

**Module 5: Ancient Rome**  
**Topic 5 Content: The Rise of Christianity**

**Introduction**



The Rise of Christianity

Click NEXT to continue.

## Module 5: Ancient Rome

### Topic 5 Content: The Rise of Christianity

#### Christianity

# Christianity

- Monotheistic**
- Abraham and Judaism**
- New Testament**
- Jesus of Nazareth**
- Largest religion**
- 2 billion followers**
- 34,000 denominations**
- Europe, North and South America**



*John the Baptist baptizing Christ,*  
Francesco Trevisani

Christianity is a monotheistic religion that traces its roots to Abraham and the religion of Judaism. The major beliefs of Christianity can be found in the New Testament, also known as the Christian Bible, and are based on the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, who Christians believe is the Son of God and the Messiah, or savior of all people.

Today, Christianity is the largest religion in the world, and one of the five major world religions. It has more than two billion followers, broken up into over thirty-four thousand denominations, or groups with individual but Christian-based beliefs. The majority of Christians live in Europe, North America, and South America.

## Module 5: Ancient Rome

### Topic 5 Content: The Rise of Christianity

#### Founder

# Founder

**Jesus**


**Born in Bethlehem**

**Raised in Nazareth**

**Jew**

**Roman**

**Gospels**



*Adoration of the shepherds, Gerard van Honthorst*

The religious figure central to Christianity is Jesus. He was born in Bethlehem, a town near Jerusalem in Judea, around 7 to 3 B.C. (B.C.E.), and was raised in the nearby town of Nazareth. During that time, Judea was part of a province of the Roman Empire, and was inhabited predominately by Jews. Jesus was both a Jew and a Roman subject who lived during the reign of Augustus (Octavian) Caesar. Much of what is known about the life and teachings of Jesus comes from the Gospels, the first four books of the New Testament.

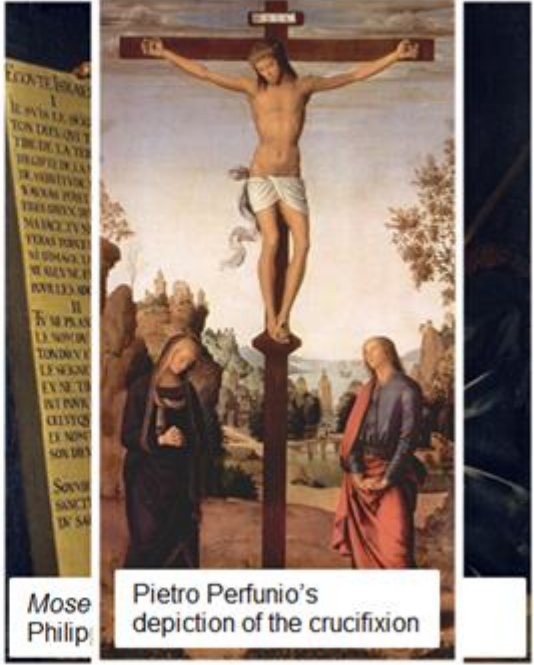
## Module 5: Ancient Rome

### Topic 5 Content: The Rise of Christianity

#### The Rise of Christianity in the Roman Empire

# The Rise of Christianity

- Jewish ideals
- Messiah
- Pontius Pilate
- Challenged Roman authority
- Emperor as a god
- Arrested and crucified
- Resurrection



Mose Philip

Pietro Perfunio's depiction of the crucifixion

The image shows a slide titled 'The Rise of Christianity'. On the left is a dark blue box with a white border containing a list of key concepts: Jewish ideals, Messiah, Pontius Pilate, Challenged Roman authority, Emperor as a god, Arrested and crucified, and Resurrection. On the right is a reproduction of a painting of the Crucifixion by Pietro Perugino. The painting depicts Jesus on the cross, with the Virgin Mary on the left and Saint John the Apostle on the right. In the background, a landscape with a castle is visible. To the left of the cross is a scroll with Latin text. Below the painting is a white box with the text 'Pietro Perfunio's depiction of the crucifixion'. At the bottom left of the slide, the name 'Mose Philip' is written.

Jesus' teachings contained many ideas from the Jewish tradition, such as monotheism and the principles of the Ten Commandments. Jesus also preached new beliefs. According to his followers, he called himself the Messiah, the Son of God. Jews do not accept Jesus as the Messiah.


As Jesus preached from place to place, he grew in popularity and caught the attention of a Roman governor named Pontius Pilate. Pilate accused Jesus of challenging Roman authority, as the Romans were polytheistic and believed that the emperor should be worshipped as one of their many gods. Pilate arrested Jesus and had him sentenced to death by crucifixion. After his death, Jesus' body was placed in a tomb. According to the Gospels, three days later, Jesus' body was gone. His followers believe he was resurrected (rose from the dead), and that he is the Messiah (Christ). It is from this belief that Jesus came to be referred to as Jesus Christ.

**Module 5: Ancient Rome**  
**Topic 5 Content: The Rise of Christianity**

**The Spread of Christianity**

## The Spread of Christianity

- Twelve apostles
- Paul of Tarsus
- Brotherly love
- Salvation
- Persecution
- Martyrs
- Constantine
- Theodosius I



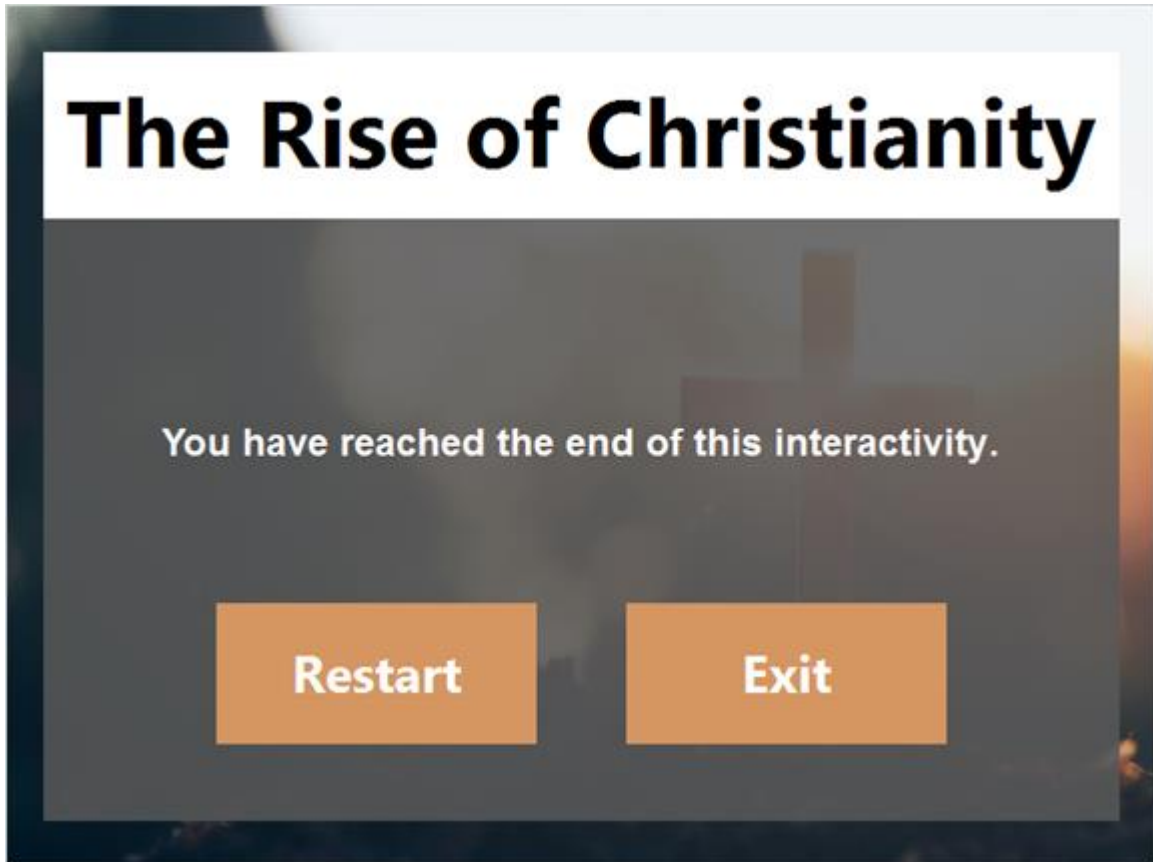
Constantine, considered a saint, with the bishops of the Council of Nicaea

One of Jesus' twelve apostles, or closest followers, was Paul of Tarsus. Paul dedicated his life to spreading Jesus' teachings throughout the Roman Empire. Paul's message of brotherly love and salvation for those who believed Jesus was the Son of God appealed to many. As Christianity grew in popularity, so did the Roman persecution of Christians, who were often burned or fed to the lions as Roman entertainment. Many Christians were martyrs, or people who suffer or die for their beliefs. The fact that people were willing to die for their beliefs further strengthened Christianity.

It was not until 313 A.D. (C.E.) that the persecution of Christians was formally made illegal under the Roman Emperor Constantine. He wrote the Edict of Milan, which commanded tolerance for the religion. Christianity became the official state religion of the Roman Empire under Theodosius I.

**Module 5: Ancient Rome**  
**Topic 5 Content: The Rise of Christianity**

**Conclusion**



You have reached the end of this interactivity.