Early Objects of Christianity

#1 The world’s oldest church.

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Available at
www.GospelHall.org/sundayschool
The first of many...

1. First known church building.
5. First known picture of Jesus.
6. First known hymn.
7. First known archaeological evidence of crucifixion.
The world’s oldest church.
Dura-Europos

Dura – Europos is an ongoing archeology dig in Syria that has been studied since its discovery in 1920 by archaeologists from Yale University and French Academy of Inscriptions and Letters.

The city was a medium-sized city once inhabited by up to 10,000 people between about 300 B.C. and 250 A.D.

Originally called “Europos” by the Greeks the city later came to be known by local inhabitants as “Dura,” or “the fortress”. “Dura-Europos” is the modern name given to the site.
Many gods in one town...

- Many other religions existed side by side with the Christians.
- Temples in Dura included the following gods.
- How would evangelism be different in 250 A.D than it is for you?

Zeus Kyrios

Nanaia, similar to the Sumerian goddess of the moon.

Mithras being born from a rock.

Artemis
The church at Dura-Europos

- A house uncovered in the ancient city was used for church gatherings between 233 A.D. and 256 A.D.
- Christianity was technically illegal in the Roman empire at the time of this church. Persecution was very real for many Christians.
- Compared to the synagogue, the house church was much smaller and had less elaborate paintings on the walls.
- This house was located next to a wall tower which indicates that the Christians were not necessarily hiding.
Pictures from the church at Dura-Europos

The building is a house (left) attached to the meeting room for the church (right).
Pictures from the church at Dura-Europos

Several pictures were painted on the walls of the church as seen in this museum exhibit.
Pictures from the church at Dura-Europos

The Good Shepherd.
Pictures from the church at Dura-Europos

- The Healing of the Paralytic.
- These pictures are probably the earliest known pictures of Jesus Christ.
- Notice he has no beard.
Pictures from the church at Dura-Europos

Several pictures were painted on the walls of the church including this one of Peter walking on the water and being saved by Jesus.
Pictures from the church at Dura-Europos

The Samaritan Woman at the Well.
Pictures from the church at Dura-Europos

❯ Three Mary’s at the Empty Tomb.