The background is a composite image. On the left, the lower portion of the Colosseum is visible, showing its iconic tiered arches. On the right, a large, detailed marble bust of a man with curly hair is shown in profile. The upper half of the image features a map of the Roman Empire, with various regions labeled in Latin: DACIA, MYSIA, MARE, TRACIA, MARE, and others. The map is overlaid on a textured, aged parchment-like background.

# ROME & THE BIRTH OF CHRISTIANITY



## Part 2: Introduction

As we saw in our previous lecture, Julius Caesar was appointed dictator after crossing the Rubicon in 49 BC and defeating Pompey in a Civil War. However, Caesar was assassinated in 44 BC by 60 senators on the Ides of March (March 15) and, when his will was read, it was discovered that he had appointed his grand-nephew, Octavian, as his heir. From Daniel we learn that God “changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings” (Dan. 2:21), and with Solomon acknowledge the truth that “the king’s heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will” (Prov. 21:1). Who was this man who brought an end to the Republic and became the first Emperor of the newly formed Roman Empire? And why should we even





# Introduction

be concerned about an ancient empire which began over 2,000 years ago? The late biblical scholar F.F. Bruce (1910-1990) provides some insight: “When we open the New Testament, we find another world power dominating the Near East and indeed the whole Mediterranean area. The New Testament writings, from first to last, are set in the context of the Roman Empire. The story which they tell, from the closing years of the pre-Christian era to the end of the first century A.D., presupposes throughout the dominating presence of Roman power. As it turns out, this Roman Empire was one of the chief agents in preparing the world for the advent of Christianity” (*New Testament History*).



# Introduction

What we learn from ancient history and early Christianity will certainly help us as we seek to honestly answer the question, *How Should We Then Live?* (Francis Schaeffer) within our own contemporary culture and as citizens of a government that uses its authority and power to establish laws and policies that are in direct rebellion against the Triune God, but who also provides services for our good and for the advancement of Christ's kingdom.

***We will begin our search today as we investigate the life of Augustus.***



# Gaius Julius Caesar Octavian: Caesar Augustus



“Now it came about in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census should be taken of all the inhabited earth.”

- Luke 2:1





# The Twelve Caesars

The Julio - Claudians	
49 - 44 BC	Julius Caesar, dictator
31 BC – AD 14	Augustus, first emperor
AD 14 – 37	Tiberius
AD 37 – 41	Caligula (Gaius)
AD 41 – 54	Claudius
AD 54 – 68	Nero
The Civil Wars	
68 – 69	Galba
69	Otho
69	Vitellius
The Flavian Emperors	
69-79	Vespasian
79 – 81	Titus
81 – 96	Domitian



# Images of Caesar Augustus



**Head of Emperor Augustus**

Date: 25 – 1 BC

The J. Paul Getty Museum



**Portrait of Emperor Augustus**

The Walters Art Museum

Baltimore, Maryland



**Augustus Wearing the *Corona Civica***

The Hall of the Emperors, Capitoline Museum

Rome, Italy



# Images of Caesar Augustus



**Statue of Caesar Augustus**  
Rome, Italy



**Augustus of Prima Porta**  
Discovered on April 20, 1863 in the Villa  
of Livia at Prima Porta



A low-angle, upward-looking photograph of the Caesars Palace building at dusk. The building is a grand, classical-style structure with multiple levels of arched windows and ornate architectural details. The facade is a light blue-grey color. A prominent feature is the large, red neon sign that reads "CAESARS PALACE" in a stylized, outlined font, mounted on the upper part of the building. Above the sign, there is a decorative pediment with a golden laurel wreath emblem. The building is illuminated with warm, yellow lights from within, and the sky is a clear, deep blue.

CAESARS PALACE



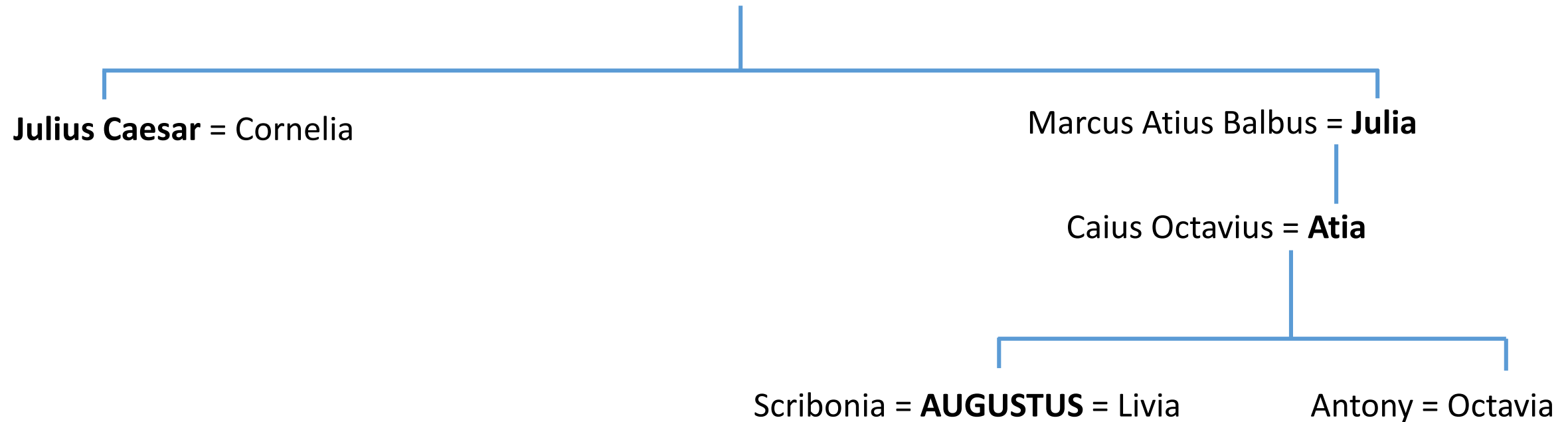


# Augustus in Chronological Context

- Gaius Octavius: Born on September 23, 63 BC.
- Octavian's father, Caius Octavius, was a knight, a senator, and a praetor (a magistrate annually elected to the judiciary of Rome) and his mother was Atia, the daughter of Julius Caesar's sister, Julia. He died when Octavius was four years old.
- Augustus' father "died suddenly, leaving behind him a daughter, the elder Octavia, by Ancharia; and another daughter, Octavia the younger, as well as Augustus, by Atia" (Suetonius, 69-after 122 AD).
- 45 BC: Caesar sent him to Apollonia in Epirus (Albania) for education.
- As Octavius' great-uncle, Julius Caesar adopted him in his will (deposited with the Vestal Virgins) and made him his personal heir.



# Relationship of Augustus to Julius Caesar



Julius Caesar is Augustus' Great Uncle





# Augustus in Chronological Context

- Julius Caesar (101-44 BC): Stabbed to death by 60 senators on the Ides of March (March 15, 44 BC). Octavian sailed to Rome to claim his inheritance. Cleopatra departed Rome for Egypt.
- 43 BC: Mark Antony, Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus, and Marcus Lepidus formed a Second Triumvirate (lasted 10 years).
- 42 BC: Octavian and Antony pursued Caesar's assassins to Greece and defeated them at Philippi in two successive engagements. Brutus and Cassius committed suicide, as did Brutus' wife, Porcia.
- Octavian took control of the west, while Antony controlled the east, where he became involved with Cleopatra (he was married to Octavian's sister, Octavia).



# Augustus in Chronological Context

- 32 BC: the second term (5 years each) of the Triumvirate ended.
- 31 BC: Octavian and Antony faced each other in the naval Battle of Actium, northwest of Greece, ending on September 2; Octavian victorious.
- 30 BC: Antony fled to Egypt, where he and Cleopatra committed suicide; Caesarion, Julius Caesar's & Cleopatra's son, was killed.
- 29 BC: Octavian returned to Rome after long civil wars.
- January 27, 27 BC: Octavian acclaimed as *Princeps* ("first citizen") and given the title *Augustus* (meaning *highly revered*).
- 25 and 23 BC: Augustus seriously ill.
- 5 BC: Jesus Christ born; 4 BC Herod the Great dies.





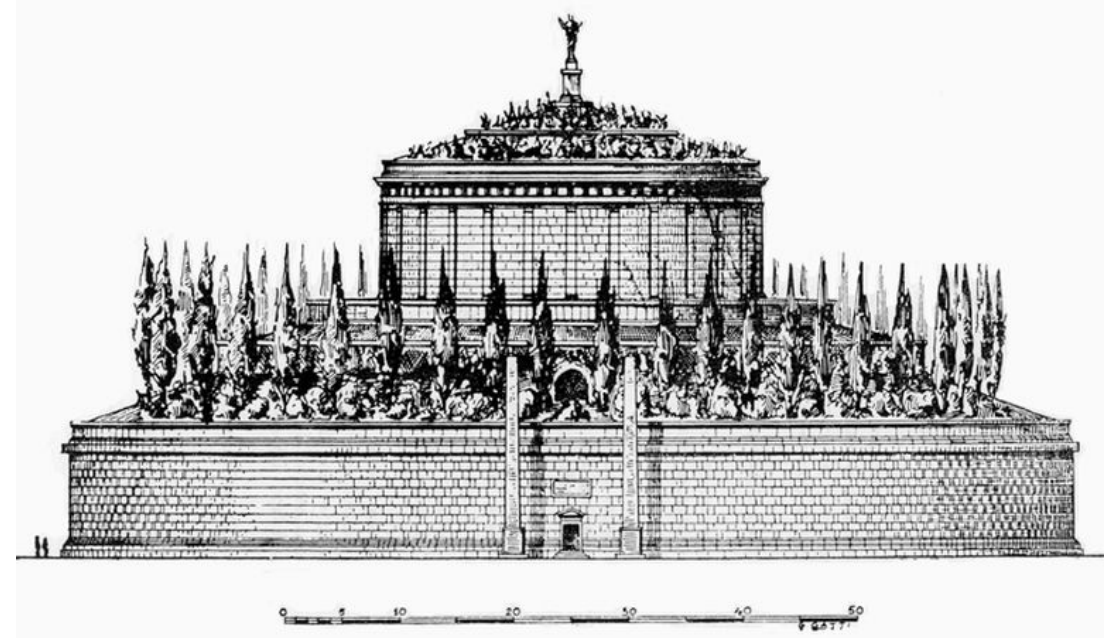
# Augustus in Chronological Context

- 2 BC: Augustus given the title of *Father of the Country*.
- 6 AD: Herod the Great's son, Archelaus, deposed; Judea becomes a Roman province.
- “The last decade of Augustus’ life was darkened not only by family troubles but by spectacular disasters in recently occupied territories, notably a three-year rebellion in Illyricum (AD 6-9), and the destruction of Varus and three legions by the Germans (AD 9). Nevertheless, with the help of Tiberius (his step-son), Augustus carried on for another five years...” (Michael Grant).

14 AD: Death of Augustus. He died on August 19, AD 14 (nearly 76 years old) at Nola, Italy (a municipality of Naples), just north of Mount Vesuvius, as he was returning from Capri.



# Augustus' Mausoleum (28 BC)







# Interesting Facts About Augustus

- He never wrote or spoke Greek fluently, though he admired Greek culture.
- He thought that the men who ruled the Roman Empire ought to be Italians.
- The Roman Empire contained 4,063,000 citizens in 28 BC and as many as 4,937,000 in AD 14 when Augustus died.
- He instituted the praetorian guards, nine cohorts of five hundred infantry (see Phil. 1:13; Mt. 27:27; Jn. 18:28,33; 19:9; Acts 23:35).
- He enjoyed simple foods like green figs and was only a moderate drinker.





# Interesting Facts About Augustus

- He slept in the same bedroom for 40 years, in the excavated *Casa di Livia* on the Palatine.
- He hated to rise early.
- He didn't sleep well, usually waking about 4 or 5 times during the night. He liked to have readers or story-tellers close at hand during those times.
- He was fond of gambling.
- He was an “adulterous womanizer.”
- In the winter he protected himself with four tunics and a heavy toga, an undershirt, and a woolen chest-protector and wraps for his legs.





# Interesting Facts About Augustus

- In the last 39 years of his life, he never personally went to battle again.
- Remembering how Julius Caesar was assassinated, no senators were allowed to approach Augustus' chair except one by one and, then, only after the folds of their robes had been carefully searched.
- He advocated that privately owned art treasures should be confiscated by the government for the benefit of the whole population.
- The month of August is named after Augustus.
- His imperial army consisted of about 300,000 men (28 legions).





# Physical Description by Suetonius

“In person he was handsome and graceful, through every period of his life. But he was negligent in his dress; and so careless about dressing his hair, that he usually had it done in great haste, by several barbers at a time. His beard was sometimes clipped, and sometimes shaved; and either read or wrote during the operation. His countenance, either when discoursing or silent, was so calm and serene, that a Gaul of the first rank declared among his friends, that he was so softened by it, as to be restrained from throwing him down a precipice, in his passing over the Alps, when he had been admitted to approach him, under pretense of conferring with him. His eyes were bright and piercing; and he was willing it should be thought that there was something of a





# Physical Description by Suetonius

divine vigour in them. He was likewise not a little pleased to see people, upon his looking steadfastly at them, lower their countenances, as if the sun shone in their eyes. But in his old age, he saw very imperfectly with his left eye. His teeth were thin set, small and scaly, his hair a little curled, and inclining to a yellow colour. His eye-brows met; his ears were small, and he had an aquiline nose. His complexion was betwixt brown and fair; his stature but low; though Julius Marathus, his freedman, says he was five feet and nine inches in height. This, however, was so much concealed by the just proportion of his limbs, that it was only perceivable upon comparison with some taller person standing by him.”





# The Roman Empire's Civil Wars

- “He (Augustus) was engaged in five civil wars, namely those of Modena, Philippi, Perugia, Sicily, and Actium; the first and last of which were against Antony, and the second against Brutus and Cassius; the third against Lucius Antonius, the triumvir’s brother, and the fourth against Sextus Pompeius, the son of Cneius Pompeius” (Suetonius).
- “By the time of Actium the empire had been convulsed and ruined by decades of civil war. In the eternal balancing of order against liberty, this was one of the epochs of the world during which people were prepared to tolerate a certain tilting of the scales towards order” (Grant).



# The Roman Empire

in 117 AD, at its greatest extent

