**#11—Crash Course World History**

**Christianity from Judaism to Constantine**

1. Any understanding of Christianity has to start with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ because Jesus was born a Jew, and he grew up in the Jewish tradition. He was one of many teachers spreading his ideas in the Roman province of Judea at the time, and he was part of a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ tradition that helps us understand why he was thought of not only teacher but something much, much more.
2. The \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ initially worshipped many gods, making sacrifices to them in order to bring good weather and good fortune. But they eventually developed a religion centered on an idea that would become key to the other great western religions. This was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, the idea that there is only one true god
3. The Hebrews developed a second concept that is key to their religion as well: the idea of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, a deal with God. The main man in this was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
4. So, some important things about this god: 1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. He—and I’m using the masculine pronoun because that’s what Hebrew prayers use—does not want you to put any gods before Him. 2. He is also \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, having always existed and he is deeply personal – he chats with prophets, sends locusts, etc. He doesn’t take corporeal form like the Greek and Roman gods do.
5. Probably most important to us today, and certainly most important to Jesus, this god demands \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ righteousness and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ justice. So, this is the god of the Hebrews, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and despite many ups and downs, the Jewish people have stuck with him for- according to the Hebrew calendar, at least- over 5700 years.
6. By the time that Jesus was born, the land of the Israelites had been absorbed into the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Empire as the province of Judea. Both Herods ultimately took their orders from the Romans, and they were Hellenizers, bringing in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ theater and architecture, and rationalism.
7. In response to those Hellenistic influences, there were a lot of preachers trying to get the Jews to return to the traditions and the godly ways of the past, including the Sadducees, the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the Essenes, and the Zealots. And one of those preachers, who didn’t fit comfortably into any of these four groups, was Jesus of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
8. Jesus was a preacher who spread his message of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ love and, above all, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ across Judea. He was remarkably charismatic, attracting a small but incredibly loyal group of followers, and he was said to perform \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ —although it’s worth noting that miracles weren’t terribly uncommon at the time.
9. Jesus’s message was particularly resonant to the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and downtrodden and pretty radical in its anti- \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ stance. All of which was kind of threatening to the powers that be, who accordingly had him arrested, tried and then executed in the normal method of killing rebels at that time, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
10. So why would people believe that Jesus was the Messiah? First, the Jews had a long tradition of believing that a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ who would come to them in a time of trouble. And Judea under the rule of Herod and the Romans… definitely a time of trouble. Also, many of the prophecies about this savior point to someone whose life looks a lot like Jesus's. So some religious Jews saw Jesus in those prophecies and came to believe either during his life or shortly thereafter, that he was the messiah.
11. There are three possible historical reasons why Jesus became more influential than Augustus:
* **Reason #1**: The Romans continued to make things bad for the Jews. In fact, things got much worse for the Jews, especially after they launched a revolt between 66-73 CE, which did not go well. By the time the dust settled, the Romans had destroyed the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and expelled the Jews from Judea, beginning what we now know as the Jewish \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Without a Temple or geographic unity, the Jews had to solidify what it meant to be a Jew and what the basic tenants of the religion were. This forced the followers of Jesus to make a decision; were they going to continue to be Jews following stricter laws set forth by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or were they going to be something else. The decision to open up their religion to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, or gentiles, people who weren’t part of the covenant, is the central reason that Christianity could become a world religion instead of just a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, of Judaism.
* **Reason #2**: Is related to reason number 1 and it’s all about a dude named \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of Tarsus, who after having received a vision on the road to Damascus, became Paul and began visiting and sending letters to Jesus followers throughout the Mediterranean. And it was Paul who emphatically declared that Jesus followers did NOT have to be \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that they did not have to be circumcised or keep to Jewish laws. The other thing to remember about Paul is that he was a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ citizen which meant that he could travel freely throughout the Roman Empire. This allowed him to make his case to lots of different people and facilitated the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ spread of Christianity.
* **Reason #3:** Christianity was born and flourished an empire with a common \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that allowed for its spread. And crucially, it was also an Empire in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Like even by the end of the first century CE, Rome was on its way down. For the average person, and even for some elites, things weren’t as good as they had been, if fact they were getting worse so fast that you might have thought the end of the world was coming.
1. But then as the Roman decline continued, Emperor \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ allowed the worship of Jesus and then eventually converted to Christianity himself.