

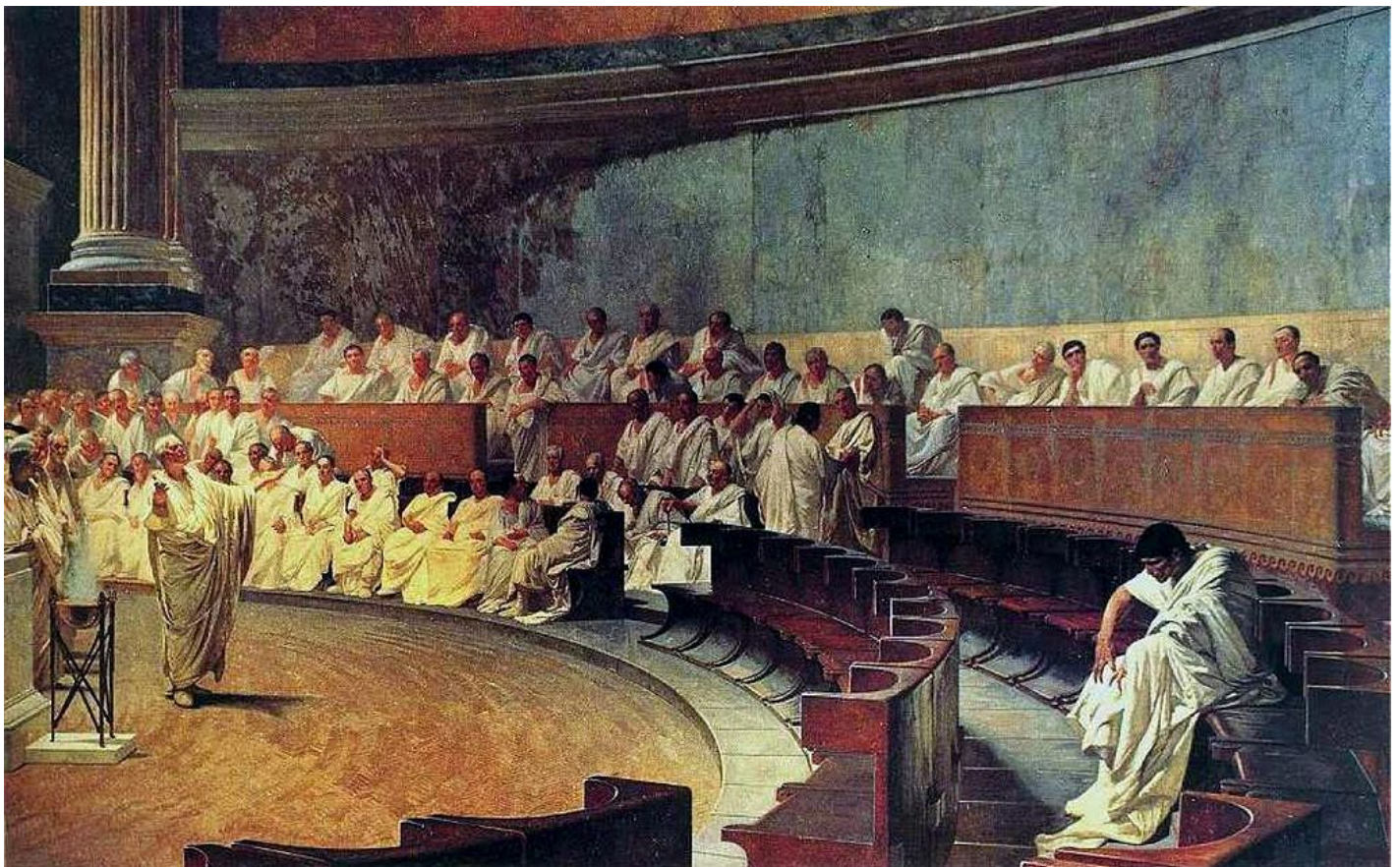
EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT Ancient Rome

The city of Rome began as a group of small villages in an area of seven hills on the Tiber River in southern Europe. The villages grew in the hills until they became one large town. This town eventually became one of the largest empires in the world, with hundreds of nationalities and tribes and almost 100 million people.



The Roman Republic

Around 700 B.C.E., a people called Etruscans invaded and conquered Rome. They ruled for about 200 years. Romans overthrew their king around 500 B.C.E. and drove out the Etruscans. The people of Rome set up a new form of government called a **republic**. A republic is a form of government where there is no king and the citizens choose the people to run government. Free men were allowed to vote, but women and slaves were not.



Roman citizens were divided into two classes: The **patricians** were rich nobles and the **plebeians** were common people, such as farmers and workers. In the early years of the republic, the patricians controlled the government. Only patricians could enter the Senate, where laws were made. The plebeians had little voice in the government and many of the laws were unfair to them.

After more than one hundred years of struggle, the plebeians made few gains. They won the right to have the laws written down and displayed in the public areas so that the laws could not be suddenly changed. They also gained the right to elect two officers, called **consuls**, to look after interests of the ordinary citizens. The Roman Republic lasted until 27 B.C.E., when Augustus became emperor.

By the second century B.C.E., Rome had become a powerful state. Its mighty army conquered all of Italy and eventually ruled all the lands around the Mediterranean Sea. It had even conquered the Greeks. Rome's chief enemy was Carthage in North Africa. Rome and Carthage fought three wars over the course of a hundred years; they were called the **Punic Wars**. They ended when Rome burned Carthage to the ground in 146 B.C.E.

The lands ruled by the Romans were **provinces**. Roman provinces had to pay taxes to Rome. The capital became very rich. Rome itself became a city of the very rich and the very poor. Governing such a large empire was difficult, and the Romans began to turn to military leaders as rulers.

The Beginning of the Roman Empire

In 46 B.C.E., a great general and military hero named **Julius Caesar** took power in Rome. As the dictator, Caesar built new buildings, reduced taxes, and made life better for the plebeians. Julius Caesar was their hero. Because of his military leadership, soldiers were loyal to him. But the Senate, made up of the patricians, thought he had too much power. So, in 44 B.C.E, some senators murdered him.

Caesar's adopted son, **Octavian**, took power in 27 B.C.E. He called himself Augustus, which means "great." Augustus became the first emperor of Rome, which was no longer a republic. This was the beginning of the Roman Empire. Augustus's rule began a 200-year period known as the Pax Romana, or the Roman Peace. It was mostly a time of peace and progress.

Augustus ruled from 27 B.C.E. to 14 C.E. He was a fair and able ruler and did many things for the Roman Empire: He maintained the peace, restored order in the army, established fair taxes, constructed many roads and buildings, and encouraged science, art, and literature.



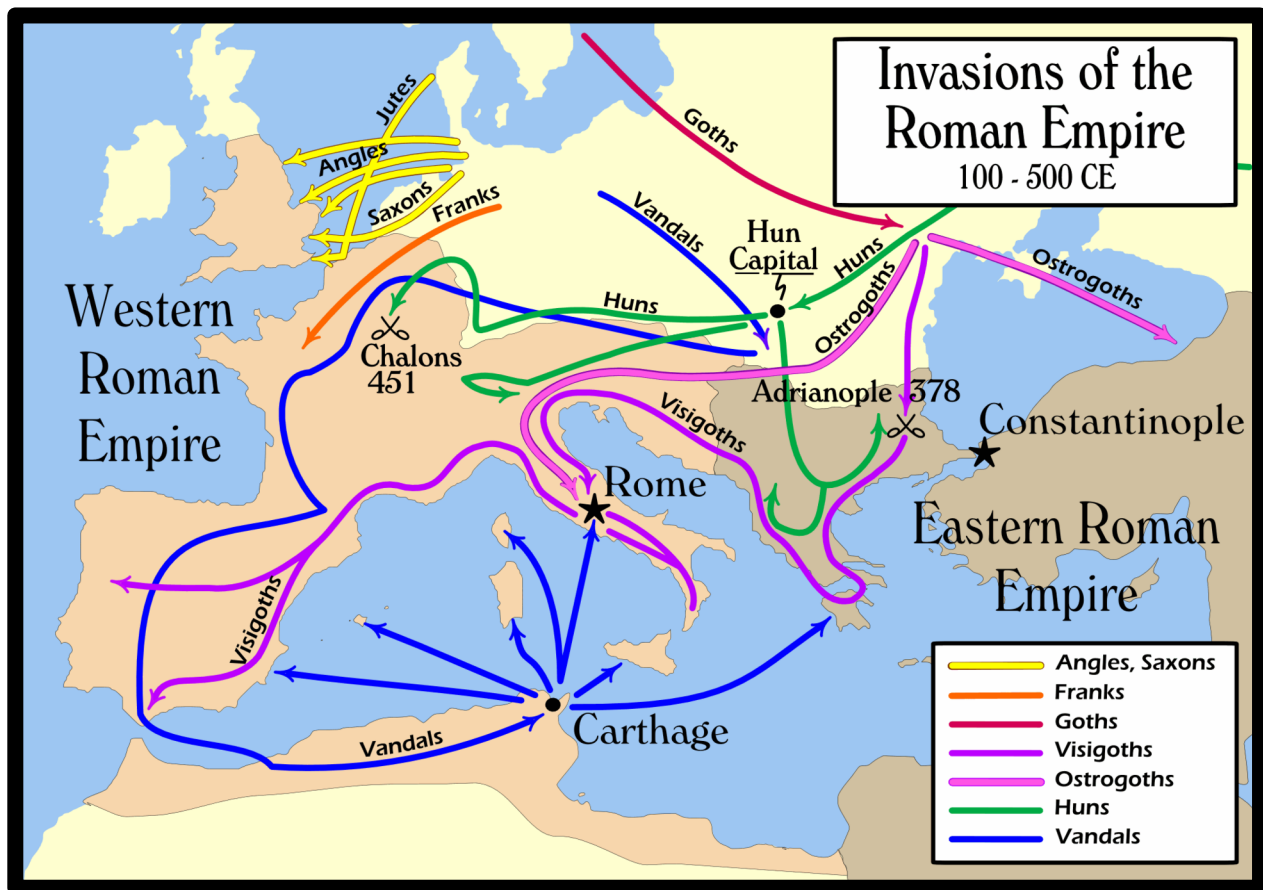
Julius Caesar

Rome had a number of strong and able emperors who ruled for many years, expanding the territories and maintaining peace. With the death of **Marcus Aurelius**, in 180 C.E., a long decline began.

The Decline and Fall of Rome

The Roman Empire stretched from the Middle East to Great Britain. It was so large that Alexander the Great's empire was just an eastern province. Because of its vastness, it was hard to control. About 290 C.E., the emperor **Diocletian** divided the empire into two sections—the **Western Empire** and the **Eastern Empire**. Diocletian began the shift of power from Rome, the capital of the Western Empire, to the east. Once Emperor **Constantine** took over, in 324 C.E., he completed the shift, making Constantinople the main capital when the city was rebuilt in 330 C.E.

In the fifth century C.E., Germanic tribes and Mongol people called **Huns** invaded the Roman Empire. Romans referred to the Huns and Germanic tribes as **barbarians**, which then meant that they lived outside the empire. Eventually, the Huns conquered the Western Empire. The Eastern Empire survived for another thousand years.



REASONS FOR THE FALL OF ROME

1. There was no orderly way of choosing an emperor. Military leaders often did it, who chose soldiers rather than effective rulers. The military often murdered emperors whom they did not like.
2. To support the large army, Romans were heavily taxed. This created burdens for common people.
3. Small farmers could not compete with large landowners, who used slaves for labor. Less food was grown because of poor farming methods on estates.
4. People without jobs, such as out-of-work small farmers, used up tax money.
5. Diseases killed about a third of the people.



The Roman Gods

Roman gods were very much like Greek gods, but they had different names. Religion was the center of the Roman home and every family kept a shrine to the gods of the household—Janus and Vesta. Romans also built temples to their gods and goddesses.

Jupiter	The king of gods and god of light.
Juno	The queen of the gods.
Vesta	The goddess of the hearth.
Mars	The god of war.
Ceres	The goddess of the harvest and the mother of the Earth.
Minerva	The goddess of wisdom.
Venus	The goddess of love. Her son was cupid.
Janus	The god of the beginnings. The first month of the year, January is named after him.
Diana	The goddess of the moon and hunting.
Neptune	The god of the sea.
Vulcan	The god of fire.
Mercury	The messenger of the gods and the protector of traders.

The Beginnings of Christianity

During the reign of Augustus a man named **Jesus** was born. He was a Jew who lived in Nazareth in the Roman province of Judea. Little is known about his childhood. All we know of Jesus comes from the gospels of the New Testament in the Christian Bible. Jesus became a religious teacher with many followers. His followers called him Christ, which means “the anointed one.” Jesus taught people to love God and their neighbors as much as they loved themselves. This teaching stressed the importance of forgiving people, living an unselfish life, and being sorry for your sins. The religion built on the teachings of Jesus became known as Christianity. It took hold as the Roman Empire was falling apart.

Roman officials believed Jesus was dangerous. He was arrested and put to death by crucifixion (fastened to a cross until he died). Despite the death of Jesus, Christianity grew and spread all over the Roman Empire. A number of Roman emperors tried to crush the religion. They put Christians in jail and even murdered them. This cruel punishment lasted for many years until the emperor Constantine became a Christian in 312 C.E. and, made Christianity legal. Three centuries after the death of Jesus, Christianity became the main religion in the empire.



A Roman mosaic thought to be the head of Christ

ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE ROMANS

1. They wrote a set of **laws** that became the basis of many legal systems for many countries of Europe and Latin America.
2. They built **roads**, **bridges**, and **aqueducts** to carry water. Building on the architecture developed by the Greeks, Roman architects built the **arch**, the **dome**, and the **column**. Some famous Roman buildings are the **Temple of Vesta**, the **Pantheon**, the **Colosseum**, the **Theater of Pompey**, and the **Arch of Titus**.
3. They created **sculptures** that actually looked like the people they portrayed, a first in ancient times.
4. Their language (**Latin**), became the basis for many other languages, including French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese.
5. The **Roman poet Virgil** wrote an epic poem, ***The Aeneid***, which traces Rome's origins to Aeneas, one of the warriors in ***The Illiad*** by Homer.
6. They invented **Roman numerals**, which are still used today.
7. They united people and created peace in a vast empire.

