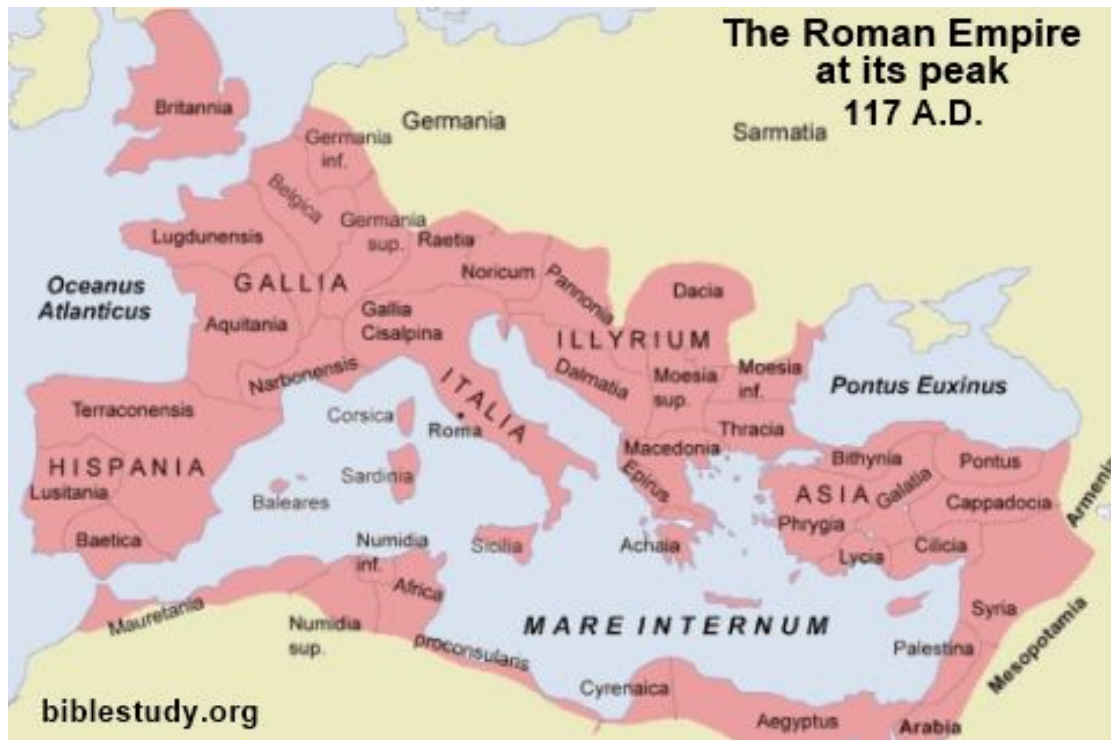


Document 19: Map & Tacitus

Background

The map below shows the expanse of the Roman Empire at its' peak in 117 A.D.



The Annals, written by Tacitus in 116 CE

Background

In 64 CE, during the reign of the unpopular emperor Nero, a great fire destroyed Rome. The following is an excerpt from The Annals, a history of the Roman Empire written by the Roman historian Tacitus in 116 CE. Tacitus wrote and lived during a time period when Christians were persecuted in large numbers.

All human efforts and all the lavish gifts of Emperor Nero did not banish the belief that the great fire was the result of Nero's order. To get rid of the report, Nero placed the guilt and the most exquisite tortures on a group hated for their abominations. This group was called Christians by the people. An arrest was first made of all those who pleaded guilty. Then, upon their information, an immense multitude of Christians was convicted, not for the crime of setting the city on fire, but for the crime of hatred against mankind. Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. They were torn by dogs and eaten, or were nailed to crosses, or were thrown into to the flames and burnt alive.

Vocabulary

- **banish:** to send someone away from a place as a punishment
- **abominations:** shameful, disgusting habits or actions
- **multitude:** a large gathering of people
- **mockery:** to make something seem foolish or absurd