

### Early Church Leadership According To Eusebius<sup>1</sup>

<b>AD</b>	<b>JERUSALEM (JUDEA)</b>	<b>ROME (ITALY)</b>	<b>ALEXANDRIA (EGYPT)</b>	<b>ANTIOCH (SYRIA)</b>	<b>EPHESUS (ASIA)</b>	<b>SMYRNA</b>
66	Nero	Symeon <sup>2</sup>	[1 <sup>st</sup> Roman Persecution] <sup>3</sup>	Evodius	Apostle John [overseeing Asia] <sup>4</sup>	
67		(6)	[Peter executed at Rome]	(?)	(?)	
68	Vespasian	(7)	[Paul executed at Rome]	(?)	(?)	
69		(8)	Linus <sup>5</sup>	Anianus <sup>6</sup>	(?)	(?)
70		(9)	(2)	(9)	? Ignatius	(?)
		[City destroyed] <sup>7</sup>			[? - John writes his three letters] <sup>8</sup>	
71		(10)	(3)	(10)	(?)	(?)
72		(11)	(4)	(11)	(?)	(?)
73		(12)	(5)	(12)	(?)	(?)
74		(13)	(6)	(13)	(?)	(?)
75		(14)	(7)	(14)	(?)	(?)
76		(15)	(8)	(15)	(?)	(?)
77		(16)	(9)	(16)	(?)	(?)
78		(17)	(10)	(17)	(?)	(?)
79	Titus	(18)	(11)	(18)	(?)	(?)
80		(19)	Anencletus	(19)	(?)	(?)
81	Domitian <sup>9</sup>	(20)	(2)	(20)	(?)	(?)
82		(21)	(3)	(21)	(?)	(?)
83		(22)	(4)	(22)	(?)	(?)
84		(23)	(5)	Abilius	(?)	(?)
85		(24)	(6)	(2)	(?)	(?)
86		(25)	(7)	(3)	(?)	(?)
87		(26)	(8)	(4)	(?)	(?)
88		(27)	(9)	(5)	(?)	(?)
89		(28)	(10)	(6)	(?)	(?)
90		(29)	(11)	(7)	(?)	(?)

<sup>1</sup> Eusebius' Church History was completed around AD 325 and made use of a variety of source material, some of which is no longer in existence. An online edition can be found at <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2501.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> Symeon was supposedly the son of Clopas (John 19:25), who was, in turn, supposedly a brother to Joseph (Church History 3.11.2), and therefore a cousin to Jesus. He was said to have replaced James – the half-brother of Jesus – as leader of the Jerusalem Church (Ibid.) whenever James was executed by the Jewish Sanhedrin during a lull of Roman governance brought on by the sudden death of Festus around AD 62 (See Josephus' Antiquities of the Jews 20.9.1).

<sup>3</sup> This first period of official Roman persecution of Christians (AD 64-68) was brought on by Nero's desire for a scapegoat to blame for the fire that destroyed most of Rome in AD 64 (Tacitus' Annals 15.44).

<sup>4</sup> John the Apostle probably came to Ephesus after abandoning Jerusalem (per Jesus' instructions in Luke 21:20-24) when the Jewish war with Rome began in the summer of AD 66.

<sup>5</sup> This man – a companion of Paul at Rome, shortly before the Apostle's death (2 Timothy 4:21) - was supposedly designated as the leader of the Church at Rome after the deaths of Peter & Paul (Church History 3.2.1).

<sup>6</sup> This man was supposedly designated by John Mark - who had been leading the Church in Alexandria - to succeed him in that role whenever he went to Rome to assist Peter around AD 62 (Ibid. 2.24.1; cf. 1 Peter 5:13).

<sup>7</sup> When the Jewish war with Rome began in the AD 66, Jewish believers in Jesus abandoned the city in accordance with Jesus' instructions (Luke 21:20-24). Some of them remained nearby, in Judea, and presumably Symeon was the leader of this group. Another group relocated to Pella, to the northwest, just across the Jordan (Church History 3.5.3), where they eventually became known as the "Nazarenes."

<sup>8</sup> I suspect that the false teachers – the "antichrists" of 1 John 2:18-23; 4:1-6; 2 John 7, who denied the human nature of Jesus - against whom John was writing, arose, in part, out of the chaos brought on by the official persecution radiating out from Rome & the recent destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of the saints from there. He seems also to have also been gravely concerned about anti-apostolic leaders, like Diotrophes (3 John 9-10), who were acting as tyrants within the congregations.

<sup>9</sup> This emperor revived the "imperial cult" (worship of the emperor as a god) which eventually caused both Jews & Christians, who would have refused to participate, to suffer persecution. While this persecution doesn't seem to have been as bad as that under Nero, there is reference to it by contemporary Christians. John the Apostle was evidently banished to Patmos during this period and wrote the book of Revelation after returning to Ephesus after the death of Domitian terminated his banishment decree.

AD		JERUSALEM (JUDEA)	ROME (ITALY)	ALEXANDRIA (EGYPT)	ANTIOCH (SYRIA)	EPHESUS (ASIA)	SMYRNA
91	Domitian	Symeon	Anencletus	Abilius	Ignatius	John the Apostle [ <i>overseeing Asia</i> ]	
92		(31)	Clement <sup>10</sup>	(9)	(?)	(?)	
93		(32)	(2)	(10)	(?)	(?)	
94		(33)	(3)	(11)	(?)	(?)	
95		(34)	(4)	(12)	(?)	(?)	
			<b>[Clement wrote to the Corinthians]<sup>11</sup></b>			<b>[Book of Revelation written]<sup>12</sup></b>	
96	Nerva	(35)	(5)	(13)	(?)	(?)	
97		(37)	(6)	Cerdon	(?)	(?)	
98	Trajan <sup>13</sup>	(38)	(7)	(2)	(?)	(?)	
99		(39)	(8)	(3)	(?)	(?)	
100		(40)	Evarestus	(4)	(?)	[John dies?] <sup>14</sup>	? Polycarp
101		(41)	(2)	(5)	(?)	? Onesimus	(?)
102		(42)	(3)	(6)	(?)	(?)	(?)
103		(43)	(4)	(7)	(?)	(?)	(?)
104		(44)	(5)	(8)	(?)	(?)	(?)
105		(45)	(6)	(9)	(?)	(?)	(?)
106		(46) <sup>15</sup>	(7)	(10)	(?)	(?)	(?)
107		Justus <sup>16</sup>	(8)	(11)	(?)	(?)	(?)
108		(*) <sup>17</sup>	(9)	(12)	(?)	(?)	(?)
					<b>[Ignatius writes seven letters]<sup>18</sup></b>		
109		(*)	(10)	Primus	Heros	(?)	(?)
110		(*)	Alexander	(2)	(?)	(?)	(?)
111		(*)	(2)	(3)	(?)	(?)	(?)
112		(*)	(3)	(4)	(?)	(?)	(?)
					<b>[Pliny the Younger of Bithynia corresponds with Emperor Trajan regarding the disposition of Christians]<sup>19</sup></b>		

<sup>10</sup> This man was supposedly the same Clement mentioned by Paul in Philippians 4:3 (*Ibid.* 3.15).

<sup>11</sup> In this letter, Clement decried the fact that certain persons with questionable credentials have forced out those leaders who had been apostolically appointed. An online edition can be found at <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/1clement-roberts.html>.

<sup>12</sup> Take note of the issues prevalent at each of the seven key congregations of Asia province: At Ephesus, there were false apostles & Nicolaitans trying to take over, although they were being successfully resisted; at Smyrna, unbelieving Jews were persecuting believers, but again, to no avail; at Pergamum, believers were caving into the Nicolaitans, who apparently encouraged idolatry (emperor worship?) and sexual immorality; at Thyatira, a false prophetess who was promoting sexual immorality & idolatry was being tolerated; at Sardis, the congregation thought everything was fine when it wasn't; at Philadelphian, the church was being persecuted by unbelieving Jews, but was holding firm; and at Laodicea, the believers were "lukewarm" in their faith.

<sup>13</sup> Trajan clearly continued the persecution of Christians, primarily in regard to the imperial cult.

<sup>14</sup> It is reasonable to assume that John the Apostle had some part in selecting the leaders of the Asian congregations around this time. Polycarp was apparently a student of the apostles (*Ibid.* 3.36.1).

<sup>15</sup> Symeon was supposedly martyred at age 120 (*Ibid.* 3.32.3). This would have made him 74 when he became leader of the Jerusalem Church and about 47 when Jesus was crucified.

<sup>16</sup> This man is cited as being one of many thousands of Jewish believers in Jesus evidently living in Judea near the desolated city of Jerusalem (*Ibid.* 3.35.1).

<sup>17</sup> Justus was followed by twelve other Jews, all who led only a short while - Zacchæus, Tobias, Benjamin, John, Matthias, Philip, Seneca, Justus, Levi, Ephres, Joseph, Judas (*Ibid.* 4.5) – before circumstances resulted in Gentiles [the first being Marcus (*Ibid.* 4.6.4)] permanently assuming the leadership role at Jerusalem.

<sup>18</sup> Online copies of these letters can be found at <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/ignatius.html>. They were written as Ignatius, as a condemned prisoner, was passing through Asia Minor on his way to death at Rome. They indicate his conviction that the only way to guard against false teachers - such as those who clung to Judaism or those who claimed that Jesus only "appeared" to be human and therefore didn't die – was the adherence to a strict hierarchy in the Church, with a single bishop overseeing local presbyters and deacons.

<sup>19</sup> An online copy of this important correspondence can be found at <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/pliny.html>.