

A MORE THAN BRIEF TIME-LINE OF CHRISTIAN CHURCH HISTORY

Christianity claims her roots lie in Judaism. Jews longed for the Messiah. According to Christian belief Jesus becomes that Anointed One (Messiah in Hebrew) or the Christ (Christos in Greek). Therefore he is called Jesus Christ. All dates are C.E. (the Common Era).

30-33– Jesus' life, death and resurrection.

1. He lives an ethic of love for all with a unique identification with the last, the least, the lost and the lonely; the poor and marginalized; a perfect example to follow
2. He dies because he threatens the status quo of the religious world and societal powers and because he blasphemes by granting the forgiveness of sins. Everyone knew that only God could forgive sins. He dies for the sins of the world with God's words on his lips: "Father, forgive them". He is now, not only an example of how to love and live, but also the Savior of humanity.
3. He is raised to show that God's power of love and forgiveness is greater than the power of sin and death. This resurrected Jesus appears to many followers and promises to return someday to call God's people home to heaven.
4. **Day of Pentecost (The beginning of the church)**– After Jesus ascends to heaven the Holy Spirit comes upon the small group of believers. This special presence of God helps them to live together in love and empowers them to tell others about God's love in Jesus Christ. The small community grows by the thousands.

Late 40's – 65 – Apostle Paul – the first Christian missionary; starts small churches throughout the Middle East and Asia Minor; writes at least 10 of the New Testament books or letters (epistles); interprets the meaning of Jesus' life, death and resurrection; gives the early church the doctrines of the faith and guidelines for living

60's – 311 – the church is a small, persecuted minority

311 – Emperor Constantine – According to legend he was a sun worshiper. One day he saw a cross as he looked at the sun and heard the words "By this sign you will win". He put the sign of the cross on the shields of his soldiers and attempted to unify the Roman Empire under Christianity. Eventually, all were expected to accept the Christian faith and persecution of non-believers ensued.

313-590 – Supremacy of the Old Catholic (universal) Imperial Church – As the power of the Roman bishop grew it gradually becomes the Roman Catholic Church.

590-1517 – The Supremacy of the Papacy (pope) – alliances with and battles against emperors; the church becomes a major land owner; monastic movements continue as a way of purifying the church; feuds between the western church leaders in Rome and the eastern church leaders in Constantinople; **the Crusades begin in 1095 and continue sporadically through the 1300's** as debunked attempts to free Jerusalem from the Muslims and to provide safe passage for Christians who wanted to take pilgrimages to the Holy Land; the 4th Crusade in 1203 the crusaders plunder the Eastern Christian city of Constantinople and this cements the division between the Roman Catholic Church (Western) and the Eastern Orthodox Church

1521 – The Reformation and the beginning of Protestantism– Martin Luther confronts the Catholic church and emphasizes:

1. Scripture stands on its own as a guide to Christians; papal interpretations are not infallible
2. Priesthood of all believers – immediate access to God
3. Salvation by grace not doing the "works" of the church

1521-1950's - Rise of Protestant Denominationalism - gap between Catholics and Protestants widens

1960's –Present – Ecumenism – attempts to unite all Christians, both Protestant and Catholic under the banner of God's love through Jesus Christ