

The Origins and Spread of Christianity

How did Christianity originate and spread?

PREVIEW

Aesop's Fables is a collection of brief stories said to have been written by a Greek slave named Aesop, who may have lived from 620 to 560 B.C.E. A *fable* is a short story that teaches a moral lesson. Read the fable below. Then, *on a separate sheet of paper*, follow the directions and answer the questions below.

1. List the characters in the fable.
2. Summarize the plot.
3. What moral lesson do you think this fable is trying to teach?
4. Do you think this kind of storytelling is effective? Why or why not?

The Lion and the Mouse

Once when a Lion was asleep, a Mouse began running up and down upon him. This soon wakened the Lion, who placed his huge paw upon the Mouse, and opened his big jaws to swallow the little creature. "Pardon, O Great Lion," cried the little Mouse, "Forgive me this time, and I shall never forget it. Who knows? I may be able to do you a good turn one day." The Lion was so tickled at the idea of the Mouse being able to help him that he lifted his paw and let him go.

Sometime later, the Lion was caught in a hunters' trap. The hunters, who wanted to bring the Lion alive to the king, tied him to a tree while they went in search of a wagon to carry him. Just then, the Mouse happened to pass by. Seeing the sad plight of the Lion, the Mouse went up to him and soon gnawed away the ropes that bound the mighty animal. "Was I not right?" asked the little Mouse.

READING NOTES

Key Content Terms

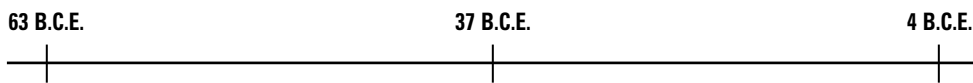
As you complete the Reading Notes, use these terms in your answers.

Christianity	Gospel	Resurrection
Jesus	disciple	missionary
Messiah	parable	Constantine

Section 2

1. Where was Judea and why was it important to the Jews?

2. For each date on the timeline below, describe how the Romans ruled Judea and how Jews reacted to Roman rule.



Section 3

1. What are the Gospels and who wrote them?

2. Describe Jesus's birth according to the Gospels.

Section 4

1. According to the Gospels, what did Jesus say were the two most important of all the Jewish laws?

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2. Summarize the Parable of the Good Samaritan and explain its moral lesson.

<p style="text-align: center;">Summary of the Parable of the Good Samaritan</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Moral Lesson of the Parable of the Good Samaritan</p>

3. According to the Gospels, why was Jesus condemned to die on a cross?

4. Why was belief in the Resurrection important to Jesus's disciples and other Christians?

Section 5

1. What caused Paul to stop persecuting Christians and become a missionary?

2. How did Paul's work help to spread Christianity?

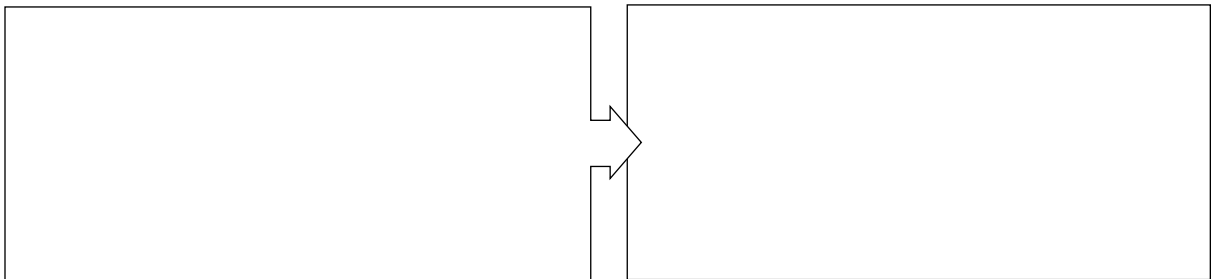
Section 6

1. Why were Christians considered a threat to Rome?

2. Complete the following flowchart about the Roman persecution of Christians.

Methods of Persecution

Results of Persecution



3. Describe the role of Constantine, and Roman emperors who followed him, in spreading Christianity.

P R O C E S S I N G

As you have learned, a *parable* is a brief story that teaches a moral lesson. In the space below, write your own parable that teaches a lesson about some aspect of good citizenship. For example, it might be about the importance of voting or of volunteering in your community. Include a symbol or small illustration that shows the main idea of the moral lesson you want to teach.