

12: The Silk Road Reading Questions

Eyewitness – p. 233

1. What was Zhang Qian's mission? What happened to him on his journeys?
2. How did Zhang Qian's mission end up helping establish trade between China and Bactria?

Long-Distance Trade and the Silk Roads Network – p. 234

3. What two classical era developments reduced the risks associated with travel and stimulated long-distance trade?
4. What new knowledge enabled trade across the Indian Ocean?
5. What was the principal commercial center for Indian Ocean trade in the late centuries B.C.? Where was this located?

The Silk Roads – p. 236

6. Traveling from east to west (Luoyang to Tyre), list the major cities one would have to go through to travel overland via the silk road. You should probably use the map on p. 237 to make it easier.
7. Why were spices so important in the classical world?
8. It was extremely rare for a single individual to travel the entire silk road. How did trade along the route generally work?

Cultural and Biological Exchanges Along the Silk Roads – p. 239

9. Describe the spread of Buddhism into China.

The Spread of Christianity – p. 240

10. For what two reasons did the Roman dislike Christians?
11. How did the religions asceticism of India impact Mediterranean Christians?
12. Who were the Nestorians?

The Spread of Manichaeism – p. 242

13. Mani blended three major religions together to form Manichaeism. What were these religions?

The Spread of Epidemic Diseases – p. 243

14. How do scholars arrive at population figures for ancient times?
15. Diseases are especially devastating when they break out in populations without _____, _____, or _____ to combat them.
16. List at least two non-demographic changes for the Roman and/or Chinese empires that came as a result of disease.

17. PD244 – St. Cyprian argued that death by epidemic was a positive experience for Christians. What reasons did he use to justify this belief?

China after the Han Dynasty – p. 244

18. What caused the Yellow Turban rebellion?
19. How did the Han Dynasty finally end?

Cultural Change in Post-Han China – p. 246

20. Nomadic people moved into China and “became increasingly sinicized.” Judging from the context, what does “sinicized” mean?
21. Why did the Confucian tradition decline?
22. What traditions/belief systems replaced Confucianism?

The Fall of the Roman Empire – p. 246

23. Bentley & Ziegler point out that there are many different theories regarding Rome’s decline. What do the authors say about these theories?

Internal Decay in the Roman Empire – p. 247

24. Describe the typical reign of one of the “barracks emperors.”
25. How did Diocletian attempt to solve the problem of Rome’s enormous size?
 - he organized the empire into two halves and put tetrarchs over them

Germanic Invasions and the Fall of the Western Roman Empire – p. 248

26. Most Germanic peoples lived on the borders of the Roman empire, adopting some Roman ways. What made them start to move inside the Roman borders?

Cultural Change in the Roman Empire – p. 250

27. _____ issued the Edict of Milan, which made Christianity legal in the Roman empire. _____ made Christianity the official religion of the Roman empire.
28. St. Augustine attempted to reconcile philosophy with Christianity. What Greek philosopher especially interested Augustine?
29. Why did the bishop of Rome become the head of the institutional church?