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STUDY GUIDE

For Grades 7 to 12

The questions in this guide are appropriate for family read-aloud time, or approximately 7th to 12th grade classroom/homeschool assignments. Topic areas such as History, Geography, Art, Social, Politics, Ethics, Culture and Research are addressed. Long-term research project ideas are listed at the end of the guide.

This is by no means comprehensive. The Comprehension questions do not even begin to measure complete understanding of the text. Some questions are harder than others, and many require research, but for the most part it is not difficult. At the end of the document, you will find the more challenging topics and projects that older children in particular will appreciate.

My hope is that through this novel the young-adult reader will investigate the amazing period of the early church and that through that investigation will become more compassionate, more faithful Christians.



GOTHLAND THE DREADFUL

CULTURAL

- What cultural differences are there between the little you know so far of Marcellus's life and the life of the Gothic bandits as reflected in the first chapters?
- Compare and contrast Marcellus's life at the beginning of the book with your life.

HISTORY:

- Where did the Gothic tribes originate? What year did they start interacting with the Byzantine empire? With which people group would they have been fighting in 529 AD?



ANTIOCH THE GLORIOUS

The Ascension Day Banquet

COMPREHENSION:

- In which season of the year does this chapter occur? What signs in the story inform you of the season?
- What is your overall impression of Gaius Justus from this chapter? Of Byziana? Of Belisarius? Of Marcellus? Of Justin?
- What is the relationship between Gaius Justus and Belisarius?

HISTORY:

- What was unique about the Antioch mosaics of the early Byzantine era? Find some examples and create a presentation showing your finds.
- Find a photograph or drawing of the Megalophychia mosaic. Identify the elements included in the book. Where was it found?
- What caused the great Antioch fire of 525?
- In what way did the concept of *megalopsychia* impact ancient Greek culture? How much of this impact was part of the Byzantine ethos or worldview?

Pouch of Herbs

COMPREHENSION:

- What do you think will happen because of this secret talk in the library?

POLITICS:

- What makes something a conspiracy? What conspiracies do you know of, and why do they remain “conspiracies” instead of answered connections?

ETHICS:

- Did Marcellus do the right thing to listen at the door and make conclusions about what was happening? What should he have done? What would you have done?

Image of the Invisible God

COMPREHENSION:

- What was in the Trunk, where did it come from, and why did it need to be kept secret?
- Why did Lady Sophia think it was important to emphasize to her daughter that ‘God’s* fullness dwelt in Christ’? What was Byziana’s objection?
- How old is Byziana? Why do you think is she betrothed at this age?
- How important is it to believe what we are told to believe? Is there any instance when we should not believe what we are told?

RELATIONSHIPS:

- What does Lady Sophia mean when she says, “The Pater makes the decisions and we trust the Pater?” What does this say about Byzantine family life and culture?

HISTORY:

- What was the main dividing point of the Monophysites from Orthodoxy? Why did the Monophysites insist on holding their ground?
- Why was the Council of Chalcedon held? Who attended, and what was the conclusion?

Civil War**COMPREHENSION:**

- What is the main reason Belisarius was chosen to be the husband of Byziana?
- What side of the Monophysite controversy does Gaius Justus hold, and why?
- What is the test to know if something is true?
- Which bears more weight, faith or reason?

HISTORY:

- What was going on between the Persians and Byzantines in AD 500s?

The Secret of the Colonnades**COMPREHENSION:**

- Why does Marcellus follow the men down the hill?
- Why do you think people hurt other people? What causes bullies to bully?
- Have you ever had something happen to you that was too hard to talk about?

BIBLE:

- What verses in the Bible can you find that would have brought comfort to Marcellus, after being hurt by the people he thought he could trust? Write a letter to him, encouraging him in his difficulty.

ETHICS:

- Was Marcellus right in swearing to keep his secret to himself? What good will it do? What harm will it do?

What Reason Demands**COMPREHENSION:**

- What is the test to know if something is true?
- Which bears more weight, faith or reason?

RELATIONSHIPS:

- Should a wife always match her beliefs to her husband's beliefs?

BIBLE:

- If God can do anything, could Christ have died for man if he had not been fully human?
- Compare what Colossians 2:8 says about human thought to what 1 Corinthians 1:18-19 says about human thought. What is the role of reason in faith?

Our Hike on the Hills**COMPREHENSION:**

- What is the Relationships: between Byziana's mother Sophia and Marcellus's mother Aemelia?
- What does Marcellus like about Byziana?
- What unique features does Antioch of Syria have? Why would these be important?

- Why did the earthquake “show no mercy”?

RELATIONSHIPS:

- Did Marcellus lie to his mother about his bruise? Do you think he should have been more upfront with his mother about what happened?

HISTORY:

- What is Ascension Day, and what role did it play in the early Byzantine era?
- How important was Antioch of Syria in 526 AD?

GEOGRAPHY/MAPPING:

- Find a map of ancient Antioch. Using this for reference, on GoogleEarth* find Mount Silpius and look at the view. (Hint: Antakya Turkey) Travel along the paths of Mt. Silpius and look at the pictures. Make a list of your observations.

Stone versus Man**COMPREHENSION:**

- What concerns did Lady Sophia have after the earthquake? From what you know about her, why is this her concern?
- What does Marcellus mean when he says there is a cost to the strength we get when we live through disasters?
- What is happening at Mount Silpius while Byziana and Marcellus are in the city?

BIBLE:

- Does anything in the Bible show that God use earthquakes to punish?
- Is a natural disaster evidence of God’s displeasure?

HISTORY/ARCHITECTURE:

- What were homes built of during the Byzantine times, and why would fire spread so quickly?
- What causes earthquakes? On a world map, trace the tectonic plates and star the 20 most recent 6+ world earthquakes.
- *Ancient engineering hoist*. What machinery/technology would the Byzantine people of 526 AD have ready access to for moving heavy objects? When and where was this invented? Draw a model of what you find.

God of the Earthquake**COMPREHENSION:**

- What is a *patrikios*? What role did they play in the Byzantine times?
- Why did Gaius Epiphrales think they were abandoned by God*?

BIBLE:

- Do you agree with Byziana when she says, “If God* wants them dead we should not fight Him?” What comments would you add to this discussion?

GEOGRAPHY/MAPPING:

- Using a map of ancient Antioch, on GoogleEarth* find the locations of the northern Gate of Orientalis to the southern Gate of Daphne. Note the similarities of the street city plan of ancient Antioch and modern Antioch. (Hint: Antakya Turkey)

Death of a Saint**COMPREHENSION:**

- Who is Emilia? Why is she important?
- What promise does Lady Sophia ask from Marcellus? Why?
- What do you think they mean when they say *Kyrie Eleison*?

RELATIONSHIPS:

- Have you ever lost someone you love to death? What is the hardest thing there is about death?
- When you have experienced a deep sorrow like this, you are more empathetic towards others who experience loss. Write a thoughtful note to someone who recently lost a loved one, using words you would have found comforting in your situation.

HISTORY:

- Find primary source information regarding the 526 AD Antioch earthquake. What evidence can you find for the “cross in the sky”? Do you believe it?

The Dim Torch**COMPREHENSION:**

- Where is the Trunk of Scrolls? How long has it been there?
- Who was Macrina, and what did she do for Emilia?
- Why did Naucratus leave home? Was this the right thing to do?

BIBLE:

- Where is your Bible at this very moment? How long has it been there?
- What is a saint, according to the Bible? What is a saint, according to the characters in the book?
- Do you think blood carries holiness? Use the Bible to defend your ideas.
- What does the Bible say about leaving your family for the sake of evangelism?

RELATIONSHIPS:

- Is it a good idea to believe something just because someone else believes it? What does the Bible say about this?

HISTORY:

- What is the process required for someone becoming “sainted” in the Catholic church? Is it the same in the Eastern Orthodox church? Has the process changed over time?

The Return of the Patrikos**COMPREHENSION:**

- Make a timeline of the story so far, including what happened to Gaius Justus.
- Why did Lady Aemelia desire for Marcellus to accompany Gaius Justus on the rounds? What did this accomplish?
- What kind of person is Natalia?
- What happened to Gaius Justus at the end of the chapter. Why is this of concern to Marcellus?

GEOGRAPHY:

- *Maps*. Trace out on a blank Mediterranean map the journey that Gaius Justus took.

- What role did the Orontes River have for the people of Antioch? Which would have been worse on their economy: if there had been no river or if the river had not connected to the Mediterranean Sea?

Off to Athens!

COMPREHENSION:

- What is Domus Aurea? What does this mean in Greek?
- What is it about saint-bones that John the Gold-Tongue taught was special?
- What problem does Marcellus have that he thinks will be solved at university?

BIBLE:

- Can you find a story in the Bible in which bones apparently cause a miracle?
- What does the Bible teach about “invisible rays of light” that come from bones of saints?

HISTORY:

- By what name is John the Gold-Tongue known today? How significant was his impact on church history?



'NATOLIA THE TREACHEROUS

Fiery Fears

COMPREHENSION:

- What was happening with Marcellus just before the earthquake?
- Do you think bad things always happen when you are the most happy?
- What promise has Byziana made, and why is it a problem for her?
- If you were going on a cross-country walking journey, what would you take?

BIBLE:

- How does God lead us? What verses in the Bible show us how to know what decisions we should make?

SCIENCE/HISTORY:

- Why can secondary earthquakes happen on the site of previous earthquakes?
- Find primary documents. How long did the 528 AD Antioch earthquake last?

Tooth of a Saint

COMPREHENSION:

- Why did the family stop at the monastery on their departure from Antioch?
- Why did the monks give Simeon’s tooth to the travelers?

BIBLE:

- Why do you think men would choose to live their lives on a pillar? What Bible verses do you think they would use to support what they were doing?
- How does God want us to show our commitment to him? Find Bible verses to support this.

HISTORY:

- What was life like in an Antioch monastery? What would the monastic order have been, and what was required of that order?
- Research the Stylite monks. What do you learn about them?

Pilgrim Road**COMPREHENSION:**

- What kind of person is Trolius?
- Does Marcellus tell Byziana the truth about Belisarius? Why or why not?
- How does Marcellus describe God's* character? How does Byziana? With whom do you agree?

BIBLE:

- Does God want people dead? How does the Bible refer to God's view of the death of men?
- What would have happened if Marcellus and Byziana had not rescued the people they had rescued? What does the Bible say about God's will?

GEOGRAPHY:

- Find a map of Turkey. Trace out the path the family may take to walk from Antioch to Constantinople. What is the distance? Refer to the map in the book.
- Can you find any primary documents of early church travelers who traversed the same Pilgrim Way? Report on your findings.

What is Mankind?**COMPREHENSION:**

- With whom do you agree about the power of relics, with Justin or with Marcellus? Why?
- What happened to Trolius? Why do you think this happened?
- What is the problem about working, and why is it a problem?
- What do you learn about Gallus? Are you surprised? Why or why not?
- Predict what you think they will do.

BIBLE:

- How would you have felt if you were in their situation and heard the Book of Hebrews? Look over Hebrews, and write down verses that would have made you feel better or worse. Explain why.
- Byziana says she can no longer trust God. Why does she say this? What would you say to her if you were in their situation with them? Do you think she would listen?

HISTORY/GEOGRAPHY:

- What historical events happened at the Cilician Gate (aka Taurus Pass and Horns of the Bull)? What landform circumstances lend itself to those events?
- *Maps*: What geological features make Tarsus a verdant, green, tree-filled city?
- Using other sources for the location and path, find the Cilician Gate on GoogleEarth*. What do you notice about the landscape? Follow the path and make a list of your observations of the mountain pass.

Horns of the Bull**COMPREHENSION:**

- Have you ever been in the snow longer than you wanted? What kinds of feelings did you have?
- Does Byziana do the wise thing? Why or why not?
- When did Natalia start to feel poorly? Why do you think this began?

BIBLE:

- The text says “At fourteen years of age, Byziana found nothing impossible.” Do you know a young person who makes dangerous decisions because they “find nothing impossible”? What verses in Proverbs speak about this?

SCIENCE:

- Look up hypothermia. Who is at risk, what are the symptoms and what can be done once it sets in?

Facing Death all Day Long**COMPREHENSION/APPLICATION:**

- Draw a family tree for the family of Marcellus and Byziana, based on their story of the Trunk. You can use the Timeline in the back of the book for more information.
- Imagine you had never seen a Bible in your life, but had only heard of it. How would you feel if you found someone who had a Bible? What would you do?

BIBLE:

- How did Widow Arite become familiar with the Psalms? What name did she call them by?
- Can you find any verses in the Gospel of John that show that Jesus was really human? Are there any verses that show that Jesus was actually God?

SCIENCE:

- If someone is asleep, will they swallow right after they are given salt? Can you set up a secret study? Should you give liquids to unconscious people? What would you have done for Natalia in their situation: snowed in with no hospital or doctor to call?

HISTORY:

- Find out about the family of Basil and Emmelia. What are some interesting facts you learn about their life? When did they live, how did they live? Why did they live the way they did?

The Great Debate**COMPREHENSION:**

- What triggered Byziana’s sorrow? What helped her out of her sorrow?
- How long did they stay at Widow Arite’s house?

HISTORY:

- What was the date for the Council of Chalcedon? What problems were the cause for the church leaders to meet together in Chalcedon?
- List the four negatives set down in the Creed of Chalcedon. Match these to the appropriate heresy considered at the council.

BIBLE/RELATIONSHIPS:

- What Psalms might have been encouraging to Byziana in her worries? Write an encouraging letter to Byziana using some verses from Psalms to help her deal with her lack of trust in God and her concerns about the amount of sorrow they are experiencing.

Valley of Death**COMPREHENSION:**

- What has the time at Arite's house done for Marcellus? Has it been good or bad?
- What does Natalia's question to Marcellus tell us about Natalia? What does Marcellus's answer tell us about Marcellus?
- What do the widow's words, "Carry the torch!" mean to the group?

HISTORY:

- What was the relationship between the people from Susa and the Byzantines? What evidence have you seen in the novel that shows this?
- What is the history of the Sarabi dog? Find the town of Sarabi, Iran on a map.

GEOGRAPHY:

- Kartir the Merchant is from Susa. Find Susa on a map. What Bible stories mention Susa?

The Merchant's Gift**COMPREHENSION:**

- List five things that contributed to Marcellus falling asleep in the tent.
- Why did the donkey die?

BIBLE/ETHICS:

- When the Bible says to "give generously to all who ask," and to not require repayment from those who want what you have, does that mean you should not ask for a thief to return something they stole? Write a paragraph explaining how a Christian should respond to theft.

GEOGRAPHY:

- On Google Earth, or elsewhere online, find pictures of the valley between the "Horns of the Bull" or Cilician Gate. What are the features you notice? How will this help or hinder the travelers?

Our Circle of Fire**COMPREHENSION:**

- What do you think motivated Justin to run out from the safety of the group?
- How is the torch used in this scene and how is that related to Arite's last words?

GEOGRAPHY:

- What kinds of wolves live in Anatolia (modern Turkey)? On a world map, shade in the territory this wolf is found in today.

ART:

- Being careful in your use of light, use pastels to draw a picture of the scene where the group is facing the wolves. Try to use color and detail to evoke the feelings they had in the story.

Fickle Hearts**COMPREHENSION:**

- In what ways do the actions of Byziana show her feelings about their “circle of fire”? Choose one of the interactions between Byziana and Marcellus and write that scene from Byziana’s point of view, including her explaining herself to the reader.

RELATIONSHIPS

- How important is honesty and openness between close friends? Is there ever an instance where keeping your feelings private is the right thing? In what instances is it the wrong thing?

GEOGRAPHY

- Look at a map of the area just beyond the Cilician Gate. What landforms do you see in the area? Find photographs of the view the family would have seen ahead of them. Does it look safe?

Our Separate Ways**COMPREHENSION:**

- How is the story of Galuki the donkey similar to Marcellus and his story?
- What are Byziana’s spoken and unspoken motivations for sending Marcellus away?

HISTORY:

- Who were the Cappadocian Fathers? Write a short biography of each one.
- Why did the early Christians live in caves?
- Make a collage of the different frescos found in the Cappadocian caves.

GEOGRAPHY:

- Find Cappadocia on an online map. Using Google Earth, www.360cities.net/map, or other search methods, find photographs of the landscape. Make a presentation showing the insides and outsides of the caves where the Cappadocian Fathers had their monastic schools and cave churches.

Approaching the Fire**COMPREHENSION:**

- What reasons would Marcellus have for leaving the family? Why did Marcellus follow them instead?
- What hints do you have in this scene that something bad will happen? What has happened in the story to tell you what will probably happen?

ART:

- Draw a picture of a rough firepit. Draw Marcellus on his mat looking across the fire at Byziana. Use color and shape to reflect the mood.

SOCIAL:

- What might motivate someone to live the life of a bandit? Pretend you are a bandit in Anatolia and write a letter about why you live the life you do. Feel free to make up a family past for him, but try to match the setting to what you know already of life in Anatolia in the 6th century.

Kyrie Eleison!

COMPREHENSION:

- Why did the bandits attack the party? Why do you think they took Justin?
- What happened to the Trunk during the fight? Why?
- Were they right or wrong in choosing to sell the Scrolls? Explain your answer. Would you ever sell a rare Scripture Scroll to a complete stranger just for money?

BIBLE:

- The Bible says, “If someone hits your right cheek, turn to them your left as well.” And, “Those who live by the sword die by the sword.” Considering these verses, is Marcellus doing the right thing or the wrong thing by fighting the Goths?

HISTORY:

- Find out about the history of ancient Tyana. Write a paragraph about what you found.



TOME the SECOND

CHALCEDON THE BETRAYED

Byziana and her Husband

COMPREHENSION:

- What does it mean that Marcellus “tallied off days of enslavement by worry for Byzia”?
- Why does so much about Constantinople bother Marcellus? Make a list of the things he mentions that he notices are “different” or that irritate him.
- What do you think happened to Byziana and her sisters? Why does Justin seem to not care?

RELATIONSHIPS:

- What does Marcellus mean when he says, “Some men care about proving themselves men, some men care about proving themselves human.”
- Do you know anyone who spent significant time in another country? Interview them to find out if their return home was difficult, and in what ways they were bothered by their homeland. Can you find out the name for this phenomenon?

HISTORY:

- Find out about the Battle of Dara. Find it on a map. Who fought, against whom, how did they fight and what were the results of the battle? If possible, demonstrate the battle with plastic army men or Legos.

Journey to Tyana

COMPREHENSION:

- How far is Tyana from Constantinople? How long did it take the young men to arrive? What speed would they need to go to get there that fast?
- Why did the innkeeper keep the Scrolls under the counter?
- What news do the young men receive that makes them rush back to Antioch?

HISTORY

- The innkeeper says she knows her letters but does not understand the words on the Scroll? How can this be? What language were the Scrolls in, and what else in the story spoke of this?

BIBLE

- How do you see the Sovereignty of God* displayed in this story so far? What events point to that?

* (see Parent notes)

Reunited!

COMPREHENSION:

- Why does Marcellus think he’s in a dream? Is this just an expression?
- What has happened to the infrastructure of Antioch while the young men were away?

HISTORY:

- What is the difference between papyrus, parchment and vellum? When were each invented and where? Why did they not use paper? Was it available?

Bound to the Scrolls**COMPREHENSION:**

- What changes have happened in the Antioch family since the young men were captured by Goths?
- What problems keep the family from being able to read or copy the Scrolls?

HISTORY:

- What historical causes make Natalia say, “Imagine if you could go to one place, like . . . like Jerusalem . . . and read the Hebrew Scriptures and the Gospel Scriptures and the Epistles, and not have to go to a different monastery to find each one. I would like to live there. If there were a place like that. I mean if I could read.”

RELATIONSHIPS:

- How precious is your Bible to you? Do you share Bible verses with your friends, or are you afraid to tell them about it?

Glass Bottle Days**COMPREHENSION:**

- How has Byziana’s behavior toward Marcellus changed? Why do you think this happened?
- What new information do you learn about Mari? Why is Byziana so curious about her?

BIBLE/RELATIONSHIPS:

- Do you think Marcellus is acting respectfully toward Byziana? Why or why not? Compare and contrast this with a story in the Bible that shows betrothal or engagement.

HISTORY:

- Research the history of glass-making. Can you find pictures of the oldest glassware in the world? Watch a video of glass-blowers. How is glass made and shaped? Write about what you find.

A Consecrated Life**COMPREHENSION:**

- What is the motivation for Marcellus to join a monastery? Why is everyone against it?
- Why is Byziana willing to go to Constantinople? What other options does she have?

BIBLE:

- What does the Bible say about “consecrating” your life? Look up the uses of the word in both the Old and the New Testaments. Is this the way Marcellus and his mother understand it?
- Is there deceit going on? If so, how? If not, what is it that is causing the anger and misunderstanding?

RELATIONSHIPS:

- What are Marcellus’s strengths? What are his weaknesses? How do these contribute to the decisions he and others make in the story?
- What is the biggest problem between Marcellus and Byziana?

Pater's Promise**COMPREHENSION:**

- Why do you think this chapter is entitled *Pater's Promise*? Which fathers are referred to in this chapter and how do their desires influence Marcellus?
- Why does Marcellus want to return to Gothland? Why doesn't he want to return to Gothland?

Eyes Wide Open**COMPREHENSION:**

- What does Marcellus want more than anything else? What is keeping him from it?
- What does Byziana mean when she says she goes with her "eyes wide open"? What does that say about what she really wants?

BIBLE:

- What does 2 Corinthians 6:14 mean in the context of marriage? How does this relate to Byziana's situation? Why does the verse not influence her?

On the Pillion**COMPREHENSION:**

- Why did Byziana want to travel behind Marcellus? Is she being truthful? Why or why not?
- What is the real reason for the silence of Marcellus?
- When Marcellus talks to Byziana about the Street of Colonnades, why does he do it the way he does? What problem does he have right afterwards? Why does he feel that he is acting toward her like Belisarius did toward him?

ART:

- Draw a picture of Marcellus and Byziana on the horse, "as a general taking his queen." Make sure to reflect the feelings each is having through their facial expressions or use of color.

BIBLE:

- Referring back to the Bible scrolls Marcellus lists in Arite's house, find verses they did not know from books they did not have that might have helped them in their difficulties.
- Find verses from books they did have but were not remembering that could have encouraged them or helped them in their troubles.

The Tome of Leo**COMPREHENSION:**

- What were the things the family did not like about John of Ephesus?
- What secret message did Marcellus and Justin communicate, and why?
- Write down the few quotations Byziana gives from *Leo's Tome*. How are they helpful in light of the questions she had about the human nature of Christ?

SOCIAL:

- Look up George Washington's Rules of Civility. While this book takes place more than a thousand years earlier, write down some of the ways John of Ephesus broke these rules. Make a list of a couple of the rules you perhaps should improve in as well.

HISTORY:

- What was Leo's Tome, and how was it important in history? How does its influence affect you in your life today?
- Research John of Ephesus. What did he do in Anatolia and when? What was his motivation?

Chalcedon Virgin**COMPREHENSION:**

- What is the name of the church where the Chalcedon Council met?
- What is significant about when, where and how the travelers found the church?
- Marcellus refers to the Trunk of Scrolls as a kind of reliquary. How is it similar to a reliquary? How is it different?

HISTORY:

- Find out about Euphemia. Why and how did she die? What was the myth of what happened with her at the Council of Chalcedon? Do you believe it? Why or why not?

GEOGRAPHY/MAPPING SKILLS:

- On GoogleEarth*, in Istanbul (Kadiköy), find the Church of Euphemia. After you locate the church, try to walk using "street view" from the church to the coast and back again. (Hint: Ayia Efimia Istanbul)

Harken to the Golden Horn**COMPREHENSION:**

- What kinds of feelings is Marcellus having on the boat across to the capital?
- Why does Marcellus refuse to tell Byziana that he cares for her?
- Do you think Byziana is having a conflict inside of her? Is there any evidence for this?

SCIENCE

- Why do seagulls fly next to boats, pacing them? How is this similar to why dolphins swim next to boats?

GEOGRAPHY:

- Find a video showing the crossing from Chalcedon to Constantinople. (Hint: İstanbul Kadıköy'den Eminönü'ne Vapurla; there are lots to choose from). Make a list of your observations.



CONSTANTINOPLE THE MAJESTIC

Face to Face

COMPREHENSION:

- Who is the god Oceanus? What were the Titans? Find pictures of statues of this god. Why would Belisarius, who lived in a Christian empire, have a Greek/Roman god on his door?
- *Character Analysis.* How did Marcellus feel about Indulf at the beginning of the story? How does he feel about him now? For what reasons did this change? Is that realistic? What in the Bible supports your answer?

SOCIAL:

- *Conversation Skills.* What does it mean to be a good listener? Make a list of the kinds of things a good listener does, and compare it with the way Belisarius acts as he talks with Byziana, Justin, Marcellus and Hypatius. What do his conversation skills say about Belisarius?

ECONOMICS & WARFARE:

- *Ancient Trade.* This chapter refers to the vases and urns that Belisarius had accumulated in his travels or perhaps from traders in Constantinople. Find out the early Byzantine (6th century) trade routes. What kinds of goods did they receive from other countries? What kinds of goods did they export?
- *Callinicum.* What was the Battle of Callinicum? Why were the Byzantines fighting the Persians? Find a map of the battle. Draw a picture of how the troops began the battle, with arrows showing the progress. Why did Belisarius lose this battle? Why did Hypatius say it was not really a loss?

Pater's Fate

COMPREHENSION:

- Why did Gaius Justus not leave the room when everyone else tried? What has happened to him? What does Justin do with the ring and why?
- Why does Marcellus draw his sword to Belisarius? Is he right to do this?

SOCIAL:

- *Chastity.* Define chastity. What does the Bible say about chastity? How does this go against what the “world” says about the way young people should behave?
- *Animal Science.* Find out about wolves in the wild. Do they have a system to care for orphaned pups? What do they do? How is this the same or different for orphaned human children?

ECONOMICS

- *Slavery*. What did the Justinian Code say about slaves?
- *Gold*. What was the cost of gold in Justinian's time? What is the cost of gold today? Make a chart showing the change in the value of gold over the last 6 centuries.

MYTH

- *Odysseus*. Who is Odysseus? Draw a map showing his travels in the Aegean.
- *Odysseus*. Retell the story or draw a picture of Odysseus and the Cyclops.

Things that Have Happened**COMPREHENSION:**

- Draw a picture of how you imagine the house of Gaius Justus, as described in the text.
- What are the symptoms of shock, and do you think Byziana is in shock?
- What were Byziana's questions about God. And what are her reasons for thinking that "Jesus wept" answers all of those questions?

RELATIONSHIPS

- What changed in the relationship between Byziana and Marcellus? Do you think that was a good reason for Marcellus to change his approach? Has he been "above reproach" in his interaction with Byziana? Explain your answer?

BIBLE

- Jesus' tears. Why did Jesus cry if he was going to bring Lazarus out from the grave? How does this show his dual-nature?

Holy Wisdom**COMPREHENSION:**

- *The Games*. Find out about the Chariot Racing Teams of Byzantium. According to the book and according to your research, how were the team colors connected to politics?
- (bonus question: Is there a connection between US sports teams and political parties? In other words, do more Republicans support certain teams and Democrats other teams?)
- What did the Justinian Code say about interest on loans and usury? Do you think the government should make limits on how people loan their own money? Why or why not?

HISTORY

- *Apostle Andrew*. Read about the travels of the Apostle Andrew, according to late tradition.
- Draw a map or trace the journeys of the Apostle Andrew, according to those sources.

Pouches of Gold**COMPREHENSION:**

- What has Marcellus seen between Belisarius and Hypatius? How does this make a case against the men?
- What do you think is going on with the pouches of gold? Predict what the two men will do with or because of the gold. What hints have you had about this?

HISTORY:

- Find out about the charioteer Porphyrius. Why was he esteemed? What did he do that was infamous?

- Marcellus notices a donkey and a man that represent victory. Find out the story and write it in your own words, or draw a picture demonstrating the significant moment of the story. Hint: look up (Actium, Eutyches, Nikon).

CULTURE:

- Look at photos of modern sports stadiums. What does this show you about the “gods” that are worshipped in that arena? Explain your thoughts.

Raging Torches**COMPREHENSION:**

- Find out about the cause for the Nika riots. Find out about the results of the riot.

SCIENCE:

- *Fire.* How were the buildings made in the 6th century? Why could cities burn up so fast, and what were the methods of putting out large fires like that?

ARCHITECTURE:

- *Church of the Apostles.* What was the original architectural plan like for the Church of the Apostles? What was Justinian’s restored church like? What relics were said to be in that church? Can you find any [clues](#) about what happened to those relics?

Merciless Inferno**COMPREHENSION:**

- What different classes of people do you notice interacting during the fire? How were the actions of the priestly class different than the actions of others? How were they the same?
- Orphans of natural disaster. What modern natural disasters have left orphans in the world? What has the church done to help these orphans in distress?

MAPPING SKILLS:

- Find some city maps of Constantinople during Justinian’s time. Trace the journey the main characters had to make.
- Find the Hagia Sophia on GoogleEarth*. Using “street view” try to walk from the church to the coast and back again. Are there more than one paths to take? (Hint: Aya Sofya Istanbul)

God of Hidden Waters**COMPREHENSION:**

- What was Marcellus’s reasoning about disguising themselves? Do you agree with him or not? What would you have done?

ETHICS:

- Is it a good thing to disguise oneself in order to bring about a better good? Is it the same as deceit? Is this similar or different to what Jesus did? Compare this to Numbers 12:8. What did it mean to take up “vows” with a priestly/monastic order? Find an example of vows that were required by monks of those times.

HISTORY:

- Which monastic orders existed in Justinian’s Byzantium (6th century)? List the different orders and their unique views and expectations of their monks.

- What is the Delphi Serpent Column? Where did it come from and why? Where is it now? Draw a picture of the snake as it would have been in the 6th century.
- Find the Delphi Serpent Column on an Istanbul city map, on the south end of the Hippodrome. Use this map to guide your search on GoogleEarth*. Using “street view” try to walk along the Hippodrome from the the Delphi Serpent Column to Hagia Sophia. (Hint: Hippodrome Istanbul)

No Purple Shrouds

COMPREHENSION:

- Why were the three main characters in the Palace, and how did they get there?
- What happened to the men who came up after them? Was that positive or negative?

HISTORY

- Find out what history says about the decision Justinian and Theodora made during the Nika Riots. How is this similar and different from what is in this story?
- Kyrie Eleison songs. Find several audio samples of Gregorian or Orthodox Kyrie Eleison chants. What does this phrase mean and why would Christians use this as a refrain?

ARCHITECTURE:

- Look up Basilica Cistern. Find the panorama on www.360cities.net (and/or GoogleEarth). Make a list of aspects of its architecture, make a drawing of it, or make a collage from different photos you find online. Does it remind you of any building you know?
- Hagia Sophia. Find out what the original Hagia Sophia probably looked like. Compare it to Justinian’s Hagia Sophia and today’s Hagia Sophia. Make a list of similarities and differences.

My Princess

COMPREHENSION:

- How did the topic of the Gothic Princess come up? Why did Byziana want Marcellus to return to Gothland?
- What would you do if you had this much debt? How would you pay it?

HISTORY:

- Hypatius. Who was Hypatius? Did he really do the things this book accuses him of? What did he do? What was his wife, Mary, like?
- Gaius Justus said, “Belisarius is for Belisarius” What does this mean? Find out about the character of General Belisarius from historical sources. Was it true of him? Is it in a way true of everyone? Why or why not?

ECONOMICS:

- *Debt and slavery.* Today do people get put into slavery if they are in extreme debt? Do they sell their children? What happens to a debtor in case of extreme debt? Is this true in all countries, or just America?

BIBLE:

- *Who of God.* What does Marcellus say about the “who” of God. Do you agree? Think of a time in your life when you were in difficulty. How does the Who of God help you to better understand why God allowed this into your life?

God over All Kings**COMPREHENSION:**

- What is the connection between the incarnation of Christ and Byziana's giving her robe to the little girl?
- Was Justinian "just" in the way he dealt with the conspiracy and attempted coup? Do you think he should have done something differently? Why or why not?
- Belisarius's part. Look back at the things that Marcellus saw and heard from Belisarius. Does he have evidence against Belisarius? Is it empirical or circumstantial? Is he right to keep his mouth shut? Why or why not?

BIBLE:

- What does God require of us in response to being in a suffering world

Two Banquets**COMPREHENSION:**

- Who is the hero of this story? Who made the events of the story resolve as they did? Why do you think this? Have you ever had things work out in unexpected ways?

SOCIAL:

- What does the Bible say about caring for widows and orphans? What kinds of circumstances cause people to become widows and orphans? Does anything in the Bible show you a plan God put into place to care for those impacted by unexpected misfortune like widows, orphans, and the poor?

ASSESSMENT

- *Alternate ending.* Write a scene showing what might have happened if Marcellus had spoken out against Belisarius. Show Justinian's response, and Belisarius's response. Show how the end of the book is the same or different because of this.
- From the perspective of Byziana or Justin, write a short story, or a "letter" to Lady Aemelia, summarizing the events of Trunk of Scrolls. Make sure to show the story from different eyes and perspective. (I'd love to read this, if you send it to me!
author@darlenenbocek.com)



Long Term Research Assignments

Change over Time “In what three ways did society change after...?”

Cause and Effect “What were three most significant causes for ...?” or “What were three of the worst effects of ...?”

Compare and Contrast “In what ways were.... and the same? In what ways were they different?”

Define and Identify “What is ... and what are the signs of its presence during?”

Statement and Reaction “What was the most far-reaching reaction to’s speech....?’s book...?”

Evaluation “Was the a good or a bad change for the people during the era of?”

Analyzing Viewpoints “Why were in favor of ? Why were against it?”

1. GOTHLAND THE DREADFUL

- a. Evaluation: Research the life of Alaric and Theodoric the great. Answer this question: which of the two had a more impactful life?
- b. Change over Time: Trace the development of Arian Christianity in the Gothic population.
- c. Cause and Effect: What was the most significant cause for the Gothic takeover of Rome?

2. ANTIOCH THE GLORIOUS

- a. Compare and Contrast: What do the primary documents say about the AD 526 Antioch earthquake? Compare the facts they give, contrast the differences in the accounts.
- b. Analyzing Viewpoints: What did the Monophysites believe and why did other Christians have a problem with these beliefs?
- c. Define and Identify: What is Megalopsychia and why was it important?
- d. Statement and Reaction: In his *Poem on the Lisbon Disaster*, Voltaire used suffering of Christians as a primary evidence against the Providence of God. How did his assessment of the Lisbon earthquake impact Rousseau and how does it now impact modern society?
- e. Philosophy Research How is the dual-nature of Christ compatible with reason?
- f. Bible Research Using only the writings of the Apostle John, show evidence that John believed in both the divinity and the actual-humanity of Christ.

3. ‘NATOLIA THE TREACHEROUS

- a. Analyzing Viewpoints: The family embarks on a cross-country walking journey. Find out about what Syrian refugees took with them (or wished they had taken with them). Compare this with what people going on “walkabouts” or European backpack expeditions take with them. Analyze the situations. Why do differing situations require different supplies?
- b. Compare and Contrast: What do the [different reports](#) of the 526 AD Antioch earthquake claim about the earthquake? Compare and contrast the reports. How can we know what really happened? (If you prefer, you may do the 528 AD Antioch earthquake instead.)

- c. Statement and Reaction: Lady Sophia says, “Your belief on Chalcedon identifies the very God you worship.” After you research the council and the divisions that were made as a result of the council affirm or deny this statement with evidence from history and the Bible.
- d. Biography: Cappadocian Fathers: Choose one of the Cappadocian Fathers (Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa or Gregory of Nazianzus). Write a report about his life, his teaching, his lifetime impact, and his historical impact.
- e. Evaluation: Individuals have changed their views of relics over time. Consider St. Augustine’s views former view of relics and read about why his view changed. Evaluate his reasons to change his view of the power of relics. Compare this with what happened at Council of Nicaea in 787 AD. What is your assessment of the power of relics?
- f. **(Apologetic Challenge)** Analyzing Viewpoints: The characters pass through Tyana, where Apollonius was born. Some people say that Apollonius of Tyana is the real historical character that the “fictionalized” Jesus was based on. Analyze this idea with a solid defense for the historicity of Jesus Christ’s life, death and resurrection. You must use other historical sources besides the Bible.

4. CHALCEDON THE BETRAYED

- a. Define and Identify: What universities were available to study at in 531 AD? Who could study there, who were the teachers, and what were the courses of study? Also discuss what happened to the School of Athens and why.
- b. Biography: Pamphilus of Caesarea: Tell about Pamphilus of Caesarea. Include in your research what both St. Jerome and Eusebius wrote about his use of Scripture? How is this significant in the development of the Bible we have now? (hint-Jerome’s passage begins, “What lover of books was there who did not find a friend in Pamphilus?”)
- c. Cause and Effect: What were the positive and negative results of the centralization, or collecting, of all copies of Scripture into monasteries? Trace the movement of the earliest copies of Scripture to the earliest Tomes of complete Scripture, requested by Emperor Constantine. Include in your study the names of the oldest Codexes.
- d. Evaluate: Find a translation of Leo’s Tome. Read through it, noting its use of Scripture. Evaluate how influenced Leo was by the Scripture by the reasoning he makes.
- e. Compare and Contrast: Search for different types of ancient reliquaries. Compare the different ways that people housed the relics. Why did they give such value to them?
- f. Analyzing Viewpoints: Write a story from the perspective of a Christian in the near future who has no Bible (either physical or digital). In your story show how the church functions and the problems and strengths it would have.

5. CONSTANTINOPLE THE MAJESTIC

- a. Character Analysis. Choose one of the characters. Trace their character journey. How are they at the beginning of the book? What events happen, and how does the character change by the middle and at the end of the book? What are their strengths and weaknesses, personality, favorites and other things you note about them. Write one of their most significant scenes from their point of view.

- b. Define and Identify. Find city maps from Justinian's Constantinople. Using materials you choose, make a model of the hippodrome. Identify the significant events of the Nika riots on your model.
- c. Compare and Contrast. Battle of Daras. Compare and contrast Belisarius's success at the Battle of Daras with the Battle of Callinicum? (see <http://www.theartofbattle.com/> to get started).
- d. Cause and Effect. Slavery/Economics. For what reasons were people made to be slaves in the Age of Justinian? Is there a modern-day equivalent?
- e. Change over Time. Slaves and Poor. How did Justinian's improvements change the way the earlier Roman culture looked at things such as slavery and the poor?
- f. Compare and Contrast. Ancient Sources. Compare what Eusebius and Origen say about the Apostle Andrew with what later writers such as Chronicle of Nestor and Hippolytus of Rome say. How should we interpret the later records, true or not? Explain your reasoning.

*NOTES TO PARENTS

1. God or the Sovereignty of God: I recognize this is a book of fiction, so all references to God are an attempt to translate the real God into a fictional environment. I have done my best to accurately reflect His Character as I believe it would be in this environment. My heart is to honor him, not to blaspheme him by claiming He did what He most certainly did not do. God's Character is steady. The way he related to those of faith in the Bronze Age, or to those of faith in the Byzantine Age, or to us of faith today is identical. He is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. With this in mind, I refer to His Sovereign Hand over the life of Marcellus and his family, because for all intents and purposes they represent the Family of Faith of all generations.

2. Resources: The topics in this study guide are vast, but all of the research topics can be answered from online resources.

- Many good source material can be found on Google Books, and it is a great resource for students to know how to use.
- The sources at the bottom of Wikipedia articles, including the references, offer good links to primary documents.
- Original documents can also be found on academic sites such as www.newadvent.org and <http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/> and <https://www.ccel.org/fathers.html>.
- GoogleEarth can be downloaded for free from <https://www.google.com/earth/>. Streetview is accessed by dragging the person icon from the control box and placing it on your desired location. If the person icon highlights blue lines, you can click forward along the streets for a walking tour. Selecting photo icons give you a photograph or a 360 view of the location.
- Students should not be afraid of academic pdf documents, since they often have diagrams and quotes from inaccessible books.
- Please note, the advanced research projects have categories discussed on this site: <https://darlenenbocek.com/10elements5>. Learning how to do research like this will give them a head-start for university.

3. Help: If you or your student gets stuck, feel free to write to me (author@darlenenbocek.com) and I will direct you to places to find the answers. Also, if you would like my assistance in *grading* the long-term research assignments, I would enjoy seeing what your students produce and helping assess the content. In any event, *I would love to host your finalized research projects on my website, so feel free to send them my way.*