

WEEK
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Decisive Moments in the History of Christianity
TURNING POINTS

The Fall of Jerusalem (A.D. 70)

Many camps present their history to each new staff. It's helpful to know how your camp was started, where it came from, and what the values have been over the years. This communicates the heartbeat and some of the DNA—stuff you don't always pick up from reading the employee handbook or operations manual.

The same is true for the church. So each weekend we are going to present an event in the formation of Christianity that had decisive implications. Certainly the Bible is our only sure guide, but understanding these historical events gives us a better grasp on how Christianity unfolded and how we got to where we are today.

The first event occurred about 40 years after Jesus was crucified, resurrected, and ascended back into

heaven. In the year 66, Jewish exasperation with the insensitive rule of Rome came to a boil, and the Jewish revolt began in Caesarea. So Rome sent four legions to discipline its wayward Judean colony. Four years later Jerusalem was sieged, the Jewish temple destroyed, and the animal sacrifices ceased, never to begin again.

Why does this matter? It moved Christianity outward, transforming it from an appendage of Judaism to a religion with universal significance. The destruction of Jerusalem pushed Christianity out on its own to establish authority, formulate creeds, and assemble the Scriptures. Within a few decades Rome replaced Jerusalem as the center of Christianity, and Christians spread all around the Mediterranean world.