

Timeline of Early Christianity

6 BCE - 500 CE

When do Christians believe that Paul was beheaded? When might St. Thomas have visited India? When did Origen and Jerome write their versions of the Bible? When did Constantine issue the Edict of Milan? When did St. Augustine die? These are all important dates in the history of Christianity; not only are they presented here in this timeline, but they are presented in historical and religious context.

There are several different types of color-coded dates in this timeline of Islamic and Middle East history, explained at the bottom of the [timeline](#).

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April 06, 0006 BCE	According to some Biblical scholars, this would have been the actual date of the birth of Jesus Christ .
November 17, 0003 BCE	According to Christian theologian Clement of Alexandria , Jesus Christ was born on this date.
0026 - 0036	Pontius Pilate is prefect in the Roman province of Palestine.
c. 0030	Clement I , the fourth pope, may have been born.
April 07, 0030	According to the estimates of some scholars, Jesus would have been crucified by Roman troops in Jerusalem on this date.
March 25, 0031	According to Christian calendar-maker Dionysius Exiguus, the first Easter was celebrated on this date.
April 23, 0033	According to Christian tradition, Jesus Christ was raised from the dead on this date, making it the very first Easter . Easter would not fall on April 23rd again until the year 2000.
0034	Christians believe that Stephen , deacon at Jerusalem, is martyred by stoning.
c. 0035	Ignatius of Antioch , important apostolic father who was martyred in Rome, is born.

0037	Christians believe that Saul of Tarsus had a vision on the Damascus road, leading to his conversion to Christianity.
c. 0041	Probable time of Paul's first missionary journey.
c. 0044	Christians believe that James , son of Zebedee, was killed in Jerusalem by Herod Agrippa I.
0052	According to Christian tradition, Paul visited the Greek city of Athens.
c. 0054	Christians believe that the Apostle Philip is stoned to death in Hierapolis.
c. 0063	Christians believe that James , described in the New Testament as the brother of Jesus and the head of the Jerusalem church, was stoned to death by the high priest Ananias at Jerusalem.
c. 0064	Christians believe that Barnabas was burned alive outside the city of Salamina in Cyprus.
c. 0068	Linus , second pope, is believed to have been chosen.
0069	Christians believe that Paul was beheaded in Rome.
c. 0069	Polycarp of Smyrna , regarded as a personal link between the apostolic age and the growing Christian church of the second century, is born.
c. 0070	Christians believe that the Apostle Andrew was martyred by being crucified on an X-shaped cross at Patras in Archaia, Greece.
May 31, 0070	Roman forces captured the first wall of the city of Jerusalem.
September 08, 0070	Following a six-month siege, Jerusalem surrendered to the Roman forces under the command of Titus. Over a million Jewish citizens are thought to have perished during the Great Revolt and, following Jerusalem's

	capture, another 97,000 were sold into slavery.
April 13, 0073	According to Jewish historian Josephus , 967 Jewish zealots committed mass suicide at the fortress of Masada the night before the Roman Tenth Legion broke through the walls. The only survivors were two women and five children who had hid in a cistern; they were later released unharmed by the Romans.
c. 0078	Christians believe that the Apostle Peter died a martyr in Rome.
c. 0078	According to tradition, Pope Linus was martyred. Linus was the second pope and believed to have been chosen by St. Peter to succeed him.
c. 0078	Anacletus , third pope, probably assumed office around this year.
c. 0091	Anacletus , third pope, probably died. According to tradition he was martyred, but there is no verification of that.
c. 0091	Clement I , fourth pope, is believed to have taken office.
0093	Some Christians believe that Luke was martyred by hanging in Greece.
c. 0095	Clement of Rome (c. 0030 - 0101), the fourth Roman Catholic pope, wrote a letter arguing that church leaders possess a divine authority inherited from Christ and his apostles.
c. 0095 - 0105	Composition of the "Pastoral Epistles," falsely attributed to Paul : Hebrews, I and II Timothy, Titus, and I Peter.
c. January 22, 0098	Christians believe that Timothy was stoned to death at Ephesus.
0100	Legends suggest that St. Thomas visited India .
c. 0100	Latest possible date for the composition of

	the Gospel of Matthew .
c. 0100	Christian churches were established in Greece, North Africa, Italy, and Asia Minor.
c. 0100 - 0125	Latest dates for the composition of the Gospel of John .
c. 0101	Evaristus becomes the fifth pope.
c. 0107	Ignatius is martyred in Rome by being fed to the lions in the arena.
c. 0108	Polycarp , regarded as a personal link between the apostolic age and the growing Christian church of the second century, writes an epistle to the Philipians.
c. 0109	According to tradition, Pope Evaristus was martyred and buried near St. Peter.
May 03, 0116	Pope Alexander I is believed to have been martyred by decapitation on the Via Nomentana in Rome.
c. 0117	Sixtus I becomes the seventh pope.
0122	Roman emperor Hadrian visited Britain and began construction of a wall and fortifications between northern England and Scotland.
c. 0125	Sixtus I , the seventh pope, dies.
c. 0125	Telesphorus likely became pope - the eighth in the official lists.
0135	Julius Severus, formerly governor of Britain, crushed the revolt in Palestine. Final Diaspora (dispersion) of the Jews occurred.
c. 0136	Pope Telesphorus , eighth in the lists of popes, probably died.
c. 0138	Hyginus probably became the ninth pope.
c. 0140	Shepherd of Hermas was written, describing a highly developed system of bishops, deacons, and priests
c. 0142	Hyginus , the ninth pope, probably died.

c. 0142	Pius I probably became the tenth pope.
c. 0144	Marcion founded an influential Christian system which argued for the existence of two gods (one good, one evil) and for the rejection of the Old Testament.
c. 0150	School of Alexandria was founded in Egypt, quickly becoming a major center for both Christian theology and Greek philosophy. Among its prominent teachers were the theologians Clement (died c. 0215) and Origen (c. 0185 - 0254).
c. 0150 - 0213	Life of Clement of Alexandria . He was the first known major Christian writer to assert that the gods of other religions were really demons: "The verdict of the prophets was that the gods of all the nations were images of demons." This teaching contradicted the general belief in the Roman Empire that the gods of all religions and nations were universal and differed only in their names and certain minor characteristics.
c. 0155	Anicetus likely became the eleventh pope.
February 23, 0155	Polycarp of Smyrna was burned at the stake at the age of 86 because he refused to repudiate Christianity .
c. February 23, 0155	Polycarp , regarded as a personal link between the apostolic age and the growing Christian church of the second century, is martyred at Smyrna.
July 11, 0155	Pope Pius I died.
c. 0165	Justin Martyr is executed in Rome by Junius Rusticus. St. Justin Martyr was one of the first Christian apologists to offer a defense of Christianity.
c. 0166	Pope Anicetus probably died.
c. 0166	Soter was probably elected the twelfth pope.
c. 0174	Pope Soter probably died.

c. 0174	Eleutherius likely became the thirteenth pope.
c. 0178	The Roman author Celsus attacks Christianity and argues that it is only followed by the poor and ignorant of society.
c. 0180	Irenaeus (0125 - c. 0202), Catholic theologian, wrote Against Heresies in an attempt to fight the spread of Gnosticism. He claimed that "every church must agree" with the church of Rome because of its apostolic authority.
0180	The first African Christians are martyred at Scillium.
c. 0185	Origen , an important early Christian theologian whose views were eventually declared heretical , is born in Alexandria.
c. 0189	Pope Eleutherius dies.
c. 0190	Alexander I is, according to tradition, made the sixth pope.
0200	The New Testament canon is mostly fixed in its currently known form.
0209	St. Alban, first British martyr, is killed for his faith in one of the few persecutions of Christians by pagans ever to take place on the island, during the governorship of Gaius Junius Faustinus Postumianus.
0231	After two decades of collecting and collating manuscripts, Origen commences his polyglot version of the Bible - a text containing several translations of the books of the Bible in parallel columns.
November 21, 0235	Anterus was elected pope.
January 03, 0236	Pope Anterus died.
January 10, 0236	Fabian was elected pope.
January	Pope Fabian died.

20, 0250	
June 25, 0253	Lucius I is elected pope.
c. 0254	Origen , an important early Christian theologian whose views were eventually declared heretical , dies.
March 05, 0254	Pope Lucius I died.
May 12, 0254	Stephen I was elected as the 23rd pope.
August 02, 0257	Pope Stephen I died. Stephen had insisted that Lapsed Christians need not be re-baptized to return to the church.
August 06, 0258	Pope Sixtus II died as a martyr in Rome under the persecutions instituted by emperor Valerian.
December 26, 0267	Pope Dionysius died.
0268	Goths sack Athens, Corinth, and Sparta.
January 03, 0269	Felix I was elected pope.
February 27, 0272	Constantine the Great was born. Constantine would later give Christianity social and political legitimacy in the Roman Empire.
January 04, 0274	Eutychian was elected pope.
December 30, 0274	Pope Felix I died.
December 07, 0283	Pope Eutychian died.
December 17, 0283	Gaius was elected pope.
0296 - 0373	Life of Athanasius. He disputed Arius and taught that that Jesus must be divine because otherwise he could not be the Savior.

April 22, 0296	Pope Gaius died.
June 30, 0296	Marcellinus is elected pope.
February 24, 0303	Roman Emperor Diocletian ordered the destruction of all Christian churches and the general persecution of Christians .
May 01, 0305	Roman emperor Diocletian and co-emperor Maximian retired from office.
October 25, 0306	Marcellinus , once pope, died. It is believed that when Marcellinus died he was no longer pope, having been forced from office on charges of heresy stemming from the Diocletian persecutions of Christians in Rome.
November 30, 0306	Marcellus I was elected pope.
January 16, 0308	Pope Marcellus I died.
April 18, 0310	Eusebius was elected pope.
October 21, 0310	Pope Eusebius died.
0311	Donatist controversy began. Numidian Bishops in North Africa refused to recognize the newly appointed Bishop of Carthage because he had been ordained by a bishop who had, according to them, forfeited his Holy Orders by handing over holy books during recent persecutions. They elected a rival, Bishop Donatus.
May 05, 0311	Gaius VM Galerius, emperor of Rome, died at about the age of 50.
July 02, 0311	Miltiades was elected pope.
28, 0312	Constantine , emperor of the Eastern Empire (from 0306 - 0337) defeated and killed

	Maxentius, emperor of the Western Empire (from 308). Constantine converted to Christianity after seeing a vision before the Battle of Milvian Bridge.
0313	Constantine issued the Edict of Milan, granting legal rights to all Christians and restoring their confiscated possessions.
January 11, 0314	Pope Miltiades died.
January 31, 0314	Silvester I was elected pope.
May 20, 0325	The First Council of Nicea opened. Convened by Emperor Constantine, it establishes Nicene Creed as the fundamental statement of Christian doctrine.
July 25, 0325	The First Council of Nicea ended.
August 25, 0325	The first Council of Nicaea ended, having rejected Arianism and formulated the Nicene Creed .
July 25, 0326	In a public mark of his acceptance of Christianity as the official state religion, Constantine refused to carry out the traditional pagan sacrifices.
May 11, 0330	The city of Constantinople , formerly the Greek town of Byzantium, was inaugurated. Roman emperor Constantine renamed it after himself and made the capital of the empire. For more than 1000 years, Constantinople would remain the most culturally advanced and politically important city in the west.
August 18, 0330	St. Helena died. Mother of Constantine the Great , Helena was an early convert to Christianity and devoted much of her life to religious patronage.
December 31, 0335	Pope Sylvester I died.
January	Mark was elected pope.

18, 0336	
October 07, 0336	Pope Mark died.
February 06, 0337	Julius I was elected pope.
March 22, 0337	Constantine , Emperor of Rome, died at the age of 47.
December 25, 0337	This is the earliest possible year that Christmas was celebrated on December 25th. This was the same date as the first-century BCE Roman holiday for the sun god Mithra.
May 30, 0339	Eusebius , widely regarded as the 'father' of early church history, died at the age of 74.
0350	Christianity first reached Ethiopia.
0351	Emperor Julian attempted to reintroduce paganism in place of Christianity.
April 12, 0352	Pope Julius I died.
May 17, 0352	Liberius was elected the 36th pope.
December 25, 0352	This is the first year that Christmas was definitely celebrated on December 25th.
November 13, 0354	Aurelius Augustinus (Augustine of Hippo) was born in Tagaste, Numidia (now Algeria).
February 19, 0356	Emperor Constantius II closed all pagan temples, continuing the policies of his predecessor, emperor Constantine the Great .
c. 0364	The Church Council of Laodicea ordered that religious observances were to be conducted on Sunday, not Saturday. Sunday became the new Sabbath: "Christians shall not Judaize and be idle on Saturday, but shall work on that day. "
0366	Christians were forbidden to marry during Lent.

September 24, 0366	Pope Liberius died.
October 01, 0366	Damasus I was elected pope.
0367	Festal Epistle of St. Athanasius (c. 0293 - 0373) offered earliest known list of the New Testament canon in current form.
May 02, 0373	Athanasius , bishop of Alexandria, died.
December 07, 0374	St. Ambrose was ordained.
0376	Ulfias introduces Christianity to the Goths. Ulfias translated portions of the Bible into Gothic, creating what is now the only written example of the Gothic language to still exist.
January 18, 0379	Theodosius was installed as co-emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire.
0381	First Council of Constantinople . Convened by Theodosius I (the Great) , then emperor of the East and a recent convert, to confirm the victory over Arianism .
July 09, 0381	Bishop Nestorius is nominated to be the first patriarch of Constantinople .
0382	Emperor Theodosius the Great passed laws making heresy punishable by death.
December 11, 0384	Pope Damasus I died.
February 11, 0385	Siricius was elected pope.
April 24, 0387	At the age of 32, Augustine of Hippo was baptized on Easter Eve. Converting to Christianity, Augustine would become the leading theologian in the church's history by writing major theological works like City of God and Confessions and by writing polemics against heresies.
0393	Christian conquerors abolished the Greek

	Olympics.
0394	Council of Carthage - first council to uphold the doctrines of prayers for the dead and purgatory.
September 06, 0394	Theodosius the Great , Roman emperor who established Christianity as the official religion and persecuted the pagans, defeats Western emperor Eugenius and reunites the Eastern and Western empires.
0395	Roman Empire is divided again between East and West, setting the stage for the eventual division of the Christian Church. Latin Christianity is based in Rome under the leadership of the popes while Eastern Orthodoxy develops in the east in Constantinople under the leadership of patriarchs.
January 17, 0395	Theodosius I the Great , the Spanish-born emperor of Rome, died at age 49.
January 17, 0395	Theodosius the Great , Roman emperor who established Christianity as the official religion and persecuted the pagans, dies and the empire is divided between his two sons: Arcadius in the east and Honorius in the west.
April 04, 0397	St. Ambrose died.
November 26, 0399	Pope Siricius died.
November 27, 0399	Anastasius I was elected pope.
0400	Anglo-Saxon pagan invaders almost eliminate Christianity in England.
December 19, 0401	Pope Anastasius I died.
December 21, 0401	Innocent I was elected pope. Innocent I would claim universal jurisdiction over the Roman Church.

c. 0405	St. Jerome (c. 0347 - 0419) completed the Vulgate - a Latin translation of both the Old and New Testaments. This remains the Latin Bible of the Roman Catholic Church.
June 21, 0406	St. Alban's day, named after the supposed martyrdom of a priest, St. Alban , in Mainz around the year 406. This Alban is sometimes confused with another St. Alban of England of the same time period.
August 24, 0410	Under the leadership of Alarich, the Visigoths captured Rome and began four days of looting. This would be one of the events which forced the collapse of the Roman Empire in the West.
0415	Hypatia , a pagan scholar, was killed at the hands of a Christian mob. A close advisor of Orestes, the Roman governor of Alexandria, Hypatia had been a popular public lecturer in philosophy and mathematics.
March 12, 0417	Pope Innocent I died.
March 18, 0417	Zosimus was elected pope.
0418	Pelagius (c. 0354 - 0420), a British monk, was excommunicated. Pelagius denied original sin and the need for baptism, asserting that if God asked men to do good, then they must be capable of doing good on their own. He was condemned by Augustine.
March 10, 0418	Jews were officially excluded from holding public offices in the Roman Empire.
April 30, 0418	Roman Emperor Honorius issued a decree denouncing Pelagianism , a Christian heresy which taught that humans can do good of their own free will, independent of God's grace.
December 26, 0418	Pope Zosimus died.
December	Antipope Eulalius was elected.

27, 0418	
December 28, 0418	Boniface I elected pope.
September 30, 0420	Traditional date for the death of Saint Jerome .
September 04, 0422	Pope Boniface I died.
September 10, 0422	Celestine I was elected pope.
0426	Augustine of Hippo declared that the purpose of marriage was procreation.
c. 0430	St. Patrick , the "Apostle of Ireland," introduced Christianity to pagan Ireland. A Roman Briton, he was born Maewyn Succat and adopted Patrick or Patricius upon becoming a priest
August 28, 0430	Augustine of Hippo died.
December 07, 0430	Cyril of Alexandria condemned the doctrine of the Antiochene monk Nestorius at the Synod of Rome. According to Nestorius, there were two separate Persons in the Christ - one Divine and the other Human.
0431	Under the direction of St. Patrick (c. 0390 - c. 0460), the conversion of Ireland began.
June 22, 0431	The Council of Ephesus opened. It would denounce the teachings of Nestorius (d. 451), who argued that Christ had completely separate human and divine natures.
July 17, 0431	The Council of Ephesus closed.
0432	First celebration of St. Patrick's Day in Ireland, in honor of the arrival of St. Patrick .
July 27, 0432	Pope Celestine I died.
February	Saint Mesrop Mashtots died. Mesrop played

17, 0440	an key role in the development of Christianity in Armenia.
0446	Eutyches, abbot of Constantinople, asserted that there was a single nature in Christ, divine, and that his human nature had been absorbed by God. Followers of this doctrine came to known as Monophysites (or sometimes Eutychians).
0450	The Athanasian Creed was written by an anonymous author in Gaul.
0451	Attila invaded Gaul but was repulsed by joint forces of Franks, Alemanni and, Romans at the battle of Chalons. Attila Invaded Italy the next year.
October 08, 0451	Council of Chalcedon (4th ecumenical council) opened.
October 22, 0451	During the Fifth Session of the Council of Chalcedon , the final form of the Chalcedonian Creed was drafted, defining for the early church the person and work of Jesus Christ. The Council voted that Christ was simultaneously "truly man and truly God."
October 31, 0451	During the 15th Session of the Council of Chalcedon , Constantinople was given a patriarchate that extended over the civil dioceses of Pontus, Asia, and Thrace.
November 01, 0451	The Council of Chalcedon was closed.
0460 - 0467	Pope Leo I asserted papal primacy, arguing that the pope alone has the responsibility and authority to care for the entire church.
March 17, 0461	Saint Patrick , patron saint of Ireland, is believed to have died in Saul, County Down.
November 10, 0461	Pope Leo I (the Great) died.
November 17, 0461	St. Hilarius was elected pope.

November 19, 0461	St. Hilary was consecrated pope.
February 29, 0468	Pope Hilarius died.
March 03, 0468	Simplicius was elected pope.
0476	The Western Roman Empire falls to barbarian armies, leaving the church as the primary authority in the West. In the East, the Byzantine Empire based in Constantinople continues for the next 977 years.
0480 - 0543	Life of St. Benedict who introduced monastic life to Europe and who, in 529, founded the monastery of Monte Casino in Campania, Italy, with eleven of his followers.
March 10, 0483	Pope Simplicius died.
March 13, 0483	Felix III was elected pope.
March 01, 0492	Pope Felix III died.
March 01, 0492	Gelasius I was elected pope
November 21, 0496	Pope Gelasius I died.
November 24, 0496	Anastasius II was elected pope.
November 19, 0498	Pope Anastasius II died.

Color Key: This chart explains which sorts of topics are given which colors in the chronologies.

Color	Topic
Blue	Scripture: Events in the development of the Christian New Testament and other religious

	documents.
Yellow	Persecution: Events in which Christians were or are believed to have been persecuted for their beliefs.
Green	Popes: Lives, elections, and deaths of those regarded as the earliest bishops of Rome.
Orange	Councils: Meetings of the early Christian councils during which basic Christian doctrine was worked out.
Purple	Other
Grey	Miscellaneous events to provide historical context and comparison