

# The Rise of Christianity

## Lesson 1 Early Christianity

### ESSENTIAL QUESTION

*What are the characteristics of a leader?*

### GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. *How did the Jews respond to Roman rule?*
2. *Why were the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth important to his followers?*
3. *How did early Christianity spread throughout the Roman Empire?*

### Terms to Know

**parables** short stories that teach a lesson about good, or honorable, behavior

**resurrection** coming back to life from the dead

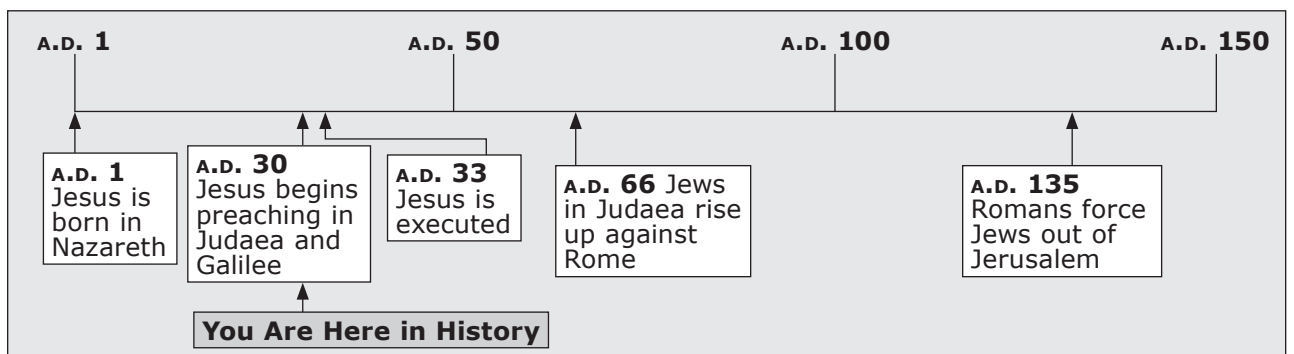
**apostle** Christian leader chosen by Jesus to spread his message

**salvation** the act of being saved from the effects of wrongdoing, or sin

## Where in the world?



## When did it happen?

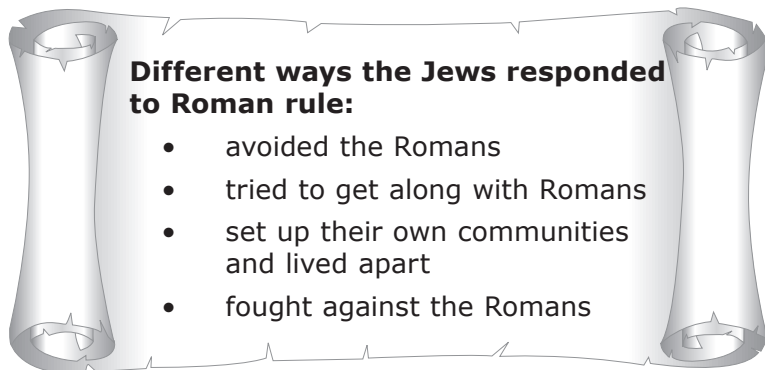


# The Rise of Christianity

## Lesson 1 Early Christianity, *Continued*

### Judaism and Rome

The Roman Empire allowed Jews to practice their religion. However, in Judaea and Galilee, the Romans made life very difficult for Jews. The Romans replaced the Jewish king with a Roman governor. Many Jews hoped God would send someone to free them from Roman rule.



**Different ways the Jews responded to Roman rule:**

- avoided the Romans
- tried to get along with Romans
- set up their own communities and lived apart
- fought against the Romans

The Jews who lived in Judaea and Galilee had different ways of dealing with the Romans. One group of Jews wanted to fight the Romans in order to win their freedom. These Jews were called Zealots. In A.D. 66 they rose up against the Romans. The Romans crushed the uprising. Four years later, the Zealots took over an ancient mountain fort called Masada. For about two years, the Zealots held off a powerful Roman army. Eventually, the Romans defeated the Zealots.

In A.D. 132, the Jews again rose up against the Roman rulers. Once again they were defeated. This time the Romans forced the Jews out of Jerusalem and told them they could never return.

### Jesus of Nazareth

Jesus was born in the small town of Nazareth in Galilee. In about A.D. 30, he began to preach in Galilee and Judaea. He traveled with a group of close followers called disciples.

Jesus was born and raised in a Jewish family. His teachings were based on the lessons of the Jewish religion. Jesus often preached using **parables**, short stories that made his ideas easier to understand. He taught that God created all people and loved them the way a father loves his children.

Jesus also preached that God was coming soon to rule the world. For this reason, Jesus told people they had to do more than follow the laws of their religion. He told them

#### Listing

1. List 3 ways the Jews responded to Roman rule.

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#### Reading Check

2. How did the A.D. 132 revolt affect the Jews of Judaea?

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#### Explaining

3. Why do you think Jesus used parables?

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## The Rise of Christianity

### Lesson 1 Early Christianity, *Continued*

#### Analyzing

4. Why did leaders in Jerusalem arrest Jesus?

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#### Drawing Conclusions

5. Why do you think Jesus traveled to Jerusalem when there was already so much tension between the Romans and the Jews?

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#### Reading Check

6. How did Jesus reinforce traditional Jewish teachings?

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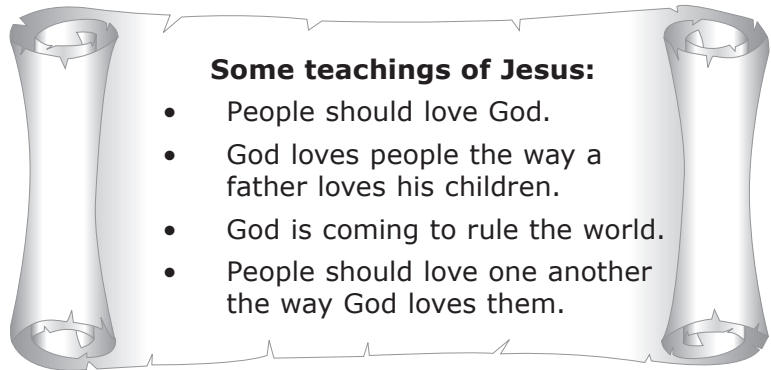


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#### Marking the Text

7. Underline the word *apostles* and its definition.

they must also love others and forgive them. His message strengthened Jewish teachings such as, "Love your neighbor as yourself."



The Romans saw Jesus as a threat to their power. This was because more and more people began to believe in what Jesus was saying. The more his influence grew, the more dangerous he became in the eyes of Roman rulers.

In about A.D. 33, Jesus traveled with his disciples to the city of Jerusalem to celebrate the Jewish holy days of Passover. The Jews were tired of Roman rule and high taxes. The Romans were angry because the Jews would not worship statues of the Roman emperor.

Jesus celebrated the Passover meal with his disciples. This event has come to be known as the Last Supper. After the meal, leaders in Jerusalem arrested Jesus. Jesus was accused of disloyalty to the Roman government. He was sentenced to death by crucifixion. This meant he would be hung from a wooden cross until he died.

According to Christian belief, three days after Jesus died, he rose from the dead and appeared to some of his followers. The disciples of Jesus still thought of themselves as Jews. However, the message of his **resurrection**, or coming back from the dead, led to the birth of Christianity.

### Who Were the Apostles?

The **apostles** were early Christian leaders who spread the teachings of Jesus after his death. People who accepted these teachings came to be known as Christians. Early Christians met in people's homes. These gatherings were the first churches.

Two of the most influential leaders of the early Christian church were Peter and Paul. Tradition says that after Jesus died, Peter went to Rome and set up a Christian church.

# The Rise of Christianity

## Lesson 1 Early Christianity, *Continued*

Paul was an educated Jew. At first, he tried to stop Christianity from spreading. Then one day, according to Christian writings, Paul saw a great light and heard the voice of Jesus. After this experience, Paul became a Christian. He spent the rest of his life spreading the message of Jesus.

### Facts about the Apostles Peter and Paul

Peter	Paul
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A fisher</li> <li>• Became a disciple of Jesus</li> <li>• Went to Rome and set up a Christian church</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An educated Jew</li> <li>• Opposed Christianity</li> <li>• Became a Christian after seeing a light and hearing the voice of Jesus</li> </ul>

Christianity grew out of the Jewish religion. Both religions believe in the God of Israel and draw their teachings from the Hebrew Bible.

However, many Christian beliefs are different from Jewish teachings. For example, Christians believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Jews do not. Another important difference is the belief in **salvation**. Christians believe that people who accept Jesus will be saved from the consequences of their wrongdoing. After they die, they will go to heaven and one day be resurrected the way Jesus was. The basis for the Christian faith is the Trinity, which means "three." In Christian belief, this refers to the three persons of God: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

### Check for Understanding

List two different ways the Jews responded to Roman rule.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_

List the names of two early Christian leaders who helped spread Christian teachings.

3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_



### Contrasting

8. Describe two Christian beliefs that differ from Jewish beliefs in the God of Israel.

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### Reading Check

9. Why were the apostles important to early Christians?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



10. Place a two-tab Foldable to cover the Check for Understanding. On the anchor tab, write *Memory Map*. Label the tabs *Jews under Roman Rule* and *Early Christian Leaders*.

In words or short phrases, record what you remember about each. Use your notes to answer the Check for Understanding.