CHAPTER 1 SECTION 4	Section Summary
	THE RISE OF CHRISTIANITY

Early in the *Pax Romana,* Christianity emerged in the Roman provinces of Galilee and Judea. Its leader was a Jewish man named **Jesus.** Almost all that we know about his life comes from the New Testament Gospels. Among other things, they relate that Jesus preached in Jerusalem. Twelve close followers, or **apostles,** helped him. Large crowds gathered to hear Jesus, especially when word spread that he had performed miracles.

Jesus' teachings were rooted in Jewish law, but he interpreted the law in new ways. He promised to bring salvation and eternal life to anyone who would believe in him. He emphasized God's love and taught the need for justice, morality, and service to others. But Jewish leaders were concerned that Jesus' teaching might trigger a revolt and a Roman crackdown. They had Jesus arrested. Roman authorities crucified him. The Gospels state that Jesus rose from the dead. After these events, the apostles and other followers spread Jesus' teachings. **Paul,** a Jew from Asia Minor, brought Jesus' teachings to Gentiles, or non-Jews. He helped to make Christianity separate from Judaism and to develop into a world religion.

However, for a time Christianity remained a sect within Judaism. The main difference between this sect and traditional Judaism was the Christian focus on Jesus as the **messiah** and the center of their faith. Rome had a long history of **tolerance** of varied religions, but that tolerance did not extend to Christianity. Christians refused to make sacrifices to the emperor and would not honor Roman gods. Although the Romans persecuted Christians, Christianity continued to spread. Gradually, the scattered Christian communities organized a structured church hierarchy made up of **clergy,** such as priests and bishops. During the Middle Ages, the Christian church became the most powerful force in Europe.

In the West, the shared heritage of Jews and Christians is known as the Judeo-Christian tradition. At the heart of this tradition are the moral and ethical principles put forth in the Bible. These principles are the basic assumptions behind many Western beliefs, including fair treatment, or justice.

Review Questions

1. What did Jesus promise to those who believed in him?

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2. What was the main difference between the new Christian sect and traditional Judaism?

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READING CHECK

Who was Paul?

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VOCABULARY STRATEGY

What does the word *hierarchy* mean in the underlined sentence? The word *hierarchy* is a synonym for the words *order* and *rank.* Use these synonyms and any context clues to help you figure out what *hierarchy* means.

READING SKILL

Identify Causes and Effects
Why did the Roman empire not tolerate Christianity, and what was the result?

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