

## 50 Suggested Reasons for the Fall of the Roman Empire

1. Invasions by barbarian tribes
2. Cost of maintaining army to protect long frontier
3. Lower morale in army of draftees, not volunteers
4. Weakening of army by political appointment of officers
5. Too many young men in army rather than labor force
6. Christian subversion of historic political unity
7. Tension between emperors and Senate
8. Political corruption of Praetorian Guard
9. Lower birth rate and resulting labor shortage
10. Rising income inequality and hereditary wealth
11. Orgies, child molesting, and other moral perversions
12. High taxes to support bloated bureaucracy
13. Excessive spending on military forces and equipment
14. Corruption among suppliers of military equipment
15. Failure to raise taxes to maintain roads and aqueducts
16. Rising crime in anonymous city apartments
17. Police brutality to suppress crime and dissent
18. Gated communities and private security
19. Laziness because of free food, housing ("the dole")
20. Widespread corruption of government officials
21. Decline in education and scientific advance
22. Futile attempt to control inflation by price fixing
23. Slower expansion and fewer captured slaves
24. Loss of talented people to govern distant provinces
25. High cost of land/building in crowded cities
26. Increase in homelessness and street begging
27. More money going to church instead of business
28. More money going to church instead of government
29. More money going to government instead of business
30. Too much money spent on silk and other Chinese luxuries
31. Too much money spent for lavish parties and festivals
32. Mental retardation due to inbreeding in rich families
33. Moral decay and decline in family values among poor
34. Immigration, diversity, and resulting loss of ethnic identity
35. Abandonment of silver standard for currency
36. Inefficient barter economy as a result of hyperinflation
37. Money and time "wasted" in public spectacles (gladiators)
38. Church attracted talented leaders away from business
39. Church attracted talented leaders away from government
40. Empire attracted talented leaders away from business
41. Villas attracted talented leaders away from capital city
42. Rich people bribed government leaders for subsidies
43. Government problems due to lack of clear succession
44. Assassination as a political or economic tool
45. Government uncertainty due to fear of assassination
46. Moral decay caused by killing as a spectator sport
47. Christian pacifist refusal to support imperial wars
48. Barbarian adoption of Roman military tactics
49. Lead in water pipes and resulting mental retardation
50. Climate change and reduction in food production

Question: Could you "cherry-pick" ten reasons that fit any given political position today?

Footnote 1: consider this quote by Glenn Bowersock: "We have been obsessed with the fall of Rome . . . we see it as the archetype for every perceived decline . . . hence, a symbol for our own fears."

Footnote 2: "The Roman Empire never actually fell – it just changed hands in a relatively peaceful way."

See also <http://sbcusd.com/DocumentCenter/Home/View/13704> <http://www.roman-empire.net/diverse/faq.html>  
<http://www.tribunesandtriumphs.org/roman-empire/causes-for-the-fall-of-the-roman-empire.htm>