

FALL OF ROME

Chapter 7 Section 5
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THE DECLINE OF THE EMPIRE

- Constantine --- emperor of Rome from 312 to 337
 - Constantine is known for strongly encouraging the spread of Christianity throughout the Roman Empire
- The Christian Church provided comfort and authority at a time when the mighty Roman Empire was on the edge of disaster.
- Decline of the Empire
 - The decline began in 180
 - Commodus came to power
 - Not a wise ruler, Loved bloodshed of the gladiators
 - Bribed the army to support him

THE DECLINE OF THE EMPIRE

- Bad Emperors
 - Emperors were successful generals and not politicians
 - They stole money from the treasury
 - Used the money to make themselves rich
 - To bribe the soldiers
 - Government and the economy lost stability
 - The senate lost power
 - Would be rulers gained the throne by violence
 - Between 180 to 284, Rome had 29 emperors
 - Most were assassinated

THE DECLINE OF THE EMPIRE

- Mercenary Armies
 - At one time the Roman army had been made up of citizen soldiers willing to defend their land.
 - Later they used Mercenaries.
 - Foreign soldiers who served for pay\Mercenaries are motivated by money, not by loyalty to any cause
 - Often they would change sides if it is to their personal advantage.
- The Size of the Empire
 - The roman empire had grown too big to be ruled from one place.
 - The Roman army now had to spend its time defending the empire instead of extending its authority into new areas
 - The loss of territories and the inability to gain new ones caused the empire to shrink.

THE DECLINE OF THE EMPIRE

- Serious Economic Problems
 - Without conquering new lands, there were no new sources of wealth available.
 - The empire struggled to pay its army, which would refuse to fight
 - To raise money they increased taxes.
 - Unemployment when up drastically.
 - Food was in short supply and prices went up
 - To pay for food the government produced more coins.
 - Value of the coins depended on the amount of silver in them.
 - The government had very little silver and put less and less into the coins, which resulted in inflation.
 - An economic situation in which there is more money, but the money has less value.
 - Roman coin soon became worthless.

THE DECLINE OF THE EMPIRE

- Efforts to stop the Decline
- Diocletian tried to stop the decline
 - He enlarged the army and built new forts at the borders.
 - He improved the system of collecting taxes, which brought in more money to pay the army.
 - He divided the empire into two parts to make it easier to control.
 - He ruled the wealthier east, and he appointed a co-emperor who ruled over the west.
- Constantine becomes emperor 312.
 - He believed the Christian God helped his army win the battle for the control of Rome.
 - Constantine proclaimed freedom of worship for people in the empire.
 - Rome would no longer persecute the Christians.
 - Christianity soon became the official religion of the Roman Empire
 - Constantine worked to strengthen the Christian church.
 - He moved his capital to the city of Byzantium in present day Turkey and renamed the city Constantinople (Istanbul)
 - The power of the empire was now firmly in the east.
- Romans accept Christianity

THE DECLINE OF THE EMPIRE

- The defeat of Rome
 - Northern invader swept across the Rome's borders after the death of Constantine.
 - The invaders were called the Germanic tribes (Romans called them barbarians).
 - In 410 a Germanic tribe called the Visigoths captured and looted Rome
 - 455 the Vandals took Rome
 - Last Roman emperor was 14 year old Romulus Augustulus.
 - 476 a German general seized control of Rome and sent the boy emperor back to southern Italy. No emperor ruled over Rome again.
 - While the Western Roman empire fell the Eastern Roman empire remained strong with its capital of Constantinople. It would become the Byzantine Empire and last for another 1000 years.