

# Saints of Caesar's Household

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## PREFACE

### REFERENCES USED IN THIS PUBLICATION

- **American Standard Version** (ASV or AV) is a version of the Bible that was released in 1901. It soon came to have other names, such as the American Revised Version, the American Standard Revision, the American Standard Revised Bible, and the American Standard Edition. By the time its copyright was renewed in 1929, it had come to be known by its present name, the American Standard Version.
- **Diaglott** is a two-language polyglot translation, of the New Testament by Benjamin Wilson, first published in 1864. It is an interlinear translation with the original Greek text and a word-for-word English translation in the left column, and a full English translation in the right column.
- **King James Version** (KJV) references are used throughout this publication unless otherwise noted.
- **Revised Version** (RV) (or English Revised Version) of the Bible is a late 19th-century British revision of the King James Version of 1611. It was the first and remains the only officially authorized and recognized revision of the King James Bible.
- **Wuest:** Kenneth Samuel Wuest (1893–1962) was a noted New Testament Greek (Κοινὴ) scholar of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century...produced his own English translation of the New Testament (the Wuest Expanded Translation – abbreviated WET) based on Nestle's critical text.

**Note:** *Definitions of references pulled from WikipediA, The Free Encyclopedia, January 2013.*

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*"All the saints salute you, chiefly that are of Caesar's household." [Phi.4:22]*

Here is a striking verse of Scripture though almost unbelievable that there were saints in Caesar's household. Paul says there were, so we believe it. They were surely unusual folk to take a stand for Jesus Christ in that place of rebellion against God and His rule. When we remember who Caesar was at that time, the miracle is the more wonderful, that there should be saints in his household.

Nero was the Caesar of that day and the most infamous of all the Caesars. In fact it is questionable if there is any other that even compares in any measure with this beast of Rome. Once indeed, the devil had realized his conception of a man in this vicious monster. In Nero. Satan's ideal stood out and was manifested in bold relief. Nero's mother and father were of the same evil turn, and it is no strange thing that their son should even outdo them both in wickedness, cruelty, and diabolical corruption.

As a boy, Nero was a slave of the most violent passions. His capacity for cruelty was developed with the years.

- He murdered his own mother, his 2 wives, and his rival.
- His tutor, Seneca, he bludgeoned to death.
- Disguised as a highwayman he often went on tours of Rome, committing the most outrageous crimes. He was cured of this however, when a man who knew how to deal with highwaymen took him, not knowing he was the emperor, and beat him within an inch of his life.

His extravagance was unsurpassed except by his cruelty. If Caligula drank pearls in his wine, Nero shod his mules with silver. He never wore the same garment twice. His golden house was a marvel of extravagance and luxury to the highest degree. On his porch he had a statue of himself 120 feet high. The space that was in it was large enough to take in 2 proportions each a mile in length, and a silvered lake surrounded it with buildings, resembling a city. Within its area were vineyards, pastures, cornfields, and woods containing large numbers of tame and wild animals. Parts of the house were overlaid with gold and mother of pearl. The banqueting house was built in circular form revolving ceaselessly night and day, imitating the motions of the planets. After dedicating it, Nero said, "I have now a dwelling fit for man." He might have added, but I have no man fit for the dwelling.

This one was the man at the head of the household in which Paul said there were "*saints*." Is there a Godless man at the head of your household and does he make you to feel that you cannot be a disciple of Christ? Then picture this scene of Caesar's household. Remember the monster at the head of this house. Recall the fortitude it required to be a Christian in that time and in that place; then take courage in the fact that what God's grace could do for the men and women of Caesar's age, that grace can accomplish in the men and women of this age also. If you fight for spiritual life, remember, "*All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household.*"

Consider also the age in which these people lived. It was an age of despotism; absolute power was vested in the emperor.

- Did a man want an office, he went to the emperor.
- Did he desire a commission in the army, he saw the emperor.
- Did he want to keep his head on his shoulders, he saw the emperor.
- All authority was lodged in the emperor.

Anything against the emperor meant death; human rights were trampled underfoot, and liberty was unknown. Despotism had slain manly principals, leaving men who were only parodies on manhood, weaklings by the side of the mighty men of former days. Nevertheless, the mightiest character, next to the Son of God, could be found right there in Rome in that age of despotism and wickedness. He never sat upon the throne of Caesar, but the fact that he was a prisoner in that prison, flooded that dungeon with an effulgence such as Caesar's throne had never known. In that dark, noisome hole underground, Paul built a throne upon the principals of Jesus Christ; and, from that throne mandates were issued which have shaken the kingdoms of the world and transformed civilization. In that age of absolute wickedness there were some who had come into harmony with a will which was above the will of the emperor. They struggled up to the heights of glory all aglow and bespotted with blood to lock hands with a man of Calvary. Counting their lives not dear unto themselves [Act.20:24], they sowed the crimson seed of martyrdom. Paul spoke of these believers in his letter to the Philippians: "*All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household.*"

Some of Nero's actions, and those of other beastly men, were out of desire for pleasure. **Theaters** enthralled the multitudes with their deadly charm. The serious business of life had passed away and amusement was to the front. It is estimated that the **public pleasure resorts** were beyond number; they could accommodate masses of people. **Public baths** became centers of pleasure—they were kept open night and day; the rich almost lived in them. It is said that some ate in their baths. Some bathed as often as 7 times a day, just before eating and then after eating to create a new hunger. The baths were built on a magnificent scale and the genius of art was prostituted by allowing, on the marble walls, pictures of shame. There were representations that ought to have brought a blush to the cheeks of a demon.

But this Roman midnight of shame was ending, melting away under the radiant dawn of the Christian Era. The Star of Bethlehem and the Son of Righteousness shone upon the darkness, and God's golden morning burst over the hills of the world. Paul came to old Rome with his message of redemption. The Son of God had come down to earth to deliver them from the slavery of sin, which is much greater than the natural slavery in Caesar's household. They saw the Light of the world. He shone upon them the Lord of glory. Building their faith upon this deathless One, they became deathless too. He lightened their darkness as well as their burdens and conquered their fears and immortalized their hopes. Their salutations have become a part of the music of the age. "*All the saints salute you, chiefly they of Caesar's household.*" If such saints can bloom and blossom in such an atmosphere, what can the rest of us do who are in the latter time when things are so much better? We can overcome to the uttermost, live in perfect peace and harmony with each other,

and bring to God a glory that is unsurpassed. If they of Caesar's household could overcome and salute us, we surely can do as much...and more.

History tells us of consequent **carnality** and **beastliness**.

**Extravagance** marked that day. Men vied with each other in doing something beyond their fellows in one way or another. The doings of those days are beyond our idea of things. We cannot conceive of the foolishness into which they delved.

**Gluttony** was a part of their very mind. They were slaves to their stomachs, and a higher estimate was put upon a big eater than a big thinker of their time.

Nevertheless, in that day there were men of spiritual greatness and Divine Ambition such as those of Caesar's household. They breathed a pure atmosphere and lived upon heavenly manna and angel's food came to them upon platters of gold as it were. They overcame all things, those of Caesar's household who saluted all saints. When we consider that those saints in Caesar's household lived in days of **slavery**, we are the more amazed. In fact of the 120 million population of Rome, it is estimated that half of them were slaves.

- They were denied both social and political rights.
- They could not contract legal marriage, make a will, or inherit property.
- After toiling all day, they were cast into a subterranean cell at night.
- At his master's will a slave was crucified or tortured.

Slaves not only did the manual labor but labored in mechanical arts also. They were found in the professions of musicians, actors, secretaries, and school-masters. These folk were brought from Syria, Africa, Asia Minor, and Greece. Think of an educated Grecian obeying the commands of a brutal Roman, and that without thanks. Nevertheless, a declaration of independence had been drawn up on the Judean hills.

*"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." [Joh.8:36]*

Paul had caught this message from the lips of the Son of God and carried it across the mountains and seas and proclaimed it in the slave-marts of Nero. Like a melody from heavenly shores it ravished their hearts and strengthened their souls. It lifted them from the dungeon, the lion's claw, and the woodsman's ax. There were other saints in other cities singing the song of victory in the midst of the jaws of death. It was to the true Church a glorious harvest of that work. What a kingly privilege to hear their salutation ringing down the ages "*All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household.*" What an honor to be saluted by such glorious worthies of faith.

Nero's age was not a brainy age. Schools of carving superseded schools of philosophy. Cooking was a serious matter in the closing days of the Roman Empire. We read that they ate everything from water rats to white worms, from snails to pheasants, from peacocks to singing birds, from oysters to wild boars. Great was the glutton, and his greatness grew with his increased capacity for

gluttony. Marvelous scrumptious repasts they enjoyed, beyond the imagination of men to conceive. Dinners that would cost thousands of dollars at a sitting were a common occurrence.

In addition to the manifested gluttony, there was an **idolatrous worship** of tables and dishes. Even Cicero paid \$3,250 for his banqueting table, and other extravagances we could mention, but this is enough to convince us that overcoming is possible in any age and under any circumstances.

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