

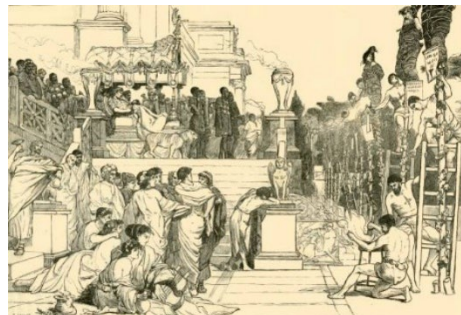
I. The burning of Rome under Nero and the persecution of Christians.

- A. The greatest activity of the Christian religion was now centered in Rome, the capital of the Empire.
- B. On July 18, in 64 A.D., a fire started in the heart of Rome and burned for ten days. Ten of the fourteen districts of the city were destroyed.
- C. The rumor spread that Nero himself had started the fire.

- 1. To avoid this accusation, Nero placed the blame on the Christians.
- 2. This began the persecution of the Christians by the Roman government.

Many Christians were:

- a) Covered by hides of wild beasts and devoured by dogs.
- b) Crucified and some were burned alive.
- c) Thrown to wild beasts to be torn asunder.



II. The destruction of Jerusalem 70 A.D. by Titus (eldest son of Vespasian, Domitian was middle son.)

- A. While Nero was persecuting the Christians in Rome, the Jews were revolting against the Roman rule in Judea.
 - 1. The Procurator Gessius Florius had made things so grievous for the Jews they had united in a common effort to overthrow Roman rule.
 - 2. There were outbreaks in Jerusalem and other parts of Judea.
 - 3. Subsequent revolts: the three Roman-Jewish Wars (66-73 CE, 115-117 CE, and 132-136 CE) stand out as pivotal moments in Jewish history, setting in motion a chain of events that ultimately led to the dispersion of Jewish communities across the world, known as the **Jewish Diaspora**.
- B. Finally, Roman blood was shed causing Florius to march against Jerusalem where he was badly beaten by the Jews.
 - 1. Vespasian (Rome's greatest general, was dispatched to aid Florius with 60,000 soldiers (4 legions including the X Legion which subsequently destroyed Masada.)
 - 2. After 3 years of fighting, all of Judea had been subdued except Jerusalem.
 - 3. Vespasian was preparing to attack Jerusalem when he was declared emperor and returned to Rome.
 - 4. His son Titus assumed command and attacked Jerusalem.
 - 5. Titus laid siege to Jerusalem and approximately one million inhabitants were trapped inside the city.
 - 6. Finally, Jerusalem was utterly destroyed and the citizens sold into slavery. The plunder was used to finance the building of Rome's Colosseum. This destruction fulfilled the prophecy of Jesus in Matthew 24 (and other gospels.)

Matthew 24: ¹And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple. ²And Jesus said unto them, *See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.*

- III. After the death of Nero, the Christians were not vigorously persecuted again until the last years of the reign of Emperor Domitian (95-96 A.D.)
- A. Domitian was the first Emperor to call himself God and he determined to destroy all who refused him as such.
 - B. John was banished to the Isle of Patmos and many Christians were beheaded.
 - C. Under Emperor Trajan (106 - 117 A.D.), the persecution of Christians intensified. To be a Christian was
 - D. outlawed, branded a criminal, and worthy of death.
- IV. Faith of our Fathers
- A. To study the history of these early churches and Christians is a thrilling experience.
 1. Standing staunch and true they willing laid down their lives.
 2. They counted it an honor to die for Christ.
 - B. For about 100 years, the churches maintained purity of doctrine and character. The seeds of error, however, were beginning to grow.
- V. There were ten persecutions of Christians under the Roman Emperors:
- A. Under Nero, 64 A.D.
 - B. Under Domitian, 85 A.D.
 - C. Under Trajan, 108 A.D.
 - D. Under Marus Aurelius, 163 A.D.
 - E. Under other Roman Emperors in 200 A.D., 235 A.D., 249 A.D., 257 A.D., 270 A.D., 303 A.D.

Partial list of Roman Emperors (27 B.C. – 180.A.D.)

[Augustus](#) (27 B.C.–14 A.D.)

[Tiberius](#) (14–37 A.D.)

[Caligula](#) (37–41 A.D.)

[Claudius](#) (41–54 A.D.)

[Nero](#) (54–68 A.D.)

[Galba](#) (68–69 A.D.)

[Otho](#) (January–April 69 A.D.)

[Aulus Vitellius](#) (July–Dec. 69 A.D.)

[Vespasian](#) (69–79 A.D.)

[Titus](#) (79–81 A.D.)

[Domitian](#) (81–96 A.D.)

[Nerva](#) (96–98 A.D.)

[Trajan](#) (98–117 A.D.)

[Hadrian](#) (117–138 A.D.)

[Antoninus Pius](#) (138–161 A.D.)

[Marcus Aurelius](#) (161–180 A.D.)