



ANSWER GUIDE

Ancient: Episode 7

East Meets West

Discussion Questions and Answers

1. List some items that originated in Turkey.

Examples include: Tulips, Turkish coffee, Turkish baths, Turkish delight, turkey

2. Why was ancient Smyrna powerful as a city?

Ancient Smyrna (modern-day Izmir) is located in Western Turkey on the shore of the Aegean Sea. It stood at a high-traffic crossroads between sea and land trade routes, which made it a city of financial power and strategic importance.

3. What was the Royal Road and why was it significant to travel and trade?

The Royal Road was built by the Persians. The Persians were so convinced of the importance of Smyrna that they built a road to it from their capital city of Susa in modern-day Iraq. The Royal Road eventually reached Sardis and was over 1600 miles long, with over 100 rest stops. This route caused travel and trade to explode across the region.

4. Who rebuilt the city of Smyrna? Who then developed it further?

During the classical period of Greece, Smyrna laid dormant until about 334 BC, when it was visited by one of the world's most notorious conquerors, Alexander the Great. Smyrna was rebuilt by Alexander and returned to its former glory. In fact, the Greeks referred to the city as "The Crown of Smyrna." After the Greek Empire, the Romans developed Smyrna further, building an aqueduct, paved roads, temples, and an expanded marketplace (or agora).

5. What high-ranking person was worshipped as a god in the Roman Empire? What consequence did this have on Jews and Christians?

The Romans instituted emperor worship. Anyone who refused to bow on a knee to an image or idol of the Caesar was subject to harsh treatment or even death. This meant heavy persecution for Jews and Christians who held the line on their convictions and refused to worship the emperor.

6. Who was Polycarp? Describe his life, death, and significance in the history of Christianity.

Polycarp was born in 70 AD. He came to believe in Christ at an early age. He studied directly under the Apostle John and others who had direct association with Jesus Christ during his ministry. Polycarp was eventually appointed by John as the bishop of the church in Smyrna, where he faithfully ministered for many years. Later, Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius intensified the persecution of Christians. In 156 AD, Polycarp was arrested by Roman soldiers and taken before the local proconsul in Smyrna. He was commanded to state the phrase, "Caesar is Lord," and offer a pinch of incense to a statue of the emperor. It was a simple formality that would have spared Polycarp from torture and death. However, he refused to renounce Jesus Christ, and was executed. Polycarp's life and death was a powerful testimony of faith that has endured for 2,000 years. The martyrdom of Polycarp backfired, for his conviction emboldened thousands of Christians after him and helped fuel the expansion of Christianity. He is a tangible illustration of the fact that during times of great persecution the Christian church grows the most.