

# The Fall of Rome

Commodus didn't get senate approval for his actions

Appointees tried to usurp senate power. He allowed it.

Stayed in power by paying off the army to support him

Commodus gave others some of his power, didn't choose well

Loved the gladiatorial contests so much he wanted to be one.

Planned to fight on 1/1/193 Assassinated on New Year's Eve

Set up his son, Commodus (18), as the next emperor- knew he wasn't ready but hoped he would step up

Marcus Aurelius- last of the Five Good Emperors

Rome was falling apart- Christian church took care of people when the government couldn't

Constantine- Emperor 312-337 AD- strongly encouraged the spread of Christianity

Saw a vision over the Tiber River of a cross with the words "Under this sign you will conquer" Won. Converted

Had a dream that told him the cross would protect him. Had the soldiers put crosses on their shields. Won. Converted

two stories about Constantine's conversion to Christianity

Reasons for Rome's Decline

- Weak, corrupt rulers
- Mercenary army
- Serious Economic Problems
- Size of the Empire
- Ways to stop the decline

Diocletian- built forts on borders, enlarged the army, improved tax system

Split it into two parts- east and west- took the eastern good part- appointed someone else to deal with the west

From Good Rule to Bad

The Empire Crumbles

Invasions and Collapse

Constantine won (remember his vision?)

Constantine took over the Western half, Licinius and Maximus took over the West

7 years of fighting among generals

Diocletian and co-emperor stepped down in 305

free to open churches publicly, property taken from them was returned, Christianity became official Roman religion

313- Constantine and Licinius declared freedom of religion- no more persecution

Licinius had allowed persecution of Christians to continue- now it stopped- obviously God was on Constantine's side

324- Constantine fought and defeated Licinius- took over the whole empire

Constantine tried to keep the church strong

Constantine helped plan and pay for churches in Rome (the Vatican), Jerusalem (the Church of the Rock), Hagia Sophia

When the church almost split apart because of internal disagreements, Constantine met with leaders to solve it

330- Constantine moved the capital from Rome to Byzantium.

West half was a lost cause- east was doing well

He grew up near there as a kid

He called it New Rome- everybody else called it Constantinople (Constantine's city)

After Constantine died, Rome fell apart for good.

Barbarians from the north (Germanic tribes like Goths, visigoths, vandals) invaded. Some asked for space (visigoths-Romania) others pushed their way in mostly because they were being pushed from the north

City of Rome was almost defenseless

the last true Roman Emperor was Romulus Augustulus. he was 14 when the a German general captured the city and sent him to work on a farm

West fell apart, East stayed strong with capital protected in Constantinople- Became Byzantine Empire (Byzantium)