

American Minute with Bill Federer The Fall of Rome-Are there Lessons to be Learned?

THE FALL OF ROME was a culmination of external and internal factors.

**THE FALL
OF
ROME**



GREAT WALL OF CHINA

By 220AD, the Later Eastern Han Dynasty had extended sections of the Great Wall of China along its

Mongolian border.

This resulted in the Northern Huns attacking west instead of east.



This caused a domino effect of tribes migrating west across Central Asia, and overrunning the Western Roman Empire.



OPEN BORDERS

Illegal immigrants poured across the Roman borders:

Visigoths, Ostrogoths, Franks, Angles, Saxons, Alemanni, Thuringians, Rugians, Jutes, Picts, Burgundians, Lombards, Alans, Vandals, as well as African Berbers and Arab raiders.

Will and Ariel Durant wrote in *The Story of Civilization* (Vol. 3-Caesar and Christ, Simon & Schuster, 1944, p. 366):

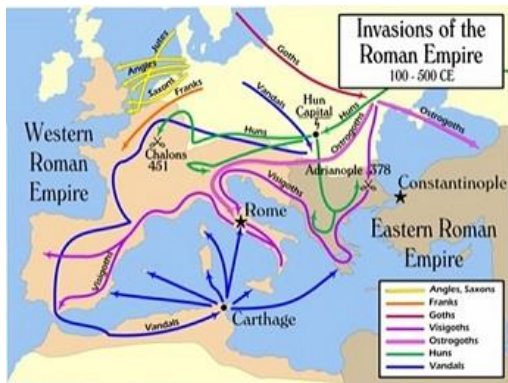


"If Rome had not engulfed so many men of alien blood in so brief a time,

"if she had passed all these newcomers through her schools instead of her slums, if she had treated them as men with a hundred potential excellences,

"if she had occasionally closed her gates to let assimilation catch up with infiltration,

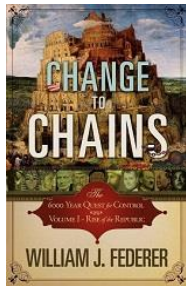
"she might have gained new racial and literary vitality from the infusion, and might have remained a Roman Rome, the voice and citadel of the West."



LOSS OF COMMON LANGUAGE

At first immigrants assimilated and learned the Latin language. They worked as servants with many rising to leadership.

But then they came so fast they did not learn Latin, but instead created a mix of Latin with their own Germanic, Frankish and Anglo tribal tongues. The unity of the Roman Empire began to dissolve.



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THE WELFARE STATE

"Bread and the Circus!" Starting in 123 BC, the immensely powerful Roman politician, Gaius Gracchus began appealing citizens with welfare, a monthly hand-out of a free dole (handout) of grain.

Roman poet Juvenal (circa 100 AD) described how Roman emperors controlled the masses by keeping them ignorant and obsessed with self-indulgence, so that they would be distracted and not throw them out of office, which they might do if they realized the true condition of the Empire:



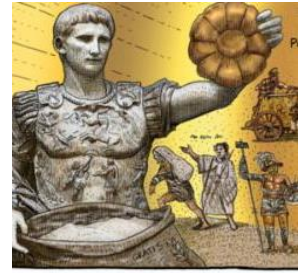
Bread and circuses are distractions and entertainments, things that manipulate, and sway mass public opinion.

"Already long ago, from when we sold our vote to no man, the People have abdicated our duties; for the People who

ONCE UPON A TIME handed out military command, high civil office, legions - everything, NOW restrains itself and anxiously hopes for just two things: **bread and circuses.**"

The fools did not realize that they were merely recovering a portion of their own property, and that their ruler could not have given them what they were receiving without having first taken it from them.

Juvenal



The Roman satirist Juvenal (c. AD 60-140) made this scornful remark "(The people) long eagerly for two things/bread and circuses"

shamelessly cry, 'Long live the King'...

Juvenal continued:

"Tyrants would distribute largess, a bushel of wheat, a gallon of wine, and a sesterce; and everyone would

The fools did not realize that they were merely recovering a portion of their own property, and that their ruler could not have given them what they were receiving without having first taken it from them."

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The Durants wrote in *The Lessons of History* (p. 92): "The concentration of population and poverty in great cities may compel a government to choose between ENFEEBLING THE ECONOMY WITH A DOLE or running the risk of riot and revolution."

In *The Great Ages of Man-Barbarian Europe* (NY: Time-Life Books, 1968, p. 39), one Roman is recorded as stating:

"Those who live at the expense of the public funds are more numerous than those who provide them."

VIOLENT ENTERTAINMENT

The Circus Maximus and Coliseum were packed with crowds of Romans engrossed with violent entertainment, games, chariot races, and until 404 AD, gladiators fighting to the death.



Gerald Simons wrote in *Great Ages of Man-Barbarian Europe* (NY: Time-Life Books, 1968, p. 20):

"In the causal brutality of its public spectacles, in a rampant immorality that even Christianity could not

check."

CHURCH LOST ITS ROLE AS CONSCIENCE

Richard A. Todd wrote in "The Fall of the Roman Empire" (*Eerdmans' Handbook to the History of Christianity*, Grand Rapids, MI:

Wm. B. Eerdmans Co., 1977, p. 184):

"The church, while preaching against abuses, contributed to the decline by discouraging good Christians from holding public office."



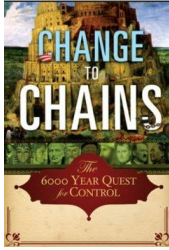
PLANNED PARENTHOOD

Roman families had fewer children. Some would sell unwanted children into slavery or,

up until 374 AD, leave them outside exposed to the weather to die.

The Durants wrote in *The Story of Civilization*, Vol. 3-Caesar and Christ (Simon & Schuster, 1944, p. 134):

"Children were now luxuries which only the poor could afford."



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IMMORALITY & INFIDELITY

There was court favoritism, the patronage system, injustice in the legal system, infidelity, bathhouses rampant with homosexuality, sexual immorality, gluttony, and gymnasiums ("gym" being the Greek word for naked). 5th-Century historian Salvian wrote:



"For all the lurid Roman tales of their atrocities ... the barbarians displayed ... a good deal more fidelity to their wives." (*Great Ages*, p. 13.)

Salvian continued:

"O Roman people be ashamed; be ashamed of your lives. Almost no cities are free of evil dens, are altogether free of impurities, except the cities in which the barbarians have begun to live ...



Let nobody think otherwise, the vices of our bad lives have alone conquered us ...

The Goths lie, but are chaste, the Franks lie, but are generous, the Saxons are

savage in cruelty ... but are admirable in chastity ... What hope can there be for the Romans when the barbarians are more pure than they?"



Samuel Adams wrote to John Scollay of Boston, April 30, 1776:

"The diminution of public virtue is usually attended with that of public happiness, and the public liberty will not long survive the total extinction of morals. 'The Roman Empire,' says the historian, 'must have sunk, though the

Goths had not invaded it. Why? Because the Roman virtue was sunk.'"

As Roman virtue declined, the number of laws increased. Cornelius Tacitus wrote:

"The more corrupt the state, the more numerous the laws."

CLASS WARFARE



City centers were abandoned by the upper class, who bought up farms from rural landowners and transformed them into palatial estates.

The Durants wrote in *The Story of Civilization* (Vol. 3-Caesar and Christ, Simon & Schuster, 1944, p.90):

"The Roman landowner disappeared now that ownership was concentrated in a few families, and a proletariat without stake in the country filled the slums of Rome."



Inner cities were destabilized, being also plagued with lead poisoning, as water was brought in through lead pipes. ("plumb" or "plumbing" is the Latin word for "lead.")

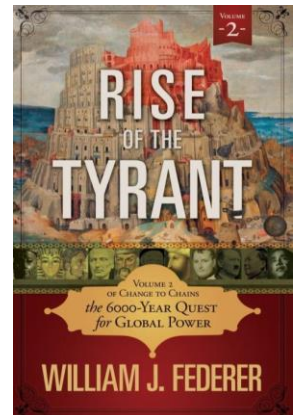
The value of human life was low. Slavery and sex-trafficking abounded, especially of captured peoples from Eastern

Europe. "Slavs," which meant "glorious" came to have the inglorious meaning of a permanent servant or "slave." (

Great Ages, p. 18).



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TAXES

Welfare and government jobs exploded, especially with emperors wanting to honor themselves by leaving legacies of massive public building projects, such as bath houses, coliseums, parade grounds, etc.

Taxes became unbearable, as "collectors became greedy functionaries in a bureaucracy so huge and corrupt." Tax collectors were described by the historian Salvian as "more terrible than the enemy." (*Great Ages*, p. 20).

Arther Ferrill wrote in *The Fall of the Roman Empire: The Military Explanation* (New York: Thames and Hudson Ltd., 1986):

"The chief cause of the agricultural decline was high taxation on the marginal land, driving it out of cultivation."

There was a loss of patriotism, wealth began to flee the Empire, and with it, the spirit of liberty.



President William Henry Harrison warned in his Inaugural Address, 1841:

"It was the beautiful remark of a distinguished English writer that 'in the Roman senate Octavius had a party and Antony a party, but the Commonwealth had none' ...

"The spirit of liberty had fled, and, avoiding the abodes of civilized man, had sought protection in the wilds of Scythia or Scandinavia; and so under

the operation of the same causes and influences it will fly from our Capitol and our forums."

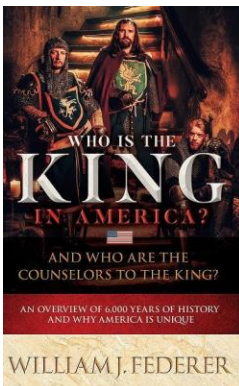
More recently, John F. Kennedy observed, January 6, 1961:

"Present tax laws may be stimulating in undue amounts the flow of American capital to industrial countries abroad."



OUTSOURCING

Rome's economy stagnated from a large trade deficit, as grain production was outsourced to North Africa. Gerald Simons wrote in *Great Ages of Man-Barbarian Europe* (NY: Time-Life Books, 1968, p. 39): "As conquerors of North Africa, the Vandals cut off the Empire's grain supply at will. This



created critical food shortages, which in turn curtailed Roman counterattacks."

[DVD Who is the King in America? -And Who are the Counselors to the King?](#)

EXPLODING DEBT &



COINAGE DEBASEMENT

Rome was crippled by huge government bureaucracies and enormous public debt. Rather than curb out-of-control government spending, Roman emperors decided to debase coins by mixing them with cheaper base metals. This devalued their monetary system and caused exponential inflation.

The Durants wrote in *The Lessons of History* (p. 92):

"Huge bureaucratic machinery was unable to govern the empire effectively with the enormous, out-of-control debt."



In *Great Ages of Man-Barbarian Europe* (NY: Time-Life Books, 1968, p. 20), Gerald Simons wrote:

"The Western Roman economy, already undermined by falling production of the great Roman estates and an unfavorable balance of trade that siphoned off gold to the East, had now run out of money."

Rolf Nef of Global Research, wrote on January 15, 2007,

Falling Empires and their Currencies
(www.globalresearch.ca):

"When empires fall, their currencies fall first. Even clearer is the rising debt of empires in decline, because in most cases their physical expansion is financed with debt ... The common thing is that the currencies of each and every one of these falling empires lost dramatically in value ...



"The Roman Empire existed from 400 B.C. to 400 A.D. Its history is the history of physical expansion, like the history of almost all empires. Its expansion was driven by a citizen soldier army, paid in silver coins, land and slaves from occupied territories. If there was not enough silver in the treasury to conduct a war, base metals were added to coin more money.

"That is to say, the authorities debased their currency which presaged the fall of the Empire. There was a limit to the expansion. The empire became over-stretched,

running out of silver money, and eventually went under, overrun by barbarian hordes."



Richard W. Fisher, President and CEO of the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, remarked before the Commonwealth Club of California, San Francisco, California, May 28, 2008: "We know from centuries of evidence in countless economies, from ancient Rome to today's Zimbabwe, that running the printing press to pay off today's bills leads to much worse problems later on. The inflation that results from the flood of money into the

economy turns out to be far worse than the fiscal pain those countries hoped to avoid."

SELF-PROMOTING, CORRUPT POLITICIANS

The Roman emperor usurped so much power that the Roman Senate, instead of ruling Rome, only existed to carry out the emperor's agenda. The Durants wrote in *The Lessons of History* (p. 92):

"The educated and skilled pursued business and financial success to the neglect of their involvement in politics."



MILITARY CUTS

Though militarily superior and marching on advanced road systems, the highly trained Roman Legions were over-extended and strained fighting continual conflicts from the Rhine River to the Sassanid Persian Empire.



Roman borders were over-extended and the military defending them was cut back to dangerously low ranks.



Emperors realized that if they kept citizens preoccupied with endless external wars, the citizens would be distracted from complaining about internal problems and political strife.

Non-Roman citizens were enlisted in the Roman military, being offered citizenship in exchange for their military service. This led to a loss of patriotism and a diminished motivation to defend the Roman

borders from invading Germanic tribes.



The Durants wrote in *The Story of Civilization* (Vol. 3-Caesar and Christ, Simon & Schuster, 1944, p.90):

"The new generation, having inherited world mastery, had no time or inclination to defend it; that readiness for war which had characterized the Roman landowner disappeared."



With the increase of invading hordes, Roman legions had to be recalled from the frontiers to protect Rome itself. It was at this time that young Patrick was kidnapped from Roman Britain and sold as a slave in Druid Ireland, which he later evangelized.

TERRORIST ATTACKS

In 452, Pope Leo rode out to meet Attila and persuaded him not to sack Rome. This delayed the inevitable for only a few more decades. Finally, in 476, barbarian Chieftain Odoacer attacked, and Rome is considered to have officially fallen on September 4, 476.



LESSONS FROM FALL OF ROME

John Stossel, host of "Stossel" on the Fox Business Network and author of "No They Can't: Why Government Fails, but Individuals Succeed," wrote in his article on the Fall of Rome (www.johnstossel.com):

"Historian Carl Richard said that today's America resembles Rome. The Roman Republic had a constitution, but Roman leaders often ignored it. 'Marius was elected consul six years in a row, even though under the constitution (he) was term-limited to one year.'

"We have presidents of both parties legislating by executive order, saying I'm not going to enforce certain laws because I don't like them. - That open flouting of the law is dangerous because law ceases to have meaning. I see that today.- Congress passes huge laws they haven't even read (as well as) overspending, overtaxing and devaluing the currency.

"The Romans were worse. I object to President Obama's \$100 million dollar trip, but Nero traveled with 1,000 carriages. Tiberius established an 'office of imperial pleasures,' which gathered 'beautiful boys and girls from all corners of the world' so, as Tacitus put it, the emperor 'could defile them.' Emperor Commodus held a show in the Colosseum at which he personally killed five hippos, two elephants, a rhinoceros and a giraffe ..."



Stossel continued:

"To pay for their excesses, emperors devalued the currency. (Doesn't our Fed do that by buying \$2 trillion of government debt?)" Nero reduced the silver content of coins to 95 percent. Then Trajan reduced it to 85 percent and so on. By the year 300, wheat that once cost eight Roman dollars cost 120,000 Roman dollars.

"The president the Foundation for Economic Education, Lawrence Reed, warned that Rome, like America, had an expanding welfare state. It started with 'subsidized grain.' The government gave it away at half price.

"But the problem was that they couldn't stop there - a man named Claudius ran for Tribune on a platform of free wheat for the masses. And won. It was downhill from

there ... Soon, to appease angry voters, emperors gave away or subsidized olive oil, salt and pork. People lined up to get free stuff."

Stossel added:

"Rome's government, much like ours, wasn't good at making sure subsidies flowed only to the poor, said Reed: 'Anybody could line up to get these goods, which contributed to the ultimate bankruptcy of the Roman state.'



"As inflation increased, Rome, much like the U.S. under President Nixon, imposed wage and price controls. When people objected, Emperor Diocletian denounced their 'greed,' saying, 'Shared humanity urges us to set a limit.' Doesn't that sound like today's anti-capitalist politicians? Diocletian was worse than Nixon.

"Rome enforced controls with the death penalty - and forbid people to change professions. Emperor Constantine decreed that those who broke such rules 'be bound with chains and reduced to servile condition."



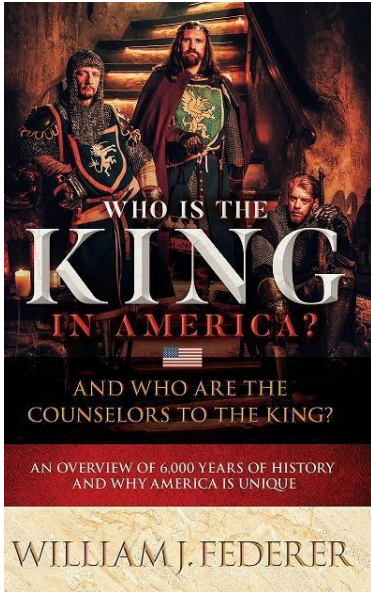
John Stossel concluded:

"Eventually, Rome's empire was so large - and people so resentful of centralized control - that generals in outlying regions began declaring independence from Rome.

"At FreedomFest, Matt Kibbe, president of FreedomWorks, also argued that America could soon collapse like Rome did.

'The parallels are quite ominous - the debt, the expansionist foreign policy, the arrogance of executive power taking over our country,' says Kibbe. 'But I do think we have a chance to...alert people to the danger in imperial Washington and try to fight it ...'

Empires do crumble. Rome's lasted the longest. The Ottoman Empire lasted 623 years. China's Song, Qing and Ming dynasties each lasted about 300 years. We've lasted just 237 years so far ...



We've accomplished amazing things, but we shouldn't take our continued success for granted. Freedom and prosperity are not natural. In human history, they're rare."

Who is the King in America? -An Overview of 6,000 Years of History & Why America is Unique

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