



CALIFORNIA CONTENT STANDARD 6.7

The Roman Republic

Overall Objective: Analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures during the development of Rome.

Read the summary below to answer questions on the next page.

The Founding of Rome, 753 B.C.

According to legend, Romulus, a descendant of the Trojan hero Aeneas, killed his brother in an argument over where to establish a city. He then founded Rome near the Tiber River. The early Romans were ruled by Etruscan kings. In 509 B.C., the Romans overthrew the Etruscan rule and founded a republic.

The Roman Republic

The new republic had two classes of citizens, the powerful **patricians**, or nobles, and the **plebeians**, or common people. In time, the plebeians won the right to elect representatives called tribunes. They also had their own assembly. The **Twelve Tables**, the law code written down in 451 B.C. and displayed in the Forum, helped to protect the rights of all citizens. Later laws were based on this code.

Three Branches of Government

Executive

- Two **consuls** were elected by the assembly for one year. They were chief executives of the government and commanders-in-chief of the military.

Legislative

- A **senate** of 300 members was chosen from the aristocracy.

Judicial

- Eight judges, or praetors, were chosen for one year.

End of the Republic, 46 B.C.

During a civil war, **Julius Caesar**, a Roman general, won great popularity among the people. He ended the war and two years later, he was

named **dictator** for life. He was an absolute ruler but had many ideas for reform. He expanded the senate, enforced laws against crime, and created jobs for the poor before he was assassinated by senators who feared his growing power.

The Roman Empire, 27 B.C.

In 27 B.C., Caesar's great nephew, **Augustus**, became Rome's first emperor. Augustus had absolute power but retained the senate, consuls, and tribunes. Under his rule, Rome expanded and enjoyed a period of peace and prosperity.

The Roots of Christianity, A.D. 6

The Romans took over the Jewish kingdom of Judea in A.D. 6 and made it a Roman province. It was about this time that Jesus was born. He was both a Jew and a Roman subject.

Jesus preached justice and compassion, often using stories known as parables. He taught forgiveness and associated with the poor and sinful of society. Jesus's followers believed he was the messiah, or savior, whom God had promised the Jewish people. (The name **Christ** comes from the Greek word for messiah, *Christos*.)

Jesus's success made enemies of the Roman officials. As a result, he was put to death. Accounts of his **resurrection**, or rising from the dead, led to the belief that he was the son of God.

After Jesus's death, his **disciples**, or followers, continued preaching his message. Saul, who was called Paul after he came to believe in Jesus as the son of God, was the most important early Christian missionary. He converted many Gentiles, or non-Jews, to Christianity.

