

## Chapter 1 : Why the Holy Land is the 'fifth gospel' of Christianity

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Across the globe, more than million believers face intimidation, prison—“even death—“for their faith in Jesus Christ. While religious persecution is spread over many countries, there are some areas where the hostility is particularly intense. These pockets of concentrated persecution are due to the focused efforts of either one person or a larger system bent on smashing or squeezing out Christians in the region. The list below highlights some of the greatest human rights offenders toward Christians. We share this list not to stir up anger—“although righteous anger is expected—“but to move us all toward prayer and action. Jesus commanded us, directly, to pray for our enemies. So please use this list as a powerful prayer tool. As Brother Andrew, the founder of Open Doors says, no door is closed to the power of prayer. Through prayer, we have the ability to move beyond borders and into the very presence of our enemies—“Pray that God would stop their actions, change their hearts and shine the brilliant light of the gospel onto their path—“much like He did with the apostle Paul, one of the most aggressive persecutors in the time of the early church. Here are some of the top persecutors of Christians worldwide. For nearly 2, years, Christianity has had a presence in countries like Iraq; however, the brutal and targeted attacks from ISIS have driven many Christians to flee these areas. Ten years ago, there were nearly 1 million Christians living in Iraq, with a large majority of the population living in Mosul. In countries like Yemen, Christian converts from Islam are particularly vulnerable as they are already treated as outcasts by their own communities. As Al-Qaeda takes advantage of distracted governments, Christians in their path experience intense persecution. Kim Jong-un Believers in North Korea face intense persecution from the government North Korea has for years been one of the worst persecutors of the Christian church. Prayer, church meetings and owning a Bible are all against the law, with violators being sent to prison camps, or even facing the death penalty. This movement has created a culture war and made it very dangerous and difficult for many Christians living in the region who are often forced out of villages, beaten and arrested for believing in Jesus. Al-Shabaab Twin attacks by suspected al-Shabaab militants in Kenya left 52 people dead The radical Islamic terrorist group al-Shabaab is in many ways the Eastern African version of al-Qaeda a group they once had an uneasy union with. Al-Shabaab has terrorized the country of Somalia for the past decade and is recently focusing its attacks on the neighboring country of Kenya. Any place al-Shabaab controls operates under Sharia law, which includes the slaughtering of anyone who identifies as Christian. They have taken out contracts on influential Christian leaders and are also at war with the Nigerian government. Clashes with militants among the predominantly Muslim group have claimed thousands of Christian lives as they raze entire villages and brutally kill and rape. A third of all Fulani people are pastoralists, making them the largest nomadic community in the world. Radical Islam In Pakistan, bombings, attacks and threats toward Christians by radical Islam are prevalent Islamic Oppression is one of the most widely recognized sources of persecution for Christians in the world today—“and it continues to spread—“aiming to bring many parts of the world under Sharia Law. Drug Cartels Threats toward Christians in Latin America often come at the hands of violent drug cartels In Colombia and Mexico, drug cartels are prevalent in certain parts of the country. On top of the danger that these groups bring to ordinary citizens, Christians are specifically targeted. Drug cartel leaders know that they are the greatest threat to their way of life. Behind all of the atrocities listed above is Satan, who prowls this world as a roaring lion. Here on earth now, and then in completion for eternity. You can unsubscribe at any time. Like us on Facebook:

### Chapter 2 : History of Christianity - Simple English Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

*In The Story of Christianity: Volume 1, Justo L. González, author of the highly praised three-volume History of Christian Thought, presents a narrative history of Christianity, from the Early Church to the Dawn of the Protestant Reformation.*

The angel Gabriel said to Mary: God has blessed you and is pleased with you. You will become pregnant by the Holy Spirit and give birth to a baby boy and you will call him Jesus. Gabriel also told Mary that her cousin, Elizabeth who everyone thought was too old to have children, would have a baby boy whom God had chosen to prepare the way for Jesus. Mary said goodbye to her family and friends and went to visit her cousin Elizabeth and her husband Zechariah. Elizabeth was very happy to see Mary. She knew that Mary had been chosen by God to be the mother of his Son. He was to be called John. Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then returned home to Nazareth. Joseph was worried when he found out that Mary was expecting a baby before their marriage had taken place. He wondered if he should put off the wedding altogether. Then an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and said: When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel had told him to do and took Mary as his wife. At this time, the land where Mary and Joseph lived was part of the Roman Empire. The Roman Emperor Augustus wanted to have a list of all the people in the empire, to make sure they paid their taxes. He ordered everyone to return to the town where their families originally came from, and enter their names in a register or census there. Most people walked but some lucky people had a donkey to help carry the goods needed for the journey. When they reached Bethlehem they had problems finding somewhere to stay. So many people had come to register their names in the census, that every house was full and every bed was taken in all of the guest rooms. The only place to stay that they could find was with the animals. So in the place where the animals slept, Mary gave birth to Jesus, the Son of God. In the hills and fields outside Bethlehem, shepherds looked after their sheep through the long night. As the new day began, suddenly an angel appeared before them and the glory of God shone around them. I have good news for you and everyone. Today in Bethlehem a Saviour has been born for you. You will find the baby lying in a manger. Then many more angels appeared, lighting up the sky. The shepherds heard them praising God singing: The baby Jesus was lying in a manger as they had been told. When they saw him, they told everyone what the angel had said and everyone who heard the story were astonished. Then the shepherds returned to their sheep, praising God for sending his Son to be their Saviour. When Jesus was born, a brand new bright star appeared in sky. Some Wise Men in faraway countries saw the star and guessed what it meant. They were very clever men that studied the stars and had read in very old writings that a new star would appear when a great king was born. They set out to find the new king and bring him gifts. The Wise Men followed the star towards the country of Judea and when they got to the capital called Jerusalem they began to ask people: Herod sent for the Wise Men to come to him. He told them to go on following the star until they had found the baby king. But Herod did not tell them that he really had an evil plan in mind to kill the new king. The Wise Men followed the star towards Bethlehem where it said that the king would be born in the old writings. It seemed to stop and shine directly down upon the place where Jesus was. The Wise Men entered the house where they now lived and found Jesus with Mary, they bowed down and worshipped him. The Wise Men spread the gifts they had brought before Jesus. The gifts were gold, frankincense and myrrh. The Wise Men were warned in a dream, by God, not to go back to Herod. So they returned home to their countries in the East by a different way. When the Wise Men had gone, an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for Jesus to kill him. When Herod realized that he had been tricked by the Wise Men, he was furious and he gave orders to kill all the boys aged two or younger in Bethlehem and the surrounding area. This was to try and kill the new King, as his plan to find the location of the new king from the Wise Men had failed. After Herod had died, Joseph had another dream in which an angel appeared to him. So instead they went to Galilee, and lived in their old town of Nazareth.

**Chapter 3 : Saints: The Story of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Latter Days - ensign**

*The history of Christianity concerns the Christian religion, Christendom, and the Church with its various denominations, from the 1st century to the present. Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Christianity spread to all of Europe in the Middle Ages.*

Galerius , who had previously been one of the leading figures in persecution, in issued an edict which ended the persecution. Victory allowed him to claim the emperorship in the West. How much Christianity Constantine adopted at this point is difficult to discern. Roman coins minted up to eight years later still bore the images of Roman gods. Constantine supported the Church financially, built various basilicas, granted privileges e. It had overtly Christian architecture, contained churches within the city walls, and had no pagan temples. Constantine also played an active role in the leadership of the Church. In , he acted as a judge in a North African dispute concerning the Donatist controversy. More significantly, in he summoned the Council of Nicaea , the first Ecumenical Council. Constantine thus established a precedent for the emperor as responsible to God for the spiritual health of their subjects, and thus with a duty to maintain orthodoxy. The emperor was to enforce doctrine, root out heresy, and uphold ecclesiastical unity. Some, such as John Chrysostom and Athanasius , suffered exile, persecution, or martyrdom from Arian Byzantine Emperors. Germanic Christianity A popular doctrine of the 4th century was Arianism , the denial of the divinity of Christ, as propounded by Arius. Though this doctrine was condemned as heresy and eventually eliminated by the Roman Church it remained popular underground for some time. In the late 4th century Ulfilas , a Roman bishop and an Arian, was appointed as the first bishop to the Goths , the Germanic peoples in much of Europe at the borders of and within the Empire. Ulfilas spread Arian Christianity among the Goths firmly establishing the faith among many of the Germanic tribes, thus helping to keep them culturally distinct. They were mostly concerned with Christological disputes. Christianity as Roman state religion [ edit ] An Eastern Roman mosaic showing a basilica with towers, mounted with Christian crosses , 5th century AD, Louvre On 27 February , with the Edict of Thessalonica put forth under Theodosius I , the Roman Empire officially adopted Trinitarian Christianity as its state religion. After its establishment, the Church adopted the same organisational boundaries as the Empire: The bishops, who were located in major urban centres as per pre-legalisation tradition, thus oversaw each diocese. Among the sees, five came to hold special eminence: Rome , Constantinople , Jerusalem , Antioch , and Alexandria. The prestige of most of these sees depended in part on their apostolic founders, from whom the bishops were therefore the spiritual successors. Though the bishop of Rome was still held to be the First among equals , Constantinople was second in precedence as the new capital of the empire. Theodosius I decreed that others not believing in the preserved "faithful tradition", such as the Trinity, were to be considered to be practitioners of illegal heresy , [49] and in , this resulted in the first case of capital punishment of a heretic, namely Priscillian. A particular consequence of this perspective was that Mary could not be properly called the mother of God, but could only be considered the mother of Christ. The most widely known proponent of this viewpoint was the Patriarch of Constantinople Nestorius. Since referring to Mary as the mother of God had become popular in many parts of the Church this became a divisive issue. Many churches who followed the Nestorian viewpoint broke away from the Roman Church, causing a major schism. The Nestorian churches were persecuted and many followers fled to the Sasanian Empire where they were accepted. The Sasanian Persian Empire had many Christian converts early in its history tied closely to the Syriac branch of Christianity. The Empire was officially Zoroastrian and maintained a strict adherence to this faith in part to distinguish itself from the religion of the Roman Empire originally the pagan Roman religion and then Christianity. Christianity became tolerated in the Sasanian Empire and as the Roman Empire increasingly exiled heretics during the 4th and 6th centuries, the Sasanian Christian community grew rapidly. This church evolved into what is today known as the Church of the East. Oriental Orthodoxy In the Council of Chalcedon was held to further clarify the Christological issues surrounding Nestorianism. The resulting schism created a communion of churches, including the Armenian, Syrian, and Egyptian churches. Christian monasticism Monasticism is a form of asceticism whereby one renounces worldly pursuits and goes off alone

as a hermit or joins a tightly organized community. It began early in the Church as a family of similar traditions, modelled upon Scriptural examples and ideals, and with roots in certain strands of Judaism. John the Baptist is seen as an archetypical monk, and monasticism was also inspired by the organisation of the Apostolic community as recorded in Acts 2. Eremetic monks, or hermits, live in solitude, whereas cenobitics live in communities, generally in a monastery, under a rule or code of practice and are governed by an abbot. Originally, all Christian monks were hermits, following the example of Anthony the Great. However, the need for some form of organised spiritual guidance led Pachomius in to organise his many followers in what was to become the first monastery. Soon, similar institutions were established throughout the Egyptian desert as well as the rest of the eastern half of the Roman Empire. Women were especially attracted to the movement.

## Chapter 4 : BBC - Religions - Christianity: Christmas

*Against this backdrop, the history of Protestantism in China includes the story of Christians who were in many ways ahead of the curve in advocating for women's equality in the church and society.*

Throughout the centuries royalty have been at the center of many conflicts over religion, land, and power. There have been some bloodthirsty royals whose exploits have had an impact on society today – just think of Henry VIII with his penchant for killing off wives, and who brought about the English Reformation. However, fortunately, there have been some remarkable royals who managed to bring peace to their nations, some of whom leaned on their Christian faith to guide them during their reign. Theirs is a beautiful story; one of devotion to their people, to each other, and to God. Like most of us, Baudouin and Fabiola experienced many hardships and much joy in their lives, while meeting many people along the way, all of which was instrumental in shaping their personalities, their values and their love. Their shared faith and their attention to others, was, it seems, their crowning glory, and the most beautiful virtue of their union. Two difficult childhoods Both of the royals had difficult childhoods. He grew up during the Second World War, during which his family experienced bombardments, Nazi deportation, accusations of treason, and exile. To add to this stress, Baudouin, while still a young adolescent, had to contend with the arrival of a new stepmother when his father, Leopold III, remarried. At just 21, despite his new status, he was sad and alone. Not only was he affected by his past; he was under the glaring eye of the press, which was eager to publish things like an exclusive on a non-existing upcoming royal wedding – or worse still, to shamelessly accuse him of sordid adventures. She was the sixth of seven children and lived in a sumptuous palace in Madrid, where the King of Spain loved to come and play bridge with her parents and admire their newly acquired masterpieces, such as paintings by Watteau and Fragonard, among others. The young Fabiola had an artistic, literary and musical education, but it was also essentially Christian, geared toward prayer and helping others. Every evening the parents, children, and servants gathered together in prayer, until the day when the Spanish Popular Front was formed and the ensuing civil war forced the whole family into exile in Switzerland. An adolescent Fabiola was able to continue her studies, and despite the adversity, was able to share her joie de vivre with all those around her. Joys and hardships You might wonder how a king living in Brussels and a young woman so attached to her native city of Madrid could meet up under such unusual conditions and get married. The young woman was none other than Fabiola, who soon was recognized as the ideal match: They were devoted to the service of others, especially the most unfortunate, such as those who had been affected by national disasters floods, plane accidents, etc. They dreamed of having a large family. Fabiola was pregnant five times, and lost all her children after many months of pregnancy. Through faith, they accepted this ordeal, moving forward in their own way, despite the hostility of the extreme-left groups who gathered at their home to organize demonstrations to demand the resignation of the couple without an heir apparent. Their love for each other and the importance they placed on communication between each other, allowed them to resist the pressures they cruelly felt. In , the adoption of the law on the legalization of abortion was a huge suffering for them. They had experienced the yearning to give life, and the death of their children still in the womb. Baudouin used his position to try and prevent the law from being passed by refusing to sign the bill. Together, the royal couple showed tremendous courage, previously unheard of in Belgian history – and in the whole world. Speaking about her experience with child loss, the queen graciously shared in You learn something from that experience. I had problems with all my pregnancies, but you know, in the end I think life is beautiful. Every day of their lives, they prayed together, and shared the Eucharist together – even in countries where the organizers of their official visits in the USSR for example found it particularly hard to find a Mass. This daily Eucharist kept them going throughout their whole life together. The death of a king In , Baudouin, physically weakened by serious open-heart surgery a few years earlier, was close to death. Fabiola supported him with her smile, her tenderness, her projects and her confidence in life. More than ever, during this time, the two of them were close and unified in prayer. Baudouin suddenly died of a heart attack during a heatwave on July 31, , in their holiday home by the sea in Motril, Andalusia. This act revealed to the wide public the foundations of

their spiritual life as a couple and their relationships with others. A contagious testimony Their strong beliefs and sense of duty, during such a tumultuous time in history, gave them the strength to lead their country in a period where traditional values were giving way to existential changes.

Chapter 5 : Jesus - Wikipedia

*A brief look into the origins and development of Christianity.*

Modernized and introduced by Stephen Tomkins. Edited and prepared for the web by Dan Graves. Introduction Throughout its first three centuries, the church went through unimaginable persecution from the Roman Empire, though all the time growing and spreading. So imagine what an extraordinary turn of events it was when the Roman Emperor himself became a Christian. This account is from a biography written by Eusebius, the Bishop of Caesarea in Palestine. He was a great historian, the first to make a significant contribution to church history, and his major work was *The History of the Church* which took him 25 years to prepare. He also knew Constantine personally, so in many ways it is a thoroughly reliable account. But he was obviously a devoted fan of Constantine, both personally and politically, which should caution us to watch for bias in his account. Constantine chooses Christianity Because of the wicked magical enchantments so diligently practiced by the tyrant [Maxentius, who was in control of Rome], Constantine was convinced that he needed more powerful aid than his military forces could give him, so he sought the help of God. He believed arms and soldiery less important than the help of the power of the invincible and unshakeable God. So he considered which god he could rely on for protection and help. It occurred to him that, of the many emperors who had preceded him, those who had put their hope in a multitude of gods and served them with sacrifices and offerings had been deceived by flattering predictions and oracles promising prosperity and come to a bad end, without one of their gods warning them of the impending wrath of heaven. On the other hand, the one who alone had condemned their error, honoring the one Supreme God throughout his whole life [i. Reflecting on this, he decided it would be great folly to join in the idle worship of those who were no gods, and to err from the truth after such convincing evidence. And while he was thus praying with fervent entreaty, a most extraordinary sign appeared to him from heaven – something which it might have been hard to believe had the story been told by any other person. But since the victorious emperor himself long afterwards declared it to the writer of this history, when he was honored with his acquaintance and society, and confirmed his statement by an oath, who could hesitate to believe it, especially since other testimonies have established its truth? In his sleep, the Christ of God appeared to him with the same sign which he had seen in the heavens, and commanded him to make a likeness of that sign which he had seen in the heavens, and to use it as a safeguard in all engagements with his enemies. Making the Standard of the Cross At the break of day he rose and told his friends about the marvel. Then he called together the workers in gold and precious stones, sat in the midst of them, and described to them the sign he had seen, telling them to represent it in gold and precious stones. And this representation I myself have had an opportunity of seeing. What the Standard looked like It was made in the following manner. A long spear overlaid with gold with a transverse bar laid over it formed the figure of the cross. From the cross-bar of the spear was suspended a cloth, a royal piece, covered with a profuse embroidery of most brilliant precious stones; and being richly interlaced with gold it presented an indescribable beauty to the beholder. This banner was square, and the upright staff, whose lower section was of great length, bore a golden half-length portrait of the pious emperor and his children on its upper part, beneath the trophy of the cross, and immediately above the embroidered banner. The emperor constantly made use of this sign of salvation as a safeguard against every adverse and hostile power, and commanded that others similar to it should be carried at the head of all his armies. Constantine is taught by the church These things were done shortly afterwards. But at the time when he was struck with amazement at the extraordinary vision, and resolving to worship no other God than him who had appeared to him, he sent for those who were acquainted with the mysteries of his doctrines, and enquired who that God was, and what the vision meant. They affirmed that he was God, the only begotten Son of the one and only God: They told him about how he came to be born, and explained to him the true account of his incarnation. Constantine was in awe of the divine manifestation he had seen. Comparing the heavenly vision with the interpretation he was given, he found his judgment confirmed. Believing this knowledge had been given to him by God, he decided to devote himself from then on to the reading of the inspired writings. Moreover, he made the priests of God his

advisers, and thought it his duty to honor the God who had appeared to him with all devotion. Then, being strengthened by this hope in God, he went quickly on to fight the fire of tyranny. He showered them with every possible honor, treating them favorably as people who were consecrated to the service of his God. He let them join him at table, even though they were dressed so plainly, because he did not look at the outer man, but saw the God within him. They accompanied him on his travels, believing that the God they served would help him as a result. He gave vast amounts of money from his own personal treasury to the churches of God, for the enlarging and heightening of their sacred buildings and for decorating the sanctuaries of the church. Giving to the Poor. He gave a great deal of money largely to those who were in need, even to non-Christians, who had no claim on him. Even the miserable, idle beggars in the forum he provided with money, food and good clothes. To those who had fallen from earlier prosperity he was even more generous. When churches in different regions had a disagreement, he, like some bishop-of-bishops constituted by God, called his ministers to a conference. He was not above sitting with them in their meeting, and even took part in their discussions, taking charge of everything that concerned the peace of God. He took his seat in the midst of them as one individual amongst many, dismissing his bodyguards and soldiers because he was protected by the fear of God and surrounded by the guardianship of his faithful friends. Those whom he knew to be calm, conciliatory and sound in judgment received his highest approval, because he delighted in harmony and agreement, and did not look kindly on the unyielding and dogmatic.

## Chapter 6 : The Story of the Christmas Tree- symbol of Christianity, the "Tree of Christ"™

*The persecution of Christians is increasing year over year. Across the globe, more than million believers face intimidation, prison—even death—for their faith in Jesus Christ. That's one in twelve Christians worldwide. While religious persecution is spread over many countries, there are.*

What is the history of Christianity? The history of Christianity is really the history of Western civilization. Christianity has had an all-pervasive influence on society at large—art, language, politics, law, family life, calendar dates, music, and the very way we think have all been colored by Christian influence for nearly two millennia. The story of the church, therefore, is an important one to know. Jesus had promised that He would build His church Matthew The initial converts to Christianity were Jews or proselytes to Judaism, and the church was centered in Jerusalem. Because of this, Christianity was seen at first as a Jewish sect, akin to the Pharisees, the Sadducees, or the Essenes. However, what the apostles preached was radically different from what other Jewish groups were teaching. It is quite proper to say that Christianity has its roots in Judaism. The Old Testament laid the groundwork for the New, and it is impossible to fully understand Christianity without a working knowledge of the Old Testament see the books of Matthew and Hebrews. The New Testament, then, is all about the coming of Messiah and His work to save us from sin. In His life, Jesus fulfilled over specific prophecies, proving that He was the One the Old Testament had anticipated. The evangelist Philip preached to the Samaritans Acts 8: The apostle Paul the former persecutor of the church spread the gospel all over the Greco-Roman world, reaching as far as Rome itself Acts For the next years, Christians were persecuted by Rome—sometimes at random, sometimes by government edict. In the 2nd and 3rd centuries, the church leadership became more and more hierarchical as numbers increased. Several heresies were exposed and refuted during this time, and the New Testament canon was agreed upon. Persecution continued to intensify. About 70 years later, during the reign of Theodosius, Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire. Bishops were given places of honor in the government, and by A. After Constantine, then, Christians were no longer persecuted. Such forced conversions led to many people entering the church without a true change of heart. The pagans brought with them their idols and the practices they were accustomed to, and the church changed; icons, elaborate architecture, pilgrimages, and the veneration of saints were added to the simplicity of early church worship. About this same time, some Christians retreated from Rome, choosing to live in isolation as monks, and infant baptism was introduced as a means of washing away original sin. As the Roman Empire grew weaker, the church became more powerful, and many disagreements broke out between the churches in the West and those in the East. The Western Latin church, based in Rome, claimed apostolic authority over all other churches. This did not sit well with the Eastern Greek church, based in Constantinople. History of Christianity - The Middle Ages During the Middle Ages in Europe, the Roman Catholic Church continued to hold power, with the popes claiming authority over all levels of life and living as kings. Corruption and greed in the church leadership was commonplace. From to the popes endorsed a series of bloody and expensive crusades in an effort to repel Muslim advances and liberate Jerusalem. History of Christianity - The Reformation Through the years, several individuals had tried to call attention to the theological, political, and human rights abuses of the Roman Church. All had been silenced in one way or another. But in , a German monk named Martin Luther took a stand against the church, and everyone heard. Although Catholicism made a comeback in Europe, and a series of wars between Protestants and Catholics ensued, the Reformation had successfully dismantled the power of the Roman Catholic Church and helped open the door to the modern age. History of Christianity - The Age of Missions From to , the church showed an unprecedented interest in missionary work. Colonization had opened eyes to the need for missions, and industrialization had provided people with the financial ability to fund the missionaries. Missionaries went around the world preaching the gospel, and churches were established throughout the world. The evangelical church is strongly independent and rooted firmly in Reformed theology. The church has also seen the rise of Pentecostalism, the charismatic movement, ecumenicalism, and various cults. Each of us is responsible to know what the Scripture says and to live by it. When the church forgets what the Bible teaches and ignores

what Jesus taught, chaos reigns. There are many churches today, but only one gospel. May we be careful to preserve that faith and pass it on without alteration, and the Lord will continue to fulfill His promise to build His church.

Chapter 7 : Constantine's vision | Christian History Institute

*The history of Christianity is the history of the Christian religion and the Christian church, from Jesus and his apostles to our times. Christianity is the monotheistic religion that is based on the birth, life, death, resurrection and teaching of Jesus Christ.*

The Franciscans who have served in the region say people should go. And the gospel was proclaimed. People came to believe. But not in the written part of revelation – if the Word became flesh, it became flesh in a place. Where is that place? The monastery itself hosts replicas of holy sites and holds various events to help link visitors to the land where Jesus Christ walked. Added to these places are the living legacy of the Jewish people. The Wailing Wall, located at the base of the site of the Temple of King David, gathers thousands of Jews who pray and celebrate at the start of every Sabbath. Muslims too consider Jerusalem a holy site, and the heights Temple Mount, once the site of the Temple, now hosts both the al-Aqsa Mosque and the golden, gleaming Dome of the Rock shrine. People decide to go to confession for the first time in decades because of a visit to the Holy Sepulchre. Francis of Assisi was so eager to go and see where Jesus was born, where he was crucified, and where he rose again. The Franciscan priest, an American who grew up in a military family, has served in the Holy Land for more than 20 years. Among his current roles is guardian of the Flagellation Monastery in Jerusalem. There is a conflict going on and there are all kinds of sharp rivalries, even between Christians themselves. Its Palestinian population, largely resident in the West Bank and the Gaza strip, is about 18 percent Muslim and two percent Christian, with both Christians and Muslims tending to identify as Palestinian Arab. The Christian population has largely declined due to emigration. Owusu said there is more to the region than many visitors expect. Not occasional crisis, but the day-to-day life that really goes on. That is what people would really like to know. The people mostly depend on pilgrimages and they also see that, irrespective of whatever situation the American comes from, there is another brother on the other side of the world that may bring them hope. Pilgrim groups hit a record high in January, with groups bringing 26, people, the Custody of the Holy Land-sponsored Christian Information Center said in February. In January only groups visited and a year prior only did. Israeli government statistics indicate over half of tourists were Christian and one-quarter were coming on pilgrimage, with over 40 percent having previously visited Israel. While travel costs and can be a barrier for a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Owusu said it is possible with some financial preparation. Those with a desire to go could afford it by saving about a thousand dollars a year for several years, he estimated. Those who want to go on a pilgrimage should contact the Franciscans who work there, he suggested. The Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in America has information on pilgrimages at the website [holylandpilgrimages.com](http://holylandpilgrimages.com).

## Chapter 8 : What is the history of Christianity?

*Christian history begins with the life and death of Jesus Christ and continues with the formation of the early Christian church, Emperor Constantine's Holy Roman Empire and the great schism into.*

The very earliest reports are in these texts: There are reasons to suppose that they were written within a few years of the crucifixion of Jesus and came from the Jerusalem Church. Christianity thought the Jewish scriptures to be sacred and used mostly the Septuagint edition and translation as the Old Testament , and added other texts as the New Testament. Christians professed Jesus to be the God of Israel , having taken human form, and considered Jesus to be the Messiah Christ who had been prophesied about in the Old Testament and so was expected by the people of Israel. Christianity continued many Judaic practices: Post-Apostolic Church[ change change source ] The time when most of the apostles had died and their jobs as leaders of the Christian communities in the cities had been taken over by bishops , is called post-apostolic period. It includes the time of persecutions until Christian worship was legalized under Constantine the Great. The term was used by Ignatius of Antioch c. Persecutions[ change change source ] Early Christians were subject to various persecutions. This meant even death. Early martyrs included Stephen Acts 7: Persecutions in larger scale by the authorities of the Roman Empire began with the year 64, when the Emperor Nero blamed them for the great Fire of Rome as the Roman historian Tacitus reported. Several of the New Testament writings mention persecutions and very difficult times. For years there were times when Christians suffered from persecutions, because they refused to worship the Roman emperor. That was seen as treason and punished by execution. But the Christian religion continued to spread throughout the Mediterranean region. In the late fourth century they became the dominant religious force of the Roman Empire. Christianity legalized[ change change source ] Galerius issued an edict permitting the practice of the Christian religion under his rule in April of Constantine became the first Christian emperor. By , under the reign of Theodosius I , Christianity had become the state religion of Rome. The Bishop of Rome claimed to be the highest amongst all others and chose the title pope. During this era, there were several Ecumenical Councils. These were mostly concerned with Christological disputes. The two Councils of Niceaea , condemned Arianism and produced the Nicene Creed to define the faith. Perhaps the most important council was the Council of Chalcedon that affirmed that Christ had two natures, fully God and fully man, at the same time. That meant that Monophysitism was condemned. With the Muslim invasions of the seventh century, the Western Latin and Eastern Greek areas of Christianity began to take on distinctive shapes, and the Bishops of Rome were more interested in barbarian kings than in the Byzantine Emperors. Emperor Justinian I tried to restore imperial dominion in Italy against the gothic aristocracy. The following campaigns were more or less successful, and the Imperial Exarchate was established in Ravenna for Italy, but imperial influence was often limited. Then came the invasion of the Lombards , and Rome had to take care of itself. Thus the popes, out of necessity, found themselves feeding the city with grain from papal estates, negotiating treaties, paying protection money to Lombard warlords, and, failing that, hiring soldiers to defend the city. Investiture Controversy[ change change source ] The Investiture Controversy, also known as the lay investiture controversy, was the most important conflict between secular and religious powers in medieval Europe. The question was who would control appointments of bishops investiture. The end of lay investiture meant an important loss of royal power, for the benefit Church reform, as the pope intended, and for ambitious noblemen as well. Bishops collected revenues from estates attached to their bishopric. Noblemen who held lands fiefdoms hereditarily passed those lands on within their family. However, a king had more control of lands under the domain of his bishops. Kings would give bishoprics to powerful friends. If a king left a bishopric vacant, he got the money until a bishop was appointed, when he was supposed to repay the earnings. The Church wanted to end this lay investiture because of the vacant sees simony and other problems. Pope Gregory VII issued the Dictatus Papae , which said only the pope make or break bishops, or move them to other sees. With excommunication and a revolt by his dukes, Henry apologized and was forgiven see Walk to Canossa , though the revolt and conflict of investiture continued. Anselm , Archbishop of Canterbury. The English dispute was resolved by a deal in , where the king gave up

making bishops but did require an oath of fealty. The later Concordat of Worms Pactum Calixtinum resolved the Imperial investiture controversy with a similar compromise. Crusades[ change change source ] The Crusades were a military conflicts conducted by Christian knights for the defense of Christians and for the expansion of Christian domains. Generally, the crusades refer to the campaigns in the Holy Land against Muslim forces sponsored by the Papacy. There were other crusades against Islamic forces in southern Spain, southern Italy, and Sicily, as well as the campaigns of Teutonic knights against pagan strongholds in Eastern Europe, and to a much lesser extent crusades against Catharism or other Christian heresies. The Holy Land had been part of the Roman Empire, and thus Byzantine Empire, until the Islamic conquests of the seventh and eighth centuries. Thereafter, Christians had generally been permitted to visit the sacred places in the Holy Land until , when the Seljuk Turks closed Christian pilgrimages and assailed the Byzantines, defeating them at the Battle of Manzikert. Instead of sending money, Urban II called upon the knights of Christendom in a speech made at the Council of Clermont on 27 November , combining the idea of pilgrimage to the Holy Land with that of waging a holy war against infidels. Western Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy. It was the first major division since certain groups in the East rejected the decrees of the Council of Chalcedon see Oriental Orthodoxy , and was far more significant. Though normally dated to , the East-West Schism was the result of an long time of disagreement between Latin and Greek Christendom over papal primacy and certain doctrinal matters like the filioque. Bad feelings were intensified by cultural and linguistic differences. A few days later, he excommunicated the legates. Attempts at reconciliation were made in in Lyon and in in Basel but in each case the eastern hierarchs who agreed to the unions were repudiated by the Orthodox as a whole. However, reconciliation was achieved between the West and what are now called the " Eastern Rite Catholic Churches ". More recently, in the mutual excommunications were rescinded by the Pope and the Patriarch of Constantinople, though schism remains. Though both acknowledge the primacy of the Bishop of Rome, Eastern Orthodoxy understands this as a primacy of honor with limited or no ecclesiastical authority in other dioceses. Western Schism[ change change source ] The Western Schism, or Papal Schism, was a prolonged period of crisis in Latin Christendom from to , when there were two or more claimants to the See of Rome and thus it was difficult to discern who the true Pope was. The conflict was political, rather than doctrinal, in nature. On the one hand, it was a time of great artistic patronage and architectural magnificence, where the Church patroned such artists as Michelangelo , Brunelleschi , Bramante , Raphael , Fra Angelico , Donatello , and da Vinci. On the other hand, wealthy Italian families often secured episcopal offices, including the papacy, for their own members, some of whom were known for immorality, such as Alexander VI and Sixtus IV. Protestant Reformation â€” [ change change source ] In the early 16th century, movements were begun by two theologians, Martin Luther and Ulrich Zwingli , that aimed to reform the Church; these reformers are distinguished from previous ones in that they considered the root of corruptions to be doctrinal rather than simply a matter of moral weakness or lack of ecclesiastical discipline and thus they aimed to change contemporary doctrines to accord with what they perceived to be the "true gospel". The term "Protestant", however, was not originally used by these leaders; instead, they called themselves "evangelical", emphasizing the "return to the true gospel Greek: Early protest was against corruptions such as simony , episcopal vacancies, and the sale of indulgences. The Protestant position, however, would come to incorporate doctrinal changes such as sola scriptura and sola fide. The three most important traditions to emerge directly from the Protestant Reformation were the Lutheran , Reformed Calvinist , Presbyterian , etc. The Protestant Reformation may be divided into two distinct but basically simultaneous movements, the Magisterial Reformation and the Radical Reformation. The Magisterial Reformation involved the alliance of certain theological teachers Latin: Radical Reformers, besides forming communities outside state sanction, often employed more extreme doctrinal change, such as the rejection of tenants of the Councils of Nicaea and Chalcedon. Often the division between magisterial and radical reformers was as or more violent than the general Catholic and Protestant hostilities. The Protestant Reformation spread almost entirely within the confines of Northern Europe, but did not take hold in certain northern areas such as Ireland and parts of Germany. By far the magisterial reformers were more successful and their changes more widespread than the radical reformers. The Catholic response to the Protestant Reformation is known as the Counter Reformation,

or Catholic Reformation, which resulted in a reassertion of traditional doctrines and the emergence of new religious orders aimed at both moral reform and new missionary activity. Protestant expansion outside of Europe occurred on a smaller scale through colonization of North America and areas of Africa.

### Chapter 9 : The Passion of the Christ () - IMDb

*Mary Fairchild is a full-time Christian minister, writer, and editor of two Christian anthologies, including Stories of Cavalry. Updated September 11, The opening chapter of the Bible begins with these words, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."*

Christmas is marked on the 25 December 7 January for Orthodox Christians. The Gospels of Matthew and Luke give different accounts. It is from them that the nativity story is pieced together. Both accounts tell us that Jesus was born to a woman called Mary who was engaged to Joseph, a carpenter. The Gospels state that Mary was a virgin when she became pregnant. Luke tells how shepherds were led to Bethlehem by an angel. Joseph had been ordered to take part in a census in his home town of Bethlehem. All Jewish people had to be counted so the Roman Emperor could determine how much money to collect from them in tax. Those who had moved away from their family homes, like Joseph, had to return to have their names entered in the Roman records. Joseph and Mary set off on the long, arduous mile journey from Nazareth along the valley of the River Jordan, past Jerusalem to Bethlehem. Mary travelled on a donkey to conserve her energy for the birth. But when they arrived in Bethlehem the local inn was already full with people returning for the census. The innkeeper let them stay in the rock cave below his house which was used as a stable for his animals. It was here, next to the noise and filth of the animals, that Mary gave birth to her son and laid him in a manger. This was an attempt to Christianise the Pagan celebrations that already took place at this time of year. By , 25th December had become a civil holiday and by the twelve days from 25th December to the Epiphany were public holidays. Christmas is not only a Christian festival. The celebration has roots in the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah, the festivals of the ancient Greeks, the beliefs of the Druids and the folk customs of Europe. Midwinter celebrations Christmas comes just after the middle of winter. The sun is strengthening and the days are beginning to grow longer. For people throughout history this has been a time of feasting and celebration. Ancient people were hunters and spent most of their time outdoors. The seasons and weather played a very important part in their lives and because of this they had a great reverence for, and even worshipped, the sun. The Norsemen of Northern Europe saw the sun as a wheel that changed the seasons. It was from the word for this wheel, houl, that the word yule another name for Christmas is thought to have come. At Winter Solstice the Norsemen lit bonfires, told stories and drank sweet ale. The Romans also held a festival to mark the Winter Solstice. Saturnalia from the God Saturn ran for seven days from 17th December. It was a time when the ordinary rules were turned upside down. Men dressed as women and masters dressed as servants. The festival also involved processions, decorating houses with greenery, lighting candles and giving presents. Its religious significance pre-dates Christianity. It was previously associated with the Sun God and was important in Pagan customs. Some ancient religions used holly for protection. They decorated doors and windows with it in the belief it would ward off evil spirits. Before Christianity came to the British Isles the Winter Solstice was held on the shortest day of the year 21st December. The Druids Celtic priests would cut the mistletoe that grew on the oak tree and give it as a blessing. Oaks were seen as sacred and the winter fruit of the mistletoe was a symbol of life in the dark winter months. The Jewish midwinter festival of Hanukkah marks an important part of Jewish history. It is eight days long and on each day a candle is lit. It is a time of remembrance, celebration of light, a time to give gifts and have fun. Historical celebration Christmas carols have existed since medieval times. The Church was already finding it hard to bury the Pagan remnants of the midwinter festival. Medieval During the medieval period c. It was a predominantly secular festival but contained some religious elements. Even up until the s the Epiphany was at least as big a celebration as Christmas day. Many Pagan traditions had been brought to Britain by the invading Roman soldiers. These included covering houses in greenery and bawdy partying that had its roots in the unruly festival of Saturnalia. The Church attempted to curb Pagan practices and popular customs were given Christian meaning. Carols that had started as Pagan songs for celebrations such as midsummer and harvest were taken up by the Church. By the late medieval period the singing of Christmas carols had become a tradition. But when he presented it, he became ashamed of his gift and started to cry. Miraculously the baby Jesus reached out and touched the

crowns. Ban on Christmas From the middle of the 17th century until the early 18th century the Christian Puritans suppressed Christmas celebrations in Europe and America. The Puritan movement began during the reign of Queen Elizabeth in England. They believed in strict moral codes, plenty of prayer and close following of New Testament scripture. In all Christmas activities were banned in England. This included decorating houses with evergreens and eating mince pies. One way that the Christmas story has been maintained is through the crib, a model of the manger that Jesus was born in. In many parts of Europe in the 18th century crib making was an important craft form. This was not the case in England until much later, suggesting that British Christmases were less Christian than those in other parts of Europe. The tradition of Nativity plays began in churches where they were used to illustrate the Christmas story as told in the Bible. Victorian Christmas After a lull in Christmas celebrations the festival returned with a bang in the Victorian Era. The Victorian Christmas was based on nostalgia for Christmases past. This group had money to spend and made Christmas a special time for the family. Although the Victorians attempted to revive the Christmas of medieval Britain, many of the new traditions were Anglo-American inventions. From the 1840s, carol singing was revived by ministers, particularly in America, who incorporated them into Christmas celebrations in the Church. Christmas cards were first sent by the British but the Americans, many of whom were on the move and away from their families, picked up the practice because of a cheap postal service and because it was a good way of keeping in contact with people at home. Christmas trees were a German tradition, brought to Britain and popularised by the royal family. Prince Albert first introduced the Christmas tree into the royal household in Britain in 1840. He was given a tree as a gift by the Queen of Norway which was displayed in Trafalgar Square.