

Constantine the Great  
280-337 AD

-1st Christian emperor  
of Roman Empire

-while involved in a  
Civil War, either...

A) the night before, or  
B) during the final battle,

he had a "vision" of  
a fiery red cross  
burning in the sky

then he heard a  
voice

"In this sign, you  
will conquer"

- when his forces won the war, he attributed his victory to the vision and voice

- this converted him to Christianity  
(he didn't get baptized until he was on his deathbed)

- Christianity was now tolerated in the empire (legalized)
  - return of "stolen" property
  - official end of persecutions
  - allowance of open practice
  - closure of the Catacombs

# importance

- 1) tolerance allows Christianity to spread, no fear involved,
- 2) he split Roman Empire in half to make it easier to govern  
Western half capital - Rome  
Eastern half capital -  
Constantinople  
(present day Istanbul, Turkey)

3) Christianity becomes the legal state religion of all Rome, (only for about 150 yrs until Rome falls) but...

the splitting of Rome and the fall of Rome will ultimately split Christianity as well

- Roman Catholic Christians in old Western Roman Empire
- Eastern Orthodox Christians in old Eastern Roman Empire

4) he forced lower classes to be tied to the land by heredity - this created a class of people called...

serfs

-too many plebeians were leaving the rural agricultural areas and moving to the cities to enjoy..

"bread and circus"