



Molly and I just returned from a trip to the UK to visit our son and his family. They moved there last summer as part of a church planting team in the town of Bakewell.

While there, we took a day trip by train to York to tour this historic city, especially its historic church, The Minster of York. It's impressive, to say the least, but the most impressive aspect of the place, for us, was what laid out of site.

During the repair of a faulty foundation, it was discovered that the Romans had beaten the Saxons and the Normans to the site. In fact, they had built a city that became the headquarters of The Western Roman Empire. Who knew? Well, somebody did once, but the knowledge was forgotten after the Romans closed up shop in about 400 AD.

But here was the thing that took us completely by surprise, and that's not hard to do, Constantine was made head of the Western Roman Empire while he was stationed at York. What! No way. Yes, way! Now, I've left a lot of history out of my story, but hopefully, when you're finished reading this you'll start googling away. It's a crazy story.

Anyway, to get to the heart of this, Constantine decided to march on Rome, the seat of the Eastern Roman Empire. Apparently, someone convinced him that would be a good idea. Now here is the interesting part. The Western guys had an army four times the size of Constantine's army, but according to legend, he claimed to have seen a vision of Jesus, with a specific symbol, telling him, "By this sign, conquer." Constantine ordered his troops to mark their shields with this symbol, the Chi-Rho, then a symbol commonly representing Christianity.



The Chi-Rho combines the first two letters in the Greek word for “Christ” and resembles a capital P with an X drawn through the spine. Constantine’s army routed the enemy, and he became emperor. The Chi-Rho symbol would be part of Constantine’s personal signature for the rest of his life.

Long story short, Constantine wins and becomes Emperor of a united Roman Empire. Historians tell us he may or may not have been a Christian. Let’s not dwell on that today. Instead, let’s look at a couple of significant things he did. One of the first things he did was issue the Edict of Milan. It declared Roman citizens free to worship whatever gods they chose, and it ended the persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire. Second., Constantine called a meeting of Christian bishops, the Council of Nicea, to settle the teaching of Arian, who denied the full divinity of Jesus.

There is more to know about Constantine, but here’s why I’ve taken the time to tell you a bit of his story. We are coming into another election cycle. There will be great gnashing of teeth and ringing of hands. The story of Constantine, that bit I’ve shared with you, is not really a story of Constantine. It’s a story of the sovereignty of our God. He will put his man in the seat of power. (Romans 13:1) Our president’s, “heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will.” Proverbs 21:1. God chose a flawed man to accomplish his will and deliver his people. Has he ever done anything else with the sons and daughters of Adam?

Dear Bereans, let’s raise our eyes and our thoughts above the darkness and make this election cycle about glorifying God by living out the great commission.

Ask yourself this question, outside of your family and Berean, can people identify you as a Christian by what you have painted on your shield of faith?

Sincerely,

Terry