

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ROMAN  
EMPEROR CONSTANTINE FOR THE CHURCH

# THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ROMAN EMPEROR CONSTANTINE

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In the year 306, Constantine was proclaimed emperor by his soldiers. At that time, however, his control did not extend over the entire Roman Empire. There were other emperors besides him who ruled over parts of the great empire.

To cope with adversaries, Constantine had to fight for the city of Rome. Before the battle he apparently saw a cross in the sky with the inscription "By this sign you shall be victorious!" He won the decisive battle of Rome on 27 October 312.

Following further victories, Constantine eventually became the sole ruler of the entire Roman Empire in 324. From that time on, he favoured the Christians in every way and manner. He, however, only had himself baptized shortly before his death in the year 337.

When Constantine became emperor over the entire Roman Empire, a dispute about the nature of the Son of God was under way. This clash threatened Christian unity. Since a good relationship with, and the unity of, the Christians seemed to be of utmost importance to the emperor in ruling the empire, he invited the bishops to a council in Nicaea, which is a city in the north-western part of present-day Turkey. Approximately 250 to 300 bishops accepted the emperor's invitation. As the supreme political authority, Constantine urged the bishops to decide on the issue in question: whether the Son of God is God in the same way as God the Father (Catechism-QA 100).

The council in 325 established the absolute equality of the Son with the Father. This statement was inspired by the Holy Spirit and is the belief of all Christians.

◀ **Theme picture:** The map shows the western and eastern halves of the Roman Empire. The picture depicts Constantine.

## EXERCISE 1



Read the text below and correctly insert the missing words:

Christianity – Christians – Christ's birth – Emperor Constantine –  
the First Commandment – Gentiles – persecuted – Roman Empire – same rights –  
secure – significance – suspicious – three

Valuable information about the history of Christianity

During the first \_\_\_\_\_ centuries after \_\_\_\_\_, the Christian faith  
was strange to many citizens of the \_\_\_\_\_ and they were naturally  
\_\_\_\_\_. The Christians did not want to worship the Gentile gods because they  
would have broken \_\_\_\_\_.

Worshipping Gentile gods was stipulated by law, however. That is why the Christians at that time  
were \_\_\_\_\_.

Some Roman emperors' objective was to completely destroy the \_\_\_\_\_.

Nevertheless, at the end of the third century, many people in the Roman Empire already professed  
\_\_\_\_\_, and more were added all the time. Christianity had gained great  
\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ wanted to win over the large group of Christians for himself in  
order to \_\_\_\_\_ his power and the unity of the empire.

In the year 313, Christians were granted the \_\_\_\_\_ as the  
\_\_\_\_\_ by means of the Edict of Milan.

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BOARD

## EXERCISE 2



Record the Bible passage from 1 Peter 5: 5 correctly below.

SEY LLA FO UOY EB EVISSIMBUS OT ENO REHTONA DNA EB DEHTOLC HTIW  
YTILIMUH ROF DOG STSISER EHT DUORP TUB SEVIG ECARG OT EHT  
ELBMUH