

→ b. Nero (54-68) Like Cal, Nero's assumption of power was looked upon as a great improvement. He was affable and artistic, but too much power ruined him. In his early reign he was friendly to J. and Christ. N. had expressed a dislike for the tenement conditions in R. and, after the burning of R, he was held to blame by popular opinion. Tacitus writing 50 years later tells us that N. brought a cruel persecution to bear upon the Christ. as scapegoats for public opinion. This persecution was confined to R. (sugg. read. "The Apostle" last 100 pages) Like Cal., Nero was murdered and was succeeded by 3 emp. placed in power by the P. G. in one year.

3. Domitian's Persecution

a. Background

- (1) Word of virtual anarchy in R. reached Vespasian, an able general then engaged in reconquering Palestine. Vespasian returns with force to R. and rules as a "very excellent emperor." (70-79) Titus, son of Vespasian completes the conquest of Palestine and returns in triumph to Rome where an arch is erected carved with the account of his deeds and replicas of articles plundered from the Jewish temple. (May still be seen)
- (2) Titus reigns as one of the best Emperors only two years. (79-81)

→ b. Domitian (Titus' brother) reigns for 15 years (81-96). His reign almost as bad as Nero's. Seemingly because of personal dislike and irritation, Domitian initiated a persecution of Christians which spread to the provinces, but which was not comparable to Nero's. A cousin of Domitian was exiled as a Christian indicating that the sect was getting close to the imperial family.

4. Pagan References to Christians

- a. Josephus who claims to have received the Jewish books from Titus makes the only reference (brief and questionable) to Christians around 90 A.D.
- b. Suetonius (early 2nd century) "The Jews in the time of Claudius were stirred up by a malefactor named Christ" Elsewhere he refers to these people as troublemakers.
- c. Tacitus(ob. cit. Nero) Although the Christians