

CONSTANTINE I

(born 2-27-280 A.D., died 5-22-337 A.D.)

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He was called “Constantine the Great.” His full name almost matched his exploits. It was Flavius Valerius Aurelius Constantinus. He was emperor of Rome from 306-337 A.D.

In 306, as a result of a confusion of emperors, Constantine was confirmed as Caesar by Galerius, while Flavius Valerius Severus became emperor of the West. In confusion of emperors, which followed Severus, was overthrown. After several battles were fought between other would-be claimants, Maxentius Daia, being the chiefest threat, in 312 A.D., Constantine crossed the Alps with a well-trained army, captured Verona, and Marched on Rome. During this campaign, it is said, he saw a flaming cross in the heavens beneath the sun, bearing the Latin inscription Hoc Vinces (in this sign thou wilt conquer), or according to other sources, in the Greek, En Touto Nika. Maxentius was defeated along the Tiber in the Battle of the Milvian, and was drowned in the river. (Oct.28, 312 A.D.) Constantine’s conversion to Christianity apparently dates from this time, and he adopted a monogram consisting of a p (Greek Rho) between the upper arms of an X (Greek Chi), the initial letters of Christ, in Greek, which was placed on the labarum.

“In 313 A.D. Licinius having disposed of his rival, the two Agusti (Constantine and Licinius) met at Mediolanum, (Milan) where Licinius married Constantine’s half-sister, Constantia. A memorable result of this meeting was the Edict of Toleration in favor of religious freedom for all sects. Confiscated property was to be returned to Christians, and they were made eligible for public office.”

It is significant to note here that, as was the case in Judea at the time of our Lord Jesus-Christ, the persecutions of the Christians were always instigated by the local Jewry, and carried out by Roman law and its servants. However, we must recognize also, that as in Judea, they exercised some control of the local governments, and also served in the Army.

As always though, God knew what he was doing, and made Constantine Emperor of the entire Roman Empire, thus the Christians enjoyed religious freedom throughout the known world. Since the Romans had built a network of fine roads, (many of which are still in use) and “all roads led to Rome,” the time was ripe for the spread of Christianity (not Judaism) “to the four corners of the earth.” Not “leaving a stone unturned,” God already had his chosen race, Israel, (the Lost Ten Tribes) whom He had given “eyes to see, and ears to hear,” scattered around in these countries, and were known as “Romans,

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Corinthians, Galatians, etc.; and all of them carried the nomenclature “GENTILES” (genes...of the same genes) because they certainly were not Jews – the current definition of the term at the time of Jesus Christ!”

With their newfound freedom to worship the Everliving-God without fear of persecution, Israel again had a population explosion such as they had enjoyed in Goshen, Egypt. THE WORD WAS TAKEN TO THEM, THEY BELIEVED, CHURCHES WERE FORMED, GOD WAS HONORED, AND MISSIONARIES WERE SENT TO THE “FOUR CORNERS OF THE EARTH.” Isn’t our Lord great?