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[Julius Caesar](#), was the first General, who conquered lands for the Romans, who were a local power around the city of Rome in Italy. He played a critical role in the gradual transformation of the [Roman Republic](#) into the [Roman Empire](#) which in later years, extended to the east, as far as Asia Minor, the Middle East, and North Africa and in the west whole of Europe, less the Scandinavian countries, and reaching up to the "end of the earth" - Anglia. - (modern England). The Greeks before them, had a religion based on mythical gods, and Romans too followed their own pantheon. Under the emperors, they gave themselves divine rights and demanded worship. Caesar entered on the scene, when the politicians of Rome, were vying against one another to gain upper hand, and the successes of Caesar, compelled him to take control, of his achievements and he formed a Triumvirate to rule the possessions.

One things which strikes is, that even in his time, politicians had to contend with opponents, and had to engage in subtle intrigues and open rebellion. In a power struggle, they will stoop to any length, to get their way, and in one such struggle, Julius was murdered. Caesar had named his grandnephew Gaius [Octavian](#) his sole heir, bequeathing him the immensely potent Caesar name and making him one of the wealthiest citizens in the Republic. This person was declared the emperor, and took the name of Augustus, and is considered the first emperor of the [Roman Empire](#), which he ruled alone from 27 BC until his death in AD 14 and during his reign, Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem in Palestine.

In those days, marine trade was common, and the Roman ships have come to the west coast of India, and traded in spices. Later the Arabs and the Jews too picked up this trade, and had settlements on the west coast. Jews had a synagogue in the south, and Arabs after the arrival of Islam, had their settlements in norther Malabar. It was to these Jews, the apostle of Jesus, by the name of Thomas, came to give them the good news, and from him many of the Indians of south India came to know of Jesus and embraced him. This was in 52 AD.

In order to keep the empire under their control, the Roman emperors demanded of their consuls and proconsuls and governors, that they keep their subjects in check. The Jews detested this and wanted to get rid of their yoke, and wanted Jesus to collaborate with them, to get the people behind him, to revolt against the Romans. But Jesus was telling them, that the way God wants is not their way. Jesus wanted to promote, neighborly love, forgiveness, and

## A Peep Into History II

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acceptance of suffering in order to gain a greater reward, and that of being the children of God. This was strange to the ears of the Jews, hell bent on getting their independence. So they tried to eliminate him, with the help of the very rulers they were detesting. (Human beings, do that even today, to get their way.) Jesus had warned them, that their efforts would be futile, and their much loved temple would be destroyed, and no stone will be left on another stone. He also foretold, his resurrection, which no one took seriously, while he knew they were plotting to kill him. In fact exactly forty years after the crucifixion, the Romans destroyed Jerusalem, and dispersed the Jews, and they wandered through the empire, and that happened in 70 AD. The teachings of Jesus caught the imagination of the people of that time, and has not ceased till today. Jesus said to his disciples:- [Mathew ch.5. v 38-42](#) - “You have heard that it was said, *An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth*

. But I say to you, offer no resistance to one who is evil. When someone strikes you on your right cheek, turn the other one to him as well. If anyone wants to go to law with you over your tunic, hand him your cloak as well. Should anyone press you into service for one mile, go with him for two miles. Give to the one who asks of you, and do not turn your back on one who wants to borrow.” This unconventional wisdom did not meet the approval of the entrenched religious powers.

It was another empire, that of the British, that brought them back, and our modern problems are rooted in this action.

Many things happened in the intervening years, within Europe, Eastern Europe, Middle East and North Africa. Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine empire fell in 1452, was eventually, replaced by the [Ottoman Empire](#), and new routes to the east and west were found by sailors like Columbus and De Gama. The roots of our modern greed and lust for power is rooted in these conflicts.