Constantine I- Roman Emperor -Constantine The Grea Essay, Research Paper

Constantine I, Roman Emperor (Constantine the Great)Flavius Valerius Constantinus, also known as Constantine the Great, was the first Roman emperor to adopt Christianity. He was born at Naissus (modern-day Nis, Yugoslavia) in about 280 A.D. Constantine was educated in the imperial court of Rome and pursued to succeed his father. In 305 A.D., his father, also Constantius, became the emperor of the Western Empire. But, when he died in 306 A.D., British troops declared that Constantine should replace his father. The Eastern emperor Galerius refused this claim and gave Constantine a lesser rank. Constantine survived the civil war that broke up the western empire in 312 A.D. challenged Maxentius, the self-appointed ruler of Italy and Africa. Constantine then defeated Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge outside of Rome on Oct. 28, 312 A.D. This guaranteed his share in the new government formed by Licinius, the acting emperor. The arch created by the Senate in Rome declaring his victory has an inscription that gives credit to Constantine’s success to the “prompting of a deity.” The Senate definitely thought it was a pagan deity, but later on Christian writers believed the victory was won due to the intervention of the Christian God, who supposedly declared his support of Constantine in a vision. Before 312 A.D., Constantine was a pagan, that worshipped heavenly gods but didn t commit himself to any one. Between 312 A.D. and 324 A.D., he gradually adopted the Christian God as his protector. He believed even more that Christianity was his religion during a political fight with Licinius. Constantine and Licinius were the only two in control of both halves of the empire. They soon began to fight. In the civil war, politics and religion became so messed up that Constantine fought Licinius (a pagan) as a crusade against paganism. Constantine then adopted Christianity officially and became more directly involved in the church. Constantine then assembled the bishops of the church in a council at Nicaea to debate the doctrines of Arius, a dignitary of Alexandria in Egypt, who thought that Christ was a created being and therefore not divine. This was the first time he had used the imperial office to implement a settlement. The meeting lasted many hours and in the end the bishops condemned Arianism(Pagan) and adopted a creed that confirmed that Christ was the divine god.

When Constantine died on May 22, 337 A.D., a civil war broke out. This did not destroy the new religion he had created. The winner of the war, his son Constantius II, was an Arian, but he still committed himself to the continuation of Christianity. Because of all these contributions to the Roman empire I believe that Constantine is a more than qualified person to be in the Roman Hall of Fame. I also believe, and because I am a Christian, that Constantine was right when he adopted Christianity for himself and as the official religion of the Roman empire. Many of the Christian views and ways are good and it was a good idea to implement it for the Roman citizens to believe in. Christianity taught good discipline and good morals involving family life and just everyday life. Overall, Constantine was a great leader of Ancient Rome because he lead the entire empire of Rome into a new religion and therefore leading them into a new era of the empire. A full era filled with life and prosperity. The Roman Empire might of survived as long as it did because of Constantine s contributions to the government and the way of life for Roman citizens. Bibliography1. Baynes, Norman H., Constantine the Great and the Christian Church (1929; repr. 1977) NewYork Publishing Co. 2. Burckhardt, Jacob, The Age of Constantine the Great (1983)Sandiego Ca. 3. Compton s Encyclopedia; Grolier IncorporatedConstantine the GreatDerek AdamsWorld History 2-3 PeriodDecember 12, 1996