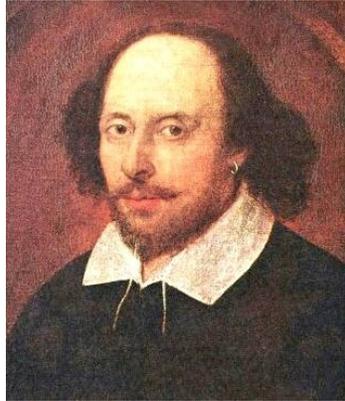


# JULIUS CAESAR

by William Shakespeare



## THE AUTHOR

William Shakespeare (1564-1616) was born into the family of a prosperous tradesman in Stratford-upon-Avon, England. While in his mid-teens, he was forced to leave school because his family fell into a period of poverty, so that he had only a rudimentary education. In 1582, he married Anne Hathaway, eight years his senior and already three months pregnant. The marriage produced three children in three years, but in 1585, Shakespeare left Stratford to go to London to seek his fortune in the big city.

In London, he embarked upon a career on the stage, becoming a popular actor by the early fifteen nineties. In 1591, he penned his first play, *Love's Labour's Lost*. His early plays were comedies, and show nothing of the depth that characterized his later works. His plots were borrowed from a variety of sources, both ancient and contemporary. During his career, he wrote 37 plays, three narrative poems, and 154 sonnets.

His writing brought him fame and popularity, but he continued to act as well as write (critics love to speculate about which of the characters in his plays would have been played by the author). He eventually became a shareholder in the Lord Chamberlain's Men (later the King's Men when James I ascended the throne). Most of his plays were performed at local theaters like the Rose, the Globe, and the indoor Blackfriars. When the Globe burned to the ground in 1613 (a cannon misfired during a performance of *Henry VIII*), Shakespeare retired, and died in Stratford three years later on his fifty-second birthday.

*Julius Caesar*, written in 1599, is in many ways a transitional play. The events of the play take place in 44 BC, when Rome was in the midst of its transition from republic to empire. Having written his cycles of plays on the Wars of the Roses, Shakespeare now turns to an account of a different history - not of Britain, but of the Roman Empire. The source is no longer Holinshed's *Chronicles*, but Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans*. In a sense, then, *Julius Caesar* is the last of Shakespeare's great histories, in that it does far more to develop the characters of the main figures and illustrate their conflicts, both internal and external, than his earlier histories. But it is also the first of his great tragedies. In Brutus, we have the tragic hero whose idealism leaves him ill-suited for the task he undertakes. As a man of the mind rather than a man of action, he serves as

a warm-up for the great figure of Hamlet. The play itself anticipates some significant elements in the most famous of Shakespeare's tragedies, as well, including the central element of revenge and the key role played by the ghost of the murdered king. Of course, Shakespeare also continues to develop his ideas about the nature of true kingship that take up so much space in his earlier histories.

## **MAJOR CHARACTERS**

- Julius Caesar - Roman general who turns down the proffered imperial crown, but is assassinated by a group of conspirators who fear he may become a tyrant.
- Octavius Caesar - Nephew of Julius Caesar, he heads the Second Triumvirate and eventually becomes the first emperor of Rome after defeating the conspirators at the Battle of Philippi.
- Mark Antony - His speech at the funeral of Caesar turns to crowd against the conspirators; he later becomes part of the Second Triumvirate.
- Lepidus - The last and weakest member of the Second Triumvirate.
- Cicero - A great orator, he is one of at least eight senators killed by the Triumvirate as they consolidate their hold on Rome.
- Brutus - The "noblest Roman of them all," he joins the conspirators for what he sees as the good of Rome.
- Cassius - A vindictive and jealous man, he talks Brutus into joining the conspiracy, and later quarrels with him on the eve of the Battle of Philippi.
- Casca - An angry man who speaks evil of Caesar and anyone else who offends him.
- Tribonius, Ligarius, Decius, Metellus Cimber, Cinna - The rest of the conspirators.
- Artemidorus - He tries to reveal the conspiracy to Caesar in a letter, but is ignored.
- Calpurnia - Wife of Caesar who has bad dreams the night before his death and warns him not to go to the Senate.
- Portia - Wife of Brutus who fears for his life and eventually takes her own.

## **NOTABLE QUOTATIONS**

"When Caesar says 'do this,' it is performed." (Antony, Iii, 10)

"Beware the ides of March." (Soothsayer, Iii, 18)

"Vexed I am  
Of late with passions of some difference,

Conceptions only proper to myself,  
Which give some soil perhaps to my behaviors;  
But let not therefore my good friends be grieved -  
Among which number, Cassius, be you one -  
Nor construe any further my neglect  
Than that poor Brutus with himself at war  
Forgets the shows of love to other men.” (Brutus, Iii, 39-47)

“What is it that you would impart to me?  
If it be aught toward the general good,  
Set honor in one eye and death i’ the other,  
And I will look on both indifferently;  
For let the gods so speed me as I love  
The name of honor more than I fear death.” (Brutus, Iii, 84-89)

“Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world  
Like a Colossus, and we petty men  
Walk under his huge legs and peep about  
To find ourselves dishonorable graves.  
Men at some times are masters of their fates:  
The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,  
But in ourselves, that we are underlings” (Cassius, Iii, 135-141)

“Let me have men about me that are fat,  
Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep o’ nights:  
Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look;  
He thinks too much: such men are dangerous.” (Caesar, Iii, 192-195)

“But for mine own part, it was Greek to me” (Casca, Iii, 287)

“Poor man! I know he would not be a wolf  
But that he sees the Romans are but sheep.” (Cassius, Iiii, 104-105)

“O, he sits high in all the people’s hearts;  
And that which would appear offense in us  
His countenance, like richest alchemy,  
Will change to virtue and to worthiness.” (Casca, Iiii, 157-160)

“O, name him not: let us not break with him,  
For he will never follow any thing  
That other men begin.” (Brutus, Iii, 150-152)

“Let us be sacrificers, but not butchers, Caius.  
We all stand up against the spirit of Caesar,  
And in the spirit of men there is no blood:  
O, that we then could come by Caesar’s spirit,  
And not dismember Caesar? But, alas,

Caesar must bleed for it! And, gentle friends,  
Let's kill him boldly, but not wrathfully;  
Let's carve him as a dish fit for the gods,  
Not hew him as a carcass fit for hounds." (Brutus, Iii, 166-174)

"But when I tell him he hates flatterers,  
He says he does, being then most flattered." (Decius, Iii, 207-208)

"When beggars die, there are no comets seen;  
the heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes." (Calpurnia, Iiii, 30-31)

Cowards die many times before their death;  
The valiant never taste of death but once." (Caesar, Iiii, 32-33)

"Et tu, Brute? Then fall, Caesar!" (Caesar, Iiii, 77)

"And Caesar's spirit ranging for revenge,  
With Ate by his side come hot from hell,  
Shall in these confines with a monarch's voice  
Cry 'Havoc,' and let slip the dogs of war." (Antony, Iiii, 270-273)

"If then that friend demand why Brutus rose against Caesar, this is my answer: not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more. Had you rather Caesar were living, and die all slaves, than that Caesar were dead, to live all freemen? As Caesar loved me, I weep for him; as he was fortunate, I rejoice at it; as he was valiant, I honor him; but as he was ambitious, I slew him. There is tears for his love; joy for his fortune; honor for his valor; and death for his ambition. Who is here so base that would be a bondman? If any, speak; for him I have offended. Who is here so rude that would not be a Roman? If any, speak; for him I have offended. Who is here so vile that would not love his country? If any, speak; for him I have offended." (Brutus, Iiii, 21-37)

"Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears;  
I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.  
The evil that men do lives after them;  
The good is oft interred with their bones.  
So let it be with Caesar. The noble Brutus  
Hath told you Caesar was ambitious.  
If it were so, it were a grievous fault,  
And grievously hath Caesar answered it.  
Here under leave of Brutus and the rest  
(For Brutus is an honorable man;  
So are they all, all honorable men),  
Come I to speak in Caesar's funeral.  
He was my friend, faithful and just to me;  
But Brutus says he was ambitious,  
And Brutus is an honorable man.  
He hath brought many captives home to Rome,

Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill.  
Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?  
When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept;  
Ambition should be made of sterner stuff.  
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;  
And Brutus is an honorable man.  
You all did see that on the Lupercal  
I thrice presented him a kingly crown,  
Which he did thrice refuse. Was this ambition?  
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;  
And sure he is an honorable man.  
I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,  
But here I am to speak what I do know.  
You all did love him once, not without cause.  
What cause withholds you then to mourn for him?  
O judgment, thou art fled to brutish beasts,  
And men have lost their reason! Bear with me.  
My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar,  
And I must pause till it come back to me.” (Antony, IIIi, 78-112)

“If you have tears, prepare to shed them now.  
You all do know this mantle. I remember  
The first time Caesar ever put it on.  
‘Twas on a summer’s evening in his tent,  
That day he overcame the Nervii.  
Look, in this place ran Cassius’ dagger through.  
See what a rent the envious Casca made.  
Through this the well-beloved Brutus stabbed;  
And as he plucked his cursed steel away,  
Mark how the blood of Caesar followed it,  
As rushing out of doors to be resolved  
If Brutus so unkindly knocked or no;  
For Brutus, as you know, was Caesar’s angel.  
Judge, O you gods, how dearly Caesar loved him!  
This was the most unkindest cut of all;  
For when the noble Caesar saw him stab,  
Ingratitude, more strong than traitors’ arms,  
Quite vanquished him. Then burst his mighty heart;  
And in his mantle muffling up his face,  
Even at the base of Pompey’s statue  
(Which all the while ran blood) great Caesar fell.  
O, what a fall was there, my countrymen!  
Then I, and you, and all of us fell down,  
Whilst bloody treason flourished over us.  
O, now you weep, and I perceive you feel  
The dint of pity. These are gracious drops.

Kind souls, what weep you when you but behold  
Our Caesar's vesture wounded? Look you here!  
Here is himself, marred as you see with traitors." (Antony, IIIii, 173-201)

"Remember March, the ides of March remember:  
Did not great Julius bleed for justice' sake?  
What villain touch'd his body, that did stab,  
And not for justice? What, shall one of us,  
that struck the foremost man of all this world  
But for supporting robbers, shall we now  
Contaminate our fingers with base bribes,  
And sell the mighty space of our large honors  
For so much trash as may be grasped thus?  
I had rather be a dog, and bay the moon,  
Than such a Roman." (Brutus, IViii, 18-28)

"There is a tide in the affairs of men  
Which taken at the flood leads on to fortune;  
Omitted, all the voyage of their life  
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.  
On such a full sea are we now afloat,  
And we must take the current when it serves,  
Or lose our ventures." (Brutus, IViii, 218-224)

"O Julius Caesar, thou art mighty yet!  
Thy spirit walks abroad, and turns our swords  
In our own proper entrails." (Brutus, Viii, 94-96)

"Caesar, now be still:  
I kill'd not thee with half so good a will." (Brutus, Vv, 50-51)

"This was the nobles Roman of them all:  
All the conspirators, save only he,  
Did that they did in envy of great Caesar;  
He only, in a general honest thought  
And common good to all, made one of them.  
His life was gentle, and the elements  
So mix'd in him that Nature might stand up  
And say to all the world 'This was a man!'" (Antony, Vv, 68-75)

## NOTES

**Act I, scene 1** - Flavius and Marullus, two tribunes, encounter tradesmen in the street on February 15<sup>th</sup>, the feast of Lupercalia, gathered to celebrate Julius Caesar's triumph over Pompey's sons. They rebuke the tradesmen, send them back to work, and give orders that decorations put up to honor

Caesar's return should be taken down. They clearly fear that Caesar's growing power could lead to tyranny.

**Act I, scene 2** - Caesar enters the city with his retinue, and tells his wife Calpurnia to stand in a prominent place when the priests run by so that she may be touched in order to remove the curse of infertility that is upon her. The Soothsayer interrupts the procession and warns Caesar to beware the ides of March. Cassius and Brutus then come aside and converse, Cassius expressing his concern that Brutus has been in poor spirits lately. Cassius then tells Brutus that he is held in high esteem among the people, but Brutus warns him not to flatter him or impute to him honors that he is incapable of bearing. They then hear the crowd shout, and Cassius expresses the fear that they are about to crown Caesar. He speaks of Caesar's mortality, telling how he once saved his life by rescuing him from drowning, and how during an illness in Spain, this "god" was very mortal indeed in his moaning in pain, and then speaks of his disgust that Caesar is being elevated above other men. Brutus promises to think over what he has said and speak of it later, but refuses to commit himself to any course of action. Caesar returns, and speaks to Antony about his apprehensions concerning Cassius. Brutus and Cassius then pull Casca aside, and the latter tells them that Caesar had been offered the crown three times, and thrice had refused it, though to Casca's mind it appeared he did so very reluctantly. The three agree to meet again and discuss things further. After all leave, Cassius expresses his determination to subvert Brutus to his cause, and plans that night to throw messages through his window telling of the crowd's love for Brutus and fear of Caesar's ambition.

**Act I, scene 3** - One month later, on the eve of the ides of March, Casca and Cicero meet in the street, and the former speaks of portents in heaven and earth that seem to be evil omens. Cicero leaves and Cassius arrives, saying that the Senate will crown Caesar the following day, and affirming that his dagger will never allow such a thing to occur. Casca asserts that he will follow him to the end, and Cassius reveals that other noble Romans are ready to join the conspiracy. The conspirators agree to meet at Pompey's porch, while Cassius and Casca go to try to convince Brutus to join the plot.

**Act II, scene 1** - Before dawn the following morning, we find Brutus in his orchard, unable to sleep, and debating whether or not Caesar's ambition requires his death for the good of Rome. His servant Lucius brings him a note thrown through his window, which begs him to strike for the sake of the people. The conspirators then arrive, Cassius introduces the others to Brutus, and proposes that they swear an oath. Brutus refuses, arguing that, if the cause of freedom is not in itself sufficient, no oath will suffice. They discuss including Cicero in the plot, but Brutus opposes the idea because Cicero will do nothing that he himself has not originated. They then debate whether anyone besides Caesar is to die; Cassius argues that Mark Antony must die as well because his survival would pose a threat to their enterprise, but Brutus insists that butchery would call their integrity into question. They then wonder whether Caesar will come to the Capitol, since he has become superstitious of late, but Decius says that he can flatter him into coming. After the conspirators leave, Brutus' wife Portia enters and asks what is wrong, given his unsettled behavior of late. He claims he is not feeling well, but she knows better, and begs him to tell her what troubles him. He promises to reveal all to her later, and sends her back to bed. Caius Ligurius arrives, and with Brutus' encouragement joins the conspiracy.

**Act II, scene 2** - At Caesar's house, his wife Calpurnia is troubled by dreams of his death and by the prodigies seen around the city. She begs him not to go to the Capitol, and his augurers agree, finding bad omens in the entrails. Calpurnia asks him to remain at home for her sake, and he finally agrees, but then Decius arrives and proposes an alternative interpretation for Calpurnia's dream, appeals to Caesar's pride, and convinces him to go after all. The conspirators then arrive, along with Mark Antony, to escort Caesar to the Capitol.

**Act II, scene 3** - Artemidorus has prepared a paper revealing the conspiracy to Caesar, and intends to give it to him when he passes by that morning.

**Act II, scene 4** - Portia sends Lucius to the Capitol to see if Brutus is well. The Soothsayer comes along and speaks of his fear that some mean Caesar ill.

**Act III, scene 1** - Caesar and the others arrive at the Capitol. Artemidorus tries to give Caesar his letter, but he refuses to read it, instead saving it for later. Metellus Cimber begs pardon for his brother, which Caesar proudly refuses. The other conspirators join in his request, which Caesar rejects, comparing himself to the North Star and the gods of Olympus. Casca strikes first, and the others join him, Brutus last of all. The crowd rises up in panic as the conspirators bathe their hands in Caesar's blood. Mark Antony's servant then arrives and asks if Antony may appear and hear the reasons for the deed. Brutus grants him permission, giving him safe conduct. When Antony appears, he asks them to get it over with and kill him if that is their intention, but Brutus denies any such desire. Antony mourns for Caesar, but shakes the bloody hands of the conspirators. Antony asks permission to speak a funeral oration to the crowd, and Brutus, despite Cassius' misgivings, agrees on the condition that Brutus speak first, and that Antony praise Caesar, but lay no blame on the conspirators. After the others leave and Antony is alone with the body, he vows vengeance for his master's blood. A servant of Octavius arrives to announce his master's coming, but Antony tells him to keep Octavius outside the city until things have settled down.

**Act III, scene 2** - Brutus calms the crowd and tells them the reasons why Caesar's death was necessary. They are satisfied, and cry out for Brutus to be their leader. He retires from the scene, leaving Mark Antony to give his oration, which completely turns the mood of the crowd against the conspirators. He even brings out Caesar's will, asserting that he left his fortune to the people, though he never actually reads the document until the end of his speech. By the time he is done, the mob is ready to mutiny and kill the conspirators. When the mob begins to rage through the city, Brutus, Cassius, and the others flee, while Antony prepares to meet with Octavius and Lepidus to form the Second Triumvirate.

**Act III, scene 3** - The mindless mob encounters Cinna the poet, and because he has the same name as one of the conspirators, murders him.

**Act IV, scene 1** - Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus sit together deciding who is to die in the coming purge as they seize power; each gives up close friends or relatives to satisfy the others. Lepidus leaves to carry a message, and the other two disparage him and agree that he is to be disposed of once he is no longer useful. They then speak of the coming war with the conspirators.

**Act IV, scene 2** - At Brutus' encampment outside Sardis, word comes that Cassius is arriving with his troops. It is obvious that the two no longer fully trust one another.

**Act IV, scene 3** - Cassius and Brutus talk alone inside the latter's tent. Cassius is furious at Brutus for having condemned a friend of his for taking bribes. Brutus says that wrong must be punished, and says he has heard that Cassius himself has been enriching himself with bribes, at which Cassius bristles. Brutus rebukes him for his anger, and Cassius threatens to fight him on the spot. Brutus then accuses him of withholding money needed to pay their soldiers, but Cassius denies having done so. Cassius bares his breast and proffers his dagger, inviting Brutus to strike, but they both calm down and make amends. Brutus then admits that he is distraught because he has received word of his wife's death; Portia, hearing of the growing power of the Triumvirate, went mad and committed suicide. A messenger brings word that the forces of Antony and Octavius are marching toward Philippi. Cassius favors waiting for them outside Sardis, while Brutus argues that they should go forth to meet them at Philippi. Cassius agrees to follow Brutus' plan and leaves to be with his troops. Brutus, unable to sleep, is visited by the ghost of Caesar, who tells him they will meet again at Philippi.

**Act V, scene 1** - As the armies of the conspirators approach the plains of Philippi, Antony and Octavius, though certain of victory, quarrel over whose army will take which position in the field. The commanders meet for a parley, exchange insults, and separate to prepare for battle. Cassius speaks to his servant, asserting that he goes into battle against his will because it involves putting all their eggs into one basket; he also notes that the omens are not propitious. Brutus and Cassius part, realizing that they may do so for the last time.

**Act V, scene 2** - Brutus sends Messala bearing a message to attack the flank guarded by Octavius.

**Act V, scene 3** - Cassius, in another part of the battlefield, worries that Brutus gave the signal to attack too early, leaving his army surrounded by that of Antony. He sends out Titinius, who is apparently captured, then frees his servant Pindarus and orders him to kill him with the sword he used to kill Caesar. Pindarus complies. Titinius returns (he met their own troops) and finds Cassius dead, then commits suicide. Brutus is brought to view the bodies, mourns their deaths, then prepares to fight again.

**Act V, scene 4** - Lucilius surrenders to Antony's army, pretending to be Brutus, but Antony recognizes the ruse.

**Act V, scene 5** - Brutus, knowing that the battle is lost, asks his friends to kill him, but they refuse. Finally Strato agrees to hold the sword while Brutus runs upon it. Octavius and Antony arrive and find Brutus dead. They honor him with the closing words of the play.

## ESSAY QUESTIONS

Discuss the following in a five-paragraph essay:

1. Many critics have suggested that William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* may be viewed as a warm-up for the playwright's greater tragedy, *Hamlet*, written two years later. Support this assertion by locating similar themes, events, or characters that tie the two plays together. How does *Hamlet* show progress in Shakespeare's skill as a playwright when compared to the earlier tragedy?
2. Discuss the oration given by Mark Antony over the body of Caesar in William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. Why is it a model of rhetorical skill? Analyze the persuasive technique in light of the principles you learned in Rhetoric I.
3. Compare and contrast the orations given by Brutus and Mark Antony at Caesar's funeral in William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. Why was the latter more successful? What could Brutus have done to retain the advantage he gained initially?
4. The orations given at Caesar's funeral are not the only examples of people manipulating others by the use of words in William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. Choose three other examples of such manipulation and explain how they contribute to the overall action and themes of the play. What does Scripture say about using words to manipulate others?
5. Discuss the role of the mob in William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. What does Shakespeare believe about the ability of people to govern themselves? Would he be a supporter of democracy? Why or why not? Support your conclusions with specifics from the play.
6. In William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, is Brutus a tragic hero? If so, what is his tragic flaw? If not, why not? Be sure to support your answer with details from the play.
7. Compare and contrast the characters of Portia and Calpurnia in William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. Both clearly love their husbands and wish to protect them from harm, but how do their relationships differ? Which is the more admirable character, and why?
8. Do you believe the assassination of the title character in William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* was justifiable or not? Explain your answer, both in light of the play and in the context of biblical teaching on the subject.
9. In William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, we see conflict among the leaders on both sides after the assassination of Caesar. Why do groups of leaders so often wind up fighting one another? Was Julius Caesar right in suggesting that there can be only one North Star, only one immovable point? Support your answer, both from the play and from Scripture.

10. In William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, we see conflict among the leaders on both sides after the assassination of Caesar. History tells us that, when the Second Triumvirate fractured, Octavius was the victor, while Antony died by his own hand in Egypt. Had the conspirators won the Battle of Philippi, who would have emerged as the ruler of Rome, Brutus or Cassius? Why do you think so? Support your answer with details from the play.
11. Compare and contrast the roles played by the ghosts in William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and *Hamlet*. In what ways do they serve similar functions? With whom do they interact? For what purpose? Which plays a more central role in the plot? Support your conclusions with specifics from the plays.
12. In William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, Brutus and Cassius often disagree on strategy. Who wins these conflicts? Why do you think so? Would the play have ended differently had the alternative plans been used? To what extent?
13. Some have suggested that the major theme of William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* could be taken from Proverbs 16:18 - "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall." To what extent is this an accurate assessment of the message of the play? Use specific incidents and quotations from the play to support your conclusions.
14. Discuss the extent to which Mark Antony in William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* is a master politician. Assess both his actions and his words in answering the question. Are these qualities in him effective? Are they admirable? Why or why not?
15. Many events in William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* involve characters setting aside their private relationships for what they view as the public good. Choose three examples of this, then discuss the wisdom of such choices. To what extent is it desirable, or even possible, for a person to separate his private and public lives?
16. In William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, Mark Antony describes Brutus as an "honorable man" and as "the noblest Roman of them all." Are these descriptions accurate? Why or why not? Support your conclusions with specifics from the play.
17. Discuss the relationship between fate and free will in William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. Are the omens in the play signs of what will come to pass or warnings of what may occur? Which characters believe in free will which assign significance to fate? To what extent are Shakespeare's thoughts on this subject parallel to biblical treatments of divine sovereignty and human responsibility?
18. Discuss the ideas concerning the nature of good government contained in William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. What form of government does Shakespeare seem to advocate? What does he see as characteristics of a good ruler? Support your conclusions with specifics from the play.

19. Discuss the ways in which Octavius shows himself to be a worthy successor to Caesar in William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. What characteristics do the two men have in common? What indicators do you see that Octavius will emerge as the absolute ruler of Rome following the years of chaos under the Second Triumvirate?
20. Discuss the role of friendship in William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. Choose three sets of friends (one or more people may overlap in the combinations you choose) and discuss the significance of their relationships. Are their friendships real, or more matters of political convenience? What effects do these friendships have on the action and themes of the play?
21. James 1:7 speaks of a "double-minded man, unstable in all he does." In William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, some characters are steadfast to the point of stubbornness and inflexibility, while others are quite willing to change with the winds of public opinion. Choose three characters who fit into one or the other of these categories. Are their character traits (flexibility versus inflexibility) wise? Are they admirable? Support your answers from the script and from Scripture.
22. One critic has suggested that Brutus in William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* displays a common flaw in that "those who mean well themselves think well of others." Is this true of Brutus? Is it a flaw or an admirable trait? Support your conclusions from the play and from Scripture.
23. Suicide plays a significant role in William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. Choose three characters who either commit or attempt to commit suicide and discuss the attitude Shakespeare takes toward their action. Are they seen as noble figures because they take their own lives? as cowards or weaklings? Evaluate their actions using details from the play and from the Bible.
24. William Shakespeare's Roman plays *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* both contain soothsayers. Compare and contrast the roles of these characters in the two plays. What do these similarities and differences convey about the themes and tones of the two works of literature? Be sure to do more than talk about the few scenes in which the soothsayers actually appear.
25. Ancient Stoics viewed suicide as a noble denouement to one's life, while Christians viewed it as a mortal sin. Compare and contrast these views of suicide as they appear in Shakespeare's pagan plays, such as *King Lear* and *Julius Caesar*, and his Christian plays, such as *Hamlet* and *Othello*.
26. In Act II, scene 3 of William Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, two tribunes turn the crowd against the title character after he has won their approval. The demagoguery in the scene is very similar to that in which Mark Antony engages in Act III, scene 2 of the same playwright's *Julius Caesar*. Compare and contrast the two encounters, considering the arguments advanced by the speakers, the subtlety with which the crowds are manipulated, and the ways in which the crowds respond.