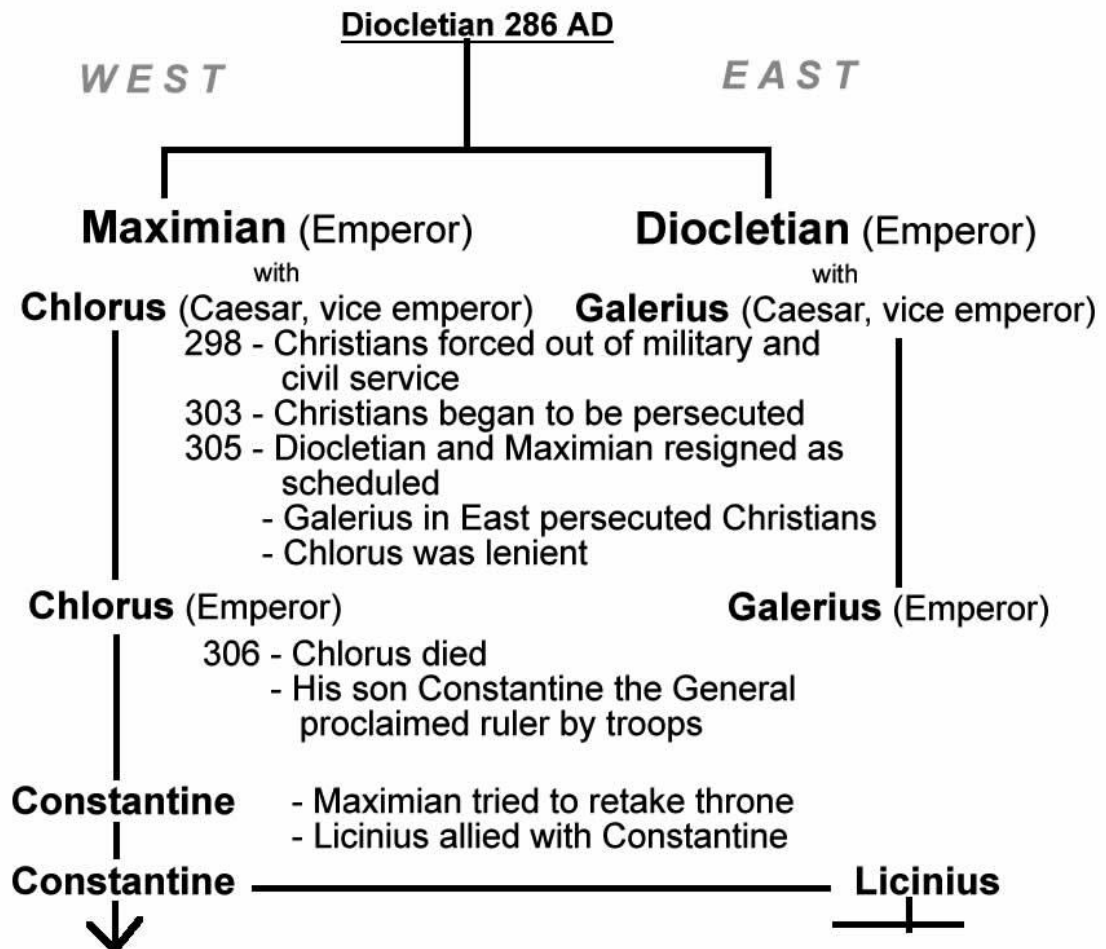


303-311 The Great Persecution

- Diocletian (284-313) became emperor as a strong military leader at the end of a century of political chaos.
- In 285 he ended the diarchy of the principate created by Caesar Augustus in 27 BC, in which the senate and the emperor had shared power. He thought only a strong monarchy could save the empire. There was no room for democracy.
- Out of this arose the greatest of the Christian persecutions.
- It began with the first edicts of persecution in March of 303. It ordered:
 - The cessation of Christian meetings
 - The destruction of the churches
 - The deposition of church officers
 - The imprisonment of those who persist in their testimony of Christ
 - The destruction of the Scriptures by fire
- A later edict ordered accused Christians to sacrifice to the pagan gods or die.
- Eusebius wrote that prisons became so crowded with Christians that there was no room for criminals.
- Christians were punished with loss of property, exile, imprisonment, or execution by sword or wild beasts. Some were sent to labor camps and worked to death in the mines
- This persecution included the burning of Scriptures which forced the church to decide which books were really Scripture and canonical. Who wants to risk death for a book that was not even inspired?



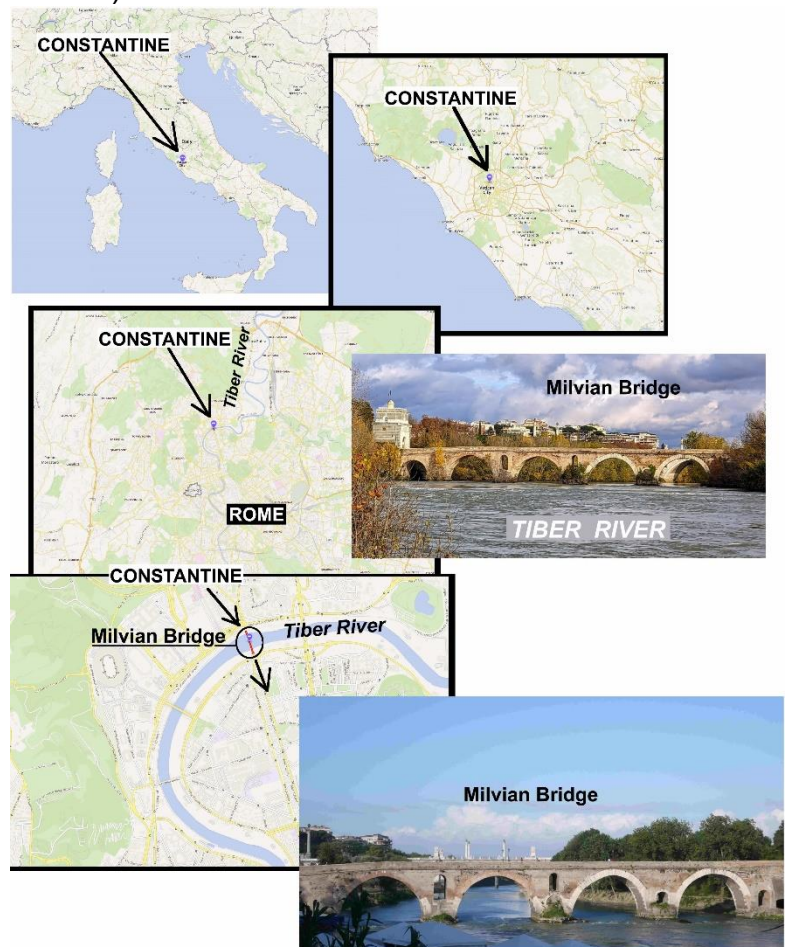
312 Constantine

- While in Britain in 306 Constantine was declared emperor of the western Roman Empire, in Rome his position was usurped by Maxentius.
- In 312 Constantine challenged him.
- Constantine gave an account of the events before the battle in 312 to Eusebius, the church historian. Alarm due to reports of Maxentius' mastery of magical arts led Constantine to pray to the "Supreme God" for help. Constantine then saw a cross at noonday "above the sun" and with it the words, "Conquer by this".
- That same night Constantine had a dream of Christ who told him to use the sign of the Chi (X) and the Rho (P) (the "ch" and the "r" of the name Christ)
- Constantine then defeated Maxentius at the battle of the Milvian Bridge on October 28, 312.
 - The Milvian Bridge was an important route over the Tiber River
- Constantine's commitment to Christianity was sincere but his understanding of the Christian faith was far from orthodox.
- Constantine did not even distinguish between the Father of Jesus Christ and the divine sun.
- Constantine maintained the pagan high priest's title of Pontifex Maximus.
- Constantinian coins continued to feature some of the pagan gods.
- Constantine delayed Christian baptism until the end of his life. (Although this was a custom of the day to help one avoid committing a mortal sin.)
- In 313 with the Edict of Milan he declared, along with Licinius (the eastern emperor), that Christianity was no longer illegal.
- In 321 Constantine made the first day of the week a holiday and called it 'the venerable day of the Sun' or 'Sunday.'



313 Edict of Milan

- Constantine had granted toleration of Christianity and restitution of property taken from Christians in the lands of Gaul, Spain and Britain in 306.
- By 310 Maxentius had done the same in Italy and Africa.
- In 311 Galerius and Licinius decreed tolerance to Christianity in the Balkans and began restitution in 313.
- The Edict of Milan came in 313 when emperors Constantine and Licinius proclaimed religious tolerance throughout the Roman Empire to include newly acquired land taken from Maximinus.



- The Edict of Milan came in the form of a letter from Licinius to the Governor of Bithynia in June of 313. It was sent on behalf of Emperor Licinius in the East and Emperor Constantine in the West. It was to be circulated to the governors throughout the east.

The Text of the Edict of Milan from 313

When I, Constantine Augustus, as well as I, Licinius Augustus, fortunately met near Mediolanum (Milan), and were considering everything that pertained to the public welfare and security, we thought, among other things which we saw would be for the good of many, those regulations pertaining to the reverence of the Divinity ought certainly to be made first, so that we might grant to the Christians and others full authority to observe that religion which each preferred; whence any Divinity whatsoever in the seat of the heavens may be propitious and kindly disposed to us and all who are placed under our rule. And thus by this wholesome counsel and most upright provision we thought to arrange that no one whatsoever should be denied the opportunity to give his heart to the observance of the Christian religion, of that religion which he should think best for himself, so that the Supreme Deity, to whose worship we freely yield our hearts) may show in all things His usual favor and benevolence. Therefore, your Worship should know that it has pleased us to remove all conditions whatsoever, which were in the rescripts formerly given to you officially, concerning the Christians and now any one of these who wishes to observe Christian religion may do so freely and openly, without molestation. We thought it fit to commend these things most fully to your care that you may know that we have given to those Christians free and unrestricted opportunity of religious worship. When you see that this has been granted to them by us, your Worship will know that we have also conceded to other religions the right of open and free observance of their worship for the sake of the peace of our times, that each one may have the free opportunity to worship as he pleases; this regulation is made we that we may not seem to detract from any dignity or any religion.

Moreover, in the case of the Christians especially we esteemed it best to order that if it happens anyone heretofore has bought from our treasury from anyone whatsoever, those places where they were previously accustomed to assemble, concerning which a certain decree had been made and a letter sent to you officially, the same shall be restored to the Christians without payment or any claim of recompense and without any kind of fraud or deception. Those, moreover, who have obtained the same by gift, are likewise to return them at once to the Christians. Besides, both those who have purchased and those who have secured them by gift, are to appeal to the vicar if they seek any recompense from our bounty, that they may be cared for through our clemency. All this property ought to be delivered at once to the community of the Christians through your intercession, and without delay. And since these Christians are known to have possessed not only those places in which they were accustomed to assemble, but also other property, namely the churches, belonging to them as a corporation and not as individuals, all these things which we have included under the above law, you will order to be restored, without any hesitation or controversy at all, to these Christians, that is to say to the corporations and their conventicles: providing, of course, that the above arrangements be followed so that those who return the same without payment, as we have said, may hope for an indemnity from our bounty. In all these circumstances you ought to tender your most efficacious intervention to the community of the Christians, that our command may be carried into effect as quickly as possible, whereby, moreover, through our clemency, public order may be secured. Let this be done so that, as we have said above, Divine favor towards us, which, under the most important circumstances we have already experienced, may, for all time, preserve and prosper our successes together with the good of the state. Moreover, in order that the statement of this decree of our good will may come to the notice of all, this rescript, published by your decree, shall be announced everywhere and brought to the knowledge of all, so that the decree of this, our benevolence, cannot be concealed.

311-314 Melchiades, Bishop of Rome (Miltiades)

- Suffered under Emperor Diocletian and Galerius persecutions
- Became bishop of Rome in 311
- When Constantine came to power Melchiades saw the end of persecution and the beginning of the new age of Christendom.
- He was given the Lateran Palace by Constantine. The Lateran Palace was the ancient palace of the Roman Empire. It became the residence of the popes for the next 1,000 years. It is from this center that the Western Church would direct its affairs. Today it holds the Pontifical Museum of Christian Antiquities.

313 Donatists

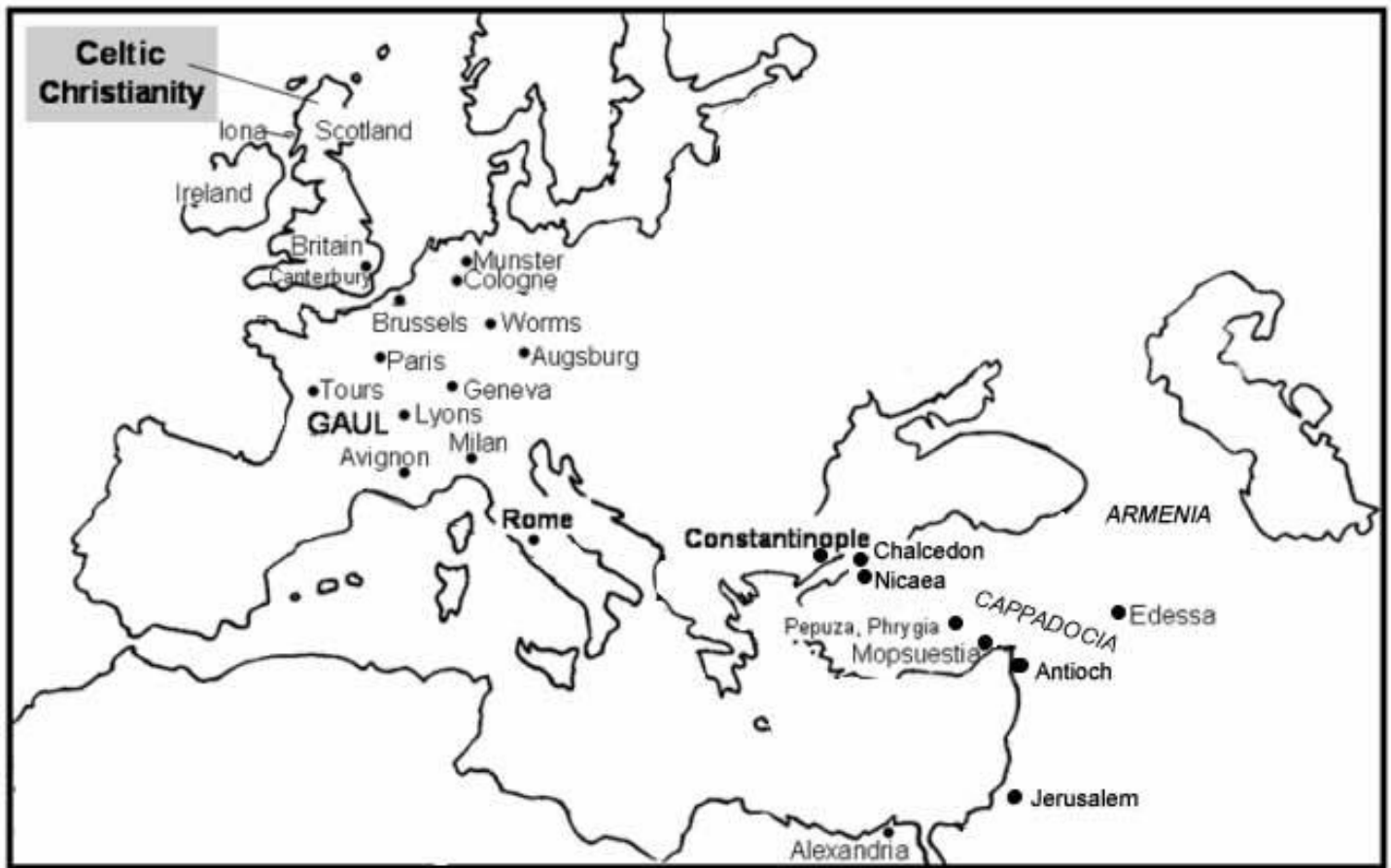
- Six months into his reign the Donatists asked Constantine to intervene in Church affairs over a decision concerning who should be bishop. When the Donatists refused his council's verdict Constantine threatened to go to Africa and settle things himself:
 "I am going to make plain to them what kind of worship is to be offered to God. . .What higher duty have I as emperor than to destroy error and repress rash indiscretions, and so cause all to offer to Almighty God true religion, honest concord and due worship?"
- Constantine ordered the Donatist churches to be confiscated and their leaders banished.
- Constantine's efforts were to no avail and he revoked his order. The Donatists survived for 300 more years.

295-373 Athanasius

- Bishop of Alexandria Egypt and a friend of the famous hermit, Anthony of Egypt Defender of the Christian faith who opposed Arian and Arianism before, during, and after the Council of Nicea.
- After the Council of Nicea his enemies (the Arians and Eusebius of Nicomedia) lied about him to Constantine who then had him banished.
- Athanasius was restored from banishment by Emperor Julius I but was forced into exile four more times between 335-366.

312 Arius

- The bishop of Alexandria put Arius in charge of one of the big churches in the city named Baucalis.
- As a pastor he found success and gained a large following with his teaching and ascetic life.
- Arius published "Thalia" where he established the unity and simplicity of the eternal God and the superiority of the Son over other created beings. The Son being created by God before time began.
- The new bishop of Alexandria, Alexander, had begun to teach what Arius thought was blasphemy. Alexander taught "as God is eternal, so is the Son – when the Father, the Son, - the Son is present in God without birth, ever-begotten, an unbegotten-begotten."
- Eusebius of Bicomedia and Eusebius of Caesarea defended Arius.
- Bishop Alexander excommunicated him.
- Emperor Constantine arrived in the East in 324 and attempted himself to settle this "trifling and foolish verbal difference, the meaning of which would be grasped only by the few."



325 Council of Nicea

- Emperor Constantine ordered this Church council.
- It was the second Church council.
- Nicea is modern Iznik, Turkey, a little town near the Bosphorus Straits which flows between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea.
- It began July 4, 325 with about 300 bishops and deacons every region of the empire except Britain in attendance.
- Constantine arrived in his imperial clothing overlaid with jewels but without his customary train of soldiers.
- Constantine spoke only briefly saying that “Division in the church is worse than war.”
- At stake was the most profound church question yet: “Who is Jesus Christ?”
- It was a new day for the church. Many of the bishops and deacons had scars from previous persecution from the emperors. A pastor from Egypt was missing an eye. One was crippled in both hands as a result of red-hot irons.
- Most of the bishops were impressed with Constantine and were willing to compromise.
- A young deacon from Alexandria, Athanasius, was not willing to compromise. Athanasius insisted that Arius’s doctrine left Christianity without a divine Savior.
- Also present was the church historian, friend of the emperor, and half-hearted supporter of Arius, Eusebius. Eusebius put forward his own creed for council approval.
- The council wanted something more specific and added, “True God of true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father. . .”
- The expression “one substance” was the “homoousion.”

- After long debate only two bishops did not agree with “in one Lord Jesus Christ, . . .true God of true God.”
- Constantine was pleased thinking the issue was settled.
- For the next 100 years the two views of Christ, the Nicene (Athanasius’) view and the Arian (Arius’) view battled for supremacy.
- Church people were banished, exiled and killed as power shifted with the change of emperor and church leadership.
- The Council of Nicaea laid the cornerstone for the orthodox understanding of Jesus Christ.
- The next council at Chalcedon would develop it further.
- Other issues decided at Nicaea were:
 - The celebration of Passover (now called Easter) was to be observed on the first Sunday after the first full moon on or after March 21
 - Validity of baptism by heretics
 - Lapsed Christians

The Nicene Creed from 325

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten of his Father, of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance (**homoousios**) with the Father. By whom all things were made, both which is in heaven and in earth. Who for us men and for our salvation came down [from heaven] and was incarnate and was made man. He suffered and the third day he rose again, ascended into heaven. And he shall come again to judge both the living and the dead. And [we believe] in the Holy Ghost. And whosoever shall say that there was a time when the Son of God was not, or that before he was begotten he was not, or that he was made of things that were not, or that he is of a different substance or essence [from the Father] or that he is a creature, or subject to change or conversion--all that so say, the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes them.

The Church Councils

#	Location	Year	Issues
1	Council of Jerusalem	49	Circumcision, Jewish Law, Gentiles
2	Council of Nicea	325	Condemn Arianism
3	Council of Constantinople	381	Settle Apollinarianism
4	Council of Ephesus	431	Nestorian Controversy; Nestorius deposed
5	Council of Chalcedon	451	Eutychian Controversy
6	Council of Constantinople II	553	Monophysites Controversy
7	Council of Constantinople III	680	Doctrine of the two wills of Christ
8	Council of Nicea II	787	Sanctioned Image Worship
9	Council of Constantinople IV	869	Final Schism between East and West
10	Council of Rome I (Lateran I)	1123	Decide Bishops are appointed by popes
11	Council of Rome II (Lateran II)	1139	Effort to heal the East and West Schism
12	Council of Rome III (Lateran III)	1179	To Enforce Ecclesiastical Discipline
13	Council of Rome IV (Lateran IV)	1215	Bidding of Innocent III
14	Council of Lyons	1245	Settle Quarrel with pope and Emperor
15	Council of Lyons II	1274	Attempt to Unite East and West
16	Council of Vienne	1311	Suppress Templars
17	Council of Constance	1414- 1418	Heal Papal Schism; Burn Jon Huss
18	Council of Basal	1431- 1449	Reform Church
19	Council of Rome V	1512	Another Reform Effort
20	Council of Trent	1545- 1563	Counter Reformation; Latin Vulgate Sole Translation; Apocrypha Canonized; Reaffirm purgatory, relics, & more
21	Council of Vatican I	1869- 1870	Declare pope Infallible
22	Council of Vatican II	1962- 1965	Effort to bring Christendom into one Church

353 *Emperor Constantius*

- Constantine's three sons:
 1. Constantine II
 2. Constans
 3. Constantius
- They killed hundreds of their father's offspring (except Gallus and Julian who were sick and a youth when their father died in 337).
- Constans slew Constantine II and then was killed by a barbarian in battle.
- Constantius became sole emperor in 353.
- Constantius began a violent suppression of heathen religion:
 1. Pillaged and destroyed temples
 2. Gave booty to the church
 3. Prohibited all sacrifices and worship of images in Rome, Alexander, and Athens
- Obviously, many people became "Christian" (if only in lip service).
- Constantius was an Arian and punished those who held to Nicene orthodoxy.
- Athanasius said at this time:

"Satan, because there is no truth in him, breaks in with axe and sword. But the Savior is gentle, and forces no one, to whom he comes, but knocks and speaks to the soul . . . If we open to him, he enters; but if we will not, he departs. For the truth is not preached by sword and dungeon, by might of an army, but by persuasion and exhortation. How can there be persuasion where fear of the emperor is uppermost? How exhortation, where the contradicter has to expect banishment and death?"

331- 363 *Emperor Julian the Apostate*

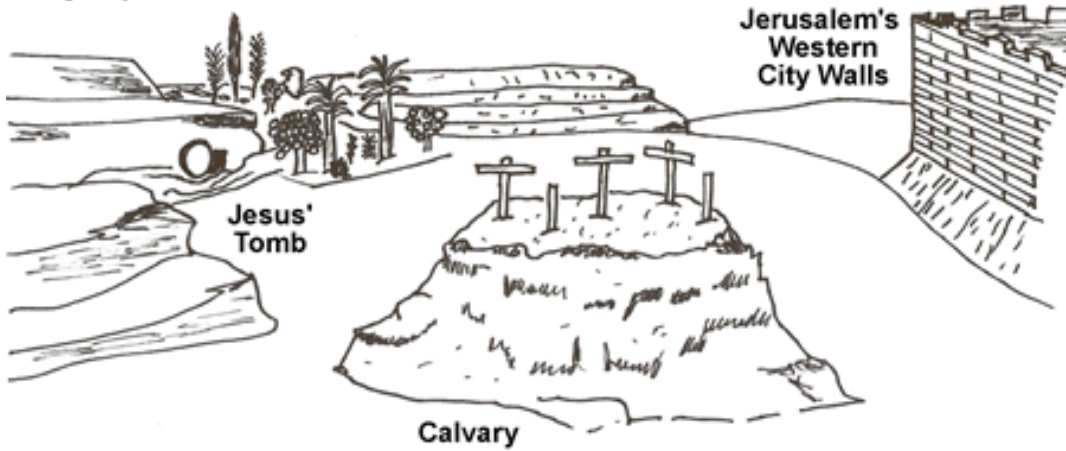
- Cousin of Constantius and nephew of Constantine
- He survived the slaughter by Constantine's sons of Constantine's descendents because he was only six years old at the time. His father died in the slaughter.
- Although he hated the "Christianity" of Constantius he was forced to receive a Christian education from the Arian bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia.
- Julian was baptized, educated for the clerical order, ordained as a lector and prayed, fasted, celebrated the martyrs, paid reverence to the bishops and sought the blessings from the hermits.
- This forced, pseudo-Christianity led the intelligent and vigorous Julian to rebel and become the heathen anti-christ known to history as Emperor Julian the Apostate. He was the last non-"Christian" emperor.
- In 355, age 24, Julian became Emperor and was initiated into the Eleusianian mysteries (uniting Julian with the god's for power) and entered Greek idolatry by practicing Theurgy (magical rituals to invoke the gods to action).
- From his position as emperor he revived mythology by spiritualizing it and uniting it with a few Christian and Oriental ideas.
- Julian was very intelligent but also believed he received direct communication from the gods (Jupiter, Apollo, Hercules) through dreams, visions, oracles and sacrifices.
- His moral character was simple, and he embraced stoic virtues.
- Julian forced the churches to return the plunder they had taken from pagan temples, decreased the public influence Christian bishops held, removed the bishops' right to travel at public expense and gave church property to pagans.
- In his attempt to stamp out Christianity he visited the site of the temple in Jerusalem and ordered it to be rebuilt. Earthquakes and reported balls of fire from the foundation caused the work on the temple to stop.
- Julian was killed retreating from battle with the Persians in 363.
- The family of Constantine was extinct upon Julian's death.

363-364 *Emperor Jovian*

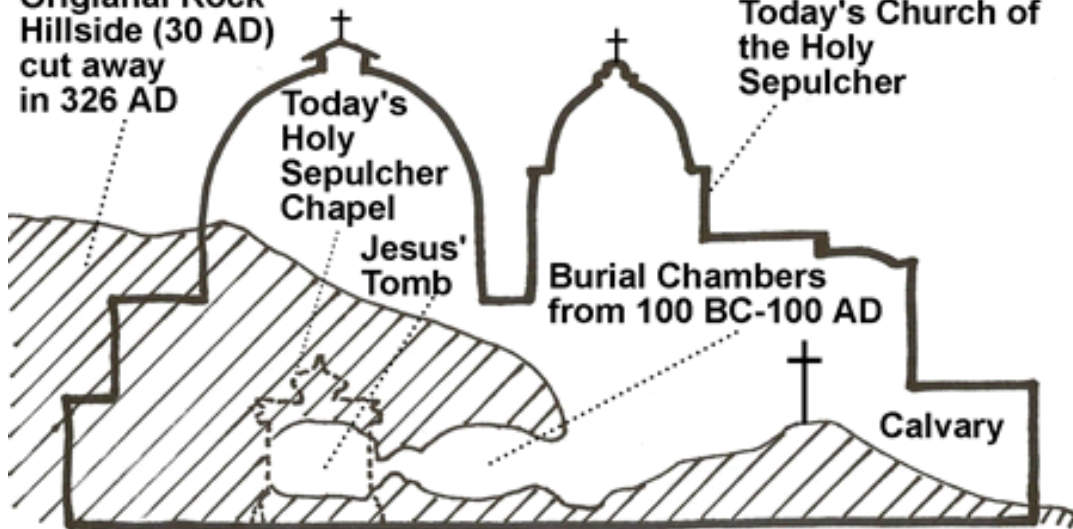
- Jovian, a Roman general, replaced Julian.
- He restored the crosses and the church's privileges.
- He avoided interfering with the church business but favored Athanasius.

Site of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher

30 AD

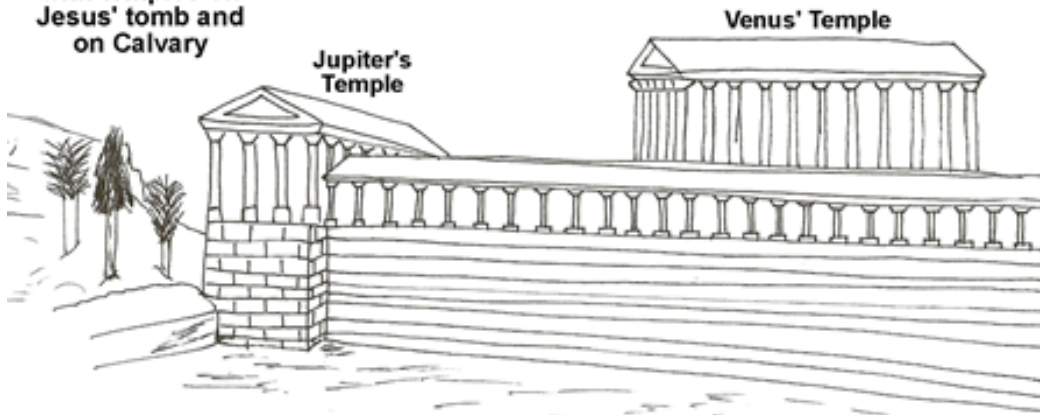


Original Rock Hillside (30 AD) cut away in 326 AD



Hadrian's platform over the Site of the Holy Sepulcher with temples on Jesus' tomb and on Calvary

135 AD



Constantine's
Church of the
Holy Sepulcher

325 AD

