

Jeanine Gherardi

March 5, 2023

World Civilization

Research Assignment Chapter 7

The ancient world's four major religions all established a message pertaining to how one practices their faith in order to be saved. One of the religions, Christianity, was recognized by its exclusivity and rejection of other beliefs, including the civic and imperial cults of the Roman Empire, which earned it persecution. It was also distinguished by its organization built around bishops assigned to cities where communities of believers grew throughout the Roman Empire between 33 and 300.

While commander Constantine was battling for the empire in 312, he witnessed a Christian symbol of the cross in the sky one evening before a battle. The message meant "under this sign you will conquer" and after achieving those foreseen victories Constantine was motivated to convert to Christianity. As a result of Constantine's conversion, Christianity was greatly impacted, and has continued to influence the religion until this day. Constantine was considered the first emperor to embrace Christianity, causing his actions to prevent Christians from further persecution that they were experiencing at the time. Constantine had pagan rituals in the church banned, confiscated Christian property returned, and provided accessibility to Christian scripture with places to worship for the common people.

In the absence of the first event, which was the sign of the cross, Constantine's conversion would not have taken place and Christianity would not have experienced some significant advancements and positive changes. After Constantine became emperor and converted to Christianity, he sent his mother to the Holy Land where she built the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem. That church, which resulted from Constantine's conversion would not have been built and pagan religious practices and the gladiatorial contests the Christians disliked

would have remained. The crucifixion would not have been abolished and sexual immorality would have continued without Constantine's conversion. If Constantine misinterpreted the sign in the sky and converted to another religion he would not have been able to prevent further Christians from being persecuted when he issued the Edict of Tolerance, which was pivotal in stopping the intermittent persecution of Christians.

In 325 CE Constantine, being the political head of state, invited clerics from across the empire to the Council of Nicaea where he made a plea for unity. This significant council event was the result of Constantine's conversion, and the result of the conference was not only a condemnation of Arianism but also the Nicene Creed. If Constantine's conversion never existed, Constantine would not have had the idea to pay for scriptures to be copied. The bishops would not have been forced to put the Canon together so that they could all agree on. The idea that our spirits would be one with God, that Jesus is coeternal and coequal with the same substance as God would not have happened at the council of Nicaea in 325. The church's New Testament scriptures came together because of the conversion of Constantine, as well as the idea of the belief the doctrine that Christ is of the same substance as God also came from his conversion. Without Constantine's conversion there would not be the established day to worship on Sunday. Additionally, the proposed tax exemptions for the clergy and the church would not exist or the development of the Canon in the Council of Nicaea. was how the Gospels spread.

“The Conversion of Constantine and the Ascent of Christianity.” *Study.com*, 25 September 2013, study.com/academy/lesson/the-conversion-of-constantine-and-the-ascent-of-christianity.html

Wasson, Donald L.. "Constantine I." *World History Encyclopedia*. World History Encyclopedia, 19 Apr 2013. Web. 03 Mar 2023.