

----- Nero -----



4058a AM, 4767 JP, 54 AD

6806. Claudius died on the 3rd of the Ides of October (October 13th), when Asinius Marcellus and Asilius Aviola were consuls. Claudius' wife Agrippina poisoned him. {Seneca, Ludi de Morte Claudii, initio} {*Suetonius, Claudius, l. 5. c. 45. 2:79} {*Dio, l. 60. (34) 8:31} He had reigned thirteen years, eight months and twenty days. {*Dio, l. 60. (34) 8:31} {*Josephus, Antiq., l. 20. c. 8. s. 1. (148) 10:81} In the middle of the same day, the gates of the palace were suddenly thrown open and Nero, the son-in-law and adopted son, was declared emperor. {*Tacitus, Annals, l. 12. c. 69. 4:417}

4058b AM, 4768 JP, 55 AD

6812. At the beginning of Nero's reign, all Judea was filled with thieves, enchanters and seducers of the ignorant masses. Every day Felix put to death as many as he could capture. Eleazar, the son of Dinaeus, who led a large band of thieves,

was persuaded by Felix to come to him. Felix had given him his word that Eleazar would suffer no harm from him, but when he came, Felix bound him and sent him to Rome. {*Josephus, Antiq., l. 20. c. 8. s. 5. (160,161) 10:89} {*Josephus, Jewish War, l. 2. c. 13. s. 2. (253) 2:423}

6813. Felix could no longer tolerate Jonathan, the high priest, who so often and so freely admonished him over his government of the Jews. By promising him a large sum of money, he persuaded Doras, a great friend of Jonathan, to kill Jonathan by using some assassins. These entered the city under the pretence of religious worship, with daggers hidden secretly under their garments. They mingled among his family and killed Jonathan. Because that murder went unpunished, it became an invitation to more licentiousness. Others came at every feast and hid their daggers in the same way; mixing with the crowd, they freely killed some of their private enemies. Some were hired for money to murder in the city, and even in the temple. {*Josephus, Antiq., l. 20. c. 8. s. 5. (162-166) 10:89,91}

6814. In this way, the city became infested with thieves. The deceivers and magicians enticed and drew multitudes into the deserts, promising to show them signs and wonders done by the power of God. When the multitude had been persuaded in this manner, they suffered the penalty for their folly. They were brought back by Felix and put to death.

{#Mt 24:24-26} {*Josephus, Jewish War, l. 2. c. 13. s. 3,4. (254-260) 2:423,425} {*Josephus, Antiq., l. 20. c. 8. s. 6. (167,168) 10:91,93}

6815. At that time, there was a certain Egyptian who called himself a prophet. He gathered thirty thousand men, or four thousand, according to Luke, {#Ac 21:38} [K670] and brought them from the wilderness to the Mount of Olives. He told them that from there they would see the walls of Jerusalem fall down, by which means they would then be able to enter the city. When Felix found out, he attacked this seduced multitude with his Roman cavalry and foot soldiers, as well as a large number of Jews. He killed four hundred and took two hundred prisoners alive. The rest of the multitude dispersed into their own countries. No one knew what became of the Egyptian and the few who escaped from that skirmish. {*Josephus, Antiq., l. 20. c. 8. s. 6. (169-172) 10:93} {*Josephus, Jewish War, l. 2. c. 13. s. 5. (261-263) 2:425} Lysias the captain mentioned him to Paul when he asked whether Paul was that Egyptian who, in earlier days had created an uproar and had led four thousand men, who were murderers, into the desert. {#Ac 21:38}

6816. When Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews of Corinth brought Paul before his judgment seat. The Greeks

took Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and beat him, and Gallio was not concerned about it. {#Ac 18:12-17}

4064 AM, 4774 JP, 61 AD

6864. At the same time, King Agrippa conferred the high priesthood on Ishmael, the son of Phabi. A dispute also arose between the chief priests and the rest of the priests and rulers of Jerusalem. Both factions were guarded by a company of very bold and seditious men, who decided their arguments with reproachful language and by throwing stones. No one curbed them, since the city had no magistrates. The impudence of the high priests grew to such heights, that they dared to send their servants to the very grain floors themselves, to take away the tithes that were the portion of the priests. So much did the violence of the seditious men prevail over justice, that many poor priests died from lack of food. {*Josephus, Antiq., l. 20. c. 8. s. 8. (179-181) 10:97,99}

4065a AM, 4774 JP, 61 AD

6865. Mark, the evangelist who had first preached Christ at Alexandria, died in the eighth year of Nero and was buried at Alexandria. {Jerome, Scriptor. Ecclesiastical Catalogue} The elders of Alexandria chose one of their number whom they placed in a higher position and called a bishop. They

followed a pattern similar to an army choosing a general. Deacons, likewise, would choose one from among their number, whom they knew to be most industrious, to be the archdeacon. {Jerome, Scriptor. Ecclesiastical Catalogue, Epist. 85. ad Euagrium} They chose Annianus, who was a man dear to God for his piety and admirable in all aspects. He was the first bishop of the church of Alexandria after Mark and was there for twelve years, from the eighth year of Nero to the fourth year of Domitian. {Jerome, Scriptor. Ecclesiastical Catalogue} {*Eusebius, Chronicles, l. 1. 1:265} {*Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, l. 2. c. 24. 1:179} {*Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, l. 3. c. 14. 1:233} [K678]

4065b AM, 4775 JP, 62 AD

6867. When Felix observed that the sedition between the Jews and Syrians of Caesarea was still going on, he sent some of the nobility from both sides as envoys to Nero, to argue their cause before him. {*Josephus, Jewish War, l. 2. c. 13. s. 7. (270) 2:429} He also sent some priests as prisoners to Rome for a very minor fault. They were good and honest men and were to plead their own cause before Nero. {*Josephus, Life, l. 1. c. 3. (13) 1:7} As well as that, he left the apostle Paul confined, as a favour to the Jews, after having already kept him prisoner for two whole years at Caesarea.

Paul was still a prisoner there when Porcius Festus arrived from Nero as Felix's successor in the province. {#Ac 24:27}

6868. Three days after Festus arrived in the province, he went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem. The high priest and the rulers of the Jews accused Paul and requested that he be brought from Caesarea to Jerusalem. They planned to ambush and kill him on the way. Festus refused and ordered Paul's accusers to come to Caesarea. He spent about ten more days in Jerusalem and then travelled back down to Caesarea. The next day he sat in his tribunal and listened to the Jews accusing Paul and Paul clearing himself of their accusations. Festus wanted to please the Jews and asked Paul if he was prepared to have the matter of which he was accused judged before him at Jerusalem. Paul knew the intent of the question and at whose instigation he had asked it, and feared some kind of treachery from the Jews. He refused to go there and appealed to Caesar. After Festus had conferred with his council, he agreed to send Paul to Caesar. {#Ac 25:1-12}

4066b AM, 4776 JP, 63 AD

6885. After Festus died in the province, Nero sent Albinus to be his successor in Judea. King Agrippa took away the high priesthood from Joseph and gave it to Ananas, the son of

Ananas, or that Ananus who had formerly had the high priesthood, a long time earlier. Ananus had five sons who had also been high priests, which had never happened to any of the high priests before. {*Josephus, Antiq., l. 20. c. 9. s. 1. (197,198) 10:107}

4067a AM, 4776 JP, 63 AD

6891. Four years before the Jewish war (that was carried out by Vespasian), at a time when the city of Jerusalem enjoyed both peace and plenty, Jesus, the son of Ananias, a countryman and one of the common people, arrived at the feast of tabernacles and suddenly began to cry out:

"A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds, a voice against Jerusalem and the temple, a voice against the bridegroom and the bride, a voice against all this people."

6892. He cried like this night and day, as he went through all the streets of the city. Some of the nobility, ignoring any sign of the impending trouble, took the fellow and scourged him with many stripes. However, he spoke nothing privately to himself or to them that scourged him, but continued on with the same cry. The magistrates thought he had a message from God and brought him to the Roman governor. He was

beaten until his bones showed, yet he never made an entreaty nor shed a tear, but at every stroke replied, with as much composure as a weeping voice would permit:

"Woe, woe, to Jerusalem."

6893. Albinus then asked who he was, where he was born and why he persisted in crying after this manner? He gave no reply and continued ceaselessly to bewail the city, until Albinus thought he was mad and allowed him to leave. He cried like this most earnestly on the feast days, and continued in this for seven years (or rather six, as Photius has it) and five months, and yet he was never hoarse nor weary. In the end, he was killed by a stone shot from an engine at the time of the siege. {*Josephus, Jewish War, l. 6. c. 5. s. 3. (300-309) 4:265-269} {Photius, Bibliotheca, c. 47} [K684]

44067b AM, 4777 JP, 64 AD

6895. From this time on, the civil state of the Jews degenerated on a daily basis. {*Josephus, Antiq., l. 20. c. 9. s. 4. (214) 10:115} The seeds of the future destruction were sown at this time through the number of leaders who led these bands. {*Josephus, Jewish War, l. 2. c. 14. s. 1. (275,276) 2:431}

6896. Albinus, the governor, robbed private citizens of their goods in the name of justice and greatly burdened the whole country with heavy taxes. For a price, he freed not only the thieves whom the soldiers of the city had captured, but also those whom the former governors had left in prison. Those who could not afford to bribe him, remained in prison as the most heinous offenders. {*Josephus, Jewish War, l. 2. c. 14. s. 1. (272-276) 2:429,431}

6897. At the same time, also, the insolence of those wanting a revolution in Jerusalem increased. The rich among them bribed Albinus to overlook their seditions, while those who delighted in disturbances, allied themselves with Albinus' side. Each of them had a troop of rascals and Albinus himself was over them all, as a tyrant and a prince of thieves. He used the help of his guard to rob the quieter sort. So it was that those whose houses were ransacked held their peace and those who escaped were glad to flatter those who they knew deserved death, in case they themselves should suffer the same things. {*Josephus, Jewish War, l. 2. c. 14. s. 1. (274-276) 2:431}

6898. When Rome was on fire, Nero watched it burn from Mecena's Tower and was very greatly delighted with the beauty of the flames. He sang of the destruction of Troy in his lyre-player's clothes, comparing the present evil to those

old ruins. {*Tacitus, Annals, l. 15. c. 38-40. 5:271-277} {*Suetonius, Nero, l. 6. c. 38. 2:149,151} {*Dio, l. 62. (16-18) 8:111-115} Some noted that this fire began on the 14th of the Calends of July (June 19th), on the same day on which the Senonian Gauls had set the city on fire, after they had taken it. Others, in their curiosity, went so far as to calculate the very days and months that were between the two fires. They said there were four hundred and eighteen years, four hundred and eighteen months and four hundred and eighteen days between the two fires. {*Tacitus, Annals, l. 15. c. 41. 5:277,279}

6899. To quell the rumour that he had started the fire, Nero falsely accused the Christians and punished them most grievously, with highly refined torments. Those who confessed to being Christians were the first to be apprehended; then, based on their information, a large multitude were convicted. They were hated, not so much for allegedly having set the city on fire, as for the general hatred that everyone bore against them. These people suffered and died most cruelly. Some were covered with beasts' skins, to be torn by dogs; some were crucified and some burned-when it was night, their bodies were turned into torches to give light by night. Nero made his garden fit for the spectacle and held shows in the circus. [K685] He mingled among the common people in the clothes of a charioteer, or stood in a

ring. The Christians were pitied, since they were not suffering for any common good, but to satisfy one man's cruelty. {*Tacitus, Annals, l. 15. c. 44. 5:283,285} The words of an old scholiast were mentioned, as commenting on Juvenal's writings: {Juvenal, Satire, 1.}

**Thou shalt be made a torch by night to shine
And burn impaled, name thou but Tigilline.**

"If you touch Tigillinus, you shall be burned alive, as it was in the shows of Nero, who commanded them to be made into torches, that they might give light to the spectators. They were fastened through their throat, so that they could not bend themselves. Nero clothed malefactors with pitch, paper and wax and set them on fire."

6900. This was the first persecution raised against the Christians by the Roman emperors. Suetonius, a heathen writer, mentioned: {*Suetonius, Nero, l. 6. c. 16. 2:107}

"The Christians were punished, who were men of a new and pernicious superstition."

6901. Tertullian, a Christian, stated: {*Tertullian, Apology, l. 1. c. 5. 3:22}

"Search your records, then you shall find that Nero was the first that used Caesar's sword against this sect, which at that time greatly increased at Rome. However, we glory in the author of our condemnation for he who understands, knows that Nero could only condemn that which is very good."

4068b AM, 4778 JP, 65 AD

6906. Although Paul was old and in prison, he won Onesimus to Christ. He was a servant who had fled from Colosse, from his master, Philemon. {#Phm 1:9,10,15 Col 4:9,18} [K686]

6907. Timothy, who was being kept as a prisoner with Paul, was set at liberty. {#Heb 13:23}

4068b AM, 4778 JP, 65 AD

6914. The building of the temple was now finished and the people realised that about eighteen thousand workmen, who had previously worked on the temple, would be idle. They did not want the holy treasure to fall prey to the Romans, as well as wanting to help the workmen. If they worked only one hour, they were promptly paid. So they tried to persuade King Agrippa to repair the eastern porch. This porch hung over a deep and narrow valley and was supported by a wall that was six hundred feet long, built from stones that were

thirty feet square and nine feet high. Claudius Caesar had committed the charge of the temple to King Agrippa. Agrippa believed that any large building could easily be pulled down, but was hard to set up, and especially this porch. It would cost much time and money to do, hence he denied their request, but he allowed them to pave their city with white stone, if they so desired. {*Josephus, Antiq., l. 20. c. 9. s. 7. (219-223) 10:117,119}

6915. After two years of having been detained, Paul was released. He had taught the gospel at Rome during this period. {#Ac 28:30} He seems to have gone from there to Asia and to have lived with Philemon at Colosse. {#Phm 1:22}

4069b AM, 4779 JP, 66 AD

6929. Paul came to Rome for the second time and was heard and acquitted by Nero. He mentioned this: {#2Ti 4:16,17}

"In my first answer, no man stood with me, but all forsook me: I pray God it be not laid to their charge. Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion."

6930. So, as he had earlier done for two years, so now again for a whole year, he preached the gospel to the people of all countries, who came from every place and flocked to Rome, to make it their home country.

6931. Demas, loving this present world more, left Paul and went to Thessalonica, Crescens went into Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke remained with Paul at Rome. {#2Ti 4:10,11}

6937. Peter and Paul were warned, by revelation from the Lord, of their approaching death. {#2Pe 1:14 2Ti 4:6,7}

6938. Peter wrote his second letter to the Hebrews, who were dispersed throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia. {#2Pe 3:1 1Pe 1:1}

6939. Paul, by the hand of Tychicus, sent his second letter to Timothy at Ephesus, where the family of Onesiphorus lived. This was after Aquila and Priscilla had left Rome and returned to Ephesus. {#2Ti 4:12,19} In this letter, he wanted Timothy to come to him before winter and bring Mark with him, who was very beneficial to him in the ministry. {#2Ti 4:9,11,21} Paul sent greetings from Eubulus, Pudens, Linus and Claudia. {#2Ti 4:21}

4070a AM, 4779 JP, 66 AD

6940. During the feast of tabernacles, after Cestius Gallus had burned Lydda, he marched toward Jerusalem. About seven or eight miles from there, the men of Jerusalem met him and fought a perilous battle near Bethhoron. When fresh troops arrived for Cestius, he forced the Jews into Jerusalem. On the 4th of the month of Hyperberetaios, (Niese: October 17th, Capellus: October 4th), he broke in and captured the lower part of the city (also known as Bezetha, or the New City and the Timber Market.) Then he attacked the temple and the upper city. He would easily have taken it, had he continued the attack more valiantly, for most of the people favoured the Romans and only the seditious men opposed them. {*Josephus, Jewish War, l. 2. c. 19. s. 1-4. (513-532) 2:521-529} [E900]

6941. When Cestius had almost captured the temple, he raised the siege for no good reason and retreated to Antipatris. Many of the Romans and auxiliary soldiers died on this march who were killed by the pursuing Jews. In their flight, the Romans abandoned most of their baggage, ammunition, engines, slings and other arms. The Jews later made good use of this equipment in their own defence against the siege of Titus. This humiliating retreat happened on the 8th of the month of Dios (Niese: November 25th, Capellus:

November 8th) in the twelfth year of Nero. (That is, the twelfth year was over.) The thirteenth year of Nero had begun on the 13th of the previous October. {*Josephus, Jewish War, l. 2. c. 19. s. 5-9. (533-555) 2:529-537}

6942. The Jews returned to Jerusalem, elated by this victory. They appointed Joseph, the son of Gorion, and Ananus, the high priest, as governors of the city and sent many commanders into each province to govern. As one of these, Josephus, (the writer of this war of the Jews), was sent into Galilee. After he had fortified and walled many of the towns, he made all the preparations necessary to endure a war because he was expecting the invasion of the Romans. {*Josephus, Jewish War, l. 2. c. 20. s. 1-8. (556-584) 2:537-547}

6943. In the meantime, there were many riots and numerous and frequent rebellions of the cities against Josephus. These were due to the craftiness and fraud of John, the son of a certain Levite, and out of envy of some of the governors of Jerusalem, who wanted the government taken from Josephus. However, Josephus thwarted all their schemes with his prudence and patience. He forced John to flee with his forces to Jerusalem from Gischala, a town of Galilee, which John had fortified. {*Josephus, Jewish War, l. 2. c. 21. s. 1-10. (585-646) 2:547-571} At Jerusalem, Ananias, the

governor of the city, made preparations for a real war by repairing the walls and ensuring that warlike instruments, arrows and arms, were made throughout the whole city. He endeavoured in vain to reconcile those who were called the Zealots. He tried to catch Simon, the son of Gioras, who was a thief, but when he sent soldiers against him, Simon fled with his followers to the thieves who held Masada. From there, they infested the whole country of Judea and Idumea plaguing it with their robberies. {*Josephus, Jewish War, l. 2. c. 22. s. 1,2. (647-654) 2:571,573} [K692]

6944. Cestius, meanwhile, sent messengers to Nero, who was in Achaia at the time, telling him of the troubled state of Judea. Disturbed by this news, Nero ordered Vespasian to go there. On receiving this command, Vespasian sent his son Titus to Alexandria, to bring the fifteenth legion from there into Judea. Meanwhile, Vespasian himself, with the fifth and the tenth legions under his command, went by land from Achaia into Asia and came from there into Syria and Antioch. {*Josephus, Jewish War, l. 3. c. 1. s. 1-3. (1-8) 3:3,5} {*Josephus, Jewish War, l. 3. c. 4. s. 2. (65) 3:23}

4070b AM, 4780 JP, 67 AD

6945. At Rome, Peter and Paul foretold that it would shortly come to pass, that God would send a king who would

overcome the Jews and who would lay their city level with the ground. He would besiege them until they so pined with hunger and thirst, that they would start eating one another. Finally, they would fall into their enemies' hands and would see their wives most grievously tormented in their sight and their virgins violated and prostituted. Their sons would be torn asunder and their little ones dashed to pieces. Everything would be destroyed by fire and sword and they would forever be banished from their own lands. All this would happen, because they had exalted themselves above the most loving Son of God, who was approved by God himself. {*Lactantius, Divine Institutions, l. 4. c. 21. 7:123}

6948. Vespasian invaded Galilee and burned and wasted the city of the Gadarenes, which he took at the first assault. From there, he went to Jotapata on the 21st day of Artemisios (Niese: June 8th, Capellus: May 21st) and fought against it. {*Josephus, Jewish War, l. 3. c. 6,7. (110-160) 3:37-53}

6949. On the 29th day of June (which was the last day of that month that happened within the reign of Nero for he died on June 9th of the following year,) Paul was beheaded at Rome, as the records of both the eastern and western church confirm. Consequently, Chrysostom affirmed without doubt that the day of Paul's death was known with greater

certainty than the death of Alexander the Great himself. {*Chrysostom, II Corinthians, Homily 26. c. 5. 12:402} Dionysius, the bishop of the Corinthians, in a letter to the Romans, affirmed that Peter also suffered martyrdom at the same time, together with him. {*Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, l. 2. c. 25. 1:181} Origen stated that Peter was crucified at Rome, with his head downward, as he had desired. {Origen, Genesis, tome. 3.} {*Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, l. 3. c. 1. 1:191} The prediction of Christ, which he had made to Peter, was fulfilled at that time:

"When thou art old, thou shalt stretch forth thine hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." {#Joh 21:18,19} [E901]

6950. After a forty-seven day siege, Vespasian captured Jotapata by force and burned it. It was valiantly defended by Josephus, who was the governor at the time, on the Calends of July (July 1st) in the thirteenth year of Nero. It was taken on the first of the month of Panemos (Niese: July 20th, Capellus July 1st) {*Josephus, Jewish War, l. 3. c. 7. s. 8-36. (161-339) 3:53-99} Vespasian captured Josephus as he lay hidden in a cave and gave him his life, but kept him prisoner. {*Josephus, Jewish War, l. 3. c. 8. s. 1-9. (340-408) 3:99-119}

4071a AM, 4780 JP, 67 AD

6953. After a whole month's siege, Gamala was taken and overthrown, on the 23rd day of the month of Hyperberetaios (Niese: Nov 10th, Capellus: October 23rd). A little later, Mount Tabor was also taken by the Romans. {*Josephus, Jewish War, l. 4. c. 1. s. 1-10. (1-83) 3:159-183} Titus attacked Gischala, which was being held by John and his party, made up of the seditious men. John appeared to like the conditions of peace that were offered by Titus, but in the night he and his party fled from the city to Jerusalem. Titus spared the city, but placed a garrison there, and then went to Caesarea. {*Josephus, Jewish War, l. 4. c. 2. s. 1-5. (84-120) 3:183-193} Vespasian left Caesarea for Jamnia and Azotus and after he had conquered them both, he returned to Caesarea. {*Josephus, Jewish War, l. 4. c. 3. s. 2. (130) 3:195}

4071b AM, 4781 JP, 68 AD

6958. Vespasian received news of the rebellions in Gaul, led by their governor, Julius Vindex, who had armed the Gauls against the Romans. This made him more determined to finish the war against the Jews. So, at the beginning of the spring, he led his army out from Caesarea and overran all Judea and Idumea and wasted it. Bringing back his army, he led them through Samaria to Jericho. When the inhabitants

fled to the mountain country opposite Jerusalem, he pursued them and drove them from the hills. He attacked the citadels at Jericho and other places and surrounded the Jews on every side. {*Josephus, Jewish War, l. 4. c. 8. s. 1-4. (440-485) 3:285-301}

6959. Nero now faced a revolt against him by Julius Vindex in Gaul. Should he be deposed, some astrologers promised him the government of the east, some the kingdom of Jerusalem and several the recovery of his previous fortunes. {*Suetonius, Nero, l. 6. c. 40. s. 2. 2:155}

6960. Nero knew he was doomed, when he heard that Galba and Spain had revolted from him. {*Suetonius, Nero, l. 6. c. 42. s. 1. 2:159} In the end, he killed himself, on the 9th of June, after he had reigned thirteen years and eight months. {*Dio, l. 63. (29) 8:193}