

# Ancient Rome And Today's Society

## [Part 1]

The fall of the Roman Empire was as much due to the decline in morals within as its being overcome by Barbarian hordes.

The basic internal mistakes that led to its fall are being repeated today in Britain and USA as well as the rest of the Western World.

The Roman Empire had great achievements during its rule of much of the Europe and Middle East.

Massive public works, cosmopolitan cities, advanced tools of warfare, bureaucratic institutions, international trade, multiracial communities, super highways, etc.

Rome started out as struggling, insignificant colony of people ruled over by a monarchy.

Injustice led to revolution and establishment of a republic centred in Rome.

Still later, after extensive expansions of its borders, civil war divided the Empire into Eastern and Western powers, both of which rose to heights of undisputed world power and leadership.

Taxation of subdued nations brought great wealth to the central governing powers.

The Roman superpower had a highly-developed system of law and justice, government and order with a well-organised production of goods and services.

The legacy can be found in the administration of many modern nations today.

But Rome crumbled.

Rich, affluent Ancient Rome left us another legacy which is all but forgotten by modern governments today.

A legacy of human social and political folly that led to worsening economic and military events that virtually guaranteed decline and eventual collapse.

Proud Romans became lulled by the belief in their seeming “*eternity*” and superiority of their system, in their long chain of rarely broken military and economic successes.

Rome prided themselves in their liberal and generous [in their thinking] largesse to nations conquered in war.

But the unthinkable happened, Rome Fell.

To speculate at the moment of unsurpassed material and military achievements and glorious Rome could collapse to inferior Barbarians was unthinkable. So the warning given by Seneca, a Roman statesman, was ignored.

Seneca's warning was based on taxation, mounting crime, race problems, moral decay, subversion from within, political assassinations and public apathy.

### **The affluence of Rome –**

The Romans built a highly advanced society for their time. To them it was a “*great society.*”

Prodigious engineers, high-rise apartments, cosmetic arts, spectator sports, sightseers and tourists, these are words used to describe Roman activity in the second century AD, the time when Rome was at the height of its power.

Rome constructed roads all over their vast Empire, cutting through hills, tunnelling through mountains, sturdy bridges over rivers and valleys, “freeways” that ran as straight and flat as possible. Even the concrete they used was hardly inferior to that used today, they even developed cement that would harden under water.

Romans mastered plumbing, water supply and sewer systems.

Some of the rich had furnaces under their houses with warm air circulating through pipes or ducts in the walls.

Hot and cold water public baths were a must for the rich Romans.

Romans cherished body hygiene, physical culture and health.

The “*Roman baths*” with a country-club atmosphere for the wealthy are thoroughly documented. Vacation resorts, mountain spas or seashore villas were used by the wealthy Roman administrators and governors.

But the cities became overcrowded requiring the development of high-rise apartments, which became much like modern slums, for the workforce and service suppliers to live in. Rome also had its ghettos.

Street noises were unbearable, day and night, in Rome’s big cities, so the rich fled to the countryside whenever possible.

The cities turned into slums full of unemployed and racial tension, spiralling crime and polluted air.

All this resulted in riots.

The economy crumbled under crushing twin burdens of taxation and inflation.

*“If at any time in history, a people could have looked confidently to the future, it was the Roman people of the second century.”* Dr. Robert Strauss-Hope, noted historian.

*“Why did this civilisation decline? And why so rapidly that, within 100 years, the Roman Empire was plunged irreversibly into anarchy and penury, ravaged by foreign aggressors and doomed to extinction.”* Dr. Strauss-Hope.

**The striking parallels between much of our Western civilisation today and the Romans of yesteryear make any complacency very dangerous.**

*“The history of the later Roman Empire carries a warning to present day Caesars.”* ‘The New Deal in Old Rome,’ page 232, Roman history researcher H.J. Haskell.

**The home is the foundation of future generations –**

Largely forgotten today is the fact that the home is the basic foundation of any society, the most influential element in natural character building.

The early Romans basically understood this, and it was a force that helped Rome grow in power and stature.

Quotation ‘*Rome: It’s Rise and Fall*’ by Philip Van Ness Myers:

*“First, at the bottom as it were of Roman society and forming its ultimate unit was the family ... the most important feature or element of this family group was the authority of the father ... It would be difficult to overestimate the influence of this group upon the history and destiny of Rome. It was the cradle of at least some of the splendid virtues of the early Romans that contributed so much to the strength and greatness of Rome, and that helped to give her dominion of the world.”* [pages 11-12]

Quote continued: *“It was in the atmosphere of the family that were nourished in the Roman youth the virtues of obedience and of deference to authority. When the youth became a citizen, obedience to magistrates and respect for law was in him as instinct and indeed almost a religion. And, on the other hand, the exercise of the parental authority in the family taught the Roman how to command as well as how to obey – how to exercise authority with wisdom, moderation and justice.”* [page 15]

As strange though it may sound to many a modern woman, mothers and homemakers in early Rome they were accorded great honour and esteem.

Quotation by Tacitus, Roman historian of early Roman Empire:

*“In the good old days [of the republic] every man’s son, born in wedlock, was brought up not in the chamber of some hireling nurse, but in the mother’s lap, and at her knee. And that mother could have no higher praise than she managed the house and gave herself to her children ... religiously and with utmost delicacy she regulated not only the serious tasks of her youthful charges, but their recreations also and their games.”* [‘Dialogue on Oratory 28,’ Loeb Classics]

### **The collapse of the home –**

The stable Roman family didn’t last. Changes took place in the social life of Rome.

A growing commercial life made pursuit of trade and wealth the all-too-common objective, especially of the upper classes.

Increasingly, men of capability were away from their homes on business trips to some remote corner of the Empire. Children and wives were left alone.

Rapidly a moral change occurred, the Romans began to practice a *“new morality.”*

An easy attitude to the marriage tie, the increasing frequency of divorce and a growing laxity in women’s morals all of which ended in a loosening of the family unit in which the best in Roman character had its roots.

The institution of slavery did much to encourage loose and easy morals.

Quotation ‘*Daily Life in Ancient Rome*’ by Jerome Carcopino:

*“Yield to the impulse to become far too complacent. Having given up the habit of controlling their children, they let the children govern them, and took pleasure in bleeding themselves white to gratify the expensive whims of their offspring. The result was that they were succeeded by a generation of idlers and wastrels ... the eternal spoiled child of society, who has grown accustomed to luxury and lost all sense of discipline.”* [pages 78-79]

By the first century BC divorce became *“normal,”* at least among the aristocracy, whose matrimonial adventures are documented.

*“They divorce in order to remarry. They marry in order to divorce.”* [page 100]

All the above seems to echo the modern Western world and was predicted by the prophet Isaiah in the Christian Bible.

**Isaiah 3:12** [King James] *“As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths.”*

This is what is happening in society today, because of the breakdown of the family and leadership that has turned its back on God’s Word, the Christian Bible. [**Isaiah 59:12-14**]

Upper-class Roman society witnessed a growing force of wives who wanted to be “*emancipated*” from home life.

Quotation ‘*Daily Life in Ancient Rome*’ by Jerome Carcopino:

*“Some evaded the duties of maternity for fear of losing their good looks, some took pride in being behind their husbands in no sphere of activity, and vied with them in tests of strength which their would seemed to forbid, some were not content to live their lives by their husband’s side, but carried on another life without him ... to live your own life was a formula which women had already brought into fashion in the second century ... it is obvious that unhappy marriages must have been innumerable.”* [pages 90, 93, 95]

The women in Imperial Rome “*did their own thing*” and the results were wretched marriages, divorce and growing juvenile delinquency.

Rome travelled this road and it weakened that society!

Most of the Western civilisation is speeding along the same roadway today.