

Rome and The Rise of Christianity

Chapter 1 Section 3

Focus Questions #3

- What are the two groups in Roman society that were at conflict? What settles the tensions?
- What is unique about the Law of Nations in Rome that was a major step forward to Western law?
- What were some of the things Romans did in order to prevent actions from the people they conquered?
- What was Jesus preaching, and what happens to him as result?
- What happens to Christianity as a result and what changes Rome's attitude about this faith?

Rome and the Rise of Christianity

- As Rome shifted from a republic to an empire, it created a system of laws and government that proved invaluable to Western civilization.
- In 313 c.e. Emperor Constantine issues the Edict of Milan, making Christianity the state religion after having a dream and winning a battle.



Roman Society

- Social division between the patricians and plebeians.
- The patricians were great landowners and Rome's ruling class.
- The plebeians were a larger group of people. Mostly made up of farmers, merchants and less wealthy landowners.
- Eventually reforms to the structure of Rome's government allowed for the tension to decline.

Roman Law

- First set of laws were designed for simple farmers. Eventually the Twelve Tables proved to be inadequate.
- Romans later developed a more sophisticated system of civil law.
- Originally the Law of Nations was intended for Romans only.
- As the empire grew issues with non-Romans arose and the laws were expanded to include non-Romans.
- This action to include everyone under the same laws and justice was a major step forward in the development of Western law.

Roman Conquest

- Romans expanded citizenship to the people they ruled.
- These people also participated in Roman celebrations, the Romans updated roads, aqueducts, bridges and integrated individuals into the Roman culture.
- Romans also developed practical administration tactics that allowed them to rule large areas of land.

Christianity

- The birth of Christianity took place in Rome in the late empire.
- The Romans tolerated other religions as long as they did not threaten order or public morals.
- Jesus was a Jewish prophet who traveled the empire and preached throughout Judea and Galilee.

Christianity

- According to Jesus he came to fulfill the law. He taught that strict adherence to the law was not as important, but instead stressed the transformation of the inner person.
- Jesus taught two very important commands while preaching. The first was to “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul,” the second to “Love your neighbor as yourself.”
- Jesus voiced the ethical concepts of humility, charity, and love towards others that shaped the value system of the entire civilization of medieval Europe.

Christianity

- ◉ Eventually Jesus' preaching stirred controversy. Some people saw him as potential revolutionary,
- ◉ Eventually he was turned over to Roman officials and crucified.
- ◉ For generations to come Christians faced persecution because of their faith.

Constantine

- Emperor Constantine became a Christian in 313 A.D and issued the Edict Milan.
- This reform proclaimed the official tolerance of Christianity through out Rome.
- Later under Theodosius the Great Christianity became the state religion of Rome.

Medieval Period 500 - 1500

- The Western Roman Empire eventually crumbled apart as Germanic tribes invaded from the North.
- In 480, the Emperor was dethroned by Odoacer, a German general.
- Between the sixth and sixteenth centuries, new systems of rule, religious doctrines, and intellectual movements emerged as Europe descended into an age of illiteracy and civil decline.