**The Decline:**

* Invasions, civil war and plague almost caused an economic collapse of Rome in the 3rd century.
* The reforms of Diocletian and Constantine in the 4th century gave a new lease on life for Rome.
* The two emperors greatly increased the army and civil service in attempt to save the economy.
* Although temporarily successful, these policies were unable to revive Rome in the long run.

**Constantine Divides the Empire:**

* Constantine’s biggest project was the moving of the capital from Rome to his new city in the East, known as Byzantium, later called Constantinople, “the city of Constantine”.
* Today, it is the site of modern day Istanbul, Turkey.
* Byzantium was picked for its perfect, strategic, military position.

**The Decline:**

* Marcus Aurelias, the last of the five good emperors died in 180 AD.
* Following his death, a series of civil wars and revolutions took place.
* For fifty years, the Roman Empire was controlled by whatever military strength was powerful enough to seize it.
* During this period there were 22 emperors, many of which had a violent death.

**The Fall:**

* As Rome was in a weakened state, The Western Empire (Rome) came under increase pressure from invading Germanic tribes.
* Since the time of Julius Caesar, the Germanic people had gathered along Rome’s northern borders and existed in relative peace with Rome.

**Attila The Hun:**

* Led by Attila, a group of Mongol nomads known as the Huns, move into Europe from Asia.
* Attila leads an army of 100,000 and terrorizes both Eastern and Western empires.
* He attacks and plunders many cities and pressures Germanic tribes.

**The Fall of Rome:**

* In an effort to save themselves from Attila, Germanic tribes flee south into Roman territory.
* By 410 AD, the Visigoths, a tribe of Germanic barbarians (non-Romans) had attacked and overrun Rome itself and plundered it.
* Rome was so weak, it would continue to be attacked and overrun for years to come.

**Attila The Hun:**

* Although he did not attack Rome itself, it can be said that Attila is indirectly responsible for the Germanic invasion and the fall of Rome.
* According to legend, the great conqueror Attila died of a nosebleed while he slept in 453 AD.
* Despite his death, the invasions of Rome would continue.

**The Fall of Rome:**

* In 476 AD, the Western emperor Romulus Augustulus (who was only 14 at the time) was deposed by a Germanic general.
* This date is most commonly used as the official fall of the Western Roman Empire.
* Many German kingdoms would replace the Western Roman Empire in the years to come.

**The Eastern Empire:**

* Despite the fall of the Rome and the Western Empire the Eastern Roman Empire would not only survive, it would flourish.
* Known as the Byzantine Empire, it would preserve Greek and Roman culture for another 1,000 years.

**Why Did Rome Fall?**

* Many theories have been proposed about the fall of Rome.
  + Christianity influence on a spiritual kingdom weakened the army
  + Traditional Roman values declined as more non-Romans gained prominence.
  + Lead poisoning from water pipes and cups caused a decline in population
  + Plague wiping out 1/10 of the population
  + Failure to advance in technology because of slavery
  + Unable to put together a workable political system

**Conclusion:**

* There may be an element to truth to each
* History is an intricate web of relationships, causes, and effects.
* No single event can sufficiently explain the fall of one of the greatest empires in history.
* The biggest problems may have come from the acquiring new lands and trying to maintain control and govern them all.