

Beliefs Change Rome

Trace key Christian figures, beliefs, and changes in the Roman Empire.

SS.6.W.3.13 "Identify key figures and the basic beliefs of early Christianity and how these beliefs impacted the Roman Empire."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the names of key people, circle beliefs, and number 1, 2, and 3 beside three ways Christianity changed the Roman Empire.

Christianity in the Roman World

- ① Early Christianity began in the eastern Roman province of Judea during the first century CE. Jesus of Nazareth taught that people should love God and their neighbors, forgive others, and care for people in need. Christians believed Jesus was the Messiah, or chosen savior, and that he rose from the dead after his crucifixion. His followers, called disciples, first shared these beliefs in Jewish communities. Peter became an important leader among Christians in Rome, while other followers carried the message to new places.
- ② Paul, also called Saul, was another key figure. At first, he opposed Christians, but after becoming a Christian, he traveled widely around the Roman Empire. He wrote letters to Christian groups and taught that faith in Jesus was open to Gentiles, people who were not Jewish. Roman roads and sea routes helped Paul and other missionaries connect cities across the empire. As Christianity spread, some Roman officials feared that Christians would not honor the traditional gods or take part in public religious ceremonies. At times, Christians faced persecution.
- ③ In 312 CE, Emperor Constantine supported Christianity after linking a military victory to the Christian God. The next year, Constantine and Emperor Licinius issued the Edict of Milan, which allowed Christians to worship openly. This changed Christianity from a sometimes persecuted religion into a legal religion. Later, Emperor Theodosius I made Nicene Christianity the empire's official religion in 380 CE. Churches gained public influence, bishops became important community leaders, and Christian ideas shaped laws and daily life. These changes also reduced the public role of traditional Roman religions.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 What two actions did Jesus teach people to do?

2 How did Paul help Christianity spread across the Roman Empire?

3 Why did some Roman officials fear Christians?

4 How did Constantine and Theodosius I each change Christianity's place in the empire?

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write exactly three sentences from the viewpoint of a Roman resident. Explain how one Christian belief could affect life in the city, name one key figure, and describe one change Christianity brought to the empire.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the names of key people, circle beliefs, and number 1, 2, and 3 beside three ways Christianity changed the Roman Empire. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What two actions did Jesus teach people to do?	He taught people to love God and their neighbors, forgive others, and care for people in need. Any two actions are correct.
2	How did Paul help Christianity spread across the Roman Empire?	He traveled around the empire, wrote letters to Christian groups, and taught that faith in Jesus was open to Gentiles.
3	Why did some Roman officials fear Christians?	They feared Christians would not honor the traditional gods or take part in public religious ceremonies.
4	How did Constantine and Theodosius I each change Christianity's place in the empire?	Constantine helped make Christianity legal through the Edict of Milan. Theodosius I later made Nicene Christianity the official religion of the empire.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

As a Roman resident, I would notice Christians caring for people in need. Peter was an important Christian leader in Rome. As churches gained public influence, Christian ideas could affect how community leaders helped people.

Accept any passage-based belief, key figure, and impact that are connected logically in three sentences. The impact may include legal worship, official status, church influence, bishops as leaders, changed laws and daily life, or a reduced public role for traditional Roman religions.