

What Was It Like to Be a Christian in Rome?

By studying the Roman Historians one can better understand what the early Christians went through, therefore developing a better understanding of what challenges one may encounter, and how to get through these challenges. In this paper, one will read about how the Romans treated the early Christians, and what Rome thought about it. After that, one will dive into what Christians today can learn from this and how one could apply it, by looking at the Roman Historians and comparing its timeline to that of the Bibles. And finally, one will compare and contrast the persecuted church of Ancient Rome and that of the Chinese Church persecution nowadays.

How did the Romans Act towards Christians? During the Early Roman Empire, Christianity was just starting and had a hard time not only because they killed Jesus for calling himself the son of God, but they also killed, tortured, and enslaved followers of Christ. If one was suspected of being a follower of Christ, they were punished without trial, some were killed by fire, others by the cross, while others were stoned to death. These are only a few of the ways that Early Christians were killed and tortured. It was very hard for Christians to spread the word without being put under suspicion or captured and killed. Some people like Paul were not killed right away but rather imprisoned for long periods of time.

Were there good things for the Early Christians? Not everything was a disadvantage and discouraging for Christians that lived during the Roman Empire. Since the Roman empire was large and extensive with roads everywhere, it made it easy for Christians to travel from city to

city. And as the Roman Empire spread, it also made a common language everywhere, which allowed Christians to spread the gospel throughout the empire more easily. But not everyone in the Roman Empire hated Christians. There were some non Christian Romans that helped them and hid them. One example in the Roman Histories is that of Poppea in *The Annals of Imperial Rome*, Because she had a guilty conscience, she liked to talk with religious people, which eventually led to her hiding Christians and other religious groups.

What can a Christian learn from this? Nowadays, Christians all over the world have a hard time remembering that everything they have is a gift. Most people take things for granted or just do not think anything of it. The Early Christians were always in danger of being killed, tortured, or imprisoned, and saw everything as a gift from God. Christians can take the experience written in these books from the Pagan perspective as a blessing. One can take it and think differently about life or just take time to appreciate life and everything one may have.

How can one apply this? There are people today that are being persecuted just like the Early Christians, and there is something they can learn from these books too. They can read it and be encouraged that they are not the only people in the world to suffer like this. Or learn from them and what they did to survive and live spreading the gospel with others. This, along with the Bible, can create a clear picture of what the Early Christians went through, and by taking that one can apply it, hopefully gaining a better or more robust understanding.

What was the Roman Christian persecution like? Most Romans hated the Early Christians because they denied their gods and said there was only one God, their God. For this, the Romans captured, killed, tortured, and imprisoned Christians constantly. They were punished without trial and hunted everywhere. Some of the first martyrs lived and died at this time, like all the babies

Herod killed, or Steven who was stoned, or James killed by Herod's sword, or Peter crucified, and many more. They died for their faith, not rejecting it for their lives.

What is Church persecution like today? It is not all good days and freedom nowadays either. For instance, in China, churches are closed and attacked all the time, and their participants imprisoned or even killed. Some are even enslaved and forced to work in factories or work camps. This is nowhere near as bad as Rome, but these Christians could read both these histories and the Bible to find peace and assurance that better days are coming. And should stay strong in their faith because once they pass through the gate of Heaven, there will be no more suffering or pain, no more need for tears or fear.

Christians are humans, and humans are flawed. Everyone makes mistakes or forgets things, and can always learn more. When one studies the Roman Histories, they can better understand the world around a lot of the New Testament, and the other world events were happening at the same time, along with learning what Christians had to go through from a pagan's perspective. The more you learn and understand, the better you can help others to understand and learn as well. When one studies the Roman Historians one can better understand what the early Christians went through, therefore developing a better understanding of what challenges one may encounter, and how to get through these challenges like those in countries that persecute the church.

Bibliography

OWC *The Roman Historians*, Moscow Idaho, Roman Roads Press, 2021.