

RIPPLE ENGLISH

ACTIVE LEARNING PROGRAM

Workbook for:

“The Roman Empire and Christianity”

問題は解きっぱなしにしないで！

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The Roman Empire and Christianity

1. One of the defining events in world history is the adoption of Christianity as the state religion of the Roman Empire. A major turning point is often attributed to the Edict of Milan, issued in 313 by Emperor Constantine, which officially recognized Christianity. It is widely regarded as the cause of Christianity's **triumph**, but is that really the case?
 2. Indeed, some estimates show that the proportion of Christian population in the empire was less than 10 percent at that time. However, Christianity was growing at the rate of around 40 percent per decade before the Edict of Milan. Also, Christianity provided a strong sense of belonging with its followers, so Christian communities were highly organized and influential. On the other hand, traditional Roman polytheism didn't bring strong commitment of the followers, attachments between them, and loyalties to the community. Constantine could not disregard the capacity to mobilize human resources and political influence of the Christian churches. He also found Christianity useful to justify the legitimacy and sanctity of the emperors. It was not that Christianity rose because of Constantine; Christianity was already so influential that he had no choice but to officially approve it. Why did one of countless cults become dominant in the Roman Empire? What can we learn about human society through the rise of Christianity?
- (1) The word "triumph" in the passage is closest in meaning to
 - A. fortune
 - B. victory
 - C. tyranny
 - D. sanctity
 - (2) According to paragraph 2, which of the following best explains why Constantine approved Christianity?
 - A. He was personally a devout Christian who wanted to spread his faith.
 - B. He aimed to replace Roman polytheism with a more peaceful religion.
 - C. He recognized the organizational power and influence of Christian communities.
 - D. He believed that Christianity had already become the majority religion in the empire.

3. Early Christianity was a cult movement **derived** from Judaism, and the initial spread is thought to have occurred among the Hellenized Jews of the diaspora; Jewish people living in the Roman empire who were integrated into Greek-Roman culture. They greatly outnumbered the Jews living in Palestine, and the majority of them lived in the eastern part of the empire.
4. They had a demand for a new religion. Many Hellenized Jews had embraced some elements of Roman polytheism and cultural views of Roman society. Also, the Law of Judaism sometimes prevented them from participating in Roman civic life. Yet, it was difficult to fully abandon their Jewish culture. The receptivity of most people for wholly new things is small. Generally speaking, people are more willing to adopt a new religion to the extent that it retains cultural continuity with conventional religions with which they are already familiar. In the modern era, movements like Mormonism and the Unification Church have gained many followers, not by being entirely new religions, but by building upon the context of traditional Christianity to which people were already accustomed. Hellenized Jews in the empire wanted to blend in the Roman culture while maintaining their religious context of Judaism. Christianity effectively satisfied such a religious demand.
5. It is estimated that there were a million Christians in the empire in A.D. 250, and only one out of every five Jews of the diaspora need to have converted to meet that number. By appealing to diaspora Jews, Christianity gained its initial substantial number of followers. Moreover, Christianity acquired universality that is free from Jewish ethnicity, while retaining the exclusive elements of monotheism. This gave rise to a religion that was open to everyone yet maintained strong communal identity and organizational strength.

- (3) The word “derive” in the passage is closest in meaning to
- A. stem
 - B. expel
 - C. support
 - D. develop
- (4) According to paragraph 4, which of the following is true?
- A. Hellenized Jews completely rejected Roman culture in order to protect their Jewish identity.
 - B. New religions that lack any connection to existing traditions tend to attract more followers.
 - C. Christianity appealed to Hellenized Jews because it preserved elements of Judaism while adapting to Roman society.
 - D. The Law of Judaism made it easier for Jews to fully participate in Roman civic life.
- (5) According to paragraph 4 and 5, what was one key factor that helped Christianity grow in its early stages?
- A. It rejected all Jewish traditions to attract non-Jewish followers.
 - B. It focused only on converting Roman citizens, not diaspora Jews.
 - C. It maintained strict ethnic boundaries to preserve religious purity.
 - D. It appealed to a specific group of people with new religious demand.

6. Around A.D. 100, the Roman Empire reached its largest territorial expansion, dominating the entire Mediterranean world. As the empire grew, traditional Roman polytheism couldn't satisfy the religious needs of the vast state. There is a historical tendency that as society becomes older, larger, and more cosmopolitan, people will demand fewer universal gods of greater scope. Roman polytheism had incorporated regional deities of each conquest. This had been one of the biggest advantages that supported the tolerance of Roman society, but eventually there were more gods than people could remember, gradually losing its attraction and influence. On the other hand, Christians were convinced that the very same God was worshiped in the same way at every church across the empire.
7. Even more importantly, they could expect that wherever they went, there would be fellows who worship the same God and welcomed them as members of the community. Christian communities particularly appealed to people who could not belong to land-based or ethnicity-based groups. Such strong cohesion and attachment among Christians were the biggest advantages over the traditional polytheism. Traditional deities only ask for a one-on-one relationship between a god and the believer; a person who sacrifices their time and resources, and the god who benefits them in response. On the other hand, Christian God also defines the relationship between his believers; God loves people, so you have to love and save your neighbors who are loved by God, and they have to love and save you who is loved by God. This logic was unique to Christianity. As the empire expanded, people came and went between cities, and members became diverse, but Christian communities were open to everyone, regardless of ethnicity, wealth, and birthplace. Being a Christian might have been more attractive, comfortable, and safer than being a Roman citizen.

- (6) According to paragraph 6, which of the following is NOT true?
- A. The Roman Empire reached its greatest territorial size around A.D. 100.
 - B. Roman polytheism lost some of its appeal due to the overwhelming number of gods.
 - C. Christianity provided a sense of unity through the worship of a single, universal God.
 - D. Roman polytheism remained fully effective in meeting the spiritual needs of the expanding empire.
- (7) According to paragraph 7, which of the following is true?
- A. Traditional polytheistic religions emphasized strong bonds among believers, similar to Christian communities.
 - B. Christian communities were exclusive and primarily accepted people of the same ethnicity or social class.
 - C. Christianity provided not only a connection with God but also a defined relationship among believers.
 - D. People preferred Roman citizenship over joining Christian communities during the empire's expansion.

8. In March 180, Emperor Marcus Aurelius, the last of the Five Good Emperors, passed away, which marked the sunset of peace and prosperity of the Roman Empire, known as the Pax Romana. Under his reign, disasters were frequent, epidemics were rampant, and borders were threatened. With the death of Marcus Aurelius, who had been diligently addressing such crises, the empire plunged into an era of turmoil. Low fertility had been a serious problem since the 1st Century, and the plague, which claimed the lives of one-quarter to one-third of the population, made the situation even worse. Public order and social bonds had changed due to a constant influx of “barbarian” settlers to make up for the population decrease. The throne was sought with violence and the government became unstable. The devaluation of currency and resulting inflation put many people in poverty.
9. Meanwhile, Christianity was propelled by these crises. Frequently in human history, crises and disasters have caused transitions of faith, especially when the traditional religion fails to provide satisfactory explanation of why the disaster occurred, a guiding principle of actions against the crises, and healing to their grief. Epidemics, in particular, revealed notable contrasts between the traditional religion and Christianity. While Priests of Roman polytheism were struggling to deal with the epidemic, Christianity told that those who care, sympathize, and support their neighbors even in difficulties would be rewarded eternal peace in heaven. In other words, Christianity gave meaning to the calamity and guidance for action. As Roman citizens abandoned the cities, Christians remained, dedicating themselves to caring for the sick. Moreover, such norms and mutual support resulted in substantially higher rates of survival among Christians. This meant that in the aftermath of each epidemic, Christians made up a larger percentage of the population even without new converts. Moreover, their better survival rate would have seemed a “miracle” of God.
10. The same was true for the influx of immigrants and economic distress. To cities filled with newcomers and strangers, Christianity offered a basis for attachment and shared norms. To cities filled with homeless and impoverished, Christianity offered charity, as well as hope that all people are equal before God. All of these made Christianity more appealing when people were gradually disillusioned with the traditional deities.

- (8) According to paragraph 8, which of the following is NOT true?
- A. The death of Marcus Aurelius marked the end of a stable and prosperous period in Roman history.
 - B. The Roman government remained stable and strong after the 2nd Century.
 - C. The empire faced population decline due to both low birthrates and deadly plagues.
 - D. Economic hardship increased as a result of inflation caused by currency devaluation.
- (9) According to paragraph 9, how did Christianity benefit during times of epidemic crises?
- A. It forced Roman priests to convert and adopt Christian practices.
 - B. It provided moral support and practical care, leading to better survival rates among Christians.
 - C. It promised material rewards for helping others during plagues.
 - D. It avoided affected areas, which helped Christians remain healthy.
- (10) According to paragraph 10, which of the following is true?
- A. Christianity appealed mainly to wealthy Roman elites who opposed immigration.
 - B. Traditional Roman deities were known for promoting social equality and charity.
 - C. Christianity provided emotional and social support in times of instability and poverty.
 - D. Economic hardship and immigration made people turn more strongly to Roman polytheism.

11. One of the profound characteristics of Christianity was that it required higher costs and more severe restrictions from its believers than the traditional polytheism. First of all, Christians had to live a peculiar lifestyle, and invest a lot of time on regular weekly worship. Generally, high costs make a service or a product less attractive, but religions may not be the case. Firstly, costly demands **mitigate** “free-rider” problems. High costs screen out potential members whose commitment and participation would be low. Also, high costs tend to increase participation among those who do join, driven by the sunk cost fallacy. Moreover, the more each member pays, the higher levels of benefits they gain collectively. For example, the more fellows join the songs and prayers, and the more enthusiastically they participate, the greater the satisfaction each participant can experience. Another cost of being a Christian is that it requires exclusive commitment. Christians are not allowed to worship other deities and belong to other religious communities simultaneously. This often triggered persecution, but it fostered a strong sense of solidarity in reverse. Thus, the high participation costs made Christian communities attractive and cohesive, which brought its great capacity to mobilize human resources and political influence.
12. The Roman Empire was fundamentally a collection of city-states and provinces; the city of Rome had relations with other cities and regions individually. The essence of Roman governance ultimately depended on whether it could maintain loyalty and support from the ruling class in each region. With the expansion of Christianity, churches and bishops in each city earned power to organize and mobilize a large number of citizens. Constantine’s favorable approach to Christianity is due to its growing influence, which he could not ignore to stabilize his rule. Backed by his official approval in 313, Christian population further increased, surpassing the majority by the time of Emperor Theodosius in the late 4th century. Christians, once persecuted, had now turned the tables, sometimes attacking pagans and destroying their temples.
13. In short, Christianity had a lot of characteristics to match Roman society and its religious needs. Leveraging the expansive network of the Roman Empire, Christianity spread widely and deeply, and profoundly impacted the course of human history.

- (11) The word “mitigate” in the passage is closest in meaning to
- A. alleviate
 - B. amplify
 - C. leverage
 - D. suffer
- (12) According to paragraph 11, which of the following is NOT true?
- A. Christianity required its believers to be exclusively committed to their faith.
 - B. High participation costs helped reduce the number of uncommitted members.
 - C. The peculiar lifestyle and time investment made Christianity less attractive to everyone.
 - D. High participation costs contributed to the cohesion and strength of Christian communities.
- (13) According to paragraph 12, what was one reason Constantine officially approved Christianity?
- A. He saw the churches’ ability to influence and organize people as useful.
 - B. He feared a rebellion led by pagan priests.
 - C. He wanted to convert all Roman citizens by force.
 - D. He aimed to abolish the provincial city-state system of governance.
- (14) Within the whole passage, all of the following are mentioned, EXCEPT
- A. Christianity spread by offering cultural continuity to Hellenized Jews who couldn’t fully integrate into Roman civic life.
 - B. Christians’ strong sense of community allowed them to survive epidemics at higher rates than non-Christians.
 - C. Roman polytheism became less attractive as the empire expanded and included too many regional deities.
 - D. Christian population became the majority as the Hellenized Jews of Diaspora continuously increased.

Answers

- (1) B
- (2) C
- (3) A
- (4) C
- (5) D
- (6) D
- (7) C
- (8) B
- (9) B
- (10) C
- (11) A
- (12) C
- (13) A
- (14) D

(1) 文中の“triumph”と意味が最も近いのは

- A. fortune（幸運、成功）
- B. victory（勝利）**
- C. tyranny（専制、暴政）
- D. sanctity（神聖性）

(2) 2段落によれば、コンスタンティヌスがキリスト教を承認した理由として最も適切なのは次のうちどれか？

- A. He was personally a devout Christian who wanted to spread his faith.（彼は個人的に敬虔なキリスト教徒であり、信仰を広めたいと考えていた）
- B. He aimed to replace Roman polytheism with a more peaceful religion.（彼はローマの多神教をより平和的な宗教に置き換えることを目指していた）
- C. He recognized the organizational power and influence of Christian communities.**（彼はキリスト教共同体の組織力と影響力を認識していた）
- D. He believed that Christianity had already become the majority religion in the empire.（彼はキリスト教がすでに帝国の多数派宗教になっていると信じていた）

(3) 文中の“derive”と意味が最も近いのは

- A. stem（～に由来する、～から生じる）**
- B. expel（追放する）
- C. support（支援する）
- D. develop（発展する）

(4) 4段落の内容に合致するのは？

- A. Hellenized Jews completely rejected Roman culture in order to protect their Jewish identity.（ギリシャ化したユダヤ人は、ユダヤ人としてのアイデンティティを守るためにローマ文化を完全に拒絶した）
- B. New religions that lack any connection to existing traditions tend to attract more followers.（既存の伝統とは何のつながりもない新しい宗教は、より多くの信者を引き付ける傾向がある）

C. Christianity appealed to Hellenized Jews because it preserved elements of Judaism while adapting to Roman society.（キリスト教は、ユダヤ教の要素を保ちながらもローマ社会に適応していたため、ギリシャ化したユダヤ人に魅力的だった）

D. The Law of Judaism made it easier for Jews to fully participate in Roman civic life.（ユダヤ教の律法は、ユダヤ人がローマの市民生活に完全に参加することを容易にした）

(5) 5段落によると、キリスト教が初期に成長するのに役立った重要な要素は何か？

- A. It rejected all Jewish traditions to attract non-Jewish followers.（非ユダヤ人の信者を引き付けるために、ユダヤ教の伝統をすべて拒絶した）
- B. It focused only on converting Roman citizens, not diaspora Jews.（離散ユダヤ人ではなく、ローマ市民の改宗にのみ焦点を当てた）
- C. It maintained strict ethnic boundaries to preserve religious purity.（宗教的純粋さを保つために、厳格な民族的境界を維持した）

D. It appealed to a specific group of people with new religious demand.（新しい宗教ニーズを持つ特定のグループの人たちにとって魅力的だった）

(6) 6段落の内容に合致しないのは？

- A. The Roman Empire reached its greatest territorial size around A.D. 100.（ローマ帝国は西暦100年頃に最大版図に達した）
- B. Roman polytheism lost some of its appeal due to the overwhelming number of gods.（ローマの多神教は、神々の数が圧倒的に多かったため、その魅力をいくらか失った）
- C. Christianity provided a sense of unity through the worship of a single, universal God.（キリスト教は、唯一の普遍的な神を崇拝することで、一体感をもたらした）
- D. Roman polytheism remained fully effective in meeting the spiritual needs of the expanding empire.**（ローマの多神教は、拡大する帝国の精神的なニーズを満たす上で、依然として十分に効果的だった）

(7) 7段落の内容に合致するのは？

- A. Traditional polytheistic religions emphasized strong bonds among believers, similar to Christian communities.（伝統的な多神教は、キリスト教共同体と同様に、信者間の強い絆を重視していた）
- B. Christian communities were exclusive and primarily accepted people of the same ethnicity or social class.（キリスト教共同体は排他的で、主に同じ民族または社会階級の人々を受け入れていた）
- C. Christianity provided not only a connection with God but also a defined relationship among believers.**（キリスト教は神とのつながりだけでなく、信者間の明確な関係も提供した）
- D. People preferred Roman citizenship over joining Christian communities during the empire’s expansion.（帝国の拡大期において、人々はキリスト教共同体への参加よりもローマ市民であることを好んだ）

(8) 8段落の内容に合致しないのは？

- A. The death of Marcus Aurelius marked the end of a stable and prosperous period in Roman history.（マルクス・アウレリウスの死は、ローマ史における安定と繁栄の時代の終わりを告げた）
- B. The Roman government remained stable and strong after the 2nd Century.**（ローマ政府は2世紀以降も安定し、強固な体制を維持した）

- C. The empire faced population decline due to both low birthrates and deadly plagues. (帝国は出生率の低下と致命的な疫病の両方により人口減少に直面した)
- D. Economic hardship increased as a result of inflation caused by currency devaluation. (通貨切り下げによるインフレの結果、経済的困難が増大した)

(9) 9段落によると、キリスト教は疫病の危機の際にどのような利益を享受したか？

- A. It forced Roman priests to convert and adopt Christian practices. (キリスト教はローマの司祭たちに改宗を強制し、キリスト教の慣習を取り入れさせ)
- B. It provided moral support and practical care, leading to better survival rates among Christians. (キリスト教は道徳的な支援と实际的なケアを提供し、キリスト教徒の生存率を高めた)**
- C. It promised material rewards for helping others during plagues. (疫病流行時に他者を助けることにに対し、物質的な報酬を約束した)
- D. It avoided affected areas, which helped Christians remain healthy. (疫病の流行地域を避け、キリスト教徒の健康維持に役立った)

(10) 10段落の内容に合致するのは？

- A. Christianity appealed mainly to wealthy Roman elites who opposed immigration. (キリスト教は主に、移民に反対する裕福なローマのエリート層に魅力的だった)
- B. Traditional Roman deities were known for promoting social equality and charity. (伝統的なローマの神々は、社会的平等と慈善を促進することで知られていた)
- C. Christianity provided emotional and social support in times of instability and poverty. (キリスト教は、不安定で貧困な時代に精神的および社会的支援を提供した)**
- D. Economic hardship and immigration made people turn more strongly to Roman polytheism. (経済的困難と移民は、人々をローマの多神教へとより強く向かわせた)

(11) 文中の “mitigate” と意味が最も近いのは

- A. alleviate (緩和する)**
- B. amplify (増幅する)
- C. leverage (最大限活用する)
- D. suffer (苦しむ)

(12) 11段落の内容に合致しないのは？

- A. Christianity required its believers to be exclusively committed to their faith. (キリスト教は信者に信仰に専心することを要求した)
- B. High participation costs helped reduce the number of uncommitted members. (参加コストが高いため、コミットメントの低い信者の数を減らすのに役立った)
- C. The peculiar lifestyle and time investment made Christianity less attractive to everyone. (独特な生活様式と時間の投資は、キリスト教をすべての人にとって魅力のないものにした)**
- D. High participation costs contributed to the cohesion and strength of Christian communities. (参加費用が高いことは、キリスト教コミュニティの結束と強さに貢献した)

(13) 12段落によると、コンスタンティヌスがキリスト教を公式に承認した理由の一つは何か？

- A. He saw the churches' ability to influence and organize people as useful. (彼は教会の影響力や組織力を有用だと考えていた)**
- B. He feared a rebellion led by pagan priests. (彼は異教の司祭による反乱を恐れていた)
- C. He wanted to convert all Roman citizens by force. (彼はすべてのローマ市民を強制的に改宗させようとしていた)
- D. He aimed to abolish the provincial city-state system of governance. (彼は属州都市国家の統治制度を廃止しようとしていた)

(14) 全本文中で言及されていないのは

- A. Christianity spread by offering cultural continuity to Hellenized Jews who couldn't fully integrate into Roman civic life. (キリスト教は、ローマの市民生活に完全に溶け込むことができなかったギリシャ化したユダヤ人に文化的連続性を提供することで広まった)
- B. Christians' strong sense of community allowed them to survive epidemics at higher rates than non-Christians. (キリスト教徒は強い共同体意識を持っていたため、非キリスト教徒よりも高い割合で疫病を生き延びることができた)
- C. Roman polytheism became less attractive as the empire expanded and included too many regional deities. (ローマ帝国が拡大し、地域の神々をあまりにも多く含むようになると、ローマの多神教の魅力は薄れていった)
- D. Christian population became the majority as the Hellenized Jews of Diaspora continuously increased. (ギリシャ化した離散ユダヤ人が継続的に増加するにつれて、キリスト教徒の人口が多数派となった)**
- 離散ユダヤ人の改宗は最初期のまとまった信者獲得に寄与した要素であり、キリスト教徒の人口が過半を越えたのはコンスタンティヌスのミラノ勅令以降であるためDが誤り。