CHRISTIANITY IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE
An Archaeological Tour from Christ to Constantine
Dr. Charles Odahl

Part One – Jesus and Roman Judaea

The Roman Empire & Its Jewish Province

The Rise of the Roman Empire in the Mid and
Late Republic - Dominance in the Mediterranean
Civil Wars and the Victory of the Julio-Claudians
Imperator & Princeps Augustus Caesar (31 B.C.-A.D. 14)
The Political-Military Messiah and his Temples

Victory Denarius of Caesar Augustus
Rome - Forum and Temples of Saturn,
Venus, Mars, & the Pantheon

The Jewish Alliance and Client Kingdoms
Antipater and Herod the Great (63-4 B.C.)
Herodian Tetrarchs (4 B.C.-A.D. 6)
Provincia Judaea & the Prefects
Pontius Pilatus (A.D. 26-36)

Caesarea Maritima - Harbor, Lighthouse,
Temple of Augustus, Hippodrome, Palace
& Gold Solidi; Theater & Pilate Inscription

The Mission and Message of Jesus

Birth and Early Years (4 B.C.- A.D. 27)
Baptism & Wilderness Testing

Bethlehem & Nazareth
Jordan River, and Jericho

The Messianic Mission & Ethical Message (A.D. 27-30)
in the Galilee Region – Calling the Apostles,
Reading in the Synagogue, the Sermon on
the Mount, Parables and Signs, the Messianic
Question at Caesarea Philippi

The Sea of Galilee & Capernaum -
Peter’s House & the Synagogue
The Mount of Beatitudes, Magdala,
Tabga; Tiberias, the Ancient Boat,
& Mount Hermon

Conflict with the Authorities and Crucifixion (A.D. 30)
Messianic Entry to the City and Temple
Cleansing the Temple & the Tribute Question
The Last Supper, the Arrest and Trials
Caiphas & Blasphemy; Pilate & Treason
Golgotha and Crucifixion; the Empty Tomb
Relics of the Crucifixion & Resurrection

Jerusalem – Ancient Walls & Gates
Temple Wailing Wall & Dome of the Rock
Mount Zion – Cenacle & Ancient Lamp
Mount of Olives and Dominus Flevit
Antonia Fortress & Via Dolorosa
Golgotha & the Holy Sepulchre
Pilate’s Placard and the Shroud?

Reading Suggestions
Pat Southern, Augustus
Ann Wroe, Pontius Pilate
Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, The Holy
Land – Oxford Archaeological Guide

E.P. Sanders, The Historical Figure of Jesus
Bart D. Ehrman, Jesus – Apocalyptic Prophet
of the New Millennium
Richard Bauckham, Jesus and the Eyewitnesses
Part Two – The Early Church and the Pagan Empire

The Apostolic Church & the First Trials

The Julio-Claudian Dynasty (A.D. 14-68)
The Apostolic Church & Early Missions – A
Kerygmatic, Charismatic & Urban Movement
St. Peter – Leadership in Jerusalem, & Missions
to Caesarea, Antioch, & Anatolia (30-49)
St. Paul – Training by Peter & Disciples, and
Missions to Anatolia, Greece, & Asia Minor (47-57)
Early Imperial Actions against Christiani
Claudius in Rome, Judaea & Egypt
Roman Trial & Release of Paul; Death of James (62)
Nero & the Fire in Rome – Martyrdoms of Peter
& Paul (64)

Jerusalem, Caesarea & Antioch
Corinth – Synagogue, Baths, Agora, Bema of
Gallio, & Temples of Venus & Apollo
Ephesus – Upper & Lower Agoras, Library,
Lecture Hall of Tyrannus & Great Theater
Jerusalem & Caesarea; Rome - Vatican
Circus and Ostian Way

The Flavian Dynasty (A.D. 69-96)
Roman Civil War & the Jewish Revolt (66-70)
Marches of Vespasian and Titus into Judaea
& Destruction of the Temple (70)
Flavian Rome & the Jewish Poll Tax
Separation of Jews & Christians
Domitian & John – End of New Testament Era (95)

Jerusalem & Temple Ruins
Rome – Flavian Arch, Amphitheatre
(Colosseum), & Souvenir Lamp

The Pagan Empire & the Persecuted Church

The Ulpian-Antonine Dynasty (A.D. 96-192)
Imperial Expansion from Trajan to Aurelius
Early Church Organization & Development
Hierarchy – Episcopoi, Presbyteroi, & Diaconoi
Doctrine – NT Scriptures & Rules of Faith
Practice – Ethics, Domus Ecclesiae & Liturgy

Rome – Trajan’s Forum, Column & Macelum;
Aurelius’ Column & Statue; & Denarii
Earliest Papyri of Gospels
Rome – Arch of Severus, Aurelian Wall
Rome – Tetrarchic Column; Portchester -
Fort of the Saxon Shore
Catacombs of Domitilla, Calixtus,
& Sebastian – Pictures, Symbols & Graffiti

Reading Suggestions

Mary Boatwright, A Brief History of the Romans
W. H. C. Friend, The Rise of Christianity
Michael Grant, St. Peter – A Biography
A.N. Wilson, Paul – The Mind of the Apostle

J.N.D. Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines
Robin Lane Fox, Pagans and Christians
Michael Gough, The Origins of Christian Art
Fabrizio Mancinelli, The Catacombs of Rome
Jerusalem
Empty Tomb, Crucifixion relics, & the Temple (Jn 18-21; Ac 2-4)

Caesarea Maritima
Theater & Pilate Inscription (Jn 18)
Peter’s Kerygma to Cornelius (Ac 10)
Paul’s Imprisonment (Ac 21-26)

Antioch in Syria
Mission Base for Christianoi (Ac 11)

Thessalonica
Paul’s Preaching & the Agora (Ac 17)

Athens
Paul’s Kerygma to the Areopagus (Ac 17)

Corinth
Success in the Synagogue, Ecclesia
& Trial before Gallio on the Tribunal (Ac 18)

Ephesus
Paul’s Lecture Hall & Disciples
Grand Theater & the Riot of the Silversmiths of Artemis (Ac 19)
John’s Letter & Tomb (Rv 2)

Pergamon
John’s Letter & Seat of Satan (Rv 3)

Rome
Final Missions & Martyrdoms for Peter and Paul (Ac 27-28; Rv 11 & I Clement)
Apostolic Tombs & Constantinian Basilicas (Eusebius, Hist Eccl II, Liber Pontificalis 34)
Part Three – Constantine and Apostolic Rome

Constantine’s Conversion & the Edict of Milan

The Second Tetrarchy of Galerius & Constantius (A.D. 305-306)
Constantine’s Escape to the West & Campaigns in Britain with his Father
Constantine’s Acclamnation at York (25 July 306)
The Gallic Emperor at Trier (A.D. 306-312)
Christian Freedom, Military Campaigns, & Imperial Building Projects
Usurpation of Maxentius in Rome
Failures to Overthrow Him & Deaths of the Persecutors

Imperial Follis
Europe & the English Channel
Britain - Hadrian’s Wall, the York Praetorium & Cathedral
Trier – Moselle River & Bridge, Porta Nigra, Amphitheater, Thermae & Aula Palatina
Roman Forum & Maxentian Follis

The Italian Campaign & Conversion (312-13)
Battles at Turin and Verona
Vision & Dream on the Road to Rome
Adoption of the Labarum & Christogram
Victory at the Mulvian Bridge (28 Oct. 312)
Adventus in Rome & Christian Witness
Basilica Nova & Colossal Statue with Labarum
Christian Advisors, Beneficia, & Edict of Milan

Campaign Route
Ms Illustration, Raphael’s Paintings, & Conversion Coins
Mulvian Bridge & Tiber River
Victory Coin, Basilica & Statue Remains
Ms Illustration & Edict

The Christian Basilicas & the Sedes Apostolica

Christian Education, Donatist Schism & Council of Arles (313-314)
The Decennalia Celebrations in Rome (July 315)
Arch of Constantine & the Christian Medallions

Rome – Arch of Constantine & Ticinum Medallions

The Christian Basilicas of Constantinian Rome - Two Liturgical & Six Martyrial Basilicas (ca. 312-350)
Basilica Constantiniiana – Lateran Cathedral
Basilica Beato Petro Apostolo – Vatican Basilica
Basilica Beato Paulo Apostolo – Ostian Basilica
From Roman Capital to Apostolic See

Rome – Modern Churches, Ancient Remains, Textual, Archaeological & Archival Evidence
A. Laffrey Engraving of The Seven Pilgrimage Churches of Rome

Reading Suggestions

A.H. M. Jones, Constantine and the Conversion of Europe
Peter J. Leithart, Defending Constantine – The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom
Charles Matson Odahl, Constantine and the Christian Empire

Richard P. McBrien, Lives of the Popes
Richard Krautheimer, Rome: Profile of a City, 312-1308
John Evangelist Walsh, The Bones of Saint Peter
THE CHRISTIAN BASILICAS OF CONSTANTINIAN ROME—
their locations and ancient Latin names are shown on the
map, and their modern Italian names given below the map

1) San Giovanni in Laterano
2) Santa Croce in Carusaleme
3) San Pietro in Vaticano
4) San Paolo fuori le Mura
5) San Sebastiano fuori le Mura
6) SS Marcellino e Pietro
7) San Lorenzo fuori le Mura
8) Sant'Agnese fuori le Mura

and Mausoleum Constantinae
et Mausoleum Helenae.

Mausoleo di Helenae

and Mausoleo de Costanza
Part Four — The Imperial Church and the Christian Empire

The Eastern Crusade & the Nicene Council

Conflicts with Licinius & Eastern Wars (A.D. 316-324)
Political Disputes & the “Religious Cold War”
Constantine & Christianity vs Licinius & Paganism
The “Holy War” of 324 & the Triumph of Christianity – the Christian Dynasty, Religious Edicts, Laws, & Apocalyptic Propaganda

The late Roman World
Christian Coins, Churches & Laws vs. Pagan Coins, Temples & Laws
Thessalonica, Hadrianople, Gallipolis, Byzantium & Chrysopolis
Constantinople, Labarum-Serpent Coins, & Christogram lamps

The Arian Conflict & the Nicene Council (A.D. 325)
Arius & Subordinationism vs. Alexander & Consubstantialism – Relationship the Son & the Father Intervention of Constantine and Ossius

The Eastern Provinces
Nicaea in Bithynia – Gates, Walls, Theater, Council Site on the Lakeshore, Icon, & Hagia Sophia Cathedral

The First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea
The Christian Emperor and the Christian Bishops at the Imperial Summer Palace in Bithynia
Theological Debate – the Homoousian Creed Easter Debate – Jewish or Western Tradition Canons for Church Organization & Practice

The Vicennalia Tragedy & Helena’s Pilgrimage To the Holy Land (A.D. 326-327)
Ada Cameo, Apostolic Rome, Helena Coins & the “New Jerusalem”

The New Christian Capital & the Thirteenth Apostle

The Site and Building of Nova Roma — from Pagan Byzantium to Christian Constantinople (A.D. 324-330)
The Palace, Hippodrome, & Augusteion Areas
The Patriarchal Area & Cathedrals
From the Milion to the Forum of Constantine
Upper New Areas with Mansions, Apartments, Aqueduct, and Church of the Holy Apostles
The Land Walls and the Sea Walls
The Dedicatio of Nova Roma (11 May 330)

The Bosporus Strait between Europe and Asia
Blue Mosque, Mosaics, Chariot Track & Baths
Hagia Sophia, Hagia Eirene, & Basilica Cistern
Column of Constantine & Grand Bazaar
Aqueduct of Valens, Fatih Camii & Oldest
Lectionary Bible – Codex Sinaiticus
Theodosian Land Walls & Marmora Sea Walls
Hippodrome & Constantinopolis Coins
Buondelmonte Map, & Christian Coin Motifs

The Last Years – Christianizing the Empire and Campaigns on the Danube (A.D. 330-337)
Baptism, Death & Burial as “the Equal of the Apostles” – the Legacy of Constantine

The Christian Roman Empire
Hagioi Apostoloi & Chariot to Heaven Coins

Reading Suggestions

Rowan Williams, Arius – Heresy & Tradition
Clive Foss, Nicaea – A Byzantine Capital and Its Praises
Richard Rubenstein, When Jesus Became God

David L. Dungan, Constantine’s Bible
Richard Krautheimer, Three Christian Capitals – Rome, Constantinople & Milan
Charles Matson Odahl, Constantine and the Christian Empire
THE NEW ROME OF CHRISTIAN CONSTANTINOPLE--
principal structures with ancient names marked on
the map, and the modern names listed below the map

1) Great Palace  
2) Chariot Stadium  
3) Imperial Forum  
4) Church of Holy Wisdom  
5) Church of Holy Peace  
6) Milestone Marker  
7) Middle Avenue  
8) Forum of Constantine  
9) Church of Holy Apostles  
10) Wall of Constantine