



## **ANSWER GUIDE**

### **Ancient: Episode 2**

The Age of Conflict

#### **Discussion Questions and Answers**

1. Why was Nero so deeply hated by his subjects?

*Nero's tyranny and madness wreaked havoc on the general public. Nero debased the value of Roman coinage and ransacked the city to rebuild it in his own image. After the great fire of Rome in 64 AD, which reduced 10 of the 14 precincts of Rome to ruins, he immediately commandeered huge portions of land to construct one of the largest, most opulent palaces in all the known world: the Domus Aurea, or "Golden House." In fact, though this rumor has never been proven, virtually every significant historian blames the fire on Nero himself.*

2. Describe how Nero's extreme persecution of Christians backfired.

*Nero launched a personal, barbaric assault against Christianity. However, his persecution of Christians was so bloody and unspeakably cruel, that it backfired. Citizens of Rome grew to sympathize with the suffering of Christians, and further turned against Nero. This brought the Christian worldview and beliefs into the limelight. Countless Romans witnessed the power of these believers enduring ghastly torture rather than recanting their faith in Jesus Christ and his resurrection.*

3. What was the Circus Maximus?

*The Circus Maximus was essentially an enormous racetrack where the Romans flocked to watch chariot races, the most popular sporting event of the time. The Circus Maximus could seat 300,000 people, and eventually reached a size of 600 meters by 200 meters: roughly the area of 20 football fields.*

4. How did the Colosseum get its name?

*Nero commissioned a 121-foot bronze statue of himself dressed as the Roman sun god. This statue, which years later ended up next to the Flavian amphitheater, was called the Colossus, and is the reason the immense amphitheater ended up with the name, the "Colosseum."*

5. What were some of the false crimes Christians were accused of when they were sentenced to death? Name at least two:

*Examples include:*

- *Cannibalism: because they consumed the Lord's Supper, which commemorated the sacrificial blood and body of Jesus.*
- *Atheism: because they refused to bow to the Roman gods, including the Caesar.*
- *Hatred of the human race.*

6. All of Jesus' disciples, except for John, were ultimately executed. Why is this significant?

*History holds that, except for John, all of Jesus' apostles were executed for their faith. For many Christians, this is a strong argument for the truth of the disciples' claims. The disciples were eyewitnesses to Jesus' death, and their subsequent willingness to die for the claim that Jesus was resurrected points to its authenticity.*

7. What were some of the architectural feats constructed by the ancient Romans? Name at least three:

*Examples include: roads, the Pantheon, the Colosseum (Flavian Amphitheatre), the Circus Maximus, aqueducts, libraries, baths, gymnasiums, and arches.*

8. What are some of the mythological gods that were named in this episode, and what were their roles or interesting facts about them?

- *Jupiter (known as “Zeus” by the ancient Greeks) was the king of all gods and the ruler of heaven and earth.*
- *Juno, Jupiter’s wife, was believed to watch and protect all women.*
- *Apollo was the sun god, known also for music and poetry. His temple in the city of Delphi, where the famous oracle resided, was considered the center of the universe.*
- *Mars was the Roman god of war.*
- *Venus was the goddess of love and beauty, and was said to be born from the foam of the Mediterranean Sea.*
- *Cupid was the god of love. Legend holds he inspired love by piercing hearts with gold-tipped arrows; and used lead arrows to wreak the opposite effect.*
- *Neptune was the god of the sea and earthquakes. Sailors used to drown horses as a sacrifice to him.*
- *Minerva was the goddess of wisdom, skill, storms, weaving, thunderbolts and horticulture.*
- *Mercury was the god of commerce and thievery.*
- *Diana was the goddess of the moon, fertility, and hunting. A temple was built for her in Ephesus, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.*
- *There were countless other lesser gods. Examples include: Vermiculus, the god of cattle parasites; Nemesis, the goddess of retribution; Robigo, the goddess of corn; Cardia, the goddess of door hinges; and Robigus, the god of mildew.*