



2.2

Early Christianity

- Rome conquered the Middle East –
- Herod (the Great) ruled Judea →
- The Jewish people were looking for a political/military “messiah” (savior - christ) to rid them of Roman rule.
- In c. 6-4 BC Jesus (Jeshua/Joshua) was born in Bethlehem
- Around the age of 30, he began to travel Judea preaching for 3 years –
- He gained some followers – 12 he named disciples (follower)
- AD 30 Jesus is arrested and crucified in Jerusalem
- His disciples believe resurrected 3 days later
- His followers then began to spread his message – (they were called “apostles” – sent out -)
- Two important apostles were Peter and Paul



- (Simon) Peter was seen as the leader of the disciples (then apostles) – He led the early church in Jerusalem and then later, the church in Rome. (He generally kept his teachings to the Jewish people)
- Paul (Saul) initially persecuted the new “sect”. Later he became an apostle of Jesus. He quickly aimed his message to the non-Jews (Gentiles). These Gentile converts were first called “Christians”.
- Both Peter and Paul were executed under Nero (part of the persecutions against Christians).
- There were several periods of persecutions until the mid-4th C (helped spread Christianity)
- Emperor Constantine converted to Christianity – legalized it (early 300’s).
- Theodosius made Christianity the official religion of the empire (AD 380)

