

# The Roman Empire

Rome in the Bible

# The Roman Empire

Prophesied in the Old Testament

# The Roman Empire

Prophesied in the Old Testament

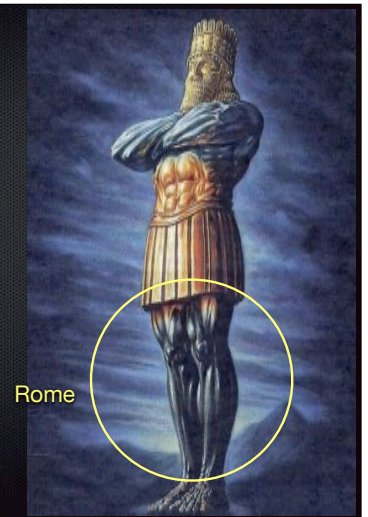
- During the time Israel was captive in Babylon, God gave Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, a vision of four future kingdoms that would dominate Israel until the coming of God's kingdom.
- Nebuchadnezzar saw an image with a head of gold, chest and arms of silver, stomach and thighs of bronze, and legs of iron. Scholars believe these sections represent Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome.



# The Roman Empire

Prophesied in the Old Testament

- It is interesting to note how the iron legs are characteristic of Rome.
- As political power passes from Greece to Rome, history transitions from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age.
- Roman poets like Virgil, Anchises and Lucretius all speak of bronze weapons as things of time long past.



## The Roman Empire

Prophesied in the Old Testament

- The Roman soldier still wore a helmet and breastplate of bronze, but his shield had an iron boss, and the rim of it was plated with iron at the top and bottom.
- Above all, he carried with him a distinctively Roman weapon the *pilum*, capable of being used both as a pike and a javelin. The *pilum* had a stout iron head and a long neck fitted to a wooden shaft, the metal extending for about a third of its entire length.



## The Roman Empire

Prophesied in the Old Testament

- Another parallel to Rome is perhaps represented by the two legs, as Rome divided into Western and Eastern empires.
- In Nebuchadnezzar's dream, the image is destroyed when a "rock cut out without hands" strikes the image on its feet, turns it to dust and a wind blows it away. The rock, representing God's kingdom, becomes a great mountain.
- Interestingly Jesus is born and ministers during the Roman Empire announcing the "kingdom of God is at hand."



## The Roman Empire

Prophesied in the Old Testament

- Some students of prophecy believe that a revived form of the Roman Empire will be in existence when Jesus returns in his Second Coming, represented by the ten toes



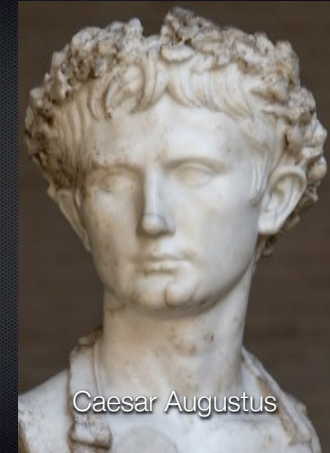
# The Roman Empire

Roman emperors mentioned in the New Testament

## The Roman Empire

Roman emperors mentioned in the New Testament

- Caesar Augustus was the first emperor of Rome. He reigned from January 16, 27 BCE to August 19, 14 CE.
- It was his decree that precipitated Joseph and Mary's move to Bethlehem where Jesus was born.



Caesar Augustus

Dan Mihai Pitca, CC BY-SA 4.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons

## The Roman Empire

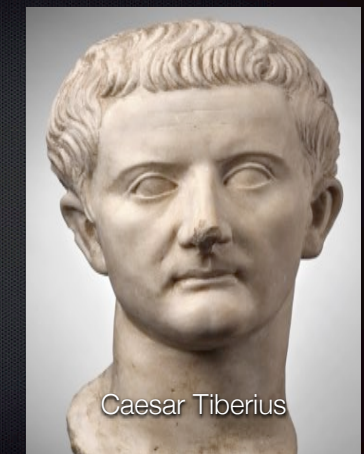
Roman emperors mentioned in the New Testament

*In those days a decree went out from **Caesar Augustus** that all the world should be registered. ... And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David. ... (Luke 2:1, 3-4 ESV)*

## The Roman Empire

Roman emperors mentioned in the New Testament

- Caesar Tiberius reigned from September 17, 14 CE to March 16, 37 CE.
- During his reign John the Baptist and Jesus began their ministries.



Caesar Tiberius

Musée Saint-Raymond (Licence Ouverte or Licence Ouverte), via Wikimedia Commons

## The Roman Empire

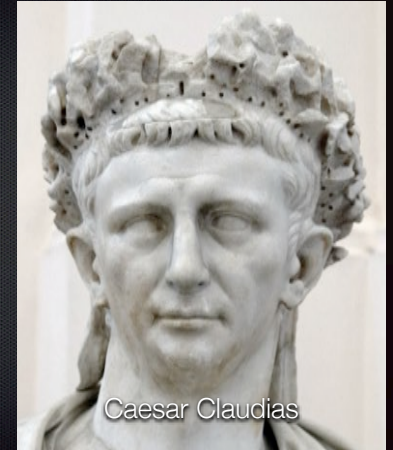
Roman emperors mentioned in the New Testament

*In the fifteenth year of the reign of **Tiberius Caesar**, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness. And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. (Luke 3:1-3 ESV)*

## The Roman Empire

Roman emperors mentioned in the New Testament

- Claudias reigned January 24, 41 CE to October 13, 54 CE.
- He was the emperor during Paul's first and second missionary journeys.



Caesar Claudias

Naples National Archaeological Museum, CC BY 2.5 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.5/>>, via Wikimedia Commons

## The Roman Empire

Roman emperors mentioned in the New Testament

- He is the Caesar referenced in the incident in Thessalonica.

*But the Jews were jealous, and taking some wicked men of the rabble, they formed a mob, set the city in an uproar, and attacked the house of Jason, seeking to bring them out to the crowd. And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city authorities, shouting, "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also, and Jason has received them, and they are all acting against the decrees of **Caesar** [Caludias], saying that there is another king, Jesus." (Acts 17:5-7 ESV)*

## The Roman Empire

Roman emperors mentioned in the New Testament

- He was also responsible for Aquila and Priscilla moving to Corinth where Paul met them

*After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because **Claudius** had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. And he went to see them... (Acts 18:1-2 ESV)*

## The Roman Empire

Roman emperors mentioned in the New Testament

- Nero reigned October 13, 54 CE to June 9, 68 CE.
- He came to power during Paul's third journey while Paul is in Ephesus.
- He is the emperor who was in power when Paul sailed to Rome.
- He was responsible for Paul's execution.



Caesar Nero

Glyptothek, Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons

## The Roman Empire

Roman emperors mentioned in the New Testament

*"If then I am a wrongdoer and have committed anything for which I deserve to die, I do not seek to escape death. But if there is nothing to their charges against me, no one can give me up to them. I appeal to **Caesar**."* (Acts 25:11 ESV)

*"For this very night there stood before me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship, and he said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before **Caesar**. And behold, God has granted you all those who sail with you.'" (Acts 27:23-24 ESV)*

## The Roman Empire

Other Roman officials mentioned in the New Testament

## The Roman Empire

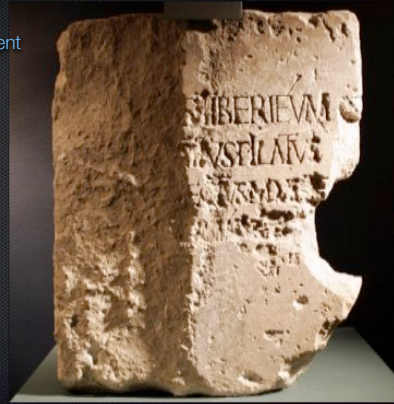
Other Roman officials mentioned in the New Testament

- **Publius Sulpicius Quirinius** was a well-known Roman official who lived ca. 51 BCE to 21 CE and was the governor of Syria at the time of Jesus birth. *In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when **Quirinius** was governor of Syria.* (Luke 2:1-2 ESV)
- The primary historical evidence for Quirinius comes from the writings of Tacitus and Josephus though he is mentioned by others. Tacitus says he led military campaigns against the Homonadenses, a tribe in Cilicia around 12-1 BCE (*Annales*, 3.48). Josephus says he was a senator sent to Syria "to take an account of their substance, and to dispose of Archelaus's money (*Antiquities of the Jews*, 18.1).

## The Roman Empire

Other Roman officials mentioned in the New Testament

- **Pontius Pilatus** was the procurator of Judea during the time of Jesus trial. A direct appointee of Rome, he ruled from 26/27 to 36/37 CE.
- In 1961, near the theater of Caesarea Maritima, archaeologists discovered a monument stone with the inscription "Pontius Pilate, the prefect of Judea, has dedicated to the people of Caesarea a temple in honor of **Tiberias**."



[https://static.timesofisrael.com/www/uploads/2018/11/AP\\_076408040625-300x480.jpg](https://static.timesofisrael.com/www/uploads/2018/11/AP_076408040625-300x480.jpg)

## The Roman Empire

Other Roman officials mentioned in the New Testament

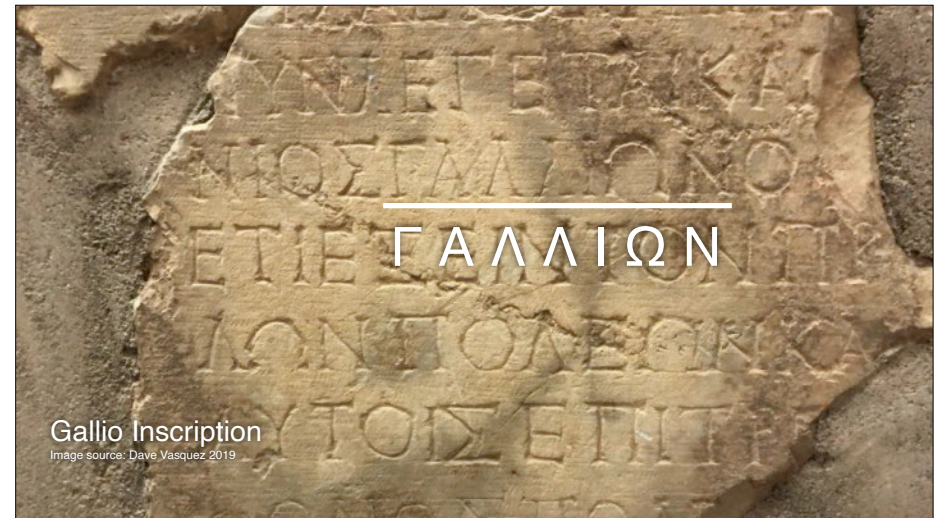
- **Lucius Junius Gallio Annaeanus** was a Roman senator and brother of Seneca who reigned as proconsul of the province of Achaia 51 to 52 CE.
- He was in power when the Jews in Corinth brought an accusation against Paul.  
*But when **Gallio** was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal, saying, "This man is persuading people to worship God contrary to the law."*

## The Roman Empire

Other Roman officials mentioned in the New Testament

*But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it were a matter of wrongdoing or vicious crime, O Jews, I would have reason to accept your complaint. But since it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own law, see to it yourselves. I refuse to be a judge of these things." And he drove them from the tribunal. (Acts 18:12-16 ESV)*

- Archaeological evidence for Gallio was discovered in the late 20th century, when a reference to Gallio proconsul of Achaia was mentioned in an inscription found at the city of Delphi.



Gallio Inscription

Image source: Dave Vasquez 2019

## The Roman Empire

Other Roman officials mentioned in the New Testament

- **Cornelius** was a Roman centurion stationed in Caesarea, the capital of *Iudaea* province.  
*At Caesarea there was a man named **Cornelius**, a centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort. (Acts 10:1 ESV)*
- He was commander of the *Cohors II Italica Civium Romanorum*.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cornelius\\_the\\_Centurion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cornelius_the_Centurion)

## The Roman Empire

Other Roman officials mentioned in the New Testament

- In Acts 10, Cornelius is presented as a devout man who receives a vision from God. He sends men to Joppa for Peter, who has also received a vision. Peter goes Caesarea where he preaches the Good News.  
*While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. (Acts 10:44-45 ESV)*
- This controversial conversion is later taken up by the Council of Jerusalem in Acts 15.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cornelius\\_the\\_Centurion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cornelius_the_Centurion)

## The Roman Empire

Other Roman officials mentioned in the New Testament

- **Julius** was a centurion of the Augustan Cohort who escorted Paul to Rome.  
*And when it was decided that we should sail for Italy, they delivered Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion of the Augustan Cohort named **Julius**. (Acts 27:1 ESV)*
- Historians and scholars have debated the nature of the Augustan Cohort, some suggesting it was a regular Roman legionary cohort, others proposing it was a special corps of imperial couriers or a bodyguard unit.

<https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/encyclopedia-of-the-bible/Augustan-Cohort-band/>

## The Roman Empire

Other Roman officials mentioned in the New Testament

- There is archeological evidence for a *Cohors Augusta I* in Syria in the time of Augustus (*Dessau, ILS 2683*).
- Josephus wrote of a *turma* or cavalry called "Sebastian," ("Augustan," the Gr. word in the present context). Sebaste was Samaria, refounded by Herod the Great under that name in honor of Augustus.
- Julius may have been a member of the praetorian guard sent on a special mission to Caesarea.

<https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/encyclopedia-of-the-bible/Augustan-Cohort-band/>