Vespasian

Birth: November 17, 9 AD

Death: June 23, 79 AD

Original Name: Titus Flavius Vespasianus

Reign as Emperor: 69 AD ~ 79 AD

Occupation before emperor: General, consul in Britain, proconsul of Africa

How he became emperor: Vespasian was proclaimed emperor by his troops and the legions in Syria and Egypt after Nero and Galba died. Vespasian had a battle with Vitellius, who was his rival. He won the battle, and the senate approved him as emperor.

Quote:

"The body of a dead enemy always smells sweet."

- Vespasian

Major Accomplishments

Made Rome peaceful and stable: After the civil war, Vespasian was approved as emperor by the senate. However, Rome was ruined during emperor Nero's reign and by the civil war. Vespasian restored Rome's finances by giving Roman citizenship to people outside Italy and restored discipline in the army. During his reign, citizens of Rome were able to live a peaceful life.

Conquest and ending war: Vespasian ended the war in Judea. Rome was having a war in Judea due to the rebellion of the Jews, but Vespasian ended this war. He also conquered Wales and Northern England in Britain.

Progressed massive building programs: During his reign, Vespasian spent some of his money on building infrastructure and buildings such as temples, theaters, and the Colosseum.

Controversy

Raising of tax in the empire: Vespasian increased the amount of taxes to restore the finances of the Roman empire. Using those taxes, he built many buildings such as temples and the Colosseum, but he probably bequeathed some surplus of public money to his successors.

Lasting Influence

Politics: During his reign, Vespasian spent most of his time in stabilizing the roman empire. His acts of restoring finance and investment on infrastructure greatly affected Rome and contributed the empire to last for a very long time.

Interesting Fact

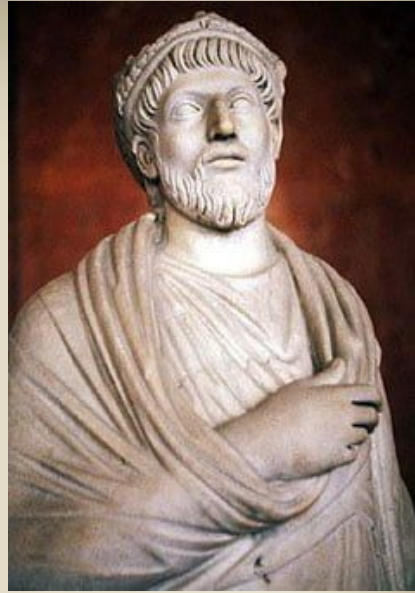Vespasian started the Flavian dynasty, which ruled the empire for a quarter century.

Citation

https://www.pbs.org/empires/romans/empire/vespasian.html#:~:text=Vespasian's%20early%20career%20was%20spent,was%20appointed%20proconsul%20in%20Africa

https://www.ccel.org/g/gibbon/decline/volume1/chap3.htm

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/vespasian.shtml

Julian

Birth: November 17, 331 AD

Death: June 26, 363 AD

Original Name: Flavius Claudius Julianus

Reign as Emperor: 361 AD ~ 363 AD

Occupation before emperor: Served in military as general (Defeated Germanic tribes)

How he became emperor: Julian successfully ran the northern provinces of Rome, such as the Germanic tribes and the area of Franks. Constantius was jealous of Julian's success. The conflict between them got severe, and civil war seemed inevitable. However, Constantius accepted to bequeath the empire to Julian on his deathbed before he died by a sudden fever.

Quote: "The idea of an incarnation of God is absurd. Why should the human race think itself so superior to bees, ants, and elephants as to be put in this unique relation to its maker? Christians are like a council of frogs in a marsh or a synod of worms on a dunghill croaking and squeaking "for our sakes was the world created.""

- Julian

Major Accomplishments

Decentralization of Power: One of the Julian's best decisions was to decentralize the power to the lowest local authorities. By giving more powers to the local authorities, Julian was able to stabilize the central government. Additionally, he abolished the Roman imperial courier service, which was a large group of officials who did not have definite tasks.

Exemptions to other classes: Julian progressed numerous exemptions to people in other classes. He freed the city doctors from many regulations, eased the tax system, and abolished getting tributes with gold from many cities.

Strengthen the power of Senate (Respected Senate): Julian didn't want to run the empire like a dictator or an autocrat. He defined the ideal ruler as '*primus inter pares'* meaning "the first among equals". So, he often took part in the Senate's deliberations and participated in debates. Also, he created some privileges for the Senate such as making a law to imprison the senator only after proving he has committed crime.

Controversy

Attitude towards Christianity: During his youth, Julian became a Christian due to the influence of his teacher named Eusebius. However, during his short reign, Julian sought to weaken and expel Christianity from the Roman Empire. He tried to raise the traditional religion of ancient Romans to the rank of state religion. Due to his actions to regulate Christianity, he got a byname of "Julian the apostate".

Lasting Influence

Religion: After Julian's sudden death, christianity was able to solidify itself as Rome's state religion. Nowadays, christianity is the most believed religion in the world.

Interesting Fact

Julian tried to rebuild the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem to weaken Christianity.

Citation

https://www.britannica.com/biography/Julian-Roman-emperor#ref3788

https://imperiumromanum.pl/en/biographies/julian-the-apostate/

https://www.ccel.org/g/gibbon/decline/volume1/chap23.htm

https://www.quotes.net/authors/Julian+the+Apostate