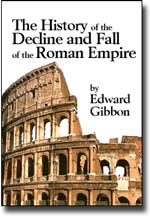
***Was the Fall of Rome Inevitable?***

**YES**

**You decide…**

Many historians believe that the decline and fall of the Western Roman Empire could not have been avoided. The problems the empire faced were too great. A famous 18th century historian of ancient Rome, Englishman Edward Gibbon, wrote



*“…the decline of Rome was the natural and inevitable effect of*

*immoderate greatness. Prosperity ripened the principle of decay;*

*the causes of destruction multiplied with the extent of conquest;*

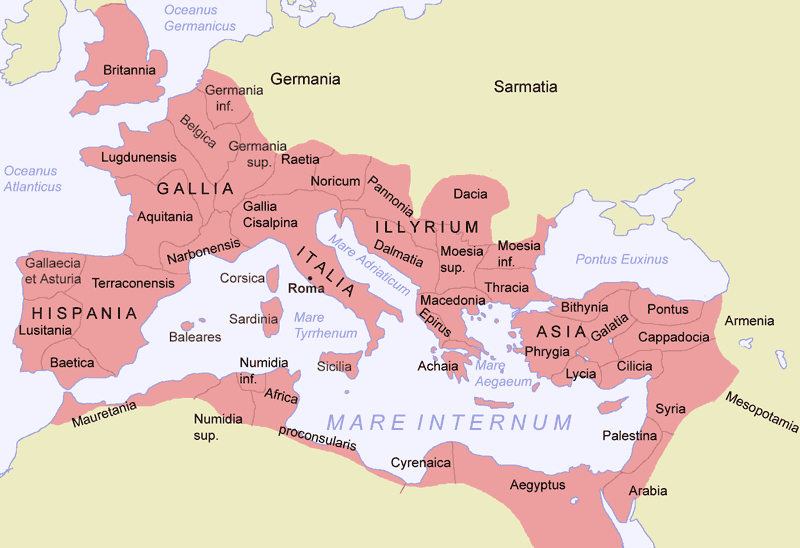
*and, as soon as time or accident had removed the artificial supports,*

*the stupendous fabric yielded to the pressure of its own weight.”*

*– Edward Gibbon****,*** The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire

**Some historians think many factors made the fall of Rome inevitable,**

**including the following:**



* Rulers were weak, ineffective, and corrupt
* There was no system for choosing a new emperor
* The empire was too big to govern well
* The army relied on permanent paid soldiers not temporary citizen volunteers
* Plague and famine weakened the population
* The empire relied too much on slavery





* People refused to pay taxes, and the government could not raise enough money
* Without enough money the government put less gold in its coins, money lost its value, and prices began to rise
* The cost of the army was too high, and it declined in size over time
* Attacks by outside invaders and lack of money for roads and bridges caused trade to decline
* The division of the empire into East and West caused a lack of unity



**NO**

***You decide…***

***Was the Fall of Rome Inevitable?***

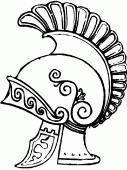
Many historians believe the Romans could have solved the problems facing their empire.

Some possible solutions to Rome’s problems include the following:

* Develop a system for choosing a new emperor
* Restore power to the Senate and other parts of the government so more people would support the government
* End corruption by enforcing the law and punishing corrupt officials
* Increase the size of the army, possibly by asking all citizens to serve in times of emergency
* Strengthen the army by increasing pay
* Reinforce the empire’s borders against invasion









* Rebuild roads and bridges and build new ships to increase trade
* Develop a better communication system to help the government control the empire
* Force people to leave Rome and other cities and return to the countryside where more food and clean water were available
* Reduce the number of slaves or abolish slavery
* Break up large estates and give the land to former slaves, poor people in the cities, and members of the army as a reward for their loyalty
* Develop a new system of currency with money that held its value

