The Roman Empire Before and During Christ’ Kingdom
Dan. 7:7-27
By: James Dale

I. The Julio/Claudian Household

1. Augustus: (27 B.C. - 14 A.D.)
   A. Original name was Gaius Octavius
   B. Born in 63 B.C.
   C. He was the grandnephew of Julius Caesar.
   D. His mother, Atia, was the daughter of Julia, Julius Caesar’s younger sister.
   E. He was 19 when Julius was murdered in the Senate.
   F. Came to power in 27 B.C.
   G. ....became the founder of the Roman empire, which formally began in Jan. 16, 27 B.C.
   H. Mentioned in Luke 2:1

2. Tiberius Claudius Caesar: (14 - 37 A.D.)
   A. His father had the same name and was married to Livia Drusilla
   B. Livia divorced Tiberius’ father and married Augustus in 38 B.C.
   C. Because of no direct successor for Augustus, Tiberius and Agrippa Postumus were adopted by Augustus on June 26, A.D. 4. His name was changed to Tiberius Julius Caesar.
   D. Named emperor September 17, A.D. 14, one month after the death of Augustus.
   E. The silver denarius coin mentioned in the NT (cf. Matt 22:15-21; Mk. 12:13-17) bore the image of Tiberius, accompanied by the inscription, “Tiberius Caesar, son of the divine Augustus, Augustus”
   G. Appointed Pontius Pilate to Judea in A.D. 26 and removed him from office ten years later.

3. Gaius (Caligula) Caesar Augustus Germanic: (37- 41 A.D.)
   A. Gaius was born on 31 August, A.D. 12,
   B. The third of six children born to Augustus's adopted grandson, Germanicus, and Augustus's granddaughter, Agrippina.
   C. Tiberius was his grand-uncle
   D. Assassinated by the Praetorian Guard on Jan 24, A.D. 41

4. Tiberius (Claudius) Caesar Augustus Germanicus: (41-54 A.D.)
   A. The fourth Roman Emperor of the Julio-Claudian dynasty.
   B. Caligula was his nephew.
   C. His maternal grandparents were Mark Antony and Octavia Minor, Caesar Augustus' sister. His paternal grandparents were Livia, Augustus' third wife, and Tiberius Claudius Nero.
   D. Mentioned in Acts 11:28; 18:2

5. (Nero) Claudius Caesar Germanicus: 54-68 A.D.
   A. Fifth Roman emperor of the Julio-Claudian dynasty
   B. His mother Agrippina, was the daughter of Germanicus and the older Agrippina, was a sister of the emperor Caligula.
   C. Through her mother she was the great-granddaughter of the emperor Augustus.
   D. Was adopted by Claudius.
   E. On July 18, A.D. 64 a fire began in Rome which lasted 6 days. Of the fourteen regions of the city seven were destroyed totally and four partially. Nero was blamed for this fire and set out to shift blame from himself.
F. Tacitus, one of the important historians of Roman Antiquity, recounted Nero’s scheme to avert suspicion from himself. “He put forward as guilty, and afflicted with the most exquisite punishment, those who were hated for their abominations, and called ‘Christians’ by the populace.

G. Nero’s persecution of Christians was not for religious reasons. He falsely accused them of starting the fire in Rome and persecuted them to take attention away from himself. There is no reason to suppose that the Neronian persecution of 64 extended throughout the empire.

H. Nero is in all likelyhood the Caeser Paul appealed to in Acts 25:11

I. Nero committed suicide in 68 A.D. bringing an end to the line of Julius Caesar.

Note: Although these five emperors represent the Julian household (Julius Caesar), Julius is not to be considered as the one responsible for starting the Roman empire and as a result he would not be considered as part of this list of Roman Emperors. Reasons follow.

1. Julius Caesar was never an emperor, he was given the position of dictator.
2. He was a Roman military and political leader.
3. He played an important part in the transformation of the Roman Republic into the Roman Empire.
4. Caesar fought in a civil war which left him undisputed master of the Roman world, and began extensive reforms of Roman society and government. He was proclaimed dictator for life, and he heavily centralized the government of the Republic.
5. The assassination of Julius Caesar, on the Ides of March (March 15th) in 44 BC sparked a new civil war between the Caesarians, including Octavian, Mark Antony, and Lepidus, and the Republicans, including Brutus, Cassius, Cicero and the sons of many men who were killed by Caesar in the civil war. This conflict ended with a Caesarian victory at the Battle of Philippi, and the formal establishment of the Second Triumvirate (The First Triumvirate having been established c. 60 BC between Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus, Marcus Licinius Crassus, and Caesar himself) in which Octavian, Antony, and Lepidus shared control of Rome. Tensions between Octavian and Antony soon plunged Rome into further civil war, culminating in Antony’s defeat at the Battle of Actium, and leaving Octavian as the undisputed leader of the Roman world.
6. This period of civil wars transformed the Roman Republic into the Roman Empire with Caesar's great nephew and adopted son Octavian (later known as Caesar Augustus) installed as the first emperor.

II. Three short lived kings

6. Servius (Galba): 68-69 A.D
A. Galba is noteworthy because he was neither related to nor adopted by his predecessor Nero.
B. Because of this, his accession marked the end of the nearly century-long control of the Principate by the Julio-Claudians.
C. Emperor for 7 months before being murdered by the praetorians on order of Otho.

7. Marcus Salvius (Otho): 69 A.D.
A. April 25, 32 - April 16, 69
B. Was Roman Emperor from January 15 to April 16, in 69.
C. The second emperor of the Year of the four emperors.
D. Committed Suicide, He was just thirty-seven at the time of his death, and had reigned just three month.
8. Aulus (Vitellius) Germanicus: 69 A.D.
   A. September 24, 15–December 22, 69
   B. Was Roman Emperor from April 17 69 to December 22 of the same year
   C. One of the emperors in the "Year of the Four Emperors"
   D. He was never acknowledged as emperor by the entire Roman world, though at Rome
      the Senate accepted him and decreed to him the usual imperial honours.
   E. On the entrance of Vespasian's troops into Rome Vitellius was dragged out of some
      miserable hiding-place (according to Tacitus a door-keeper's lodge), driven to the fatal
      Gemonian stairs, and there struck down. His body was thrown into the Tiber.

   Note: The Year of the Four Emperors refers to the year 69, the four emperors being Galba,
   Otho, Vitellius and Vespasian. The forced suicide of emperor Nero, in 68, was followed by a brief
   period of civil war, the first Roman civil war since Marc Antony's death in 30 BC. Between June of
   68 and December of 69, Rome witnessed the successive rise and fall of Galba, Otho and Vitellius
   until the final accession of Vespasian, first ruler of the Flavian dynasty. This period of civil war has
   become emblematic of the cyclic political disturbances in the history of the Roman Empire. The
   military and political anarchy created by this civil war had serious implications, such as the outbreak
   of the Batavian rebellion. (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Year_of_the_Four_Emperors)

III. Three kings of the Flavian Household

   A. A.D. 9 - A.D. 79
   B. Restored peace and stability to an empire in disarray following the death of Nero in A.D.
      68. In the process he established the Flavian dynasty as the legitimate successor to the
      Imperial throne.
   C. In response to rioting in Caesarea and Jerusalem that had led to the slaughter in the latter
      city of Jewish leaders and Roman soldiers, Nero granted to Vespasian in A.D. 66 a special
      command in the East with the objective of settling the revolt in Judaea. By spring A.D. 67,
      with 60,000 legionaries, auxiliaries, and allies under his control, Vespasian set out to subdue
      Galilee and then to cut off Jerusalem. Success was quick and decisive. By October all of
      Galilee had been pacified and plans for the strategic encirclement of Jerusalem were soon
      formed.
   D. Tacitus records that by December 22, A.D. 69, Vespasian had been given all the honors
      and privileges usually granted to emperors.
   E. Vespasian died peacefully - at Aquae Cutiliae near his birthplace in Sabine country on
      23 June, A.D. 79, after contracting a brief illness.

10. Titus Flavius Vespasianus: 79-81 A.D.
    A. December 30, 39–September 13, 81
    B. Son of Vespasianus
    C. Ruled the Roman Empire from 79 to 81.
D. Titus accompanied Vespasian to the east in 67 to put down the Jewish Rebellion, in which he served as commander of Legio XV Apollinaris.
E. Titus succeeded his father as Emperor in 79.
F. After just two years, Titus died of a fever, possibly poisoned by his physician Valens on behalf of Domitian.

11. Titus Flavius Domitianus: 81-96 A.D.
A. 24 October 51 – 18 September 96, commonly known as Domitian,
B. Was a Roman emperor of the gens Flavia.
C. Domitianus was the son of Vespasian, by his wife Domitilla, and brother of Titus, whom he succeeded in 81.
D. Towards the end of his reign, which had started with moderation, Domitian revealed a cruel personality. According to several sources, despite some arguments in the academic community, Jews and Christians were heavily persecuted during his reign.
E. For scholars, it is difficult to uncover Domitian's exact policy towards the developing Christian community. Many people believe that he was the Emperor during the time that the Revelation to John was authored (95 or 96).
F. Although it is unclear that Domitian officially enforced adherence to the cult, scholars generally agree that Roman governors forced citizens to participate in order to prove their loyalty and patriotism.
G. Domitian was murdered in September 96, in a plot organized by his enemies in the Senate, Stephanus (the steward of the deceased Julia Flavia), members of the Praetorian Guard and empress Domitia Longina.

1. International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, 1988, Vol 1, pg. 364