

6. Valerian (253-260) Continues bloody, extensive persecution when other methods fail.
7. From 265 in the reign of Gallienus until 303 the church enjoyed freedom from persecution. It is to be noted that during the period of spasmodic persecution the wheat was separated from the chaff and the church was purified. However, during the 40 year period of peace the church grew outwardly wealthy and worldliness crept in. *258 Cyprian martyred*
8. Diocletian (284-305)
 - a. During the first 19 years of his reign Diocletian showed no opposition to Christianity. He was the most judicious and able of all the later emperors. Gibbon terms him a "second Augustus". He ruled in the manner of an oriental despot as a matter of policy. His wife and daughter were Christians or sympathizers.
 - b. In 303 he concluded that Christianity was such an enemy of the Roman system that it must be destroyed. Beginning in Bithynia his capital he carried on a systematic persecution which was the last and greatest in the history of the early church.
 - c. France, Spain and Britain were spared under Diocletian due to Constantine's (one of 4 co-rulers) laxity or sympathy. Constantine' son Constantine in court of Diocletian comes to admire Christian fortitude. *Diocletian retires to growing cabbages refuses to take any further interest in empire.*
9. After Diocletian, Galerius who is often blamed for inciting the persecution pushed it with fury, while the other 3 territorial rulers carried it on in varying degrees. Shortly before his death, however Gallerius decided persecution was futile and proclaimed an edict of toleration in which he suggested that the Christians pray for him and the empire. By 313 persecution had ceased throughout the empire.
10. The Catacombs
 - a. The catacombs are approximately 900 miles of tunnels, 2 1/2' to 3' in width in which approximately 7 million people are buried. These tunnels were begun in the time of Paul and represent the extension of the Jewish burial customs to Rome.
 - b. The catacombs were not generally used by Christians to escape persecution nor were they used for underground meeting places. There are few rooms