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Christian History Made Easy (Rose Bible Basics)

5. What You Should Know About Christian History: AD 64–177

A quick-reference overview of the earliest era of church history. It lists the key events, people, and terms a student should recognize for the period spanning the Jerusalem Council through the persecutions of the second century.

Key takeaways

- Key events: the Jerusalem Council decided Gentiles need not become Jews to follow Christ (AD 49/50); Nero blamed Christians for the fire in Rome (AD 64); Titus destroyed Jerusalem's temple (AD 70); Pliny asked Trajan how to handle Christians (~AD 112); Polycarp was martyred (AD 155).
- Key people include the apostles Peter and Paul (both martyred ~AD 65–68), the persecuting emperor Nero, the Jewish historian Josephus, and the 'Apostolic Fathers' Ignatius, Papias, and Polycarp.
- Later apologists Justin Martyr and the slave-girl Blandina were both martyred for the faith.
- Terms: 'AD' (Anno Domini, 'the Lord's Year'); a 'century' is 100 years; 'Yahweh' is God's Hebrew name meaning 'I AM'; the 'Apostolic Fathers' are influential first-century Christians.

- Our AD dating comes from the monk Dionysius Exiguus, whose math was off by a few years—so Jesus may have been four or five years old in AD 1.

Scripture referenced

- **Acts 15** -- Jerusalem Council; Gentiles need not become Jews
- **Exodus 3:13-14** -- God's name Yahweh, 'I AM'
- **Philippians 4:3** -- possible mention of Clement of Rome