**Roman Emperors**

**Justinian**

* Strong Leader
* Reorganized the Army/Calvary
* Conquered much of Italy and North Afrida
* Defeated the Persians
* Gave woman more rights
* Reformed the Law Codes: Became known as – “Justinian – Code – “ Has Great Influence on almost every country in Europe.
* Built Hagia Sophia

**Augustus**

Augustus was known as Octavian 63 B.C. – A.D. 14, who later became known as Augustus. Augustus was born to a wealthy family in a small Italian town southeast of Rome. During his youth, Octavian suffered from a number of illnesses. He resued to let his illnesses interfere with his life, however, showing the determination that would later make him Rome’s First Emperor. Octavian’s father was a Roman senator, but it was Octavian’s Great Uncle, Julius Caesar who first introduced Octavian to the public life of Rome. In his late teens, Octavian joined Caesar in Africa and then the following year in Spain. At the age of 18, while Octavian was studying at school, he learned that his great uncle had been murdered.

Rising to Power

In his will, Caesar had adopted Octavian as his son. Caesar also made Octavian his heir – a position that Anthony had assumed would be his. Against his family’s advice, Octavian went to Rome to claim his inheritance. By the time he reached Rome, however Antony had seized Caesar’s papers and money and refused to give them to Octavian. With remarkable political savvy for someone so young, Octavian turned the situation to his favor. He won the hearts of Caesar’s soldiers and the people of Rome by celebrating the public games that Caesar started. In his rise to power and during his reign as Emperor Augustus, Octavian pushed himself and his loyal followers with relentless energy. In his private life, however, he lived simply. He was devoted to his wife, Livia Drusilla, and spent his spare time with her at their home on the outskirts of Rome.

Marcus Aurelius

Historians list Marcus Aurelius as one of the “Five Good Emperors” of Rome. Born into a powerful family in A.D. 121, Marcus Aurelius was taught by scholars from many cultures. His uncle, the future Emperor Antoninus Pius, adopted Marcus and made his his heir. When Pius dies in A.D. 161, Marcus co-ruled with his brother, Lucius Verus, for several years. After that, Marcus ruled alone. As emperor, Marcus defended the empire against invaders. He also worked on improving living conditions for the poor, particularly children. Unlike many emperors he did not kill his political enemies. However, he did persecute Christians, whom he saw as enemies of the empire. Throughout his rule, Marcus practiced a philosophy of virtue and self sacrifice. He wrote about it in 12 books called *Meditations.* In A.D. 180 Marcus died.

Quotes from Mediations

“From my grandfather Verus (I learned) good morals and the government of my temper…

Look well into thyself; there is a source of strength which will alsos spring up if thou wilt always look there.

It is the act of a madman to pursue impossibilities.

Nothing happens to anything which that things is not made by nature to bear.

**Epictetus**

Epictetus was born in an area that today we call Turkey. He was a slave and was taken to Rome while he was a young boy. Ancient sources say that Epictetus’s leg was disabled and that he studied with philosophers. Eventually, Epictetus became a free man.

Attitude Matters

Like all stoic philosophers, Epictetus thought that moral philosophy could guide people to better their lives. Stoics believed that people would be happy if they “lived consistently with nature.” They should accept that they can control some things and that they cannot control other things. Epictetus taught that people could – and should – control their attitudes. He taught that virtue and happiness come from how people react to what happens around them. People are happier if their expectations are realistic. As an example, Epictetus talks about the public baths. First, people must recognize and accept what normally happens at the Baths. Second, they must act based on his knowledge. So, people should not take anything valuable to the baths, and they must not be angry if someone splashed them.

**Clovis**

Clovis (A.D. 466 – 511) became king of the Franks when he was 15 years old. He quickly expanded the kingdom by treachery and battle. Clovis could be a cruel man. After a key battle early in his reign. Clovis wanted a vase that his soldiers had taken from a church they had plundered. One of his soldiers smashed the case instead. During an inspection of his troops a year later, Clovis killed the soldier by smashing his head. “It was thus that you treated the vase at Scissons,” he said. Clovis’s wife was a Christian. She tried repeatedly to convert Clovis to Christianity. She insisted that children be baptized. The first son died after being baptized. Their second son became gravely ill. In both cases, Clovis said it was obvious that his wife’s God did nothing to help them. Clovis Converts. Clovis Finally converted to Christianity on the battlefield in A.D. 496. The enemy was destroying his army, and Clovis prayed to Jesus for help. He promised to convert if Jesus would somehow saved his army. When the enemy army turned and ran away, Clovis publicly declared his belief in Christianity. He and about 3,000 of his soldiers were baptized together. Clovis’s newfound religion did not stop him from waging war. Instead, he tried to spread Christianity by attacking pagan countries. Clovis was buried in Paris. During the French Revolution, revolutionaries broke open his crypt and his ashes blew away as the church was destroyed.

**Constantine the Great**

Constantine was the first Christian Roman Empire. Constantine was the Roman Empire to become a Christian, although he was not baptized until near his death in A.D. 337.

He first came to believe in Christianity many years earlier, when he was a military leader.

Constantine believed he had seen a flaming cross in the sky that said, “By this sign thou shall conquer.” The next day his army was victorious in an important battle. He believed that the cross was a call to the Christian God. During his reign, Constantine granting new opportunities to Christians and helped advance the power of the early Catholic church. At the council of Nicea in A.D. 325, he encouraged discussion about the acceptance of the trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). He also boosted the political positions and power of bishops with the Roman government. Even though Constantine had many political and religious successes, his life was filled with controversy and tragedy. Constantine married a woman named Fausta. His eldest son from a previous marriage was named Crispus. Fausta accused Crispus of crimes and claimed that he was planning to seize the throne. Constantine was so shocked that he had his son killed. Constantine later discovered that Fausta had lied because she wanted her own son to be in line for the throne. He then had Fausta killed.