

# RELI 208: Birth of Christianity



This course offers a historical-critical examination of the “birth of Christianity,” the emergence of the “Christian church,” and the earliest stages of its expansion, with particular emphasis on the problems evident in the shift from a Jewish to a Gentile framework. In doing so we will engage with a set of interrelated questions: When, how, and why did Christianity become a phenomenon that was seen as something distinct from Judaism of its day? In what ways did the earliest “Christians” imagine and construct religious identity vis-à-vis their “Jewish” contemporaries? Was Christianity “born”? In what ways is such a metaphor useful? What historical and ethical problems does this metaphor present? Paul’s role in defining the issues is considered in detail and evaluated in the light of subsequent events.

**Instructor Luke Drake**

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**Tuesday/Thursday**

**3:30-4:45PM**

**General Education  
Requirements: Fulfills  
HS, NA, WB**

