

CHAPTER

5

SECTION 4

Note Taking Study Guide

THE RISE OF CHRISTIANITY

Focus question: How did Christianity emerge and then spread to become the official religion of the Roman empire?

As you read this section in your textbook, complete the table below to show the factors that caused the rise of Christianity and its establishment as the official religion of the Roman empire.

Causes	Effects
• _____ _____	• Rise of Christianity
• _____ _____	
• _____ _____	
• _____ _____	
• _____ _____	
• _____ _____	
• _____ _____	
• _____ _____	
• _____ _____	
• _____ _____	
• _____ _____	
• _____ _____	
• _____ _____	• Establishment of Christianity as empire's official religion
• _____ _____	
• _____ _____	

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Section Summary

THE RISE OF CHRISTIANITY

Within the Roman empire, there were various religious beliefs. Rome tolerated these different religions, as long as citizens honored Roman gods, too—including the emperor. Because most people were polytheistic, meaning they believed in more than one god, for a long time this was not a problem.

Later, the followers of Judaism became divided about living under Roman rule. Many began to follow a Jewish man named Jesus. They believed Jesus was the **messiah**, or anointed king sent by God. Jesus chose 12 **apostles**, meaning “persons sent forth,” to help him preach his message.

While Jesus’ teachings were rooted in Jewish tradition, he also preached new, Christian beliefs. Jesus taught the need for justice, morality, forgiveness, and service to others. After Jesus was put to death, the missionary **Paul** did much to spread Christianity. The message was helped by the *Pax Romana* and the ease of travel on Roman roads. Paul said that those who believed Jesus was the son of God and complied with his teachings would achieve salvation.

Because they did not obey certain Roman practices, many Christians were persecuted. They became known as **martyrs**, or people who suffer or die for their beliefs. Still, Christianity continued to spread. Many found comfort in Jesus’ message of love and promise of salvation. Finally, the emperor **Constantine** issued the Edict of Milan in A.D. 313. This granted freedom of worship to all Roman citizens. By the end of that century, Christianity was the official religion of the empire.

Each Christian community and its **clergy**—those who conduct religious services—were grouped together in a diocese. Every community had its own priest. All the priests in a diocese were supervised by a **bishop**, a high Church official. Eventually, bishops from five important cities gained more authority and held the honorary title of **patriarch**.

However, as the Church became more structured, differences arose from within. The bishops of Rome came to be called **popes**, and claimed authority over all other bishops. There was also an emergence of **heresies**, or beliefs said to be contrary to official Church teachings. Important teachers helped to define Christian theology. One of these was **Augustine**, from Hippo in North Africa.

Review Questions

1. Why is the missionary Paul an important figure in Christianity?

2. What did the Edict of Milan accomplish?

READING CHECK

What is a diocese?

VOCABULARY STRATEGY

What does the word *complied* mean in the underlined sentence? The word *disobeyed* is an antonym of *complied*. Use the information about this antonym to figure out the meaning of *complied*.

READING SKILL

Understand Effects How did Christianity spread?
