

# Constantine

## The Empire and the Church



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# Abdication of Diocletian and Maximianus in 305

Augusti

**Galerius** & **Constantius**

Caesares

**Maximinus** & **Severus**

# Thwarted Sons



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Maxentius

Son of Maximianus



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Constantine

Son of Constantius

# Licinius

## AD 308-324



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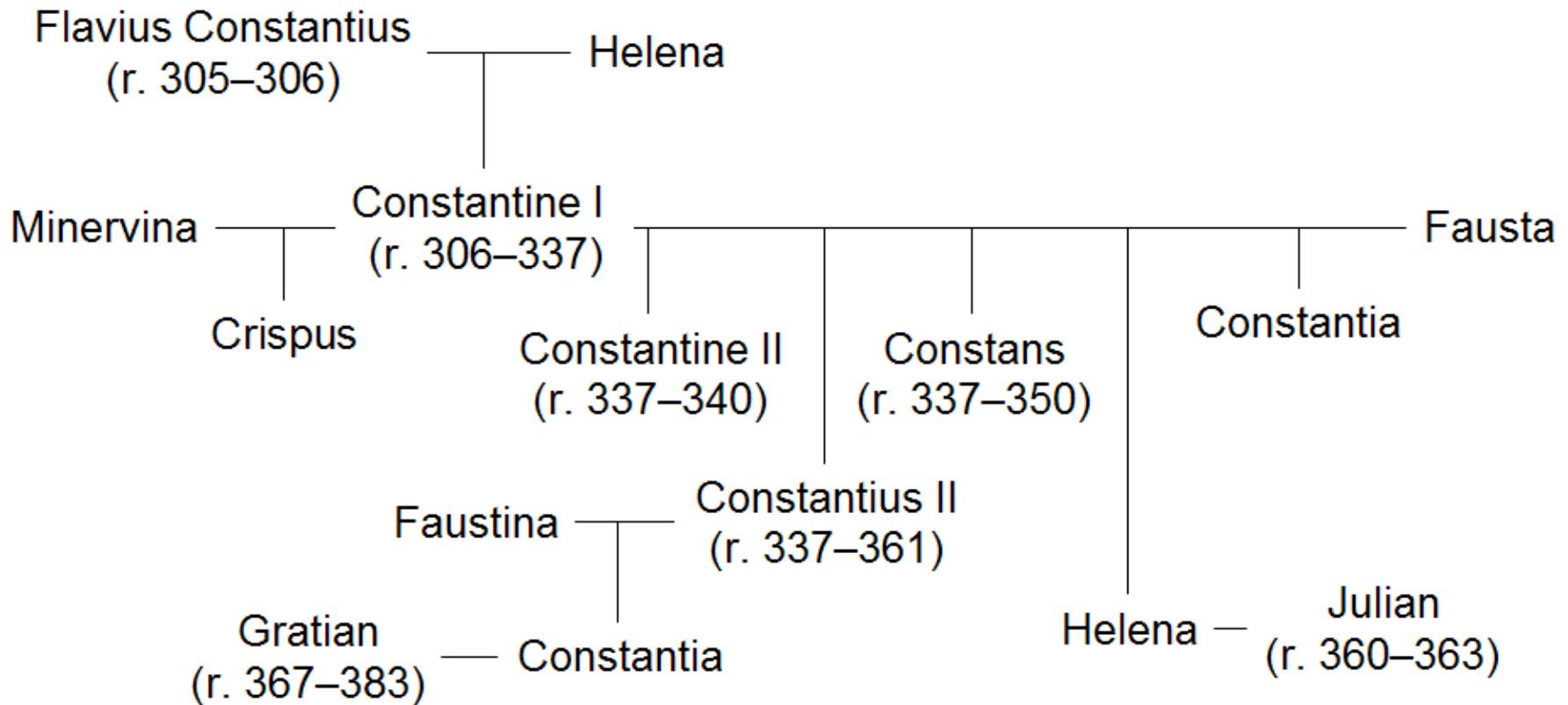
# Constantine

## 324 – 337



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# Constantine's Hereditary Tetrarchy?





Many stretches of the boundaries shown are only approximate. The provincial boundaries within Britain are unknown.

Diocese of Britanniae comprises 4 provinces, Galliae 8, Viennensis 7, Hispaniae 6, Africa 7, Italia 12, Pannoniae 7, Moesiae 11, Thracia 6, Asiana 9, Pontica 7, Oriens 16.

# Battle of the Milvian Bridge, 312

according to  
Eusebius , *Life of Constantine* 1.28

About midday, when the day was already on the wane, he said he saw with his very own eyes the victorious sign of the cross composed of light situated above the sun and linked to it the writing: 'By this conquer!' Upon this vision, I am told, astonishment seized both him and the whole army, which was marching with him and saw the miracle.

# The Conversion of Constantine, AD 312



School of Raphael  
*Vision of the Cross*  
1520-25  
Stanze di Raffaello  
Vatican Palace, Rome

Image courtesy of the Web Gallery of Art. This image is in the public domain.  
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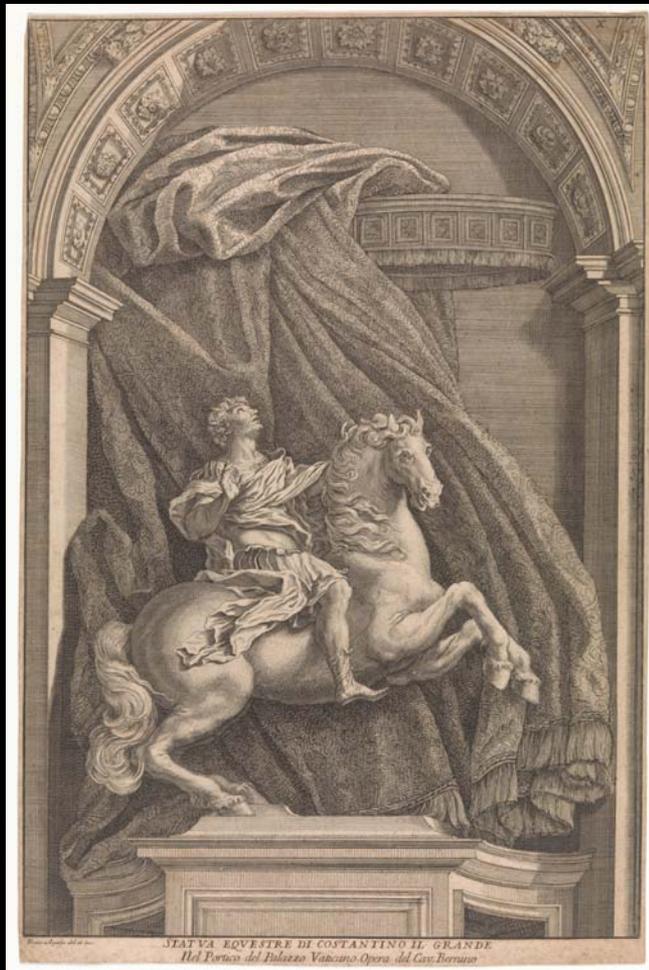


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Bernini, *Constantine*

1663-70

Etching by Francesco Faraone Aquila

# Arch of Constantine, c. 315



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‘The Senate and People of Rome dedicated this distinguished arch of victory to the Greatest Augustus because **by the inspiration of divinity** and the nobility of his own mind, with his army he avenged the res publica by just arms simultaneously from both the tyrant and all his faction.’

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# The Conversion of Constantine

The 'official' version – Eusebius, *Life of Constantine* 1.27

Constantine also considered the fact that he would need more powerful aid than military might could give him, since the tyrant [i.e. Maxentius] was making great efforts to obtain evil arts and deceitful magic spells. He sought a god to be his helper and depended on the soldiers and size of the army only in second place. For he thought that that was of no use anyway without the help of a god. He considered divine aid to be invincible and unconquerable.

So now he thought seriously about which god he should enlist as helper, and it crossed his mind that most previous rulers had put their hopes in several gods when they came to power and had worshipped them with offerings of wine, sacrifices and votive offerings. Having been initially deceived by positive prophecies and oracles that promised good auspices, they did not, however, come to an auspicious end. Not one of the gods had stood by them to protect them from the ruin which was destined by heaven.

# The Conversion of Constantine

## The 'opposition' version – Zosimus 29

Without any consideration for natural law he killed his son Crispus, on suspicion of having had intercourse with his stepmother, Fausta. And when Constantine's mother, Helena, was saddened by this atrocity and was inconsolable at the young man's death, Constantine, as if to comfort her, applied a remedy worse than the disease: he ordered a bath to be overheated, and shut Fausta up in it until she was dead.

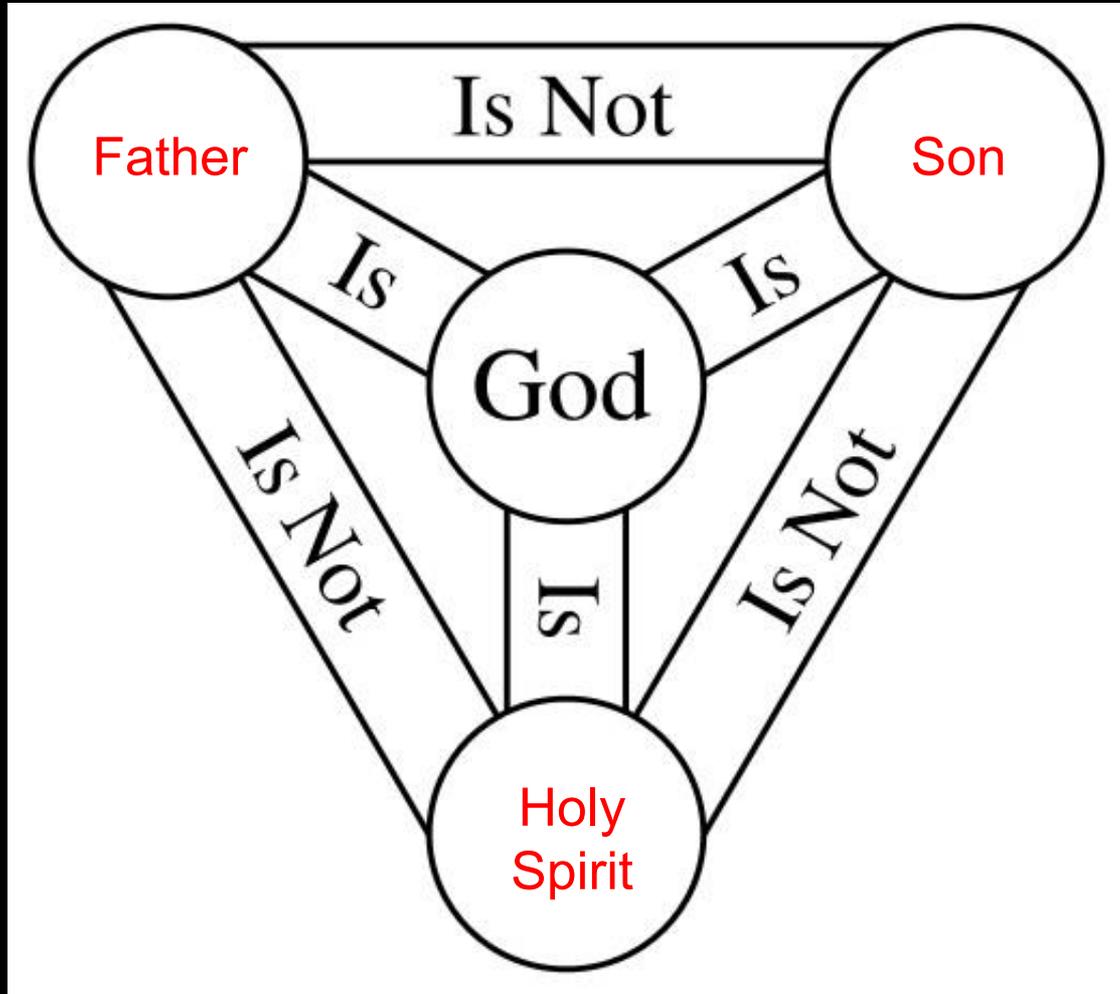
Since he was himself aware of his guilt and of his disregard for oaths as well, he approached the priests seeking absolution, but they said that there was no kind of purge known which could absolve him of such impieties.

A certain Egyptian, who had come from Spain to Rome and was intimate with the ladies of the court, met Constantine and assured him that the Christian religion was able to absolve him from guilt and that it promised every wicked man who was converted to it immediate release from all sin. Constantine readily believed what he was told and, abandoning his ancestral religion, embraced the one which the Egyptian offered him.

# Caesaropapism?

- Council of Nicaea in 325
- The Arian controversy
- The Nicene Creed
  - 'homo-ousios' vs 'homoi-ousios'

# The Christian Holy Trinity



# The Nicene Creed of 325

We believe in one God, the FATHER Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord JESUS CHRIST, the Son of God, begotten of the Father the only-begotten; that is, of the essence of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance (ὁμοούσιον) with the Father; by whom all things were made both in heaven and on earth; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down and was incarnate and was made man; he suffered, and the third day he rose again, ascended into heaven; and thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

And in the HOLY GHOST.

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