
a *Grace Notes* course

History I

by Warren Doud

Lesson 5

Roman History (Part 1 of 4)

History I

Lesson 5 - Roman History (Part 1 of 4)

Lesson 5 Quiz 5

Instructions for Completing the Lesson

Begin each study session with prayer. It is the Holy Spirit who makes spiritual things discernable to Christians, so it is essential to be in fellowship with the Lord during Bible study.

Instructions

1. Read the lesson notes carefully.
 2. Look up and study each passage of the Bible that is mentioned.
 3. Complete the answers to the Questions and send your response to Grace Notes.
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THE ROMAN EMPIRE - A Short History

"The Wisdom of Divine Prearrangement"

This phrase, "the wisdom of divine pre-arrangement", is quoted from the book *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul* written by the Christian historians Conybeare and Howson. This book is one of the most widely studied biographies of the Apostle Paul. (I say "studied" because the book is not casually read.) "Divine pre-arrangements" refer to God's activity in guiding the development of the world's government and society in order to make perfect preparation for the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ and for the formation and growth of the early Christian Church. The Lord's bringing about of the "fullness of time" included the introduction and spread of the (koinei) Greek language and the completion and maturity of the Roman Empire.

At the time of Christ, all parts of the civilized world were bound together in one empire; one common organization controlled the whole. Channels of communication were opened everywhere and new facilities for travel were provided. The Roman government and society were prepared by divine pre-arrangements to help the progress of that religion which it persecuted. The manner in which Rome provided aid to the spread of Christianity is well illustrated by some events in the life of the Apostle Paul.

Paul's Roman citizenship rescued him in Macedonia. A Roman soldier rescued him from the mob at Ephesus. Roman soldiers saved his life when the mob in Jerusalem wanted to kill him in the temple area. Roman soldiers escorted Paul from Caesarea to Rome on the voyage in which they suffered shipwreck. Roman soldiers delivered Paul to the Roman garrison of the Praetorian Guard for his imprisonment. Paul led a Roman governor to Christ in Cyprus. He was protected by another governor in Achaia. And a third governor sent him from Jerusalem to Rome.

All the weight of terrible tyranny was going to fall on the new religion; but before this took place,

Christianity had taken firm root and had begun to grow strong in close connection with all parts of the Roman Empire. And when the Roman supreme government itself became Christian, it stayed unified until, upon dividing up into the separate nations of the European continent, each fragment was closely tied to Christianity, at least in name, as part of the Holy Roman Empire.

THE ORIGINS OF ROME

While Greece was fighting the Persian wars and the Peloponnesian War, an obscure people was rising to power on the Italian peninsula. Rome had been settled about 1000 B.C. as people had migrated southward into Italy from north of the Alps. These people were known as the Etruscans, a race of people who are still obscure in history owing largely to the fact that their language has never been deciphered. We know that they worshipped evil spirits, practiced magic and voodoo, and that they enjoyed gladiatorial combat. They were also competent engineers. The early Roman kings were probably Etruscan; and the Etruscan culture dominated Italy until 508 B.C., the year assigned to the beginning of the Roman Republic.

Over the centuries, the Romans showed little talent for scientific or philosophical thinking. Their literature and art are pale imitations of Greek literature and art. Most of the Roman culture is borrowed from the Greeks. But the Romans excelled in two areas, those of law and government. The Greeks had failed in these areas and had not been able to develop a unified political state. The Romans created and held together an integrated, well-balanced empire without equal in the ancient world.

Where the Greeks jealously guarded their citizenship, the Romans offered their citizenship to large segments of conquered peoples, thereby winning a measure of loyalty and gratitude from them. While Greece destroyed itself in destructive civil wars, the Romans carried Greek culture to every part of the Western world; and for a time they brought peace and prosperity to every corner of the Mediterranean.

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THE ROMAN REPUBLIC: 508 to 30 B.C.

Patricians and Plebeians

The revolution against the Etruscan domination was led by the Patricians in 508 B.C. The patricians (from the Latin word pater, "father") were wealthy landowners and aristocrats, and the type of government they established reflected their leadership. All public offices were held by patricians.

The "common" people were called "plebeians", a word that means "crude or coarse in manners or culture." (First year cadets at the U.S. Military Academy are called "plebes." A "plebiscite" is a vote by which the people of an entire country or district declare an opinion for or against an issue. Voltaire wanted war to be declared by plebiscite, that is, by the people who would be doing the fighting. He thought that this would end war.)

The Roman government was called "The Senate of the Roman People"; in Latin, Senatus Populusque Romanus, or SPQR, which is found on thousands of monuments in Italy. But the word populus originally referred only to upper classes. Plebeians could not serve in the Senate in the early days of the Republic.

The lowest rung on the social ladder, however, was reserved for slaves, who were bought and sold as property, even by the lower plebeians.

Many businessmen were plebeians by birth and were annoyed to be excluded from the Senate. The poorer masses resented their poverty, their continually increasing debt and taxation, and the unjust laws applied to them, such as the law which provided that a creditor could imprison a debtor or sell him as a slave. The plebeians demanded that the harsh laws be repealed and that land owned by the state and won through conquest be divided up among the people.

In 494 B.C., the Senate was engaged in fighting wars and tried to draft plebeians into the army. The plebs refused to serve until their demands were met; and since the Senate was afraid of invasion, they agreed to reduce or cancel the debts of the plebs and to give plebs the offices of two

tribunes who would defend their rights in the Senate. In the same time period, high ranking officials who were trying to get elected or appointed to high office tried to curry favor with the plebs by offering land grants or by gifts of food during times of famine.

The Constitution of the Republic

At the time of the revolution against the Etruscans, the king was replaced by two consuls, one to act as a check on the other. Consuls were elected for one-year terms and handled the administration of justice and military defense. The consuls, in turn, appointed the Senate, composed of 300 heads of patrician families, who served for life. The Senate advised the consuls on legislation and public policy.

The Assembly was formed to represent the plebeian class, and gradually became the highest lawmaking body, at least in theory. But in practice the Assembly had little power because the Senate held veto power over the acts of the Assembly and controlled the expenditure of public funds. From 508 B.C. until the outbreak of the First Punic War in 264 B.C., the plebeian class was constantly struggling to limit the power of the patricians and to win greater privileges and rights for themselves.

At first the laws of the Empire were not published, and the plebeians were kept in the dark about the laws. In 450 B.C. they forced the publication of the Law of the Twelve Tables; and while the laws were weighted heavily in favor of the patricians, at least now the plebs knew what the laws were and could better protect themselves against the arbitrary acts of the patrician magistrates.

In 367 B.C., the first plebeian was elected consul; and plebs began to occupy more public offices. And since all officeholders automatically became members of the Senate, the Senate began to have more plebs.

In 339 B.C., the laws against intermarriage between patricians and plebs were repealed, and plebs were declared eligible for all offices. In 287 B.C., the Hortensian Law (named for Quintus

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Hortensius) was enacted which stripped the Senate of its veto power over the Assembly.

The Twelve Tables remained the law of Rome for 900 years. Until the time of Cicero, every schoolboy had to memorize them.

The Roman Army

From the very beginning the Romans were land hungry and intent upon expanding their territories. At the beginning of the 5th Century BC, Rome conquered two neighboring tribes. In 390 BC, the city's imperial career of conquest was nearly ended when barbarian tribes of Gauls invaded Latium and sacked Rome. The republic was saved by paying a ransom of 1,000 pounds of gold. After this, the republic never lost a war. As with Persia, the success of the political institutions of Rome lay in its ability to wage war and to put down revolts. The Roman army was the most successful military organization in history.

In Rome, the citizens and the army were one and the same. The army, assembled in its legions and

centuries, was the Assembly, the chief lawmaking body of the state.

The Roman Legion was a mixed unit of brigade strength, approximately 4,000 to 6,000 men, 300 to 500 cavalry, along with various auxiliary groups. Two legions made up a consul's army. Each legion was divided into centuries, at times 100 or 200 men. Each legion had its ensign (guidon). Honor forbade its falling into enemy hands; and officers sometimes threw the ensign into the ranks of the enemy to stir the soldiers into a desperate recovery.

In battle, the front ranks of the infantry used javelins when ten to twenty paces from the enemy - these were short wooden lances with metal points. On the wings, the archers and slingers attacked with arrows and stones. In hand-to-hand combat the soldiers used the machaira, the famous Roman short sword (cf. military tactics of Dionysius of Syracuse, about. 400 BC).

History I, Lesson 5 Questions

Instructions

The following questions relate to your study of this lesson.

Respond to the questions as required.

You have choices about sending the quiz back to Grace Notes.

- If you received an email file containing the questions, you can use the REPLY feature of your e-mail application to open the file. Enter your responses in the reply message. Then SEND the message to Grace Notes.
- You can enter your answers on these pages, then send the whole file back to Grace Notes as a file attachment. This is handy, but these lessons will average 100K to 200K in size. As an alternative,
- After you answer the questions here, copy and paste the whole list of questions into a new MS Word document; then, send the new file to Grace Notes as an attachment. The new file will, of course, be much smaller than this main file.
- Finally, you can print the Quiz pages on your printer and send your response back to Grace Notes in the regular mail. If you do this, send the mail to:

Grace Notes

% Warren Doud

1705 Aggie Lane

Austin, Texas 78757 USA

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Whichever transmission method you use, when *Grace Notes* receives your response, we will send you the next lesson in the series.

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Questions on History I, Lesson 5

1. At the time of Christ, one common organization, the _____, controlled the "civilized" world.

Answer:

2. Although Paul was born in a Roman province and had a Greek education, he was not a citizen of Rome. [True/False]

Answer:

3. The Roman Empire by people who had migrated southward into [A. Judea; B. Italy; C. Persia; D. Asia Minor].

Answer:

4. The plebeians, although they were the lower class in Rome, always held some public offices. [True/False]

Answer:

5. The Latin phrase, *Senatus Populusque Romanum*, means _____.

Answer:

6. The Twelve Tables remained the Law of Rome for _____ centuries.

Answer:

7. A Roman legion was divided into _____ of 100 to 200 men.

Answer:

8. At one point in early Roman history, an organization called _____ was formed to represent the plebeian class.

Answer:

9. The Romans allowed conquered people to be citizens. [True/False]

Answer:

10. The Roman Empire did many things which helped in the spread of the gospel. [True/False]

Answer:

End of Quiz