

## Attitudes to Christians

# Roman Imperial Times

Day of the Sun, X month, IX year of the divine Claudius

**Mad, Bad, Dangerous? Or are they harmless dreamers?**  
We asked our readers to scratch out parchments with their views on the latest sect to gain ground in Rome - the followers of Christ. Here's what your slaves brought in.

They seem like ordinary people to me. Some are rich, others poor, others slaves. It seems that the rich give all their wealth to the group to share out so that nobody is in need. People say they are an honest lot.

Gaius Valerians.  
Villa Alta  
Vatican Hill

They worship a criminal executed by Roman Justice at the corner of our Empire. Strange, very strange. What's more strange is that they seem to believe and act as if this crucified 'Christus' is alive again - risen from the dead like the unconquered Sun.

Aquila of Brindisium.  
Villa Media  
Palatine Hill

I've always thought they were like the Jews in their beliefs. We've had Jews well settled in Rome for many years now. My Jewish friends tell me these followers of Christ are not of the Jewish Religion. They gather for worship, so I am told, in one another's homes.

Faustus of Lyconium  
Lyconium crossroads

What's the big deal? They're not so bad. If they make a promise, they keep it. They don't swear false oaths. They seem full of love and joy. I've even seen them look after the sick and beggars of the poor quarter. My friends hate them because they don't honour our gods, but I think they don't mean any harm.

Name and address supplied

They don't cheat others at the market place. They get up before sunrise on the first working day of the week to worship their Christ. They take their religion very seriously indeed.

Marcus Antoninus  
Villa Circus  
Romulus Way

To join them you have to believe in their God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. One of their elders dips you under water, anoints you with oil from the olive and then offers you what they call their Eucharist. I've traded with Christians and have always found them very fair.

Name and address supplied

You are a Christian in Rome of AD 50. A friend who is not a Christian writes to you. Your friend wants to become a Christian. Write a letter of advice back to them. Include in your letter: what the Church will require of your friend; what other Romans might think of your friend once they become a Christian (read the letters above).