Saints In Caesar's Household

Philippians 4:21-22

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Rome

➤ Population probably the largest of the first century world. 4,100,000.

➤ Not unlike today's big cities, it had temples, shrines, theaters, etc.

➤ Also had overcrowded conditions, narrow streets, unsafe neighborhoods, etc.

➤ City of wealth, luxury, and poverty. (No middle class in Rome)

➤ City of atheism and superstition.

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Rome

➤ **City of degeneracy and cruelty.**

1. Absolute authority was given to the Roman slaveholder. He could beat, maim, or even kill his slave. cf. Philemon

2. Walls of temples in Rome often covered with obscenities.

4. Homosexuality common. Romans 1:26-27

5. Divorce prominent.
   – Seneca wrote that "women married to be divorced and were divorced to be married; and noble Roman matrons counted the years by their discarded or discarding husbands!" cf. Romans 7

6. Child abandonment and infanticide common. Children often raised by slaves.

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Rome

➤ **City of degeneracy and cruelty.**

7. Abortion common in Rome.

8. Entertainment brutal … Gladiator games.

9. Emperors moral reprobates.
   a. Nero (54-68 AD) Before he was thirty had poisoned his rival, caused his mother and first wife to be assassinated among other things … his cruelty knew no bounds.

10. Suicide common.

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Rome: What Caused The Gospel To Succeed In Such A Place?

• The Greek language.

• Rome was literally the crossroads of the world.

• The availability and ease of travel. (7,000 miles of roads)

• Rome's tolerance of other religions.

• The influence of Roman philosophers.

• Power of the gospel. Romans 1:16

• *"Fullness of times."* Galatians 4:4

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The Church In Rome

No information regarding the beginning of the church in Rome.

1. Peter (Cephas – Syriac) did not start the church in Rome.

2. He was in Jerusalem as late as 52 AD. Acts 15:7; cf. Acts 8:1; cf. Galatians 1:18; 2:11

3. In 57 AD he is reported to be traveling with his wife. 1 Corinthians 9:5

4. He was not in Rome when Paul wrote the Roman letter. 58 AD

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The Church In Rome

5. He was not in Rome when Paul wrote the prison epistles. 61-63 AD.
6. He was not in Rome when Paul wrote his last epistle. 66-67 AD.
7. This leaves no time for him to have established the church there.
   – *"Strangers of Rome"* were present on the Day of Pentecost. Acts 2:10
   – Perhaps some of Paul's own Gentile converts began the church there as they traveled to Rome.

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The Church In Rome

- Suggested by the fact that Paul sends greetings to no less than 26 brethren, all with Gentile names. Some of whom were his own converts from Achaia, some his kinsmen, and others with whom he had previously labored and become closely attached.
- *"First I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is proclaimed throughout the whole world."* (Romans 1:8)

➢ Yet something said about its existence. cf. Acts 28:13-16

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Lessons To Be Learned.

➢ Gospel is for all. Romans 1:16; chapters 1, 2, 3
➢ Even under the most adverse conditions. What unfavorable conditions exist today that did not exist in first century Rome?

➢ The church can exist and be faithful when society surrounds it with the most immoral and worldly conditions.

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Lessons To Be Learned.

Romans 12 spells it out.

1. Sacrificial life. Verse 1
2. Willful transformation by renewing our minds through the word of God. Verse 2; cf. Colossians 3:10
3. Think soberly about ourselves. Verses 3-8
4. Develop a wholesome appetite for that which is good. Verse 9

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Lessons To Be Learned.

Romans 12 spells it out.

5. Love the brethren. Verse 10
6. Be *"fervent."* Verse 11
7. Hopeful endurance and prayer. Verse 12
8. Proper attitude and action toward others. Verses 13-20
9. *"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."* Verse 21

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Lessons To Be Learned.

➢ They did not have to conform with the materialism and worldliness that surrounded them. Romans 6, especially verse 21
➢ They never thought they had to settle for a lower standard of morality because of the evil around them.
➢ The world can be conquered. Romans 8:31-39, 18
➢ Made for saints in Caesar's household. Philippians 4:22
➢ What about your household?

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