

Review of: the rise of christianity



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The Rise of Christianity: Discuss the rise of Christianity. Why was this new religion successful in spreading throughout the Roman Empire?

Religion was a factor that played an important role in the Roman society. Along with this, though, the worship of Roman gods was also very important in religion. The growth of the Roman Empire brought upon a new religion that broke this rule. Christianity. This new religion appealed to Rome's masses, and definitely did not appeal to Rome's government.

By the time it was 63 B. C., the Roman power had shifted to the home of the Jews, Judea. Sometime between 6 and 4 B. C., a Jew named Jesus was born. Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, and he was raised in the village of Nazareth in Palestine. At the age of thirty, Jesus preached, taught, did good works, and performed miracles during the time of his public ministry. The basis of Christianity was the belief of only one god, the Christian God. His teachings included this, as well as God's relationship with each and every human being. He stressed the importance of people's love. People should love God, their neighbors, their enemies, and themselves. A big part of his teachings that was not liked thought by the Roman government, was the idea of God ending all wickedness, and the idea of the eternal kingdom. In death, people still had a chance to repent their sins (wrong doings) in the eternal kingdom. This was a huge problem for the Roman government. The Roman Empire was open to new religions, but this was different. First of all, Christianity is a religion based on monotheistic beliefs. Then, the eternal kingdom was a gateway to the masses of Rome. Most of Rome's population was the poor people, and the public works were what appeased them. So, if they could go somewhere luxurious and better than Rome,

maybe Rome was not a place that they needed to be. It was a constant fear of the government that the Christians would convert a lot of people and their population would decrease.

After Jesus' death, the followers of the Christian religion continued to spread the Christian religion. This posed an even bigger problem for the Roman government; with so much spreading of this new religion, something had to happen to make the spreading stop. What the government did was use the Christians as scapegoats for their economic and political difficulties. If they could use them as scapegoats, they had a reason to stop them. So, the Romans started the persecutions of the Christians. The persecutions made Pax Romana crumble. Pax Romana was a time in Rome where there was peace and prosperity. With killing, peace ends, and so, this marked the end of the Pax Romana.

Despite persecutions, Christianity continued to spread and it became a powerful force. The government was very opposed to the fact that the Christian religion questioned the Roman's authority. The Romans were very fully based on their authority in government, and they said that Roman gods must be worshiped, and the Christians basically ignored the government's authority. By the late third century A. D., there were millions of Christians in Roman territory and even beyond that. Christianity was such a growing success because it embraced all types of people. It embraced slaves, poor people, and noble people. A big part that the government also did not like was that Christianity gave hope to the powerless. If there was any hope for the powerless, the government might be in risk of being overthrown by the very citizens of Rome. It was, again, all about authority. If the government

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does not have full power, than who does? If it is the citizens of the government, than there is no hope for the government, and that was exactly what the Roman government had a fear of. All of the things that made the government angry, made the Roman citizens happy. Hope made the masses happy, and power made the government happy. The Christian religion also appealed to those who were repelled by imperial Rome's extravagance. If there was a hope for people below imperial Rome because of a religion, than what was next? A constant question was probably, what is next?

A very critical moment in Christianity was when the Roman Emperor, Constantine was fighting three rivals for the leadership of Rome. When he was praying for guidance, he claimed to have seen a Christian symbol - the cross. He had artisans paint a cross on every soldier's shield. They were victorious in this battle, and their victory was credited to the Christian God. This was a turning point in Christianity because Constantine ended the persecutions, and he did not shun the Christians, but was a Christian himself. For the reason that this religion brought people a sense of power and a life after death, it spread quickly, and was a very well-known religion in time.

If there was a hope for the masses of Rome, and there was a fear for the government, than the religion was going to appeal to the people of Rome. Whenever there is a hope for the people in an Empire, than there is happiness. So, this new religion brought great hope to the people of the Roman Empire.