



## Early Church Discovery

Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. (Acts 2:43)

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# Early Church History

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- ✦ It is a story about ordinary people being impacted by the life and teachings of Jesus.
- ✦ It is a story that will both inspire and disappoint
- ✦ It is a story of how God chooses to work through sinners in order to accomplish His wonderful purposes



# Expansion of the Early Church

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- ❖ Matthew 28:16-20 “The Command to Expand”
  - ❖ Starts with understanding your response to Jesus’ authority
    - ❖ Matthew 8:5-13
    - ❖ Make Disciples
    - ❖ Baptize
    - ❖ Teaching Obedience

# Expansion Continued

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- ✦ The congregation consisted of Jewish and pagan converts
- ✦ Jesus dies in 33 A.D. within 67 years the church has been established in the following regions
  - ✦ Asia Minor - Modern day Turkey
  - ✦ Syria
  - ✦ Macedonia
  - ✦ Greece
  - ✦ Rome
  - ✦ And probably Egypt



Believers were in Cyprus before Paul arrived. These believers would have been fleeing from Paul following the stoning of Stephen.

Paul's primary audience was meant to be the Jews, but he met with such terrific opposition that he turned his message towards the Gentiles. Acts 13:46

Highpoint of the missionary journey was the conversion of Sergius Paulus, the Roman proconsul.



The Jerusalem Council - Acts 15, Must a Gentile convert submit to circumcision to be a Christian?

Peter - salvation by grace apart from human works. Converts should be sensitive to certain Jewish customs.

Timothy - becomes one of Paul's most steadfast and trusted companions.

Spirit leads Paul in a different direction than planned (Acts 16).



This journey really involves a 2 year stay in Ephesus.

Paul is arrested in Jerusalem, begins journey to Rome

- ✧ While Paul is viewed as the primary missionary for Christianity
  - ✧ Peter also preached in Rome
  - ✧ John preached in Asia Minor
  - ✧ Mark is believed to have founded a church in Egypt
  - ✧ Thomas is recognized as bringing Christianity to India

For the matter seemed to me to warrant consulting you, especially because of the number involved. For many persons of every age, every rank, and also of both sexes and will be endangered. For the contagion of this superstition has spread not only to the cities but also to the villages and farms.

*Pliny, the Roman Governor of Bithynia. A.D. 110*

## Early Church Growth Statistics

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- ❖ A.D. 40 Approximately 1,000 Christians
- ❖ A.D. 100 Approximately 7,500 Christians
- ❖ A.D. 150 Approximately 40,000 Christians
- ❖ A.D. 300 Approximately 1.2 Million Christians
- ❖ A.D. 350. Approximately 34 Million Christians
- ❖ Today Approximately 2.4 Billion Christians

## How Did This Expansion Occur

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- ❖ Religious Reasons - The power of the Holy Spirit, The power of Jesus life and teaching, Messengers who lived and preached with conviction
- ❖ Sociological Reasons
  - ❖ Koine Greek (common commercial language of the Graeco-Roman Empire). The Gospel was easily presented in common language.
  - ❖ Pax Romana - an unusual time of peace and stability in the Roman Empire, making it easier and safer to travel the Roman built roads.

## How Did This Expansion Occur Cont'd

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- ❖ Jewish Diaspora - Jews had been displaced all over the world. Wherever they lived they built synagogues, so these were natural places for Paul to visit and teach at.
- ❖ Compassion for the poor - Christians displayed enormous generosity and compassion for the poor and disenfranchised, contrary to how the pagans acted.
- ❖ Compassion for the discarded - Romans practiced infanticide, specifically female infants.

“The impious Galileans support not only their own poor but ours as well.”

*–Roman Emperor Julian, 360 A.D. - A Complaint*

“If you are delivered of a child before I return home, if it is a boy keep it, if it is a girl discard it.”

*Hilarion, Roman soldier, letter to pregnant wife*