

*Simply Charlotte Mason presents*

**CONVERSATIONS ON CHARACTER**

**PLUTARCH'S**  
**LIFE OF ALEXANDER**



*by Larry Hunt*

*“...it is my duty to dwell especially upon those actions which reveal the workings of my heroes’ minds, and from these to construct the portraits of their respective lives.” —Plutarch*

Plutarch's Lives is a wealth of character studies, written in ancient times by a master biographer who wanted his readers to understand who the Greek and Romans were as people. By focusing on stories that show what the hero valued rather than on his accomplishments, Plutarch shines a spotlight on the character qualities of the men of ancient times.

*Conversations on Character* makes Plutarch accessible for students in fourth grade and up, providing interesting readings, helpful summaries of each section, and discussion questions that guide your student to consider the character of each hero studied. Everything you need is in this guide. The full reading from Plutarch is included, along with questions and narration prompts to spark conversations around each reading. The included companion videos guide your student with a reading of the full text and starting thoughts for the discussion questions.

Give your student the opportunity to grow in understanding character qualities with *Conversations on Character*!

*Simply*  
*Charlotte Mason*

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**CONVERSATIONS ON CHARACTER**

**PLUTARCH'S**  
Life of Alexander

*by Larry Hunt*

Conversations on Character: Plutarch's Life of Alexander  
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[simplycharlottomason.com](http://simplycharlottomason.com)

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Where applicable, historical quotes have been updated to reflect modern spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.

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## PREFACE: WHO WAS PLUTARCH?

Usually, I love a book for its own sake. Something about its characters, plot, and setting captures my imagination and draws me in. But every once in a while, I love a book for the sake of its author as well. For instance, when I read a book by C. S. Lewis or George MacDonald, I feel like I am in the company of a friend and mentor, someone I could trust with my own children.

I feel the same way about Plutarch, and I am not alone. People have loved Plutarch for nearly 2,000 years. Indeed, he is one of the most beloved authors in the entire canon of literature, not merely because of his excellent work as a historian and philosopher, but because readers sense that he was a good man with a genuine desire to improve his own soul and theirs.

We know relatively little about the life of the man himself, which is ironic, given that he is famous for writing biographies. He was born around 45 A.D. in Chaeronea, a small Greek city in the Boeotian plain. As a young man, he studied philosophy in Athens and distinguished himself in this discipline for the rest of his life. He even headed his own school in Chaeronea where he taught philosophy.

Indeed, it was his work as a philosopher, teacher, and writer that made him quite popular in Rome, where he was invited to give a series of lectures on philosophical topics. While there, he traveled around Italy, sight-seeing and gathering knowledge

about the famous Romans who would later appear in his greatest work: *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans*.

Plutarch also made a trip to Alexandria, Egypt, which was the intellectual center of the world in his lifetime. The wisdom of Egypt had long fascinated the ancient Greeks, and Plutarch must have been thrilled to explore the wonders of that land.

In spite of these travels, however, and the lure of celebrity, Plutarch was attached to his homeland. He chose to spend most of his life in the little town of his birth, joyfully devoting his active mind to family life, teaching, and civic duty. As a storyteller and historian, he loved the tales of adventure that he chronicled in his biographies, but as a philosopher, he understood that one's life does not need to be epic in order to be noble. He believed that a simple but virtuous life, a life crowned by love, reason, self-control, and humility, is far nobler than that of many a famous king.

In this series, we will be studying the biographies he wrote, known collectively as *The Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans* or sometimes, simply, Plutarch's *Lives*. Plutarch himself called the collection *Parallel Lives* because he intended to present his biographies in pairs, one Greek and one Roman. He selected the pairs based on similarities of personality or circumstance. For instance, he paired Theseus, the founder-hero of Athens, with Romulus, legendary founder of Rome. Pairing them like this naturally invites a comparison of the two lives, which Plutarch often did in a concluding section. In these comparisons, Plutarch sifts the best qualities of each person by comparing and contrasting one with the other in the ways that each dealt with similar challenges.

And this gives us some insight into the true purpose of Plutarch's *Lives*.



Although his *Lives* is a useful source of historical knowledge, Plutarch made a very clear distinction between the purpose of his book and that of strict history.

“I am writing biography, not history; and often a man’s most brilliant actions prove nothing as to his true character, while some trifling incident, some casual remark or jest, will throw more light upon what manner of man he was than the bloodiest battle, the greatest array of armies, or the most important siege. Therefore, just as portrait painters pay most attention to those peculiarities of the face and eyes, in which the likeness consists, and care but little for the rest of the figure, so it is my duty to dwell especially upon those actions which reveal the workings of my heroes’ minds, and from these to construct the portraits of their respective lives, leaving their battles and their great deeds to be recorded by others.”

Plutarch, *Life of Alexander*

So the essential aim of history is to record the momentous events of the past for their own sake. Plutarch’s aim, however, was to present the moral qualities of those who were responsible for such great events, not primarily for their historical value but for their potential to inspire him and his readers to live a good, honorable, and satisfying life. He put it best when he wrote,

“It was for the sake of others that I first started to write biographies, but I soon began to dwell upon and delight in them for myself, endeavoring to the best of my ability to regulate my own life by them, and to mirror the virtues I saw in these great people. By the study of their biographies, we receive each person as a guest into our minds. . . and so train ourselves by constantly dwelling upon the memorials of the great and good, that should anything base or vicious be placed in our way by the society into which we are necessarily thrown, we reject it and expel it from

our thoughts, by fixing them calmly and happily on what is noble.”

Plutarch, *Life of Timoleon*

This perfectly describes my experience of reading Plutarch’s *Lives*, and I hope it will describe yours as well. Plutarch was a skilled storyteller, and his subjects led fascinating lives. As I read about these remarkable people, I feel as though I am living with them, sharing in their adventures, and fixing my thoughts “calmly and happily on what is noble.”

But there is one noble life in particular that inspires me whenever I read these biographies, a simple life that does not appear in the collection as such but which gives the whole work its spirit and beauty, and that is the life of its author, who speaks to me over centuries of time to show me how to live well.

## A NOTE ABOUT THE TEXT AND TRANSLATION

The translation I have selected for these study guides is that of Aubrey Stewart and George Long, both Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge. Initially, I considered using John Dryden’s translation since I first grew to love Plutarch in that translation. I also considered using Thomas North’s translation since it has a good reputation and was the version that Shakespeare drew upon for the plays *Coriolanus*, *Julius Caesar*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*, but in the end I believe that Stewart and Long’s is the best choice.

For one thing, the translations of North (1579) and Dryden (1683) contain many old-fashioned words, making them less accessible to the modern reader. Also, these two are not as accurate as Stewart and Long’s translation. North’s is a translation of Amyot’s French translation, so it is a translation of a translation. The translation called by Dryden’s name was

in fact the work of a committee, whose members had varying degrees of skill, so while it is “translated from the Greek,” Dryden’s translation is widely acknowledged to be inferior to North’s.

Stewart and Long were both excellent scholars. Their translation is from the original Greek, and its relatively modern (1892) vocabulary is more accessible.

For the most part, the text appears entire and in its original order, but on rare occasions, I may take the liberty of rearranging a few sections for thematic reasons. Also, in a very few places, I have omitted content that may not be appropriate for younger readers. Where I have changed the text in these ways, I have noted the fact and summarized the omitted sections. Where applicable, spelling and punctuation have been updated to modern conventions.

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book can be used on its own or with my video lectures. You can go through all of the readings at whatever pace you like. However, if you decide to skip some, I suggest that you read my summaries of the omitted readings in order to provide continuity.

Each reading is set up in the following way: a preliminary summary, the text of the reading, a narration prompt, and discussion questions at the end.

### Summaries

I have written a summary at the beginning of each reading in case the student (or parent) would like to get the essence of the reading ahead of time.

## Readings and Narration

I read each of these sections in my videos before I talk about the reading itself. Each reading is around three pages long on average. If you are using my video, you could press pause during the reading, or immediately afterward, to allow the student to narrate what he or she remembers. (See the What is Narration section below.) Once this is done to your satisfaction, you could either return to the video to hear my thoughts on the reading and/or conduct your own discussion with the students. The book provides questions after each reading to help facilitate your own discussions.

## Discussion Questions

I do not intend for these sections to be like quizzes over the reading. I only mean for them to invite students to think more deeply about aspects of the reading that seem to be the most important or interesting. Students should not feel bad if they do not know the answers. (Sometimes, the answers are not even directly given in the reading). I will address each of these discussion questions in the video after I read the text.

## Companion Videos

Companion videos are available for each installment of the Conversations on Character: Plutarch series and include summaries, a live reading of the text, and the discussion questions. Due to the nature of the language in the translation, it is highly recommended to use the video companion while following along with the text. If you have any questions about accessing the videos through your SCM account, send an email to [contact@simplycharlottemason.com](mailto:contact@simplycharlottemason.com).

## Maps



Your purchase of this book includes access to maps that will familiarize students with the geography of the stories as well as the logistics

of particular events (such as battles). Use the QR code or this short url to access and download the maps: [simplycm.com/plutarchs-alexander-maps](http://simplycm.com/plutarchs-alexander-maps).

## WHAT IS NARRATION?

At the end of each of my readings, you are invited to narrate what you heard, so it is important to understand what narration is.

*Narration* and *intentional reading* are skills that Charlotte Mason emphasized, and I think they are very valuable skills, particularly these days when our ability to focus on a text deeply has been weakened by the hundreds of shiny promises of entertainment that flash around us constantly.

In order to narrate, you must first read or listen to a reading closely. Here are a few quotations from Charlotte Mason herself that will help get the idea across.

This habit should be begun early; so soon as the child can read at all, he should read for himself, and to himself, history, legends, fairy tales, and other suitable matter. He should be trained from the first to think that one reading of any lesson is enough to enable him to narrate what he has read, and will thus get the habit of slow, careful reading, intelligent even when it is silent, because he reads with an eye to the full meaning of every clause.

*Home Education*, p. 227

The sort of focus that Charlotte Mason is describing here can be developed while reading on your own or while listening to someone else read. (In Plutarch's lifetime, literature was copied out by hand, which made manuscripts rare. As a consequence, you would probably have *heard* his stories read aloud to you rather than read them yourself, so when you listen to me read aloud, not only will you be developing your ability to focus, you will also be participating in a very ancient tradition.)

After an intentional reading, you have prepared yourself to narrate. When you narrate, you take on the role of storyteller, retelling the events of the story you just heard. Here is how Charlotte Mason describes the practice.

It is most interesting to hear children of seven or eight go through a long story without missing a detail, putting every event in its right order. These narrations are never a slavish reproduction of the original. A child's individuality plays about what he enjoys, and the story comes from his lips, not precisely as the author tells it, but with a certain spirit and colouring which express the narrator. By the way, it is very important that children should be allowed to narrate in their own way, and should not be pulled up or helped with words and expressions from the text. A narration should be original as it comes from the child—that is, his own mind should have acted upon the matter it has received. Narrations which are mere feats of memory are quite valueless.

*Home Education*, p. 289

She has younger students in mind here simply because the skills of close reading (or listening) and narration should be developed early in one's life, not because they have no value for older students.

So if you are using my videos with this study guide, and you want to try your hand at narration, simply pause the video after the reading and narrate. You can do this in whatever way works best: to yourself or someone else, orally, or in writing. Also, if the reading is too long, you could pause the video and narrate once or twice before the end.

# GENERAL INTRODUCTION

## WHO WAS ALEXANDER THE GREAT?

Plutarch assumed that his readers would have a certain amount of knowledge about Alexander and his world prior to reading his life of Alexander, knowledge which may not be common to the average modern reader. This section provides you with a little bit of background information that will help put Plutarch's Life of Alexander in context.

Alexander was a Macedonian. Macedonia was a kingdom in northern Greece. Alexander's father, King Philip, united most of Greece under his rule, and Alexander inherited this kingdom at the age of 20, after his father was assassinated. Before his death, Philip had been planning to lead Greece in a war against Persia, the ancient enemy of the Greeks, and Alexander took up this idea after his father died, marching his Greek army eastward to conquer the greatest empire of that age and replace it with an even greater Greek empire.

The reason Greece and Persia were such mortal enemies traces back to the fact that the Persians had invaded Greece with a massive army many years earlier under the Persian king, Xerxes. The Greeks managed to defend their homeland through a combination of heroic sacrifice and military strategy, but the memory of this offense lingered in their minds, and Alexander tapped into that memory to motivate the Greeks in their war against Persia.

## ALEXANDER THE GREAT AND THE BIBLE

As you will see in his biography, Alexander was intensely interested in oracles and prophecies about himself. You may be surprised to learn that the Bible also contains prophecies about Alexander and his war with Persia. The prophecies are in the book of Daniel.

We do not know the exact dates of Daniel's birth and death, but the Bible calls him a boy when he was carried into Babylon as a captive (in 605 B.C.), and he lived at least as late as 534 B.C. That means he lived two centuries before Alexander the Great was born in 356 B.C., and yet Daniel makes some astonishingly accurate prophecies about the Greek conqueror of Persia.

In the eighth chapter of the book, Daniel wrote down a vision he had of a powerful ram charging westward. He then wrote that he saw a mighty goat with a large horn between its eyes charging eastward to fight the ram. The goat attacked the ram furiously, threw it down, and trampled it. After this, the goat became very great, but then its single large horn broke off and was replaced by four others. Daniel goes on to say that the angel Gabriel told him what this dream meant. The ram signified Persia, the goat signified Greece, and the single horn represented "the first king" of the Greek empire, which was Alexander the Great. Gabriel also said that the four horns that replaced the single large horn represented four lesser kingdoms that would grow out of the great one founded by Alexander, and this is precisely what happened: after the death of Alexander, his huge empire broke up into four kingdoms, each ruled by a general who had served under him.

Plutarch does not mention these biblical prophecies about Alexander, but the Jewish historian Josephus does. Josephus tells us that when Alexander came to Jerusalem, the priests showed him this prophecy in Daniel. As you can imagine, he was quite pleased with its prediction and treated the Jewish people very kindly.



Alexander is connected to the Bible in another way as well. His empire stretched from Greece to India, spreading Greek language and culture throughout the ancient Near East. This made Greek a language that was common to all of these lands, providing a way for people who spoke different native languages to communicate with each other. Later, when the apostles wrote the documents that would become the New Testament, they naturally wrote in Greek.

# LIFE OF ALEXANDER

## READING 1 ---

### SUMMARY

Plutarch lets the reader know that he is going to be comparing the life of Alexander the Great with that of Julius Caesar. Before he begins, however, he explains the difference between history and his biographies: history focuses on the details of epic events, whereas his biographies portray the moral qualities of the people behind those epic events.

He then moves on to Alexander's childhood, recording some of the signs and portents that the young Macedonian was destined to be an invincible conqueror. A description of Alexander's physical appearance and general character follows.

### FROM PLUTARCH

*Use the video for reading 1 to guide you through the following text:*

In writing the Lives of Alexander the Great and of Cæsar the conqueror of Pompeius, which are contained in this book, I have before me such an abundance of materials, that I shall make no other preface than to beg the reader, if he finds any

of their famous exploits recorded imperfectly, and with large excisions, not to regard this as a fault. I am writing biography, not history; and often a man's most brilliant actions prove nothing as to his true character, while some trifling incident, some casual remark or jest, will throw more light upon what manner of man he was than the bloodiest battle, the greatest array of armies, or the most important siege. Therefore, just as portrait painters pay most attention to those peculiarities of the face and eyes, in which the likeness consists, and care but little for the rest of the figure, so it is my duty to dwell especially upon those actions which reveal the workings of my heroes' minds, and from these to construct the portraits of their respective lives, leaving their battles and their great deeds to be recorded by others.<sup>1</sup>

Alexander was born on the sixth day of the month Hekatombæon, which the Macedonians call Lous, the same day on which the temple of Artemis at Ephesus was burned. This coincidence inspired Hegesias of Magnesia to construct a ponderous joke, dull enough to have put out the fire, which was, that it was no wonder that the temple of Artemis was burned, since she was away from it, attending to the birth of Alexander. All the Persian magi who were in Ephesus at the time imagined that the destruction of the temple was but the forerunner of a greater disaster, and ran through the city beating their faces and shouting that on that day was born the destroyer of Asia. Philip, who had just captured the city of Potidæa, received at that time three messengers. The first announced that the Illyrians had been severely defeated by Parmenio; the second that his racehorse had won a victory at Olympia, and the third, that Alexander was born. As one may well believe, he was delighted at such good news and was yet more overjoyed when the soothsayers told him that his son, whose birth coincided with three victories, would surely prove invincible.

His personal appearance is best shown by the statues of Lysippus, the only artist whom he allowed to represent him; in whose works we can clearly trace that slight droop of his

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1. Some stories of Philip's relationship with Olympias and her religious practices have been omitted.

head towards the left, and that keen glance of his eyes which formed his chief characteristics, and which were afterwards imitated by his friends and successors.

Apelles, in his celebrated picture of Alexander wielding a thunderbolt, has not exactly copied the fresh tint of his flesh, but has made it darker and swarthier than it was, for we are told that his skin was remarkably fair, inclining to red about the face and breast. We learn from the memoirs of Aristoxenes that his body diffused a rich perfume, which scented his clothes, and that his breath was remarkably sweet. This was possibly caused by the hot and fiery constitution of his body; for sweet scents are produced, according to Theophrastus, by heat acting upon moisture. For this reason the hottest and driest regions of the earth produce the most aromatic perfumes, because the sun dries up that moisture which causes most substances to decay.

Alexander's warm temperament of body seems to have rendered him fond of drinking and fiery in disposition. As a youth he showed great power of self-control by abstaining from all sensual pleasures in spite of his vehement and passionate nature; while his intense desire for fame rendered him serious and high-minded beyond his years.

For many kinds of glory, however, Alexander cared little, unlike his father Philip, who prided himself on his oratorical powers, and used to record his victories in the chariot races at Olympia upon his coins. Indeed, when Alexander's friends, to try him, asked him whether he would contend in the foot race at Olympia, for he was a remarkably swift runner, he answered, "Yes, if I have kings to contend with." He seems to have been altogether indifferent to athletic exercises; for though he gave more prizes than anyone else to be contended for by dramatists, flute players, harp players, and even by rhapsodists, and though he delighted in all manner of hunting and cudgel playing, he never seems to have taken any interest in the contests of boxing or the pankratium. When ambassadors from the King of Persia arrived in Macedonia, Philip was absent, and Alexander entertained them. His engaging manners greatly charmed them, and he became their intimate friend. He never put any childish questions to them,

but made many enquiries about the length of the journey from the sea coast to the interior of Persia, about the roads which led thither, about the king, whether he was experienced in war or not, and about the resources and military strength of the Persian Empire, so that the ambassadors were filled with admiration, and declared that the boasted subtlety of Philip was nothing in comparison with the intellectual vigor and enlarged views of his son. Whenever he heard of Philip's having taken some city or won some famous victory, he used to look unhappy at the news, and would say to his friends, "Boys, my father will forestall us in everything; he will leave no great exploits for you and me to achieve." Indeed, he cared nothing for pleasure or wealth, but only for honor and glory; and he imagined that the more territory he inherited from his father, the less would be left for him to conquer. He feared that his father's conquests would be so complete, as to leave him no more battles to fight, and he wished to succeed, not to a wealthy and luxurious, but to a military empire, at the head of which he might gratify his desire for war and adventure.

## NARRATION

Tell about Alexander's physical appearance and general character.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Plutarch says his biographies are more like portraits than depictions of a full body. What do you think he means by that?
2. Plutarch's sense of humor came through in the section about the temple of Artemis. Did you notice it?
3. Which part of Plutarch's description of Alexander's *physical appearance* stood out to you the most? Why?
4. Which part of his description of Alexander's *character* stood out to you the most? Why?

## READING 10

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### SUMMARY

Rather than driving farther east toward the heart of the Persian Empire, Alexander takes his army south in order to secure the coastline first. He does this with remarkable success, even capturing the very well-defended city of Tyre. While he is besieging that city, he leads an expedition against the Arabic tribes inland. During that expedition, he bravely protects his old servant, Lysimachus.

### FROM PLUTARCH

*Use the video for reading 10 to guide you through the following text:*

After the Battle of Issus, (see reading 8) he sent troops to Damascus, and captured all the treasure, the baggage, and the women and children of the Persian army. Those who chiefly benefited by this were the Thessalian cavalry, who had distinguished themselves in the battle and had been purposely chosen for this service by Alexander as a reward for their bravery—yet all the camp was filled with riches, so great was the mass of plunder. Then did the Macedonians get their first taste of gold and silver, of Persian luxury and of Persian women, and after this, like hounds opening upon a scent, they eagerly pressed forward on the track of the wealthy Persians. Alexander, however, thought it best, before proceeding further, to complete the conquest of the sea coast. Cyprus was at once surrendered to him by its local kings, as was all Phœnicia, except Tyre. He besieged Tyre for seven months with great mounds and siege artillery on the land side, while a fleet of 200 triremes watched it by sea. During the seventh month of the siege, he dreamed that Herakles greeted him in a friendly manner from the walls of Tyre and called upon him to come in. Many of the Tyrians also dreamed that Apollo appeared to them and said that he was

going to Alexander, since what was being done in the city of Tyre did not please him. The Tyrians, upon this, treated the god as though he were a man caught in the act of deserting to Alexander, for they tied cords round his statue, nailed it down to its base, and called him Alexandristes, or follower of Alexander. Alexander now dreamed another dream—that a satyr appeared to him at a distance, and sported with him, but when he endeavored to catch him, ran away, and that at length, after much trouble, he caught him. This was very plausibly explained by the prophets to mean “Sa Tyros”—“Tyre shall be thine,” dividing the Greek word Satyros into two parts. A well is shown at the present day near which Alexander saw the satyr in his dream.

During the siege, Alexander made an expedition against the neighboring Arab tribes, in which he fell into great danger through his old tutor Lysimachus, who insisted on accompanying him, declaring that he was no older and no less brave than Phoenix when he followed Achilles to Troy. When they reached the mountains, they were forced to leave their horses and march on foot. The rest proceeded on their way, but Lysimachus could not keep up, although night was coming on and the enemy were near. Alexander would not leave him, but encouraged him and helped him along until he became separated from his army and found himself almost alone. It was now dark and bitterly cold. The country where they were was very rugged and mountainous and in the distance appeared many scattered watch fires of the enemy.

Alexander, accustomed to rouse the disheartened Macedonians by his own personal exertions, and trusting to his swiftness of foot, ran up to the nearest fire, struck down with his sword two men who were watching beside it and brought a burning firebrand back to his own party. They now made up an enormous fire, which terrified some of the enemy so much that they retreated, while others who had intended to attack them halted and forbore to do so, thus enabling them to pass the night in safety.

The siege of Tyre came to an end in the following manner. The greater part of Alexander’s troops were resting from their labors, but in order to occupy the attention of the enemy,

he led a few men up to the city walls, while Aristander, the soothsayer, offered sacrifice. When he saw the victims, he boldly informed all who were present that during the current month, Tyre would be taken. All who heard him laughed him to scorn, as that day was the last of the month, but Alexander, seeing him at his wits' end, being always eager to support the credit of prophecies, gave orders that that day should not be reckoned as the 30th of the month, but as the 23rd. After this he bade the trumpets sound and assaulted the walls much more vigorously than he had originally intended. The attack succeeded, and as the rest of the army would no longer stay behind in the camp but rushed to take their share in the assault, the Tyrians were overpowered and their city taken on that very day.

Afterwards, while Alexander was besieging Gaza, the largest city in Syria, a clod of earth was dropped upon his shoulder by a bird, which afterwards alighted upon one of the military engines and became entangled in the network of ropes by which it was worked. This portent also was truly explained by Aristander, for the place was taken and Alexander was wounded in the shoulder.

He sent many of the spoils to Olympias, Kleopatra, and others of his friends and sent his tutor Leonidas 500 talents weight of frankincense and 100 talents of myrrh to remind him of what he had said when a child. Leonidas once, when sacrificing, reproved Alexander for taking incense by handfuls to throw upon the victim when it was burning on the altar. "When," he said, "you have conquered the country from which incense comes, Alexander, then you may make such rich offerings as these, but at present you must use what we have sparingly." Alexander now wrote to him, "We have sent you abundance of frankincense and myrrh, that you may no longer treat the gods so stingily."

## NARRATION

Tell about the siege of Tyre.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Compare the way Alexander reacts to Aristander the Soothsayer's prophecy with the way he treated the oracle of Delphi and the superstition about fighting during the month of Daisius (reading 5). Do his reactions in each of these situations have anything in common?
2. What do you think Alexander's view of prophecies and omens was at this point in his life?
3. From what you have read so far, can you tell what Plutarch's own view of prophecies and omens was?
4. What does it say about Alexander's character that he personally stayed behind with his former servant when the older man could not keep up with the soldiers?

## READING 11

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### SUMMARY

Alexander continues to conquer southward. Once he captures Egypt, he builds a great city there and names it after himself: Alexandria. After this, he makes a dangerous journey through the desert to visit the shrine and oracle of the Egyptian god, Ammon.

### FROM PLUTARCH

*Use the video for reading 11 to guide you through the following text:*

When a certain casket was brought to him, which appeared to be the most valuable of all the treasures taken from Darius, he asked his friends what they thought he ought to keep in it as his own most precious possession.

## NAMES MENTIONED

**Achilles**, the greatest warrior of Homer's *Iliad*. Alexander saw himself as a kind of Achilles.

**Anaxarchus**, a philosopher who eased Alexander's sorrow over murdering his friend, Kleitus.

**Antipater**, a senior general who served under Alexander's father. Alexander left him to rule Macedonia and Greece for him while he went to war against Persia.

**Aristander**, Alexander's personal seer.

**Aristotle**, a famous Greek philosopher who tutored Alexander.

**Darius**, the king of Persia whom Alexander defeated.

**Diogenes**, a philosopher who famously asked Alexander to stop shading him from the sun.

**Hephæstion**, the friend Alexander loved the most.

**Iolas**, a son of Antipater, and Alexander's chief cup-bearer. He was suspected of poisoning Alexander.

**Kassander**, a son of Antipater who eventually became king of Macedonia and Greece.

**Kleopatra**, daughter of Olympias and sister to Alexander.

**Kraterus**, one of Alexander's generals, and the friend he most respected.

**Leonidas**, the main person charged with the care and education of the young Alexander.

**Lysimachus**, a beloved servant who attended to the young Alexander.