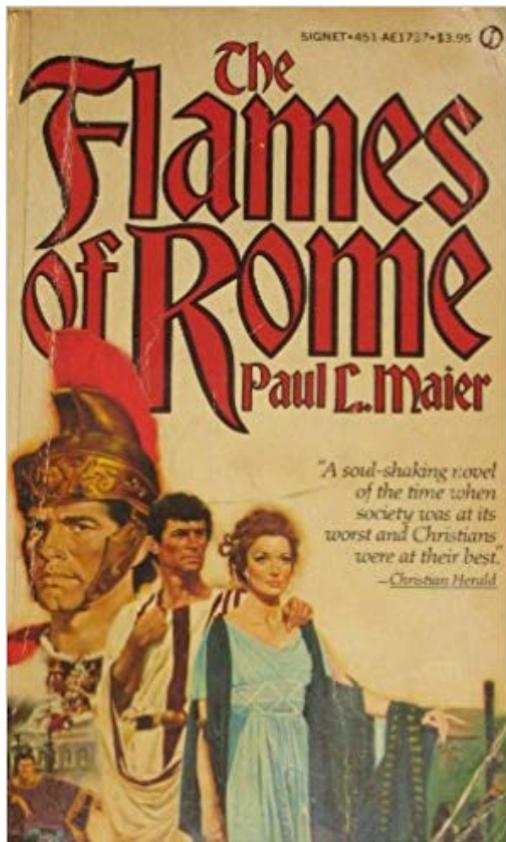


## The Flames of Rome *by* Paul L. Maier



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## Reviews of the *The Flames of Rome* *by* Paul L. Maier

Mataxe

This book is documentary fiction, and the author, who is an historian, includes extensive documentation. He used creative license to fill in gaps in history with dialogue and some events, but everything he wrote is plausible based on the sources he cited. Reading about life in Rome during the early days of Christianity was fascinating.

The depravity and evil of the times were horrific, yet--like Christian martyrs in the Middle East today--Christians went to their cruel and barbarous deaths professing their faith in the risen Lord. The book is quite long but never became tedious; I wasn't ready for it to end even though the reading was sometimes heartbreaking.

I highly recommend this book to understand what early Christians went through to spread the Gospel throughout the world.

Keath

I am normally not into reading about Roman history for the specific reason that was talked about in the beginning of the book. The loose based fictional characters written around a period of time in history. This book I found fascinating and very well written. I felt I knew more about this period of history after reading this book and felt that I had a better understanding of the interplay of Jews, Christians, and Roman government. I'd actually like to see Mr. Maier write another book explaining the differences going on in different factions of Jews and Christianity at this time. I do not consider myself a mainstream religion but it's interesting to see how their inner politics affected history. I plan to read his other book as well. Very fascinating read. I highly recommend his books.

Pryl

QVIS CVSTODIET IPSOS CVSTODES? (WHO WILL WATCH THE WATCHMEN?)

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The PRAETORIAN GWARD, the so-called protectors of the Roman Emperor and his family, plays such a pivotal role in Roman history. Possibly responsible for murdering TIBERIVS, certainly responsible for killing CALIGVLA, and involved in conspiracies to assassinate and depose the emperors that they swore to protect. It is the case with Nero himself.

OVERVIEW

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In Paul L. Maier's THE FLAMES OF ROME, you come to learn about the reign of Emperor CLAVDIVS to the end of the reign of NERO. It is a very easy and entertaining read. Even more, you learn about the founding of Christianity in Rome as it spread throughout the Roman Empire. Speaking of which, some of the most enjoyable parts in the novel are the trials of Christians. Romans had many questions for them: Were they Jews? A sect of Judaism? Were they conspirators? Did they burn Rome?

GREAT FIRE OF ROME

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NERO certainly did not burn Rome. In fact, he stood to lose the most from its destruction, politically and personally. Even more, he behaved admirably in his attempt to quench the fire. He also paid for the rebuilding of Rome after the devastation.

Nevertheless, NERO needed --politically needed-- a culprit. While building his grand palace (DOMVS AVREA), rumors were circulating that he caused the great fire of Rome. Thus, he had to blame someone, although the fire was an accident. His target: Christians. They were weird ("love thy enemy") anyway. NERO, mixing entertainment and slaughter, made games out of punishing Christians by fixing them to poles in clothes with inflammables and setting them afire. Many Christians were crucified, thrown to dogs and lions.

NERO'S persecution of the Christians was so brutal that it generated sympathy for them.

EMPEROR NERO

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NERO supposedly possessed a "celestial voice" --he would protect it with a scarf-- and believed himself quite the artist. In fact, at his death, he is reported to have said, "QVALIS ARTIFEX PEREO!" (WHAT AN ARTIST DIES IN ME!).

NERO is presented in a very convincing way in the novel. NERO was constantly being manipulated - by his mother, by advisors, and so forth. He could not trust anyone, and you could see why someone like that would rely on his PRAETORIAN COMMANDER, TIGELLINVS.

Although his reign started out well enough, probably the doing of SENECA, power and even independence would corrupt NERO. You can confidently reach a conclusion that NERO was never suitable for the job as Princeps. He probably would have much preferred writing poetry, playing his lyre, and performing as an actor.

Much (much) more could be said about NERO, but you will have to read the novel. It is worth it.

## CONCLUSION

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If you want to learn about Roman history in an entertaining and accessible way, then I highly recommend this novel. You will find yourself doing your own research. The notes at the end of the novel are useful to link the events of the novel with a historical basis.

Five stars are warranted for the author's creativity and scholarship.

Onetarieva

Paul Maier is an accomplished author as well as a consummate historian. This book reads like it could have been taken from the news. He takes historical characters and events and makes them really come alive. It is interesting and flows easily from scene to scene. I would highly recommend this book.

Kegal

Excellent, authentic, challenging. I loved this book as much as his previous book, Pontius Pilate, which is best book I've ever read. Need a dictionary at times, but love it! Paul Meier is a very talented and detailed author and I plan to find all he has written.

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