Ancient Rome and Early Christianity, 500 B.C.– A.D. 500

Civilizations emerge and develop on fertile river plains in Mesopotamia, Egypt, the Indus Valley, and China.

Ancient Rome and Early Christianity, 500 B.C.–A.D. 500

SECTION 1  The Roman Republic
SECTION 2  The Roman Empire
SECTION 3  The Rise of Christianity
SECTION 4  The Fall of the Roman Empire
SECTION 5  Rome and the Roots of Western Civilization
The early Romans establish a republic, which grows powerful and spreads its influence.
The Roman Republic

The Origins of Rome

**Rome’s Geography**
- Site of Rome chosen for its fertile soil and strategic location
- Located on Italian peninsula in center of Mediterranean Sea
- Built on seven hills on Tiber River

**The First Romans**
- Latins, Greeks, and Etruscans compete for control of region
- Latins found original settlement of Rome between 1000 and 500 B.C.
- Etruscans native to northern Italy; influence Roman civilization
The Early Republic

Early Rulers

- Around 600 B.C., Etruscan kings begin to rule Rome
- Kings build Rome’s first temples and public centers
- Romans overthrow cruel Etruscan king in 509 B.C.
- Romans found a republic—government in which citizens elect leaders
The Early Republic \textit{(continued)}

**Patricians and Plebeians**

- Different groups struggle for power in early Roman Republic
- **Patricians**—wealthy landowning class that holds most of the power
- **Plebeians**—artisans, merchants, and farmers; can vote, can’t rule
- **Tribunes**—elected representatives protect plebeians’ political rights
The Early Republic {continued}

Twelve Tables
- In 451 B.C. officials carve Roman laws on twelve tablets
- Called Twelve Tables, they become basis for later Roman law
- Laws confirm right of all free citizens to protection of the law
- Citizenship is limited to adult male landowners
- Twelve Tables are hung in the Forum
The Early Republic \textit{(continued)}

\textbf{Government Under the Republic}
\begin{itemize}
  \item Rome elects two \textbf{consuls}—one to lead army, one to direct government
  \item \textbf{Senate}—chosen from Roman upper class; makes foreign, domestic policy
  \item Democratic assemblies elect tribunes, make laws for common people
  \item \textbf{Dictators} are leaders appointed briefly in times of crisis
\end{itemize}

\textbf{The Roman Army}
\begin{itemize}
  \item Roman \textbf{legion}—military unit of 5,000 infantry; supported by cavalry
  \item Army is powerful; key factor in Rome’s rise to greatness
\end{itemize}
Rome Spreads Its Power

Rome Conquers Italy
- Romans defeat Etruscans in north and Greek city-states in south
- By 265 B.C., Rome controls Italian peninsula
- Conquered peoples treated justly; this enables Rome to grow

Rome’s Commercial Network
- Rome establishes large trading network
- Access to Mediterranean Sea provides many trade routes
- Carthage, powerful city-state in North Africa, soon rivals Rome
War with Carthage

- Rome and Carthage begin **Punic Wars**—three wars between 264–146 B.C.
- Rome defeats Carthage, wins Sicily, in first 23-year war
- **Hannibal**—Carthaginian general—avenges defeat in Second Punic War
- Attacks Italy through Spain and France, doesn’t take Rome

Rome Triumphs

- Roman general Scipio defeats Hannibal in 202 B.C.
- Rome destroys Carthage, enslaves people in last war (149–146 B.C.)
The creation of the Roman Empire transforms Roman government, society, economy, and culture.
The Republic Collapses

**Economic Turmoil**
- Gap between rich and poor widens as Roman Republic grows
- Farmers, former soldiers, lose to large estates; become homeless
- Two tribunes, Tiberius and Gaius, try to help poor, are murdered
- **Civil war**—conflict between groups within same country begins

**Military Upheaval**
- Military becomes less disciplined and disloyal
- Soldiers recruited from poor; show loyalty only to their generals
The Republic Collapses *(continued)*

**Julius Caesar Takes Control**

- Military leader **Julius Caesar** elected consul in 59 B.C.
- Caesar, Crassus, Pompey form a **triumvirate**—a group of three rulers
- Military victories give Caesar increasing popularity and power
- Pompey fears Caesar’s growing power and challenges him
- Caesar defeats Pompey’s armies in Greece, Asia, Spain, Egypt
- Caesar is named dictator for life in 44 B.C.
The Republic Collapses *continued*

**Caesar’s Reforms**
- Caesar makes reforms: grants wider citizenship, creates jobs for poor
- Group of senators opposes Caesar; kills him on March 15, 44 B.C.

**Beginning of the Empire**
- 43 B.C., Caesar’s supporters take control; become Second Triumvirate
- Octavian, Mark Antony, Lepidus alliance ends in jealousy, violence
- In 31 B.C., Mark Antony and Cleopatra’s forces are defeated at Actium
- Octavian accepts title of *Augustus*, “exalted one,” and rules Rome
A Vast and Powerful Empire

**Pax Romana**
- Under Augustus, Rome moves from a republic to an empire
- Power no longer resides with citizens, but a single ruler
- Rome enjoys 200 years of peace and prosperity known as *Pax Romana*

**A Sound Government**
- Augustus, Rome’s ablest ruler, creates lasting system of government
  - glorifies Rome with beautiful public buildings
  - sets up a civil service to administer the empire
A Vast and Powerful Empire {continued}

Agriculture and Trade

- Agriculture most important industry in empire; 90% of Romans farm
- Common coin, denarius, makes trade within empire easier
- Rome has vast trading network, includes China and India
- Network of Roman roads links empire to Persia, Russia
The Roman World

Slaves and Captivity
- Slavery is a significant part of Roman life in both cities and farms
- Some slaves become gladiators; forced to fight to death

Gods and Goddesses
- Early Romans honor guardian spirits and gods Jupiter, Juno, Minerva
- Worship of emperor becomes part of official religion of Rome

Society and Culture
- Rich live well; most people are poor, receive grain from government
- 150 holidays and Colosseum events created to control the masses
The Rise of Christianity

Christianity arises in Roman-occupied Judea and spreads throughout the Roman Empire.
Chapter 6

The Rise of Christianity

The Life and Teachings of Jesus

Romans Conquer Judea

- Rome conquers Judea, home of Jews; makes it part of empire, A.D. 6
- Many Jews believe a Messiah, or savior, eventually will free them

Jesus of Nazareth

- **Jesus**—a Jew born in Bethlehem (around 6 to 4 B.C.), raised in Nazareth
- At age 30 begins preaching monotheism, Ten Commandments
- Does good works, reportedly performs miracles
- Stresses personal relationship with God, love for friends and enemies

Continued...
The Life and Teachings of Jesus {continued}

A Growing Movement
- **Apostles**—the twelve men who are disciples (or pupils) of Jesus
- Jesus ignores wealth and status; his message appeals to poor

Jesus’ Death
- Many Jews view Jesus as the Messiah; others see him as a heretic
- Roman governor Pontius Pilate sentences Jesus to be crucified
- Apostles believe Jesus ascended into heaven after death
- *Christos*, Greek word for “savior”; *Christianity* derived from “Christ”
Christianity Spreads Through the Empire

Growth of Christianity
- Followers spread Christianity—new religion based on Jesus’ teachings

Paul’s Mission
- Apostle Paul—spends life preaching and interpreting Christianity
- Common languages of Latin and Greek help to spread message
- Paul stresses Jesus is son of God who died for people’s sins
- Paul declares that Christianity open to all converts
Christianity Spreads Through the Empire \textit{(continued)}

\textbf{Jewish Rebellion}
- Jews rebel against Rome; Romans storm Jerusalem, destroy Temple
- Rebellions in A.D. 66, 70, 132 fail; Jews driven from homeland
- \textit{Diaspora}—centuries of Jewish exile (from Greek word for “dispersal”)

\textbf{Persecution of the Christians}
- Christians won’t worship Roman gods; become enemies of Roman rule
- Roman rulers use Christians as scapegoats for hard times
- \textit{As Pax Romana} crumbles, Christians crucified, burned, killed in arena
A World Religion

Christianity’s Expansion

- Christianity becomes powerful force; reasons for widespread appeal:
  - embraces all people
  - gives hope to the powerless
  - appeals to those repelled by extravagance of Roman life
  - offers personal relationship with a loving God
  - promises eternal life after death

Continued...
A World Religion  

Constantine Accepts Christianity

- **Constantine**—Roman emperor battles for control of Rome in A.D. 312
- Has vision of cross, Christian symbol; places on soldiers’ shields
- Believes Christian God helped him win; legalizes Christianity
- In A.D. 380 Emperor Theodosius makes Christianity religion of empire
A World Religion (continued)

Early Christian Church

- Priests direct a single church; bishops supervise numerous churches
- Apostle Peter—first bishop of Rome; clergy trace their authority to him
- Pope—the father, or head, of Christian Church; Rome, center of Church
A World Religion \textit{(continued)}

\textbf{A Single Voice}
\begin{itemize}
\item Church leaders compile standard Christian beliefs in the New Testament
\item New Testament added to the Hebrew Bible (also called the Old Testament)
\end{itemize}

\textbf{The Fathers of the Church}
\begin{itemize}
\item Early writers and scholars of teachings called Fathers of the Church
\item Augustine, bishop in North Africa, one of the most important Fathers
\item Stressed receiving sacraments to obtain God’s grace
\item Wrote famous book, \textit{The City of God}
\end{itemize}
The Fall of the Roman Empire

Internal problems and innovations spur the division and decline of the Roman Empire.
The Fall of the Roman Empire

A Century of Crisis

The Empire Declines

- *Pax Romana* ends in A.D. 180 with death of emperor Marcus Aurelius
- Subsequent emperors unable to govern giant empire

Rome’s Economy Weakens

- Hostile tribes outside the empire disrupt trade
- **Inflation**—drop in value of money and rise in prices—weakens trade
- Overworked soil, war-torn farmland leads to food shortages
A Century of Crisis

Military and Political Turmoil

• By third century A.D. Roman military in turmoil. Soldiers loyal to commanders, not Rome; commanders fighting for throne
• Government enlists mercenaries—foreign soldiers they pay to fight
• Average citizens lose interest in the affairs of Rome
Emperors Attempt Reform

Diocletian Reforms the Empire
- In A.D. 284 Emperor Diocletian restores order, divides empire in two
- Two emperors in Greek-speaking East, Latin-speaking West
- In A.D. 305 Diocletian retires, rivals compete for power

Constantine Moves the Capital
- Constantine becomes emperor of Western Empire in A.D. 312
- Seizes Eastern Empire in A.D. 324; moves Roman capital to Byzantium
- Byzantium eventually renamed Constantinople—city of Constantine
The Western Empire Crumbles

**Germanic Invasions**
- Mongol nomads from Asia, the Huns, invade northern borders of empire
- Germanic tribes flee Huns, enter Roman lands, sack Rome A.D. 410

**Attila the Hun**
- *Attila*—unites the Huns in A.D. 444; plunders 70 cities in East
- Attacks Rome in 452; famine and disease prevents victory

**An Empire No More**
- Last Roman emperor falls to Germans in 476; end of Western Empire
- East thrives for another thousand years (Byzantine Empire)
Christianity arises in Roman-occupied Judea and spreads throughout the Roman Empire.
Rome and the Roots of Western Civilization

The Legacy of Greco-Roman Civilization

Military and Political Turmoil
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Roman Fine Arts
- Romans develop bas-relief sculptures to tell stories
- Artists skilled in creating mosaics, painting frescoes
- Pompeii—Roman town; ash from volcano eruption A.D. 79 preserves art
Learning and Literature

- Romans borrow from Greek philosophy and literature
- Poet Virgil writes epic *Aeneid* modeled after Homer’s Greek epics
- Roman historian Tacitus excels in writing factually accurate history
- *Annals* and *Histories* provide comprehensive look at Roman life
The Legacy of Rome

The Latin Language
- Latin was official language of Roman Catholic Church until 1900s
- Develops into French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Romanian
- More than half the words in English stem from Latin

Master Builders
- Romans pioneer use of arch; also used domes and concrete
- Create **aqueducts**—structures to bring water into cities, towns
The Legacy of Rome {continued}

Roman System of Law
- Principles of Roman law form basis of modern legal systems

Rome’s Enduring Influence
- By preserving and adding to Greek civilization, Rome strengthened the Western cultural tradition
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