

SECTION 2

Rome and the Rise of Christianity

Guide to Reading

Main Ideas

- Octavian, titled Caesar Augustus, was the first emperor of the Roman Empire.
- Christianity spread throughout the empire and eventually became the state religion of Rome.

Key Terms

republic, patrician, plebeian, imperator, Christianity, clergy, laity

People to Identify

Hannibal, Julius Caesar, Augustus, Virgil, Jesus, Constantine

Places to Locate

Rome, Carthage, Mediterranean Sea, Asia Minor, Constantinople

Preview Questions

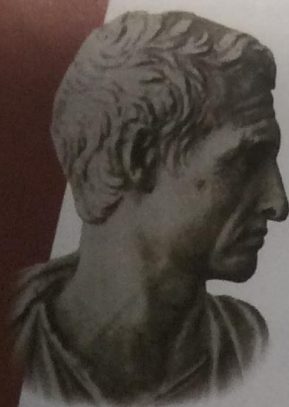
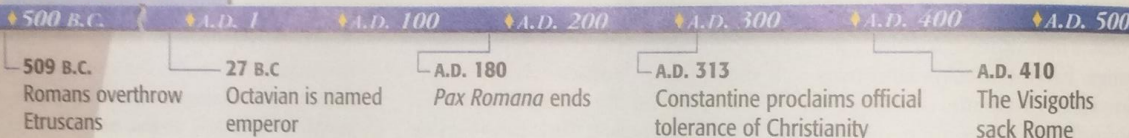
1. Why did Rome become an empire?
2. Why did Christianity grow so quickly?

Reading Strategy

Categorizing Information As you read this section, complete a chart like the one shown below listing the government officials and the legislative bodies of the Roman Republic.

Officials	Legislative Bodies

Preview of Events



Virgil

Voices from the Past

Virgil's masterpiece, the *Aeneid*, was an epic poem clearly meant to rival the work of Homer. It was also meant to express that the art of ruling was Rome's gift, as seen here:

“Let others fashion from bronze more lifelike, breathing images—
For so they shall—and evoke living faces from marble;
Others excel as orators, others track with their instruments
The planets circling in heaven and predict when stars will appear.
But, Romans, never forget that government is your medium!
Be this your art: to practise men in the habit of peace,
Generosity to the conquered, and firmness against aggressors.”

—*Aeneid*, C. Day Lewis, trans., 1952

One of the most noticeable characteristics of Roman culture and society is the impact of the Greeks.

The Emergence of Rome

Indo-European peoples moved into Italy during the period from about 1500 to 1000 B.C. The Latins were one such group. These people spoke Latin, which, like Greek, is an Indo-European language. The Latins were herders and farmers who lived in settlements consisting of huts on the tops of Italy's hills. After 800 B.C.,

other people also began settling in Italy—most notably, the Greeks and the Etruscans.

Roman tradition maintains that early Rome (753–509 B.C.) was under the control of seven kings and that two of the last three kings were Etruscans. Historians know for certain that Rome did fall under Etruscan influence during this time. In 509 B.C., the Romans overthrew the last Etruscan king and established a **republic**, a form of government in which the leader is not a monarch and certain citizens have the right to vote. This was the beginning of a new era in Rome's history.

Rome's Conquest of Italy At the beginning of the republic, Rome was surrounded by enemies. For the next two hundred years, the city was engaged in almost continuous warfare. By 264 B.C., the Romans had overcome the Greeks and completed their conquest of southern Italy. After defeating the remaining Etruscan states to the north over the next three years, Rome had conquered virtually all of Italy.

To rule Italy, the Romans devised the Roman Confederation. Under this system, Rome allowed some peoples—especially Latins—to have full Roman citizenship. Most of the remaining communities were made allies. They remained free to run their own local affairs but were required to provide soldiers for Rome. The Romans made it clear that loyal allies could improve their status and even become Roman citizens. The Romans made the conquered peoples feel they had a real stake in Rome's success.

Rome Conquers the Mediterranean After their conquest of Italy, the Romans found themselves face to face with a strong power in the Mediterranean—the state of **Carthage**. Carthage had been founded around 800 B.C. on the coast of North Africa. The state had created an enormous trading empire in the western Mediterranean. By the third century B.C., the Carthaginian Empire included the coast of northern Africa, southern Spain, Sardinia, Corsica, and western Sicily.

The presence of the Carthaginians in Sicily, an island close to the Italian coast, made the Romans fearful. The Romans fought three wars with Carthage, beginning in 264 B.C. During the second war, Rome came close to disaster as a result of the



During its wars with Carthage, Rome also battled the Hellenistic states in the eastern Mediterranean. In 148 B.C., Macedonia was made a Roman province. Two years later, Greece was placed under the control of the Roman governor of Macedonia. In 129 B.C., Pergamum became Rome's first province in Asia. Rome was now master of the **Mediterranean Sea**.

People In History

Hannibal

247–183 B.C.

Carthaginian general



When Hannibal was only nine years old, his father, a Carthaginian general, took him to a temple in Carthage and made him swear that he would always hate the Romans. Hannibal later inflicted terrible losses on the Romans—his army killed or captured thousands of Romans and allied soldiers in Italy. Unable to win the war, Hannibal eventually sought refuge with Rome's enemies.

The Romans never forgave Hannibal. They pursued him for years and finally caught up with him in Bithynia. To avoid capture, Hannibal took poison after remarking, "Let us relieve the Romans of the fear which has so long afflicted them, since it seems to tax their patience too hard to wait for an old man's death."

victories of **Hannibal**, Carthage's greatest general. Despite their losses, the Romans refused to give up and created new armies and a navy to carry on the struggle. In 202 B.C., the Romans crushed Hannibal's forces, ending the second war. Carthage lost Spain, which became a Roman province. Rome had become the dominant power in the western Mediterranean. Fifty years later, the Romans fought their third and final war with Carthage, completely destroying Carthage in 146 B.C.

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Reading Check Summarizing What is the sequence of events that led Rome to become master of the Mediterranean Sea by 129 B.C.?

The Roman State

The Romans had been ruled by kings under the Etruscans. As a result, they distrusted kingship and devised a very different system of government.

Early Rome was divided into two groups or orders—the patricians and the plebeians (plih•BEE•uhns).

The **patricians** were great landowners, who became Rome's ruling class. Less wealthy landholders, craftspeople, merchants, and small farmers were part of a larger group called **plebeians**. Men in both groups were citizens and could vote, but only the patricians could be elected to governmental offices.

The Government of Rome The chief executive officers of the Roman Republic were the consuls and praetors (PREE•tuhrs). Two consuls, chosen every year, ran the government and led the Roman army into battle. The praetor was in charge of civil law—law as it applied to Roman citizens. As the Romans' territory expanded, another praetor was added to judge cases in which people were noncitizens. The Romans also had a number of officials who had special duties, such as supervising the treasury.

The Roman Senate came to hold an especially important position in the Roman Republic. It was a select group of about three hundred patricians who served for life. At first, the Senate's only role was to advise government officials. However, the advice of the Senate carried a great deal of weight. By the third century B.C., it had the force of law.

The Roman Republic had several people's assemblies in addition to the Senate. By far the most important of these was the centuriate assembly. The centuriate assembly elected the chief officials, such as consuls and praetors, and passed laws. Because it was organized by classes based on wealth, the wealthiest

citizens always had a majority. The council of the plebs was the assembly for plebeians only, and it came into being as a result of the struggle between the two social orders in Rome.

The Struggle of the Orders There was often conflict between the patricians and the plebeians in the early Roman Republic. Children of patricians and plebeians were forbidden to marry each other. Plebeians resented this situation, especially since they served in the Roman army that protected the Republic. They thought that they deserved both political and social equality with the patricians.

The struggle between the patricians and plebeians dragged on for hundreds of years. Ultimately, it led to success for the plebeians, and the council of the plebs was created in 471 B.C. New officials, known as tribunes of the plebs, were given the power to protect the plebeians. In the fourth century B.C., plebeians were permitted to become consuls. Finally, in 287 B.C., the council of the plebs received the right to pass laws for all Romans.

By 287 B.C., all male Roman citizens were supposedly equal under the law. In reality, however, a few wealthy patrician and plebeian families formed a new senatorial ruling class that came to dominate the political offices. The Roman Republic had not become a democracy.

Reading Check Explaining How did the differences between plebeians and patricians prevent Rome from becoming a true democracy?

What If...

Roman legions had defeated the Germanic tribes?

The Roman Empire was near its height during the first century A.D. However, in A.D. 9, three Roman legions, approximately 15,000 men, were wiped out by Germanic tribesmen led by Arminius in the Teutoburg Forest. From that point on, Rome made no serious attempts to conquer what we know today as Germany.

Consider the Consequences Identify and explain at least two ways in which European history might have been different if the Romans had defeated the German warriors in the Teutoburg Forest.

From Republic to Empire

TURNING POINT After the collapse of Rome's republican institutions and a series of brutal civil wars, Augustus created a new order that began the Roman Empire.

Between 509 and 264 B.C., most of what is modern-day Italy was unified under Rome's control. Even more dramatic is that by 129 B.C., Rome stood supreme over the Mediterranean Sea.

Rome's republican institutions, however, proved inadequate for ruling an empire. By the second century B.C., the Senate had become the real governing body of the Roman state. Within the Senate, rival factions of wealthy families began to compete for power, creating disorder.

In addition, in the first century B.C., Roman leaders began to recruit armies that swore an oath of loyalty to the general, not to the Roman state. For 50 years



Geography Skills

(82–31 B.C.), Roman history was characterized by civil wars as a number of individuals competed for power. In one of these struggles, **Julius Caesar** defeated the forces led by Pompey. After Caesar was assassinated, Octavian, Caesar’s heir and grand-nephew, defeated Mark Antony and took control of the Roman world.

The period beginning in 31 B.C. and lasting until A.D. 14 came to be known as the Age of Augustus. (In 27 B.C., the Senate had awarded Octavian the title of **Augustus**—“the revered one.”) Augustus proved to be highly popular, but his continuing control of the army was the chief source of his power. The Senate named Augustus **imperator**, or commander in chief. Our word *emperor* comes from the word *imperator*. Augustus thus became the first emperor of the Roman Empire.

Reading Check Summarizing What factors contributed to disorder and civil war in the Roman Republic during the second and first centuries B.C.?

In about 350 years, the Romans conquered an area about the size of the present-day United States. Exchange and communication through trade was extensive throughout the vast Roman Empire.

- 1. Interpreting Maps** Explain how the trading routes indicated on this map allowed for the areas in the furthest reaches of the Roman Empire to trade with one another.
- 2. Applying Geography Skills** Why would control of the Mediterranean region benefit Rome’s economy? What are the names of the two chief Italian port cities of the Roman Empire?

The Early Empire

Beginning in A.D. 14, a series of new emperors ruled Rome. This period, ending in A.D. 180, is called the Early Empire.

The Five Good Emperors The first four emperors after Augustus grew increasingly more powerful and



Picturing History

A detail from the Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii shows that life for many in the city offered several comforts and pleasures. The city of Pompeii was buried in a single day when the volcano Vesuvius erupted in A.D. 79. **What does this surviving wall painting from Pompeii tell us about the lifestyles of upper-class Romans?**

corrupt. At the beginning of the second century, a series of five so-called good emperors—Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius—came to power. These emperors created a period of peace and prosperity known as the *Pax Romana*—the “Roman Peace.” The *Pax Romana* lasted for almost a hundred years (96–180). These rulers treated the ruling classes with respect, ended arbitrary executions, maintained peace in the empire, and supported domestic policies that were generally helpful to the empire.

Under the five good emperors, the powers of the emperor continued to expand at the expense of the Senate. Officials who were appointed and directed by the emperor took over the running of the government.

The good emperors also created new programs to help the people. Trajan, for example, created a program that provided state funds to assist poor parents in the raising and education of their children. The good emperors were widely praised for their building programs. Trajan and Hadrian were especially active in building public works—aqueducts, bridges, roads, and harbor facilities—throughout the provinces and in Rome.

Prosperity and Trade At its height in the second century, the Roman Empire was one of the greatest states the world had ever seen. It covered about three and a half million square miles (about 9.1 million square km) and had a population that has been estimated at more than fifty million.

The Early Empire was also a period of much prosperity, with internal peace leading to high levels of

trade. Merchants from all over the empire came to the chief Italian ports of Puteoli (pyuh•TEE•uh•LY) on the Bay of Naples and Ostia at the mouth of the Tiber River. Trade went beyond the Roman frontiers as well and included even silk goods from China. Large quantities of grain were imported, especially from Egypt, to feed the people of Rome. Luxury items poured in to satisfy the wealthy upper classes. Despite the active trade and commerce, however, farming remained the chief occupation of most people and the underlying basis of Roman prosperity.

Reading Check Explaining How did the policies and programs of the five good emperors benefit the Early Empire and its people?

Roman Law

One of Rome’s chief gifts to the Mediterranean world of its day and to later generations was its system of law. Rome’s first code of laws was the **Twelve Tables**, which was adopted in 450 B.C. This code was a product of a simple farming society and proved inadequate for later Roman needs. From the Twelve Tables, the Romans developed a more sophisticated system of civil law. This system applied only to Roman citizens, however.

As Rome expanded, legal questions arose that involved both Romans and non-Romans. The Romans found that although some of their rules of civil law could be used in these cases, special rules were often needed. These rules gave rise to a body of law known as the **Law of Nations**. The Romans came to identify the Law of Nations with natural law, or universal law

based on reason. This enabled them to establish standards of justice that applied to all people.

These standards of justice included principles still recognized today. A person was regarded as innocent until proved otherwise. People accused of wrongdoing were allowed to defend themselves before a judge. A judge, in turn, was expected to weigh evidence carefully before arriving at a decision. These principles lived on long after the fall of the Roman Empire.

Reading Check Identifying Name at least two principles in the Law of Nations that are still recognized today.

Slavery in the Roman Empire

Slavery was common throughout the ancient world, but no people had more slaves or relied so much on slave labor as the Romans did. Before the third century B.C., slaves used in Rome were usually from Italy and were often regarded as part of the family household.

The Roman conquest of the Mediterranean brought a drastic change in the use of slaves. Large numbers of foreign peoples who had been captured in different wars were brought back to Italy as slaves. Greek slaves were in much demand as tutors, musicians, doctors, and artists. Roman businessmen would employ them as shop assistants or craftspeople. Many slaves of all nationalities were used as household workers, such as cooks, valets, waiters, cleaners, and gardeners.

Slaves built roads and public buildings, and farmed the large estates of the wealthy. The conditions under which these slaves lived were often pitiful. One Roman writer argued that it was cheaper to work slaves to death and then replace them than to treat them well.

Some slaves revolted. The most famous slave revolt in Italy occurred in 73 B.C. Led by the gladiator Spartacus, the revolt broke out in southern Italy and involved seventy thousand slaves. Spartacus managed to defeat several Roman armies before being trapped and killed in 71 B.C. Six thousand followers of Spartacus were crucified (put to death by nailing to a cross).

Reading Check Describing

How did the Roman conquest of the Mediterranean change slavery in the Roman world?

Daily Life in the City of Rome

At the center of the colossal Roman Empire was the ancient city of Rome. Truly a capital city, Rome had the largest population of any city in the empire—close to one million by the time of Augustus. For anyone with ambitions, Rome was the place to be. People from all over the empire resided there.

Living Conditions Rome was an overcrowded and noisy city. Because of the congestion, cart and wagon traffic was banned from the streets during the day.

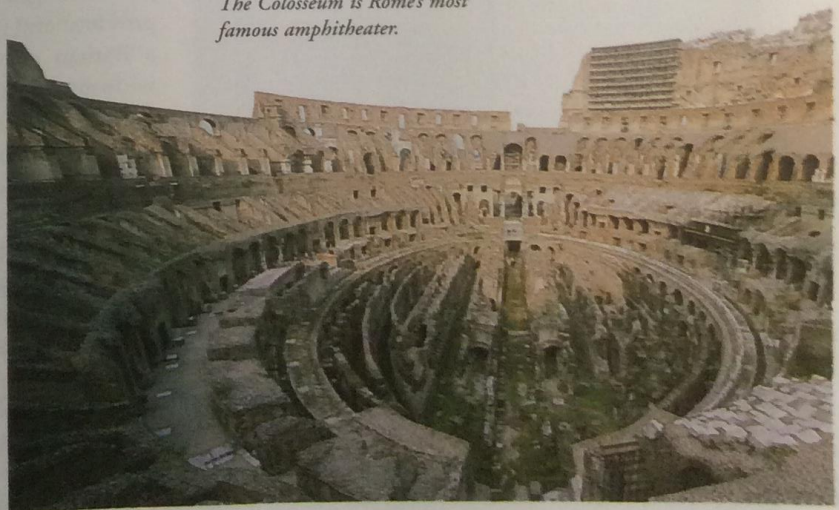
An enormous gulf existed between rich and poor. The rich had comfortable villas, while the poor lived in apartment blocks called *insulae*, which could be six stories high. Constructed of concrete walls with wooden beam floors, these buildings were usually poorly built and often collapsed.

Fire was a constant threat in the *insulae* because of the use of movable stoves, torches, candles, and lamps within the rooms for heat and light. Once started, fires were extremely difficult to put out. High rents forced entire families to live in one room. There was no plumbing or central heating. As a result, many poor Romans spent most of their time outdoors in the streets.

Public Programs Rome boasted public buildings unequalled anywhere in the empire. Its temples, markets, baths, theaters, governmental buildings, and amphitheaters gave parts of the city an appearance of grandeur and magnificence.

Although it was the center of a great empire, Rome had serious problems. Beginning with Augustus, the emperors provided food for the city's poor. About

The Colosseum is Rome's most famous amphitheater.



two hundred thousand people received free grain. Even so, conditions remained grim for the poor.

Entertainment was provided on a grand scale for the inhabitants of Rome. Public spectacles were provided by the emperor as part of the great religious festivals celebrated by the state. The festivals included three major types of entertainment. At the Circus Maximus, horse and chariot races attracted hundreds of thousands. Dramatic performances were held in theaters. The most famous of all the public spectacles, however, were the gladiatorial shows.

Reading Check Summarizing What problems did people face in the ancient city of Rome?

Roman Culture

The high point of Latin literature was reached in the Age of Augustus. The Augustan Age has been called the golden age of Latin literature.

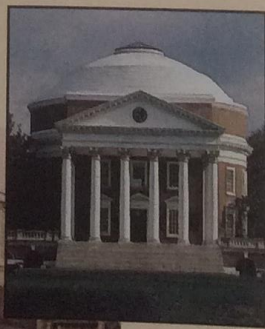
The most distinguished poet of the Augustan Age was **Virgil**. The son of a small landholder in northern Italy near Mantua, he welcomed the rule of Augustus and wrote his greatest work, the *Aeneid* (ih•NEE•uhd), in honor of Rome. In the poem, the character of Aeneas is portrayed as the ideal Roman—his virtues



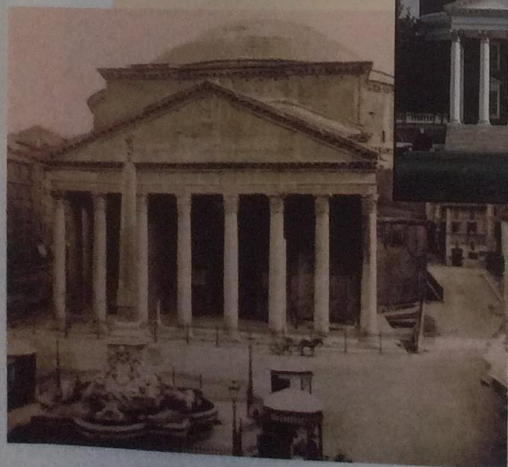
Then and Now

Thomas Jefferson copied Roman temples in his designs for the buildings of the University of Virginia at Charlottesville. How do the two buildings illustrate Roman architectural innovations and the ideas the Romans borrowed from the Greeks?

Rotunda at the University of Virginia



Hadrian's Pantheon in Rome



are duty, piety, and faithfulness. Virgil's overall purpose was to show that Aeneas had fulfilled his mission to establish the Romans in Italy and thereby start Rome on its divine mission to rule the world.

During the third and second centuries B.C., the Romans adopted many features of the Greek style of art. They developed a taste for Greek statues, which they placed not only in public buildings but also in their private houses. While Greek sculptors aimed for an ideal appearance in their figures, Roman sculptors produced realistic statues that included even unpleasant physical details.

The Romans excelled in architecture, a highly practical art. Although they continued to use Greek styles such as colonnades and rectangular buildings, the Romans also used forms based on curved lines: the arch, vault, and dome. The Romans were the first people in antiquity to use concrete on a massive scale. Using concrete along with the new architectural forms made it possible for the Romans to construct huge buildings undreamed of by the Greeks.

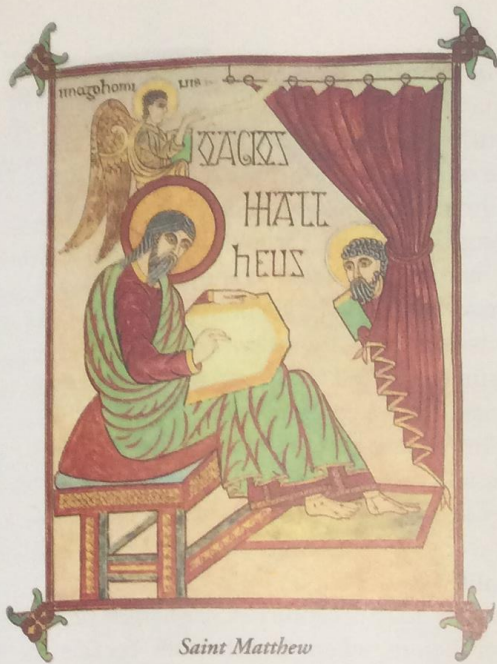
The engineering skills of the Romans were also used to construct bridges, aqueducts, and roads such as the Appian Way. The Romans built a network of some 50,000 miles (80,450 km) of roads throughout the empire. In Rome, almost a dozen aqueducts kept a population of one million supplied with water.

Reading Check Contrasting Why were the Romans able to construct buildings larger than those of the Greeks?

The Emergence of Christianity

In Hellenistic times, the Jewish people had been given considerable independence. By A.D. 6, however, Judaea, which embraced the lands of the old Jewish kingdom of Judah, had been made a Roman province and had been placed under the direction of a Roman official called a procurator. Unrest was widespread in Judaea, but the Jews differed among themselves about Roman rule. A Jewish revolt began in A.D. 66 but was crushed four years later.

A few decades before the revolt, a Jewish prophet named **Jesus** preached throughout Judaea. Jesus believed his mission was to complete the salvation that God had promised to Israel: "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them." According to Jesus, what was important was not strict adherence to the letter of the law but the transformation of the inner person: "So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets."



Saint Matthew

God's command was to love God and one another. Jesus said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. This is the first commandment. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself." Jesus voiced the ethical concepts—humility, charity, and love toward others—that would later shape the value system of Western civilization.

Jesus' preaching eventually stirred controversy. Some people saw Jesus as a potential revolutionary who might lead a revolt against Rome. His opponents finally turned him over to the Roman authorities. The procurator Pontius Pilate ordered Jesus' crucifixion.

After the death of Jesus, his followers proclaimed he had risen from death and had appeared to them. They believed Jesus to be the Messiah (anointed one), the long expected deliverer who would save Israel from its foes.

Reading Check Explaining Why was Jesus turned over to the Roman authorities?

The Spread of Christianity

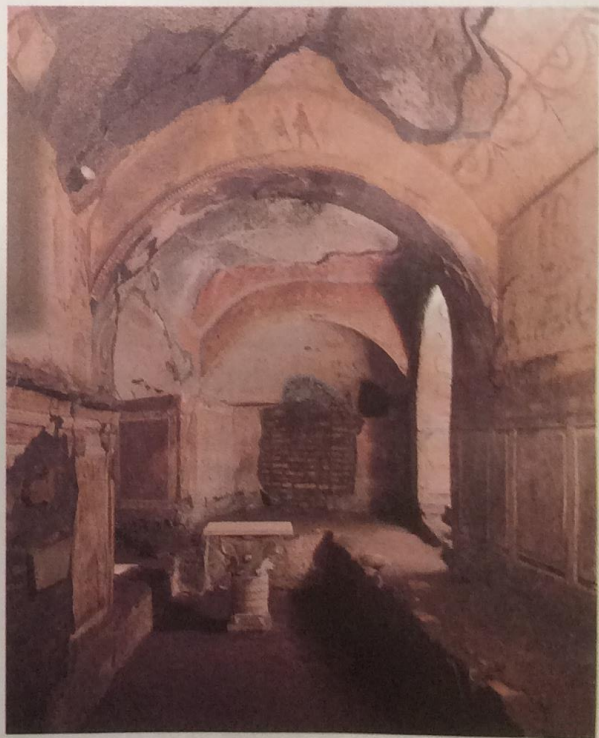
Christianity began as a religious movement within Judaism. After the reports that Jesus had overcome death, the Christian movement won followers in Jerusalem and throughout Judaea and Galilee.

Prominent apostles, or leaders, arose in early Christianity. One was Simon Peter, a Jewish fisherman who had become a follower of Jesus during Jesus' lifetime. Peter was recognized as the leader of the apostles. Another major apostle was Paul, a

highly educated Jewish Roman citizen who joined the movement later. Paul took the message of Jesus to Gentiles (non-Jews) as well as to Jews. He founded Christian communities throughout Asia Minor and along the shores of the Aegean Sea.

At the center of Paul's message was the belief that Jesus was the Savior, the Son of God who had come to Earth to save humanity. Paul taught that Jesus' death made up for the sins of all people. By accepting Jesus as Christ (from *Christos*, the Greek term for Messiah) and Savior, people could be saved from sin and reconciled to God.

The teachings of early Christianity at first were passed on orally. In time, written materials appeared, primarily in the form of letters written by disciples to Christian churches or individuals. Later, between A.D. 70 and 100, the oral accounts about Jesus became the basis of the written Gospels—the "good news"



Picturing History

Early Christians buried their dead in catacombs, underground chambers that sometimes had multiple rooms and levels. This catacomb was built in Rome in the second century. **Why might early Christians have wanted an underground sanctuary for their dead?**

concerning Jesus. These writings, along with the disciples' letters and recorded teachings, became the basis of the **New Testament**, the second part of the Christian Bible.


By 100, Christian churches had been established in most of the major cities of the eastern empire and in some places in the western part of the empire. Most early Christians came from the Jews and the Greek-speaking populations of the east. In the second and third centuries, however, an increasing number of followers were Latin-speaking people.

Many Romans came to view Christians as harmful to the Roman state because Christians refused to worship the state gods and emperors. The Romans saw the Christians' refusal to do so as an act of treason, punishable by death. The Christians, however, believed there was only one God. To them, the worship of state gods and the emperors meant worshipping false gods and endangering their own salvation.

The Roman government began persecuting (harassing to cause suffering) Christians during the reign of Nero (A.D. 54–68). The emperor blamed the Christians for the fire that destroyed much of Rome and subjected them to cruel deaths. In contrast, in the second century, persecution of Christians diminished. By the end of the reigns of the five good emperors, Christians still represented a small minority, though it was one of considerable strength.

 **Reading Check** **Summarizing** How were the teachings of Jesus preserved and passed on?

The Triumph of Christianity

 **TURNING POINT** Under Theodosius the Great, who ruled from 378 to 395, the Romans adopted Christianity as the official religion of the Roman Empire.

Though the Romans persecuted Christians in the first and second centuries, this did nothing to stop the growth of Christianity. In fact, it did just the opposite, strengthening Christianity in the second and third centuries by forcing it to become more organized.

Crucial to this change was the emerging role of the bishops, who began to assume more control over church communities. The Christian church was creating a new structure in which the **clergy** (the church leaders) had distinct functions separate from the **laity** (the regular church members).


Christianity grew quickly in the first century, took root in the second, and by the third had spread widely. Why was Christianity able to attract so many followers?

First, the Christian message had much to offer the Roman world. Christianity was personal and offered salvation and eternal life to individuals. Christianity gave meaning and purpose to life.

Christianity also fulfilled the human need to belong. Christians formed communities bound to one another. In these communities, people could express their love by helping one another and offering assistance to the poor and the sick. Christianity satisfied the need to belong in a way that the huge Roman Empire could never provide.

Christianity proved attractive to all classes, but especially to the poor and powerless. Eternal life was promised to all—rich, poor, aristocrats, slaves, men, and women. Christianity stressed a sense of spiritual equality for all people.

In the fourth century, Christianity prospered as never before when **Constantine** became the first Christian emperor. Although he was not baptized until the end of his life, in 313 Constantine issued the Edict of Milan, which proclaimed official tolerance of Christianity. Then, under Theodosius the Great, the Romans adopted Christianity as their official religion.

 **Reading Check** **Evaluating** What benefits did Christianity offer to individuals and Roman society as a whole?

The Decline

Marcus Aurelius, the last of the five good emperors, died in A.D. 180. For the next hundred years a period of civil wars, political disorder, and economic decline almost brought the Roman Empire to its end.

At the end of the third and the beginning of the fourth centuries, the Roman Empire gained a new lease on life through the efforts of two emperors, Diocletian and Constantine. The empire was changed into a new state: the Late Roman Empire. It included a new governmental structure, a rigid economic and social system, and a new state religion—Christianity.

Believing that the empire had grown too large for a single ruler, Diocletian, who ruled from 284 to 305, divided it into four units, each with its own ruler. Diocletian's military power still enabled him to claim a higher status and to hold the ultimate authority. Constantine, who ruled from 306 to 337, continued and expanded the policies of Diocletian.

Both rulers greatly strengthened and enlarged the administrative bureaucracies of the Roman Empire. A hierarchy of officials exercised control at the various levels of government. The army was enlarged to five hundred thousand men, including German troops.



Geography Skills

(82–31 B.C.), Roman history was characterized by civil wars as a number of individuals competed for power. In one of these struggles, **Julius Caesar** defeated the forces led by Pompey. After Caesar was assassinated, Octavian, Caesar's heir and grand-nephew, defeated Mark Antony and took control of the Roman world.

The period beginning in 31 B.C. and lasting until A.D. 14 came to be known as the Age of Augustus. (In 27 B.C., the Senate had awarded Octavian the title of **Augustus**—"the revered one.") Augustus proved to be highly popular, but his continuing control of the army was the chief source of his power. The Senate named Augustus **imperator**, or commander in chief. Our word *emperor* comes from the word *imperator*. Augustus thus became the first emperor of the Roman Empire.

Reading Check Summarizing What factors contributed to disorder and civil war in the Roman Republic during the second and first centuries B.C.?

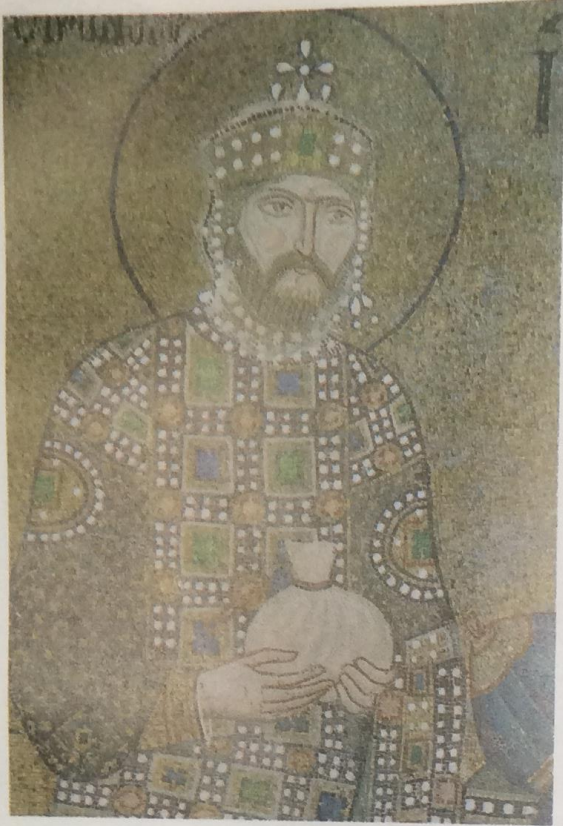
In about 350 years, the Romans conquered an area about the size of the present-day United States. Exchange and communication through trade was extensive throughout the vast Roman Empire.

- 1. Interpreting Maps** Explain how the trading routes indicated on this map allowed for the areas in the furthest reaches of the Roman Empire to trade with one another.
- 2. Applying Geography Skills** Why would control of the Mediterranean region benefit Rome's economy? What are the names of the two chief Italian port cities of the Roman Empire?

The Early Empire

Beginning in A.D. 14, a series of new emperors ruled Rome. This period, ending in A.D. 180, is called the Early Empire.

The Five Good Emperors The first four emperors after Augustus grew increasingly more powerful and



Emperor Constantine

The Fall

The restored empire of Diocletian and Constantine limped along for more than a century. After Constantine, the empire continued to be divided into western

and eastern parts. The capital of the Western Roman Empire remained in Rome. Constantinople remained the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire.

The Western Roman Empire came under increasing pressure from the invading Germanic tribes. The major breakthrough of invaders into the west came in the second half of the fourth century. The Huns, who came from Asia, moved into eastern Europe and put pressure on the Germanic Visigoths. The Visigoths, in turn, moved south and west, crossed the Danube River into Roman territory, and settled down as Roman allies. However, the Visigoths soon revolted. The Romans' attempt to stop the revolt at Adrianople in 378 led to a crushing defeat for the Romans.

Increasing numbers of Germans now crossed the frontiers. In 410, the Visigoths sacked Rome. Another group, the Vandals, poured into southern Spain and Africa. They crossed into Italy from northern Africa and, in 455, they too sacked Rome. (Our modern word *vandal* is taken from this tribe.)

In 476, the Western emperor, Romulus Augustulus, was deposed by the Germanic head of the army. This is usually taken as the date of the fall of the Western Roman Empire. As we shall see in Chapter 3, a series of German kingdoms replaced the Western Roman Empire. The Eastern Roman Empire, or the Byzantine Empire, however, continued to thrive with its center at Constantinople.

Reading Check Identifying Which groups invaded the Western Roman Empire?

SECTION 2 ASSESSMENT

Checking for Understanding

- Define** republic, patrician, plebeian, emperor, Christianity, clergy, laity.
- Identify** Hannibal, Julius Caesar, Augustus, *Pax Romana*, Twelve Tables, Law of Nations, Virgil, Jesus, New Testament, Constantine.
- Locate** Rome, Carthage, Mediterranean Sea, Asia Minor, Constantinople.
- Describe** the significance of the Twelve Tables and the Law of Nations.
- List** the ethical concepts voiced by Jesus.

Critical Thinking

- Explain** How were the Romans able to obtain large numbers of slaves? How were slaves utilized in ancient Rome?
- Summarizing Information** Create a table like the one below describing the contributions of the Greeks and the contributions of the Romans to Western civilization.

Greek contributions	Roman contributions

Analyzing Visuals

- Examine** the photograph of the Colosseum on page 71. What types of entertainments were performed in Roman amphitheaters and other public buildings?

Writing About History

- Expository Writing** Use the Internet or library sources to research the theories about why the Roman Empire fell. Summarize the theories in a brief essay and explain why some theories seem more convincing than others.