

MAIN ROMAN EMPERORS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT PERIOD

NAME	DATE	EVENTS UNDER THEIR REIGN
Caesar Augustus or Octavian	27 BC–AD 14	The emperor associated with the census at Jesus' birth (Lk 2:1). Demonstrating extraordinary skills as leader and administrator, Augustus inaugurated the <i>Pax Romana</i> ("Roman Peace"), an unprecedented period of peace and stability throughout the Mediterranean region. The freedom and relative safety of travel afforded by this peace would prove to be major factors for the rapid expansion of Christianity.
Tiberius	AD 14–37	Emperor during Jesus' public ministry (Lk 3:1). It was to him Jesus referred when he said, "Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's" (see Mk 12:17 and note).
Caligula	AD 37–41	Provoked a crisis among the Jews by demanding that his image be set up in the Jerusalem temple. Agrippa I eventually convinced Caligula to cancel the order, and the emperor was assassinated before it was carried out. Paul may be alluding to this event as a type of the antichrist when he speaks of the "man of lawlessness" who "sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God" (2Th 2:3–4).
Claudius	AD 41–54	Expelled the Jews from Rome in AD 49, probably because of conflicts with Jewish Christians (<i>Suetonius, Life of Claudius</i> 25.4). Priscilla and Aquila came from Rome to Corinth at this time (Ac 18:2; cf. 11:28).
Nero	AD 54–68	The caesar to whom Paul appealed during his trial (Ac 25:10; 28:19). Later, in AD 64, Nero began the first major persecution against Christians, blaming them for a fire he was rumored to have set in Rome (<i>Tacitus, Annals</i> 15.44). Both Paul and Peter were probably martyred under Nero.
Vespasian	AD 69–79	Declared emperor while in Israel putting down the Jewish Revolt of AD 66–73. He returned to Rome, leaving his son Titus to complete the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.
Domitian	AD 81–96	The second emperor (after Nero) to persecute the church. This persecution is likely the background to the book of Revelation.

Adapted from *Four Portraits, One Jesus* by Mark L. Strauss. Copyright © 2007 by Mark L. Strauss, p. 113. Used by permission of Zondervan.