*Reading from Tacitus – regarded by many as one of the great Roman historians- on the fire of Rome, which occurred in July AD 64.*

But all human efforts, all the lavish gifts of the emperor, and the propitiations of the gods, did not banish the sinister belief that the conflagration was the result of an order. Consequently, to get rid of the report, [Nero](https://www.livius.org/articles/person/nero/) fastened the guilt and inflicted the most exquisite tortures on a class hated for their abominations, called "Christians" by the populace.

Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of [Tiberius](https://www.livius.org/articles/person/tiberius/) at the hands of one of our [procurators](https://www.livius.org/articles/concept/procurator/), [Pontius Pilate](https://www.livius.org/articles/person/pontius-pilate/), and a most mischievous superstition, thus checked for the moment, again broke out not only in [Judaea](https://www.livius.org/articles/place/judaea/), the first source of the evil, but even in Rome, where all things hideous and shameful from every part of the world find their centre and become popular.

Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty; then, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred against mankind. Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired.