

## ROMAN EMPERORS THROUGH THE FIRST CENTURY

1. Gaius Julius Caesar, 49–44 B.C.
  - a. Formed First Triumvirate with Pompey and Crassus, 59 B.C.
  - b. Crossed Rubicon to defeat forces of Pompey, 49 B.C.
  - c. Assassinated by Brutus and Cassius (44 B.C.), in an effort to save the Republic from Julius' dictatorial powers.
  - d. Four months after his death, a comet appeared at games held in his honor. The Senate proclaimed him "the Divine Julius."
2. Roman Civil Wars, 44–31 B.C.
  - a. Octavian formed Second Triumvirate with Mark Antony and Lepidus, 43 B.C.
  - b. Death of Brutus and Cassius at Battle of Philippi, 42 B.C.
  - c. Forces of Octavian defeat forces of Antony at Actium, 31 B.C.
3. Octavian/Augustus, 31 B.C.–A.D. 14.
  - a. Great nephew, adopted son, and at age 19 heir of Julius Caesar.
  - b. Octavian, with the consent of the Senate, assumes the name Augustus, a title implying a special relationship to the gods, 27 B.C.
  - c. Maintained the fiction of Republican Rome managed by the Senate while holding the power himself.
  - d. A shrewd ruler who gave the Empire efficient organization and a stable system of laws.
  - e. Inaugurated the *Pax Romana*, the Peace of Rome.
  - f. Jesus of Nazareth was born during his reign.
4. Tiberius, A.D. 14–37.
  - a. Stepson whom Augustus adopted and made his heir.
  - b. The last 11 years of his reign, he ruled Rome while living on the island of Capri in the Bay of Naples.
  - c. Appointed Pilate procurator of Judea.
  - d. Ruled the Empire during the ministry and death of Jesus.
  - e. A deeply conservative Roman, he refused to accept divine honors. Unlike his two predecessors, the Senate did not declare him divine after his death.

5. Gaius/Caligula, A.D. 37–41.

- a. Son of the military leader Germanicus, received the name Caligula, “little boots,” in the army camp of his father.
- b. A descendant of Augustus and a great nephew of Tiberius, he was adopted by the Emperor and at age 26 inherited power.
- c. Soon intoxicated by power, he claimed to be a god and proposed that his horse be elected consul.
- d. Insisted that a statue of Zeus in his own likeness be erected in the Jewish temple at Jerusalem.
- e. Assassinated in A.D. 41 before the Jerusalem temple was desecrated. The Senate cursed his memory.

6. Claudius, A.D. 41–54.

- a. A 50 year-old uncle of Caligula, made emperor by the praetorian guard.
- b. Crippled and ill-favored, Augustus had been ashamed for him to appear in public.
- c. Added most of Britain and other domains to the Empire.
- d. Expelled Jews from Rome in A.D. 49. Ruled through most of the active ministry of Paul.
- e. An able administrator, organized efficient government for the Empire.
- f. Poisoned by his fourth wife, Agrippina after she persuaded him to make Nero, her son by a previous marriage, his heir instead of his son Britannicus.

7. Nero, A.D. 54–68.
  - a. Became Emperor at age 17. Did well during his first years under the guidance of the philosopher Seneca and the military commander Burrus.
  - b. Warming to his power, within six years he contrived the murder of his advisors, Seneca among them, Britannicus, his mother, and his wife Octavia.
  - c. Shocked aristocratic Romans by entering poetry and theatrical contests, as well as chariot races.
  - d. When Rome burned in A.D. 64, he placed the blame on Christians and killed many of them.
  - e. War with the Jews broke out in A.D. 66. After initial successes by the Jews, the Roman general Vespasian systematically destroyed all resistance.
  - f. A revolt of legions in Spain and Gaul led to his suicide.
8. Year of the Four Emperors, A.D. 69.
  - a. Marked the end of the Julio-Claudian Emperors, so called because all those from Augustus to Nero wore the family name of Julius or Claudius.
  - b. Galba, Otho, and Vitellius in turn managed to get control of armies, allowing each to be Emperor for a few months.
  - c. Leaving the Judean War, Vespasian was declared Emperor by his army in Egypt. Came to Rome and assumed the power.
9. Vespasian, A.D. 69–79.
  - a. His son Titus took command of the legions in Judea and destroyed Jerusalem in A.D. 70.
  - b. Established a harmonious working relationship with the Senate.
  - c. A wise and good Emperor, he engaged in a massive rebuilding program in Rome.
10. Titus, A.D. 79–81.
  - a. Son of Vespasian who finished the Roman war in Judea, reducing Jerusalem to ruins and ashes.
  - b. Erected a great monument, the Arch of Titus, in Rome to commemorate his victory over the Jews. The monument still stands.

11. Domitian, A.D. 81–96.

- a. A younger son of Vespasian whose political and administrative powers fell considerably below those of his father.
- b. Increasing tensions between the Emperor and the Senate.
- c. During the last year of his reign he insisted on being addressed as a god.
- d. Oppressed several religious and ethnic groups, including Jews and Christians.
- e. Oppression of Christians accelerated, especially in Asia Minor where the Christians were more numerous.
- f. The last of the Flavian Emperors. Flavius was the family name of Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian.
- g. After his death, the Senate cursed Domitian's memory as they had Nero's. The Senate named the next Emperor.