

CHRISTIANITY & ROME

Luke 2:1 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from **Caesar Augustus**, that all the world should be taxed. **Luke 2:2** (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)

Luke 3:1 Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of **Tiberius Caesar**, **Pontius Pilate** being governor of Judaea, and **Herod** being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother **Philip** tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and **Lysanias** the tetrarch of Abilene, **Luke 3:2 Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests**, the word of God came unto **John the son of Zacharias** in the wilderness.

WHAT DO WE FIND?

➤ **Christians were persecuted and it started in the NT itself!**

John 15:17 These things I command you, that ye love one another.

John 15:18 If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. **John 15:19** If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. **John 15:20** Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. **John 15:21** But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me.

John 16:1 These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. **John 16:2** They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. **John 16:3** And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me.

John 16:4 But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you.

1 Peter 3:14 But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; **1 Peter 3:15** But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: **1 Peter 3:16** Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. **1 Peter 3:17** For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

1 Peter 4:12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: **1 Peter 4:13** But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. **1 Peter 4:14** If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. **1 Peter 4:15** But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. **1 Peter 4:16** Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

2 Timothy 3:12 Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.

➤ **Christians were persecuted as “followers of the way” and later as Christians!**

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, **I am the way**, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

Acts 9:1 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, **Acts 9:2** And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.

Acts 19:9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, **but spake evil of that way before the multitude**, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

Acts 19:23 And the same time there arose no small stir **about that way**.

Acts 22:4 And I persecuted **this way** unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.

Acts 24:22 And when Felix heard these things, **having more perfect knowledge of that way**, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter.

The way of:

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→ we might call this

Acts 11:26 And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. **And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.**

Acts 26:28 Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a **Christian**.

1 Peter 4:16 Yet if any man suffer **as a Christian**, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

Christian: a word v

spelled & especially is this true:

In various

By various

From similar s

➤ **Christians were persecuted first under Nero (54-68)**

Tacitus: Annals 38-44

A friend of Suetonius & Pliny the Younger.

Writing around 115-117 AD

From Roman s

38 1 There followed a disaster, whether due to chance or to the malice of the sovereign is uncertain — for each version has its sponsors¹⁰ — but graver and more terrible than any other which has p273 befallen this city by the ravages of fire. It took its rise in the part of the Circus touching the Palatine and Caelian Hills; where, among the shops packed with inflammable goods, the conflagration broke out, gathered strength in the same moment, **and, impelled by the wind, swept the full length of the Circus**: for there were neither mansions screened by boundary walls, nor temples surrounded by stone enclosures, nor obstructions of any description, to bar its progress. The flames, which in full career overran the level districts first, then shot up to the heights, and sank again to harry the lower parts, kept ahead of all remedial measures, the mischief travelling fast, and the town being an easy prey owing to the narrow, twisting lanes and formless streets typical of old Rome.¹¹ In addition, shrieking and terrified women; fugitives stricken or immature in years; men consulting their own safety or the safety of others, as they dragged the infirm along or paused to wait for them, combined by their dilatoriness or their haste to impede everything. Often, while they glanced back to the rear, they were attacked on the flanks or in front; or, if they had made their escape into a neighbouring quarter, that also was involved in the flames, and even districts which they had believed remote from danger were found to be in the same plight. At last, irresolute what to avoid or what to seek, they crowded into the roads or threw themselves down in the fields: some who had lost the whole of their means — their daily bread included — chose to die, though the way of escape was open, and were followed by others, through love for the relatives whom they had proved unable to rescue. **None ventured to combat the fire, as there were p275 reiterated threats from a**

large number of persons who forbade extinction, and others were openly throwing firebrands¹² and shouting that "they had their authority" — possibly in order to have a freer hand in looting, possibly from orders received.

40 1 Only on the sixth day, was the conflagration brought to an end at the foot of the Esquiline, by demolishing the buildings over a vast area and opposing to the unabated fury of the flames a clear tract of ground and an open horizon. But fear had not yet been laid aside, nor had hope yet returned to the people, when the fire resumed its ravages; in the less congested parts of the city, however; so that, while the toll of human life was not so great, the destruction of temples and of porticoes dedicated to pleasure was on a wider scale. **The second fire produced the greater scandal of the two,** as it had broken out on Aemilian property¹⁶ of Tigellinus and appearances suggested that Nero was seeking the glory of founding a new capital and endowing it with his own name.¹⁷ Rome, in fact, is divided into fourteen regions, of which four remained intact, while three were laid level with the ground: in the other seven nothing survived but a few dilapidated and half-burned relics of houses.¹⁸

44 1 So far, the precautions taken were suggested by human prudence: now means were sought for **appeasing deity**, and application was made to the Sibylline books; at the injunction of which public prayers were offered to Vulcan, Ceres, and Proserpine, while Juno was propitiated by the matrons, first in the Capitol, then at the nearest point of the sea-shore, where water was drawn for sprinkling the temple and image of the goddess. Ritual banquets and all-night vigils were celebrated by women in the married state. **But neither human help, nor imperial munificence, nor all the modes of placating Heaven, could stifle scandal or dispel the belief that the fire had taken place by order. Therefore, to scotch the rumour,** Nero substituted as culprits, and punished with the utmost refinements of cruelty, a class of men, loathed for their vices,²⁷ whom the crowd styled Christians.²⁸ Christus, the founder of the name, had undergone the death penalty in the reign of Tiberius, by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilatus,²⁹ and the pernicious superstition was checked for a moment, only to break out once more, not merely in Judaea, the home of the disease, but in the capital itself, where all things horrible or shameful in the world collect and find a vogue. First, then, the confessed members of the sect were arrested; next, on their disclosures, vast numbers³⁰ were convicted, **not so much on the count of arson as for hatred of the human race**.³¹ And derision accompanied their end: they were covered with wild beasts' skins and torn to death by dogs; or they were fastened on crosses, and, when daylight failed were burned to serve as lamps by night. Nero had offered his Gardens for the spectacle, and gave an exhibition in his Circus, mixing with the crowd in the habit of a charioteer, or mounted on his car. **Hence, in spite of a guilt which had earned the most exemplary punishment, there arose a sentiment of pity, due to the impression that they were being sacrificed not for the welfare of the state but to the ferocity of a single man.**

We find a reference to Christ & Christianity – as a Roman Senatorial Class would have understood:

- | | Arrian's description | under the description |
|--|----------------------|----------------------------|
| ➤ Called / styled Christians by the
(See Acts 11:26) | | |
| ➤ Loathed for their vices | | |
| ➤ Founded by Christ | | |
| ➤ Founded in Jerusalem | | (well, in reality Galilee) |
| Tacitus would have been reading official records not Christian, insider information! | | |

- Christianity was temporarily ch in Judea
- Checked by the death penalty of
- A death penalty in the r of T
- Death by the sentence of procurator | praefect Pontius P

He is mentioned more than X in the NT!!!

Acts 3:13 The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus; whom ye delivered up, and denied him **in the presence of Pilate**, when he was determined to let him go.

Acts 3:14 But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; **Acts 3:15** And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. **Acts 3:17** And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. **Acts 3:18** But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, **he hath so fulfilled.**

Acts 4:27 For of a truth **against** thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both **Herod**, and **Pontius Pilate**, with the **Gentiles**, and the **people of Israel**, **were gathered together**, **Acts 4:28** **For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.**

1 Timothy 6:13 I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, **who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession;**

➤ Not merely in Judea but Christianity was briefly ch but broke out again!
in the Capital R

- Christians of reasonable n → so as to be noticed!
- Christians then arrested for “arson” & more so for their
- Christians martyred horribly
- Christians recognized as sc