

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Timeline: Christianity in the Roman Empire

### Vocabulary

<b>edict</b>	an official order	<b>scapegoat</b>	to be unfairly blamed
<b>martyr</b>	a person who is killed because of their religious or other beliefs	<b>persecution</b>	hostility and ill-treatment, especially because of race or political or religious beliefs

### 30 CE

### Crucifixion of Jesus

A generation after the death of Christ, Christianity had reached Rome in the form of a sect of Judaism popular among the city's poor and destitute. Members of this religious sect spoke of the coming of a new kingdom and a new king. These views provoked suspicion among the Jewish authorities who rejected the group and fear among the Roman authorities who perceived these sentiments as a threat to the Empire.

1. After the death of Jesus, how did the Jewish authority perceive the followers of Jesus? Why?
2. After the death of Jesus, how did the Roman empire perceive the followers of Jesus? Why?

### 64 CE



**Rome Fire:** In the summer of 64 CE, Rome suffered a terrible fire that burned for six days and seven nights consuming almost three quarters of the city. Nero, the emperor of Rome at the time, **scapegoated** Christians for the fire. The emperor ordered the arrest of members of the sect. As many of the religious sect that could be found were rounded up and put to death and tortured for the amusement of the citizens of Rome. Some were torn apart by dogs, others burnt

alive as human torches.

Image Source: <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2014/09/emperor-nero/draper-text>

3. How did Nero treat the Christians after the fire of 64 CE? Why was this done publicly?

4. What does this treatment reveal about the Roman Empire's feelings towards followers of Jesus?

## 60s-300s CE

A Christian **martyr** is a person who was killed for following Christianity, through stoning, crucifixion, burning at the stake or other forms of torture and capital punishment. The word "martyr" comes from the Greek word *mártys*, which means "witness." This meant that a Christian martyr was a witness for their religious belief or testified that they were Christian. They endured suffering and/or death for their beliefs. Early Christians martyrs were venerated, or regarded with great respect, and seen as both powerful leaders and examples. Martyrs are often viewed as heroes for their willingness to die for their beliefs.

### 5. How were martyrs viewed by other Christians? Why?

### How did martyrdom impact the growth of the Christian Church?

Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus (Father Tertullian) (155-240 CE) was a prolific early Christian author from Carthage in the Roman province of Africa. *Apologeticus*, published around 197 CE, is Tertullian's most famous work where he demanded legal toleration and that Christians be treated as all other sects of the Roman Empire. Below is an excerpt from Chapter 50 of *Apologeticus*.

**Direction:** Read the excerpt below and respond to the questions.

*Nor does your [Roman] cruelty, however exquisite, [help] you; it is rather a temptation to us. The oftener we are mown [cut] down by you, the more in number we grow; the blood of Christians is [the] seed [of the Church]. [...] On this account it is that we return thanks on the very spot for your sentences. As the divine and human are ever opposed to each other, when we are condemned by you, we are acquitted by the Highest.*

Source: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf03.iv.iii.l.html>, <https://books.google.com/books?id=NLhdW4V94zwC>

### 7. What does the sentence, "the blood of Christians is [the] seed [of the Church]" mean?

### 8. According to this excerpt from Tertullianus, how does the killing of Christians impact the growth of the Church?

**313 CE**



**Edict of Milan:** The emperor Constantine I converted to Christianity in 312. In 313, Emperor Constantine outlawed religious persecution in the Roman empire. The edict granted all persons freedom to worship whatever deity they pleased. It also promised Christians legal rights and the right to organize churches.

**How did the Edict of Milan affect Christians?**

**380 CE**

**Edict of Thessalonica:** Emperor Theodosius I made Christianity the state church of the Roman Empire and made it the Empire's sole authorized religion.

**How did the Edict of Thessalonica affect Christians?**

QUESTIONS  
to answer

1. **According to the timeline, how did the treatment of Christians change over time?**
2. **According to the timeline, how did Christianity divide the Roman empire?**
3. **According to the timeline, how did Christianity unify the Roman empire?**