

TURNING POINTS IN CHRISTIAN HISTORY: Learning to spot key moments/movements
#4 The Fall of the Roman Empire (476AD) Paul E. Engle 2022

I. THE MYTHICAL BEGINNINGS OF ROME IN 753 BC

- A. Myth that spread orally: Romulus and Remus were twin sons of the war god Mars and a human princess.
- B. What did Romulus do? _____

II. IT BEGAN AS A KINGDOM RULED BY ETRUSCAN KINGS (753 BC - 509BC)

In 509 BC an uprising took place against the last king. Legend that Lucretia was violated by the king's son. People arose against king. This marked the end of monarchy and the beginning of a **republic** with a constitution.

III. THE ERA OF THE REPUBLIC (509 BC to 27 BC)

- A. The patricians created a plebeian magistracy. Power struggles followed between the patricians and plebeians. Armed skirmishes came close to civil war. Corruption problem.
- B. As the republic expanded, it was ruled by a group of men who were unable to control the threat from victorious regional military commanders. The republic grew unstable. Roman Civil Wars resulted in more division. All this set the stage for Julius Caesar.

IV. THE ROMAN EMPIRE (27BC -476 AD)

A. After the 2nd Civil War the republic turned into an empire. Octavian became Emperor Augustus who gained control over the military--a transition back to one-man rule.

B. **Julius Caesar** was perhaps the most famous Emperor. After his assassination on the Ides of March other rulers followed: (many of these overlap with the time of the NT)

31 or 27 B.C. -- 14 A.D. Augustus

14 – 37 AD Tiberius

37 - 41 AD Caligula

41 - 54 AD Claudius

54 – 68 AD **Nero** --who murdered his rival, his mother, many senators, and others.

* In July 64 AD what destroyed 50-70% of the city? _____

* Part of this tradition suggests that Nero beheaded _____

* How did Nero die? _____

C. The rule of **Constantine** (306-377 AD)

III. THE FALL OF ROME

A. In spite of this sign of hope with the reign of Constantine, and the growth of Christians, the empire continued to decline. Who wrote The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (1776-88)? _____ *"It seems that all empires reached an apogee from which the decline is steady and often almost unnoticed by the people at the centre of the fall."*

B. Several **internal factors** contributed to their decline:

1. Rome held an arrogant view that _____

2. Corruption in _____.
3. Vespian, who followed Nero, ordered the construction of the _____. It was symptomatic of the death of a culture.
4. The distant provinces outside of Rome began to spin out of control by 271 AD. In less than 250 years things began to fall apart. The Goths were breaching the frontiers.

C. **External factors** in the decline of Rome:

1. On August 26, 410 _____, who was leader of the Goths, attacked Rome with his armies. This sack of Rome sent shock waves. The capitol of the great Empire had fallen. This came after 900 years of being a strong, impenetrable empire.
 2. At the same time _____ the translator of the Latin Vulgate, was in Palestine. Heard & wrote: *"If Rome can perish, what can be safe?"*
 3. News of the fall of Rome reached northern Africa. About 450 miles SW on the coast of North Africa was a godly bishop in the town of Hippo: _____
 4. Refugees poured into Africa from Italy. They told stories of the destruction they had seen. Who did they blame? _____
 5. Led Augustine to write his greatest book: _____ How did he see this fall of Rome? _____
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6. At the time of his death 80,000 invading Vandals were ready to storm the city of Hippo. Some of his friends quoted to him the words of Jesus, *"Flee to another city."* How did Augustine respond? _____
 7. Last command: *"See that the church library and all the books are carefully preserved for posterity."*
 8. Within days the city surrendered to the Vandals. By the end of the year the Vandals had set up a kingdom in Carthage. But in 698 Carthage fell to the Muslim Arabs who have ruled it almost without interruption to the present day.

D. But Augustine wasn't the only one who wrote about this event.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3,

E. Note that as the empire collapsed what filled the vacuum? _____

IV. THE LASTING LEGACY OF ROME.

- A. The heritage that survived the Roman Empire is evident in the fields of _____ Examples?
- B. They left a network of _____
- C. They were good at refining existing technologies.
- D. They left the _____ which allowed ideas to disseminate and impacted our vocabulary.
- E. They developed the _____.

