution:**
 - 1. **Sannehedrin led cries against blasphemy of claiming to be son of God and One with the Father (Pauline Church)**
 - 2. **Pontius Pilate executed him for being a political traitor to Rome and Caesar (Church of Jerusalem)**
 - xi. **Resurrection of Jesus reported by apostles**
- C. **Birth of Christian Churches**
 - i. **Today’s History comes from two main sources**
 - 1. **Gospels, Acts of Apostles and Epistles of New Testament**
 - 2. **Josephus, a Jewish General who went over to support Roman Legions under Titus in war against Rome**
 - ii. **Two Christian Churches built and quarrel**

1. **Jerusalem Church of James, brother and heir to Davidian crown, claims Kingdom upon Crucifixion of Brother, Yeshua**
 - a. **Maintain Jewish law**
 - b. **Accept Jesus as Messiah**
 - c. **Reserved for the Chosen people of God (Judea)**
2. **Pauline Church of Gentiles**
 - a. **Recalls Paul's miracle meeting with risen Christ**
 - b. **Christ is divine son of God**
 - c. **Dietary laws and circumcision not necessary**
 - d. **All are welcome at Christ's table, including Romans**
 - e. **Takes teachings and new letters to Greece and Rome**
- iii. **Romans fight off strong Zealot uprising in 66 AD**
- iv. **70 AD Titus Crushes Jerusalem leaving "no stone standing on top of the other" as Yeshua prophesied, according to Pauline teaching.**
- v. **James is assassinated and Jerusalem Church destroyed with the city and temple**
- vi. **Rome forces the Diaspora: literally dispersal**
 1. **Jews taken as slaves, murdered, or forced out of Palestine (lasts 1800 years to 1947)**
 2. **Exiled Jews travel to Arabia, Persia, Syria, Egypt and Spain—eventually into northern Europe after a couple of centuries**
 3. **Apostles follow this wave (some legend) leaving Pauline Church as the sole surviving Church of Jesus (Gentile and Hellenized)**
 - a. **Paul—Anatolia, Greece and Rome**
 - b. **Peter—Rome (after leaving the Jerusalem Church after quarrels with James, Jesus's brother)**
 - c. **Andrew—Russia**
 - d. **Matthew—Egypt and Ethiopia**
 - e. **Thomas—North Africa and Spain**
 - f. **Joseph of Arimathea—England and Scotland**
- vii. **Last Jewish hold out destroyed with mass Jewish suicide at Masadah, Herod's impenetrable fortress**
- viii. **In end, estimated between 500,000 and a million Jews killed**

D. Persecution

- i. **Nero blames Christians for massive fire in Rome in 64 AD.**
- ii. **Nero martyrs Peter and Paul by crucifixion on same day, according to Christian legend**

- iii. **Martyrs are exalted**
- iv. **Christians deny Roman pantheon and Caesar's divinity**
- v. **Christians used in Gladiator games**
- vi. **Mass crucifixions occur through the reign of Marcus Aurelius and Pax Romana**
- vii. **Christian masses go underground—literally into catacombs**
- viii. **Celebrations, rituals and sacraments and are hidden in Roman Holidays (Christmas and All Hallows are prime examples).**

E. Growth of Church

- i. **By third century AD, Christians number in the millions**
- ii. **Teachings of Christianity appeal to many**
 - 1. **Embraces all classes and both genders—"All are welcome at my Father's table."**
 - 2. **Gave hope of redemption to the powerless—"The first shall be last, and the last shall be first."**
 - 3. **Alternative to corrupt materials of Rome—"Consider the birds on the wing, they neither reap nor sow, yet their Father provides for them. How much greater will he care for you, whom he loves?"**
 - 4. **Personal relationship with a loving God through prayer—"Knock and the door shall be opened unto you."**
 - 5. **Promised Eternal life—"I am the Way, the truth and the Light..."**
- iii. **Bishops organized dozens of local churches**
- iv. **The elected Pope descends from Peter "the Rock" who the Gospels said was given the keys to Heaven**

F. Roman Empire Become Christian

- i. **Emperor Constantine at the Tiber River outside of Rome calls in prayer for help to defeat his greatest rival**
 - 1. **A Cross of light appears in the sky and a voice from Heaven tells him "In this sign, conquer."**
 - 2. **Constantine orders Sign of the cross painted on all Legion Shields upon victory**
 - 3. **Emperor officially accepts Christianity in 313 AD**
- ii. **Tiring from constant quarreling among Christian Bishops calls for a council of the Church in 325 AD in Nicea in Anatolia for a Universal (Catholic) Church of Rome**
 - 1. **Pope and Bishops given task of agreeing on unified doctrine and teachings**
 - 2. **4 Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John chosen from dozens of Gospels and declared sacred word of**

- God. Early Church Epistles (Letters) and the Acts of the Apostles are also included.**
 - a. Gnostic Gospels avoided (Thomas)**
 - b. Mark was assistant of Paul**
 - c. Luke was a physician of Paul's**
 - d. John's gospel is only first hand record, most likely written just before his death as he expected the second coming in his lifetime**
- 3. Beliefs are laid out in the Nicene Creed**
- iii. **St. Augustine of North Africa writes the *City of God* in 396 AD**
 - 1. Explains the concept of Grace**
 - 2. Stresses Spiritual City of God and denies worldly politics**
- iv. **Church organizes to save souls of the laity, but also organizes for its Universal spread**
- v. **Outlives the divided Roman Empire**