



EARLY CHURCH

BEGINNING AT THE BEGINNING

Jerusalem was crowded with people from all around the Roman Empire and beyond. It was fifty days after Passover and the time for all Jews and converts to Judaism to gather for Pentecost, an annual harvest festival. But this year, 33 AD, was different from other years. Everyone was talking about the crucifixion of a man called Jesus, who had called himself the Son of God. Those who had been in Jerusalem then, recalled the sudden darkness on that day and the curtain in the temple being torn down the middle by unseen hands. And most unsettling were the stories that this man Jesus had come back to life three days after his terrible death. His followers claimed to have seen and talked to him before he rose up to heaven. Could all this be true?

Meanwhile 120 people of Jesus' followers were gathered in a large house near the temple. They were praying when all of a sudden a very loud sound, like a strong wind, filled the house. As they looked around at each other they could see what looked like a tongue of flame resting on each head. But it did not burn them. Instead they were filled with the Holy Spirit and given a gift to speak in different languages. Amazed, but knowing what to do, Jesus' followers left the house and went to the temple courtyard where thousands of people were gathered for the festival. Then each one began to speak in the language they were given, telling the story of Jesus death and resurrection and why it

had to happen. Everyone standing in the temple courtyard could understand the message in their own language and were amazed. Some were frightened by this miracle, and some laughed. They thought Jesus' followers were drunk. Then Peter stood up on a platform to speak to the entire crowd.

The throng of people quieted down and listened intently while Peter spoke. He too told the story of Jesus, quoting verses from the Old Testament scriptures to show that this was all part of God's plan to save his people from their sinful condition.

Peter also told them that they were responsible for Jesus' terrible death because they had refused to listen to him and accept him as the Messiah, God's own Son. He urged them to repent of their sins and turn to God in faith, and then be baptised to show their faith publicly. The Holy Spirit gave Peter such power to speak that those that listened were convicted of their sinful hearts. That day 3,000 people believed, repented of the sins and were baptised by Jesus' apostles. That day the early church began.

TIMELINE: EARLY CHURCH 33-100 AD*

JESUS DIED AND CAME BACK TO LIFE



APOSTOLIC AGE (33-100) The time when the Apostles were alive, teaching what they had learned from Jesus. The Apostles were: James, John, Peter, Philip, Andrew, Bartholomew, Thomas, Matthew, James son of Alpheus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot, Mathias and Paul.

PENTECOST



STEPHEN MARTYRED



PAUL IS CONVERTED ON ROAD TO DAMASCUS



APOSTLE PAUL (5-67AD) was a Jew who loved God and was angry that Christians said that Jesus was God's Son. While on his way to put Christians in prison, Jesus spoke to him and changed his heart. Paul became the first missionary, traveling around the Roman Empire preaching and establishing churches. When he was put in prison, he wrote letters to the churches that are now part of our Bible.

APOSTLE JAMES MARTYRED BY KING HEROD



Apostle James (died 44AD) was a leader in the early church. He and his brother

John were fishermen, working with their father Zebedee, when Jesus called them to be his disciples. After Pentecost, James, along with John and Peter, preached boldly the good news of Jesus Christ. King Herod Agrippa arrested James and had him executed with a sword.

APOSTLE PAUL BEGINS HIS MISSIONARY JOURNEYS



COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM

Council of Jerusalem (ca. 49 AD) was held to settle a dispute between Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians. Some Jewish Christians thought the Gentiles should follow the Jewish law that God had given to Abraham and Moses. However, the Apostles and elders of the church decided that wasn't necessary because God had not commanded that all Christians must follow Jewish laws.

ROME BURNS AND CHRISTIANS ARE PERSECUTED BY EMPEROR NERO

Emperor Nero (37-68 AD) was Roman emperor for fourteen years and a thoroughly bad person. He particularly hated Christians and blamed them for a fire that destroyed much of Rome in 64 AD. As a result he had Christians rounded up and tortured and killed, and encouraged all Roman citizens to turn Christians into the authorities. He executed the Apostles Paul and Peter.



33

33

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44

46

**ca.49

64

PERSECUTION UNDER EMPEROR TRAJAN

Persecution by Roman Emperors: Emperor Domitian declared himself a god during his reign and commanded that all those who refused to worship him had to be executed. He was particularly wanted Jews to be killed. The next emperor, Trajan, while approving the execution of Christians, said that no one should hunt them down.

APOSTLE JOHN EXILED TO ISLAND OF PATMOS



Apostle John: John was the last Apostle living in 90 AD. He was exiled to the island of Patmos by Emperor Domitian. While he was there, John wrote the Book of Revelation. In Revelation 2:13 & 17:6, John refers to martyrs who have died because of their faith in Jesus Christ.

EMPEROR DOMITIAN PERSECUTED JEWS AND CHRISTIANS



MOUNT VESUVIUS ERUPTS AND BURIES POMPEII

Roman Roads: The Roman Empire paved the way for the spread of Christianity. In each country they conquered, the Romans built wide paved roads so their army could move from place to place easily. The Apostles and other Christians also used those



roads to travel to places in the empire preaching the good news of Jesus wherever they went. Illustration: paved roads

NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS WERE WRITTEN BY THE APOSTLES

The New Testament: Books were written during the Apostolic Age (70 - 95 AD). They include the four Gospels about Jesus' life, Acts of the Apostles' about the early church, Paul's epistles to the churches, other letters by Apostles and the book of Revelation.

ROMANS DESTROY JERUSALEM



Destruction of Jerusalem (70 AD) ended a four year Jewish revolt against the Romans. When the revolt began, Emperor Nero sent in his troops to capture the troublemakers, but it took a long time. When the Roman army finally broke through into Jerusalem, they destroyed the walls, burned the temple and killed or enslaved as many Jews as they could find. This was the end of the Jewish temple worship, and caused the Jews and Christians to scatter throughout the Roman Empire.

APOSTLES PAUL AND PETER MARTYRED IN ROME



98-117

ca. 90

81-96

79

79

ca.70-95

70

64, 67