

Chapter Summary

The Rise of Christianity

Lesson 1 *Early Christianity*

- Before the rise of Christianity, the Roman Empire controlled Judaea and Galilee in the ancient land of Israel. The Jews hoped a deliverer would rescue them from cruel treatment by the Romans. They wanted to make Israel an independent Jewish kingdom.
- Around A.D. 30 a young Jewish preacher named Jesus began traveling throughout Judaea and Galilee. He gathered a group of followers known as disciples or apostles. Jesus used stories to teach people about God and the main beliefs of Judaism.
- As his influence grew, the Romans began to see Jesus as a threat to their power. On the Jewish holiday of Passover, Jesus was arrested, accused of treason, and sentenced to death by crucifixion. After his death and reports of his resurrection, Jesus' followers continued to spread his message. People who accepted the teachings of Jesus gradually became known as Christians.

Lesson 2 *The Early Church*

- As Christianity spread throughout the Roman Empire, Christians came into conflict with the Romans. Because the Romans believed the new religion was a threat, they began to punish Christians. But Roman persecution did not stop Christianity from growing and becoming a powerful movement.
- Christianity spread to East Africa. The empire of Ethiopia, also known as Abyssina, was powerful in the region. The Ethiopian city-state of Axum adopted Christianity as its official religion in A.D. 334.
- Almost four centuries after the death of Jesus, the Roman emperor Theodosius made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire. Early Christians met in people's homes. Eventually they began to write down their beliefs and to organize the church along the lines of a hierarchy.

Chapter Summary *Cont.*

The Rise of Christianity

- Bishops and archbishops were church leaders with the most authority over religious matters. The bishop of Rome, or pope, believed he was more powerful than all the other bishops. This caused a conflict between Latin-speaking Christians and Greek-speaking Christians, who did not accept the pope's authority over their churches.

Lesson 3 *A Christian Europe*

- Christianity split into two main branches—the Latin-speaking Roman Catholic Church and the Greek-speaking Eastern Orthodox Church. The two churches had different views on the use of icons, or religious symbols. They also disagreed about the authority of the pope and the relationship between church and government.
- When Italy was invaded in the late A.D. 700s, Charlemagne, a Germanic king, helped the pope defend Rome. In return, the pope made Charlemagne the new Roman emperor.
- Christians throughout the empire set up their own religious communities. Monks and nuns, the men and women who lived in these communities, spread the message of Jesus to many parts of Europe. Serving as missionaries, they taught their religion to the Slavs in Eastern Europe, the Anglo-Saxons of Britain, and the Celtic people of Ireland.