



WHO WAS MARCUS AURELIUS?

Marcus Aurelius was a Roman Emperor who ruled from 161-180 AD. He is remembered not only as a ruler but also as a philosopher whose writings have inspired people for centuries. While we may not agree with everything he believed, we can still learn from his wisdom and the questions he asked about life, character, and leadership.

During Marcus' reign, the Roman empire was enormous, and the emperor had the heavy responsibility of protecting the people and keeping peace throughout the empire. Threats of war were constant, and Marcus often had to lead his armies far from home. Unlike many rulers, Marcus tried to lead with wisdom, self-control, and virtue. He wasn't perfect, but he was always trying to become a better person and leader.

While away at war, Marcus wrote personal reflections in a journal known as *Meditations*. He wrote during difficult times. He was in the midst of battles. He was missing home. He had challenges at times with inexperienced soldiers and watching many suffer from a deadly plague. He knew he himself could die at any time. In the middle of these struggles, he wrote reminders to himself about courage, perseverance, discipline, and doing what's right.

Marcus never intended for his journal to be published but, after his death, *Meditations* became one of the most famous works of philosophy in history. His reflections still challenge readers today to think deeply about their choices, character, and the kind of person they want to become.

