

The Rise of Christianity

in the age of the *Pax Romana*



The Roman Empire

Second Century A.D.



IUDEA

(Judea)

- Formerly Israel and Judah
- **Rebellious Province**
 - Publicans
 - Zealots



Romans Go Home

YouTube

What have the Romans done for us?



Messiah



Bernini's David

[Greek: *Christos*] The “Anointed One”

*Prophesied as a hero and
deliverer of Judea*

- Apocalypticism
- King of the Jews
- Davidic Line



Jesus of Nazareth

b. around 0 A.D.
(+/- 7 yrs.)

- Descendant of David
- Raised in Galilee
 - Outskirts
- Jewish *Rabbi* (Teacher)



The Gospels

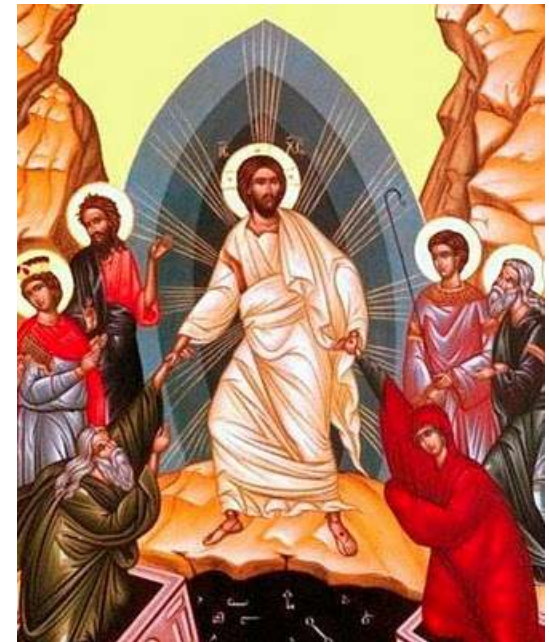
- The primary sources of information on the life and teachings of Jesus
 - Written by his followers who believed that He was the Messiah



The Gospels



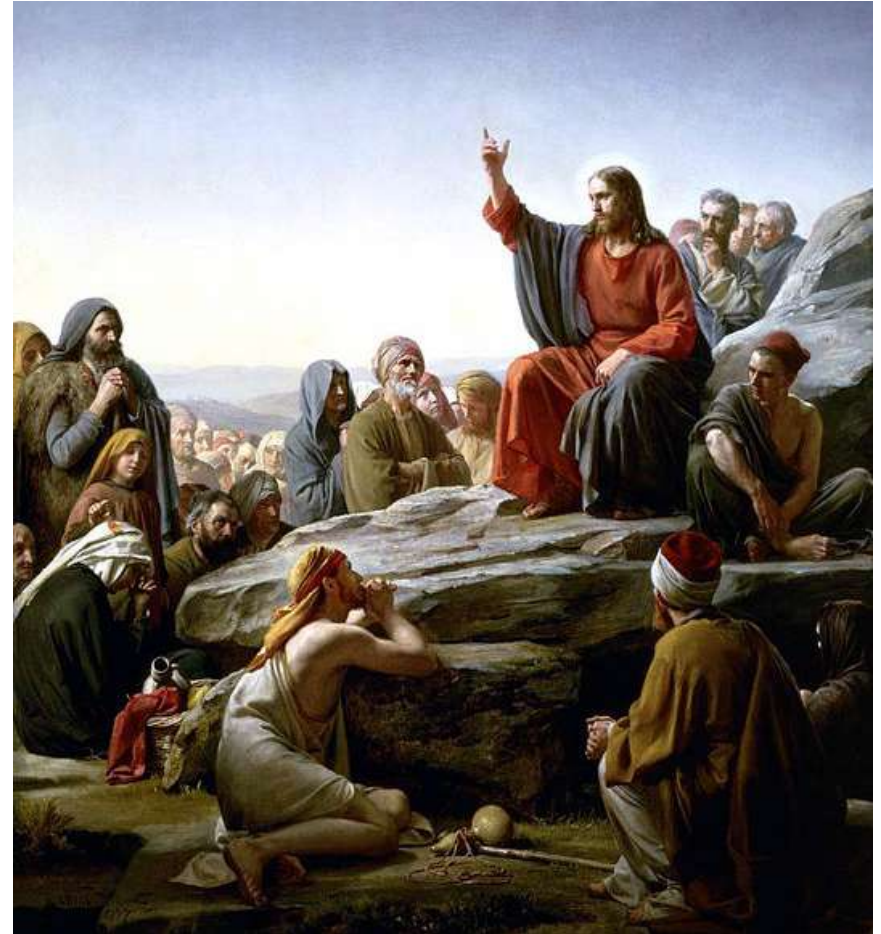
- **Virgin Birth**
- **Moral Teachings**
- **Crucifixion**
- **Resurrection**



The Sermon on the Mount

Jesus as a Moral Philosopher

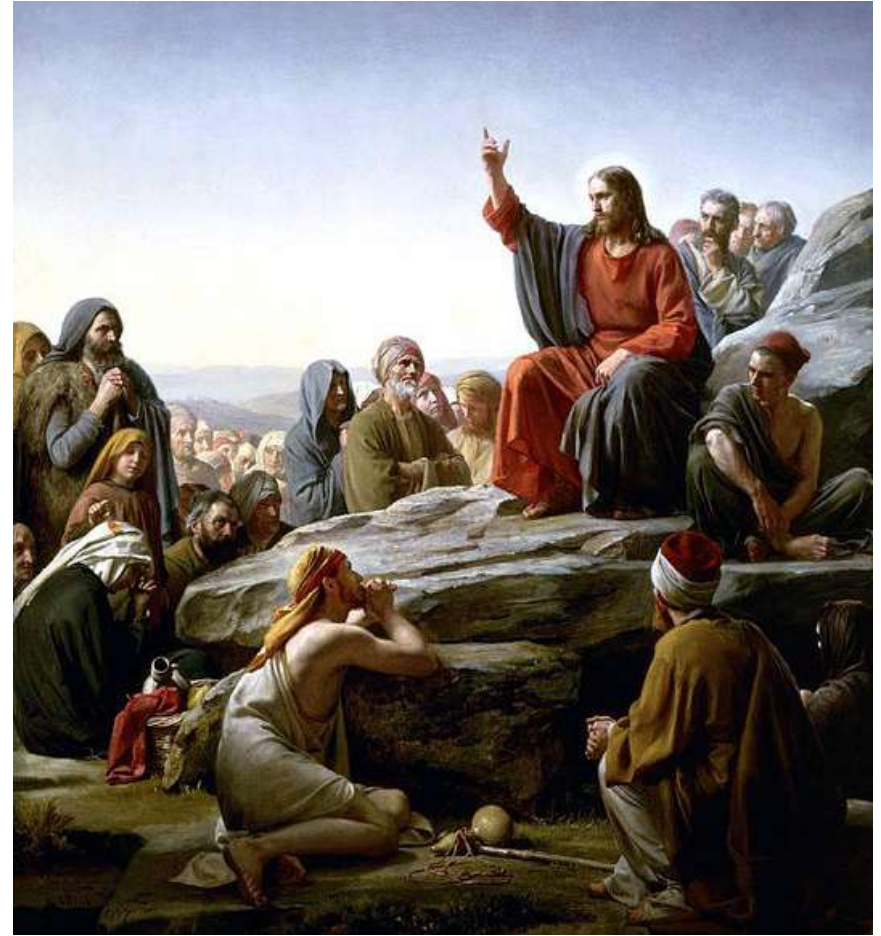
- 3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**
- 4 Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.**
- 5 Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth...**
- 7 Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.**
- 8 Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.**
- 9 Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.**
- 10 Blessed are those who are persecuted...
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

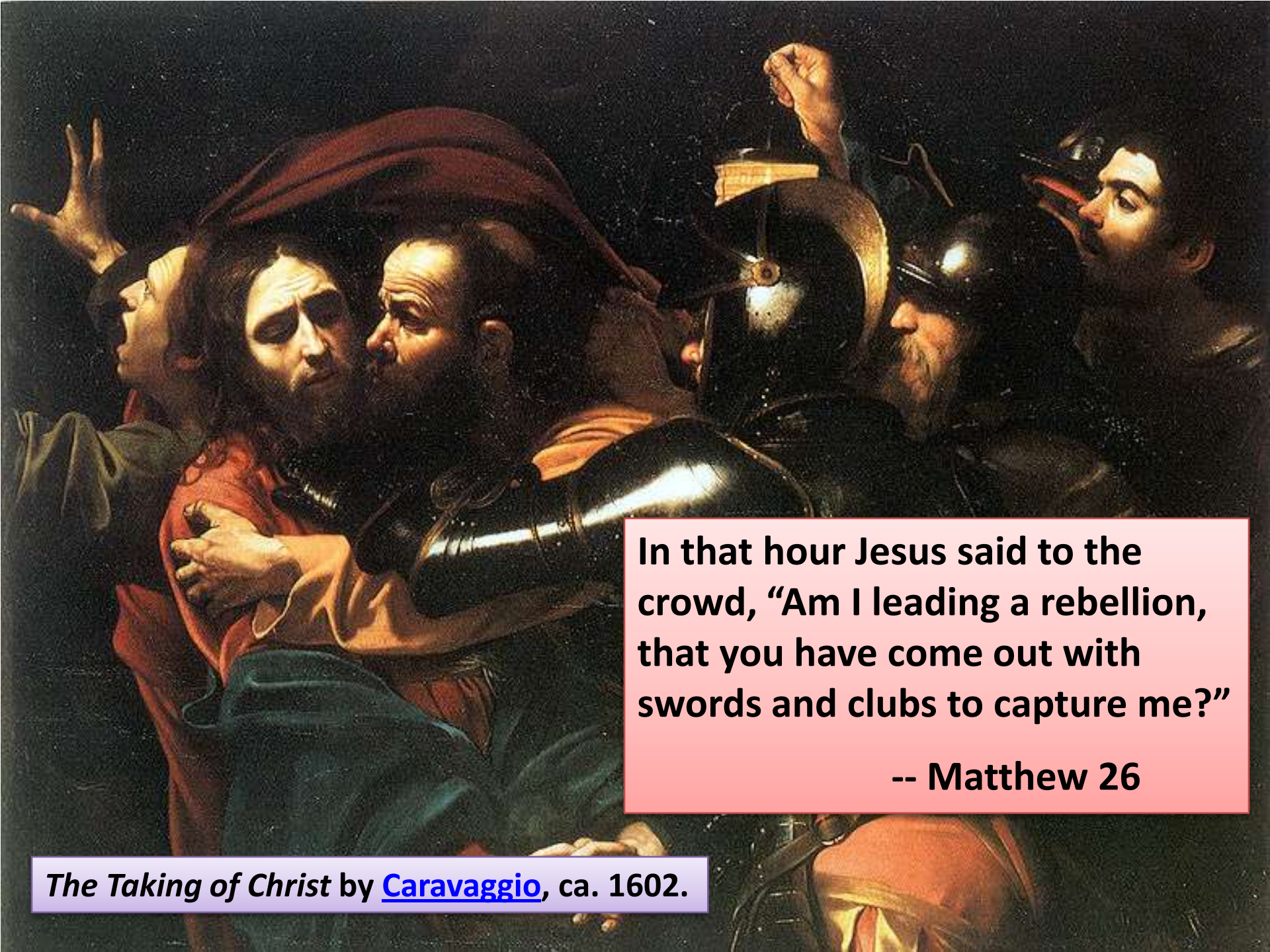


-- Matthew 5

The Messianic Backdrop

What's so controversial about this guy???





In that hour Jesus said to the crowd, “Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me?”

-- Matthew 26

The Taking of Christ by [Caravaggio](#), ca. 1602.

King of the Jews?

Very early in the morning, the chief priests, with the elders, the teachers of the law and the whole Sanhedrin, made their plans. So they bound Jesus, led him away and handed him over to Pilate. “Are you the king of the Jews?” asked Pilate.

“You have said so,” Jesus replied.

The chief priests accused him of many things. So again Pilate asked him, “Aren’t you going to answer? See how many things they are accusing you of.”

But Jesus still made no reply, and Pilate was amazed.

-- Mark 15 (NIV)



I.N.R.I.

“Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews”

The Apostles

Jesus was survived by his followers, most of whom were fishermen from Galilee. Many of Jesus' followers claimed to have seen him resurrected following His death.



Leonardo da Vinci, *The Last Supper*

P
A
U
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Michelangelo,
*The Conversion
of Saul*,
1542-1545

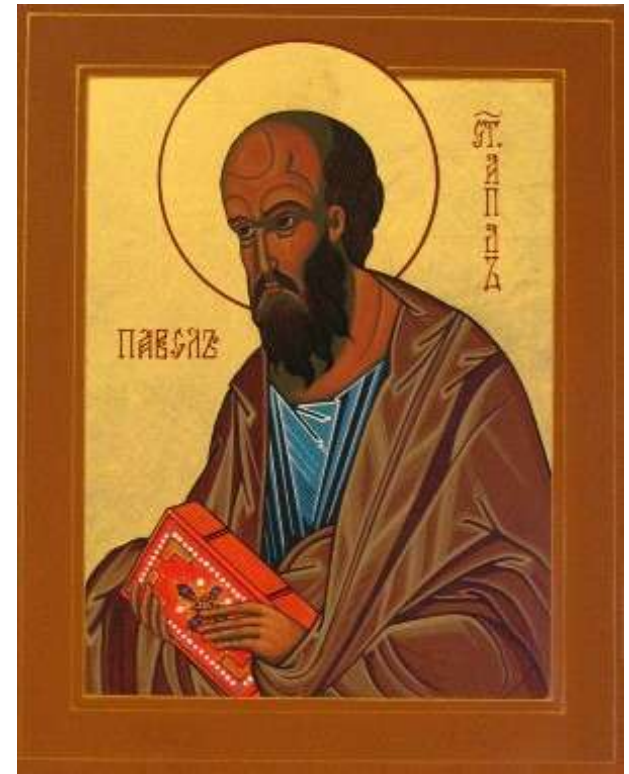
Paul

“Apostle to the Gentiles”

Formerly *Saul* of **Tarsus**

ASSETS:

- *Hellenized Jew*
- Rabbi
- Roman Citizen



Paul's Missionary Journeys

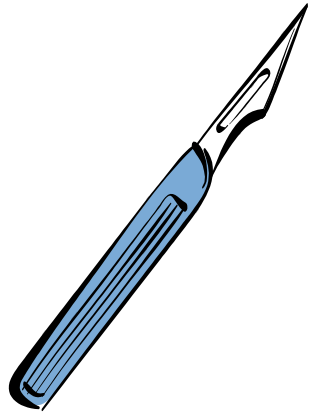
THE MISSIONARY JOURNEYS OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

MAP 13



Map Credit: <http://lds.org/scriptures/bible-maps/map-13?lang=eng>

Controversy in the Early Church



Judiazers

- New Christians should continue to observe Jewish laws of the Old Covenant.

Popularizers (aka, Hellenizers)

- New Christians should be expected to observe Jewish laws only to the extent that is necessary to be a good Christian.

What's at Stake:

Is Christianity to continue to be a sect within Judaism or a movement independent of Judaism?

The Great Fire (64 A.D.)



Nero



A Popular Legend

Hubert Robert, *The Fire of Rome, 18 July 64 AD*, (1795)

The Great Fire (64 A.D.)

Source: Tacitus, *Annals*, Book 15

But all human efforts, all the lavish gifts of the emperor, and the propitiations of the gods, did not banish the sinister belief that the [fire] was the result of an order [by the emperor]. Consequently, to get rid of the report, Nero fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called Christians by the populace. Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilatus, and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in Judaea, the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their center and become popular. Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty; then, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred against mankind. Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired.

A Turning Point...



The Torches of Nero, by [Henryk Siemiradzki](#)

Martyrdom

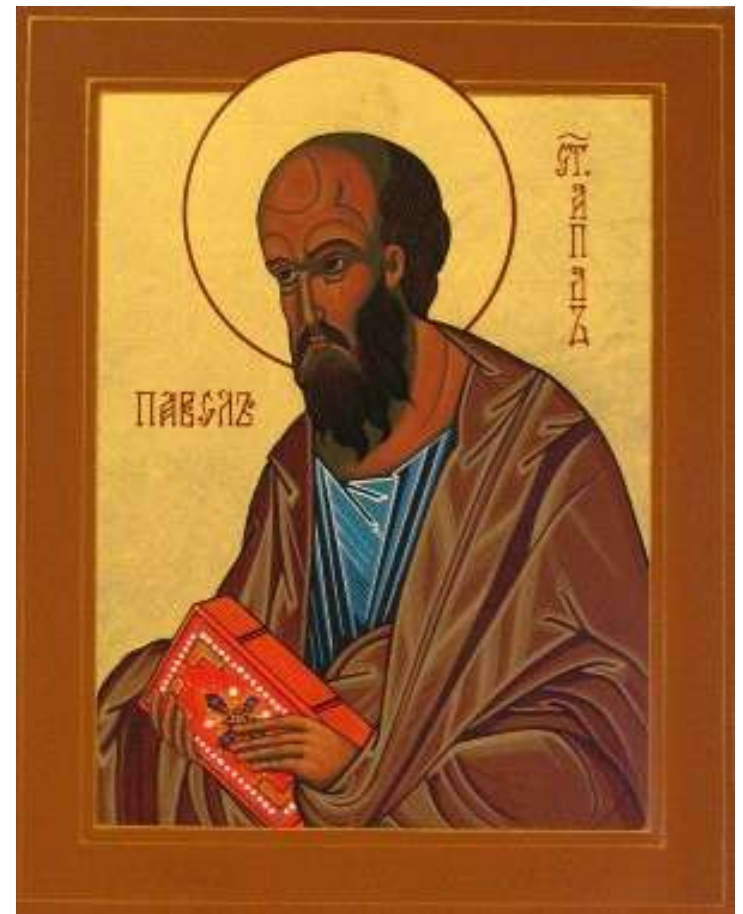


Martyrdom

Peter



Paul



Roman Attitudes Toward Christians

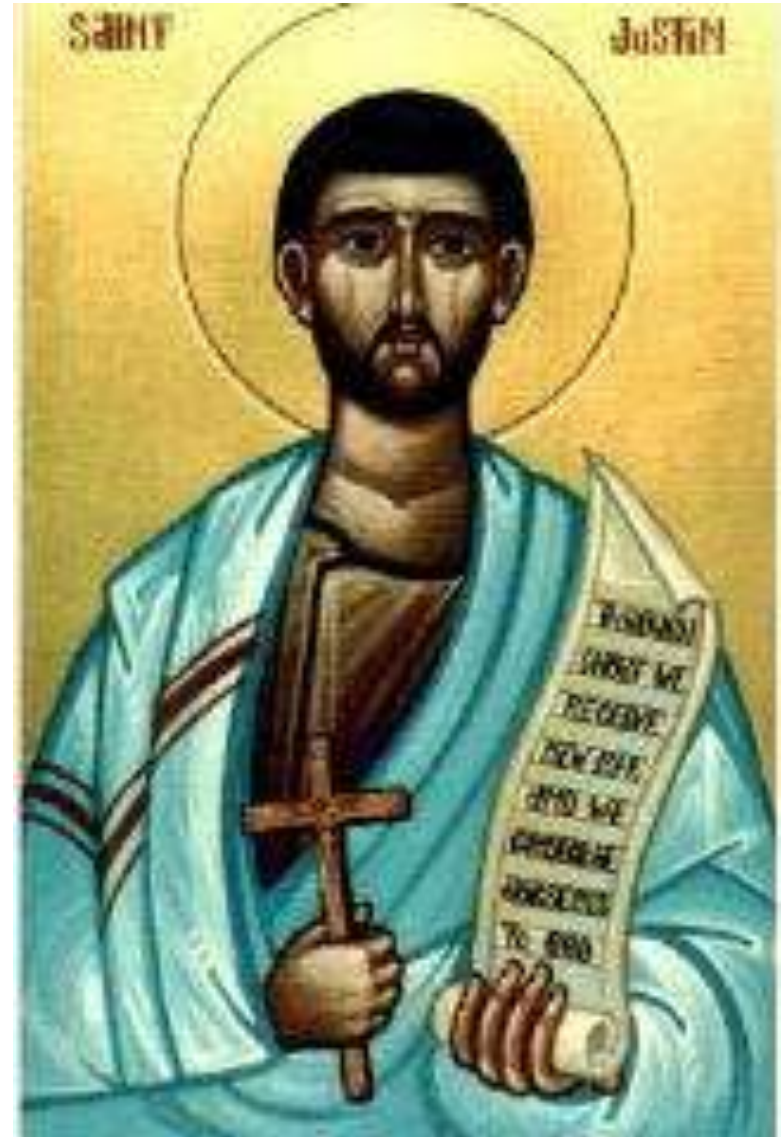


Apologetics

Defense of the Christian Faith

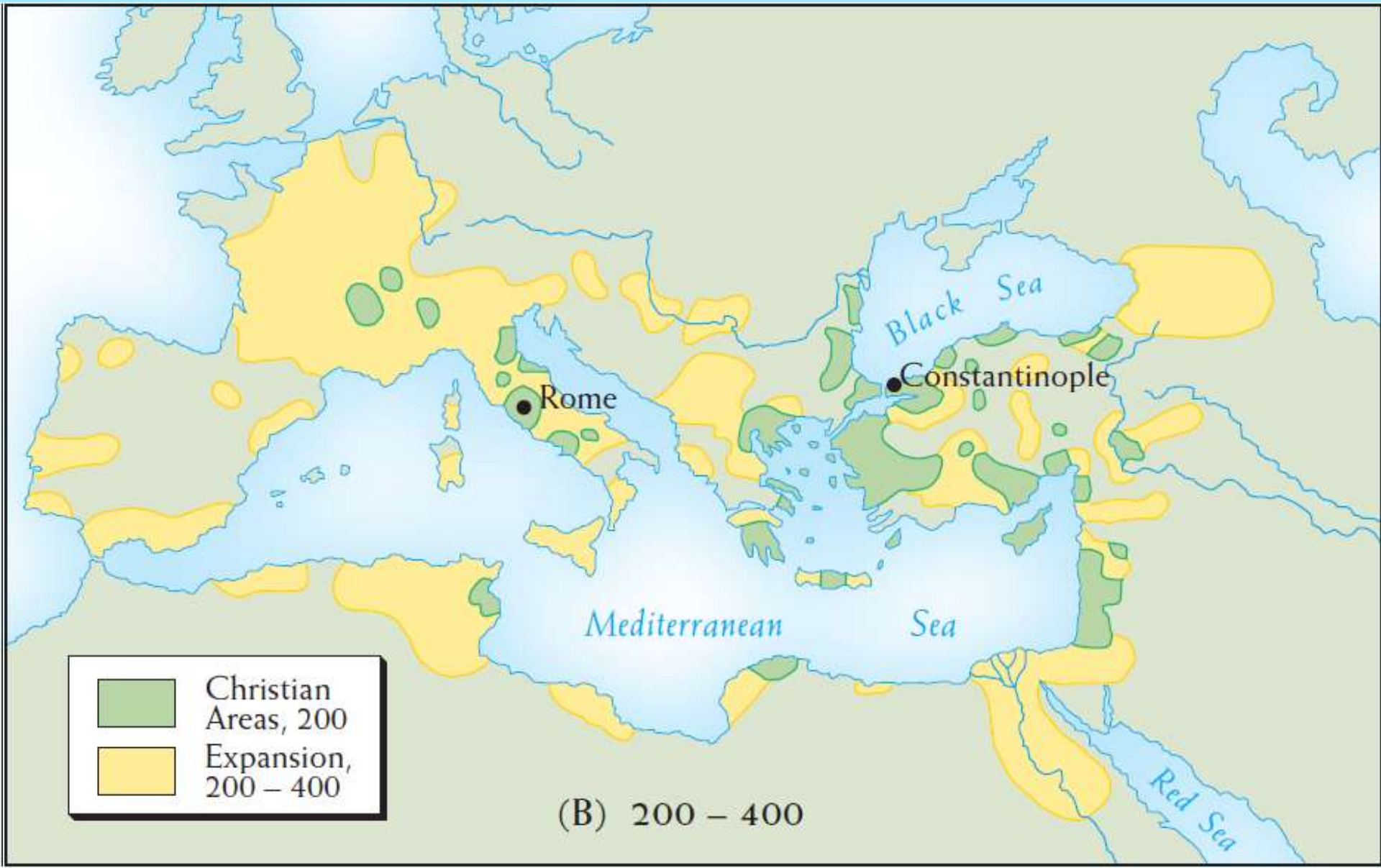
CHRISTIANS ARE:

- **NOT** atheists, cannibals, etc.
- **GOOD CITIZENS**
 - Taxpayers

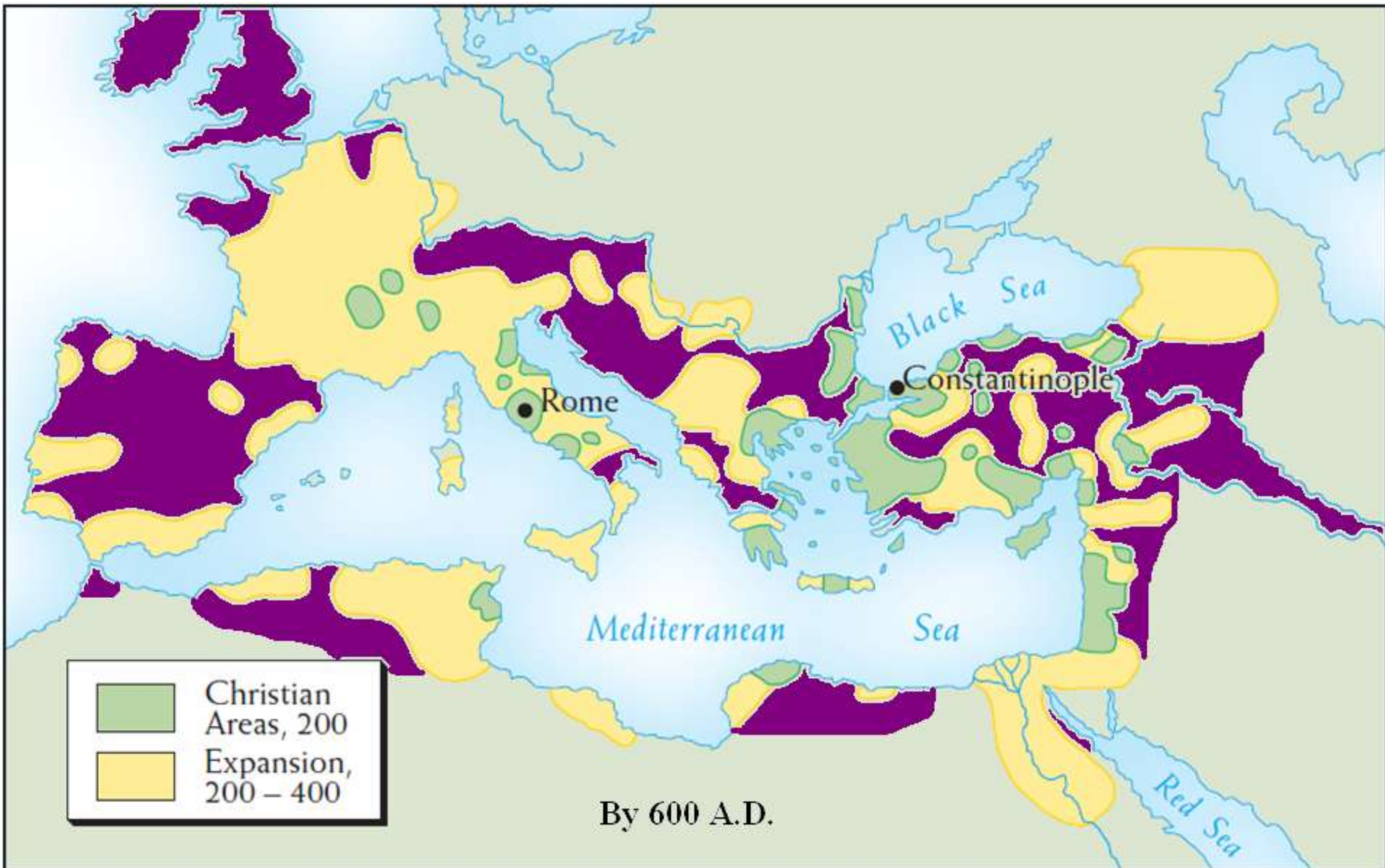


St. Justin Martyr
Second Century Apologist

The Spread of Christianity



By 600 A.D.



Hierarchy of the Early Christian Church

OFFICE	JURISDICTION	DESCRIPTION
Patriarchs	<i>Region</i>	Major cities (Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem, Rome, and later Constantinople) were known as patriarchal sees. The bishops of these cities, known as <i>patriarchs</i> , exercised authority over large areas.
Bishops	<i>City</i>	Each city would have a bishop to govern the churches in the area
Presbyters	<i>Congregation</i>	The equivalent of a priest, pastor, or minister – in charge of a single congregation
Deacons	<i>Congregation</i>	Assist presbyters with administrative functions

Centers of Early Christianity



Jewish-Roman War

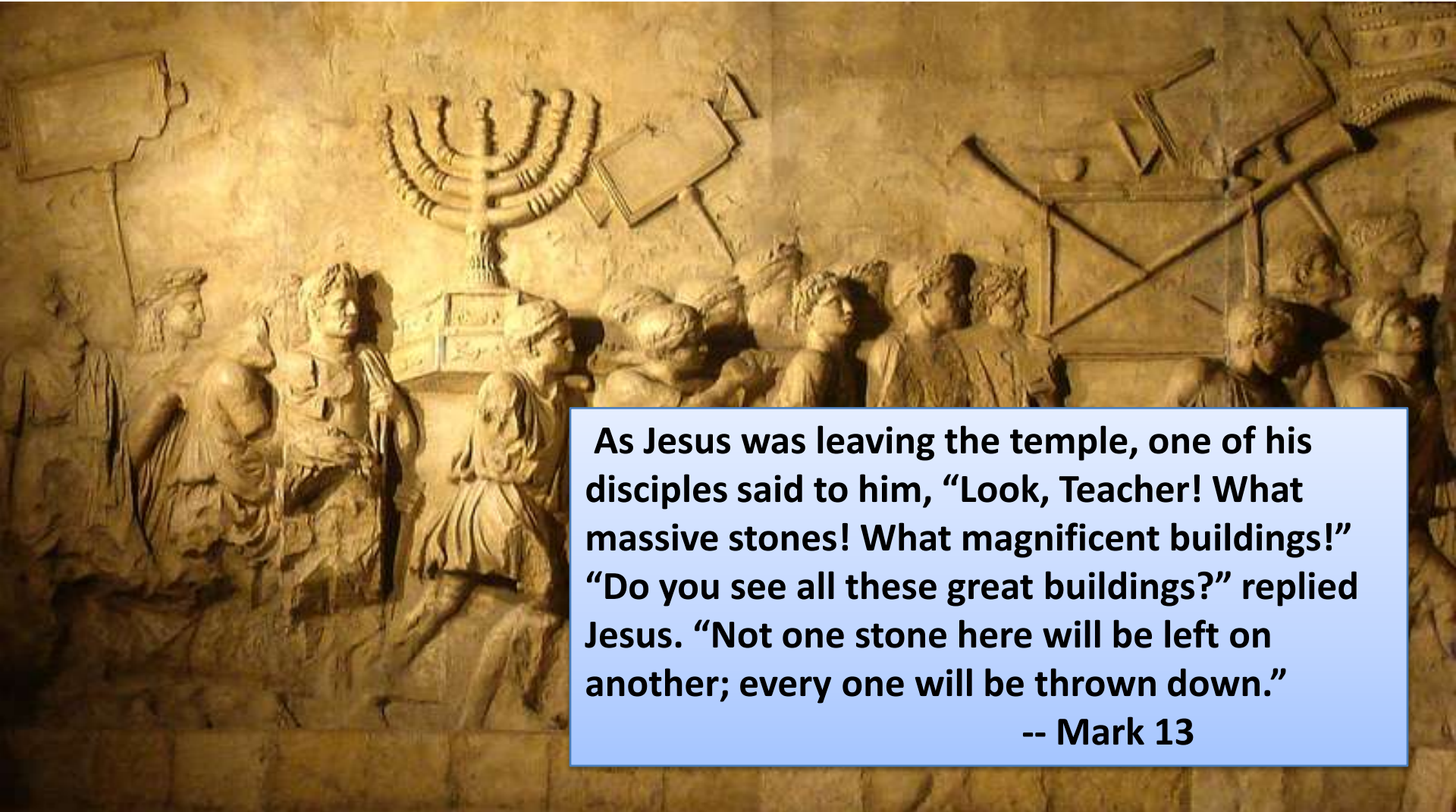
66-73 A.D.

Jewish stronghold at *Masada*

An aerial photograph of the Masada fortress, a prominent, high, rocky plateau in the Negev desert. The terrain is rugged and arid, with deep shadows and bright highlights on the rock surfaces. The fortress is situated on a narrow ridge, and the surrounding landscape is a vast, open desert with some distant hills and a few small structures visible in the distance.

Destruction of the Temple

70 A.D.



As Jesus was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, “Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!” “Do you see all these great buildings?” replied Jesus. “Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down.”

-- Mark 13

Roman soldiers carrying off the spoils from the Temple after sacking Jerusalem.

The Antonines



The “Five Good Emperors”

The first four adopted their successors.

The “Five Good Emperors” ruled in the last days of the *Pax Romana*.

[Nerva](#)

96-98

[Trajan](#)

98-117

[Hadrian](#)

117-138

Antoninus Pius

138-161

[Marcus Aurelius](#)

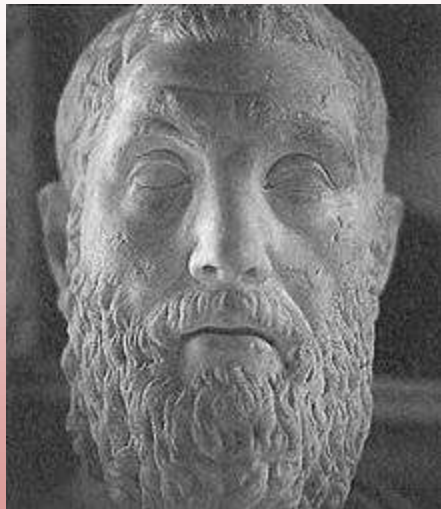
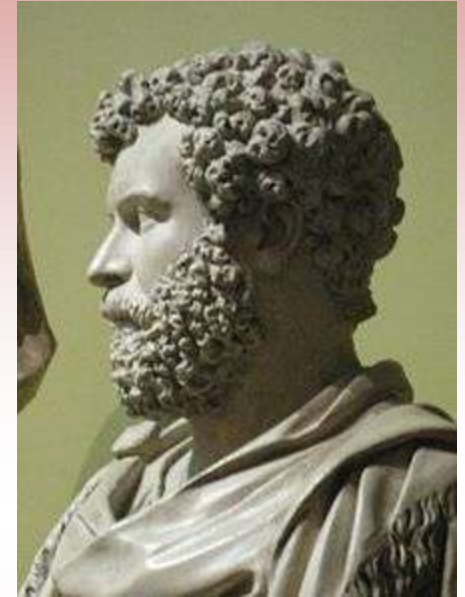
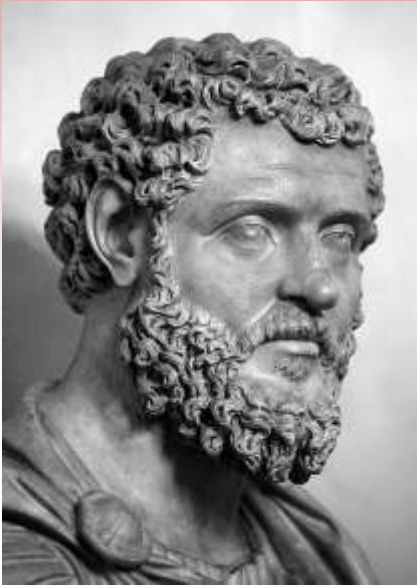
161-180

[Commodus](#)

180-192

The Year of the Five Emperors

193



***The Pax Romana
is over!!!***