The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire
Economic Troubles

- Decline begins after the *pax romana* in 3ʳᵈ Century
- Invaders made trade unsafe on sea and on roads
- The rich spent gold and silver on luxury items from Asia which drained Rome of these precious metals
- Rome began making coins with less silver which caused inflation.
Economic Troubles

- Inflation is a drastic drop in the value of money coupled with rising prices for items.
- Agriculture decreased because of infertile soil, and farmland destroyed by war.
- Food shortages
- Spread of disease
Military Troubles

- **Germanic** tribes were invading Rome
- Soldiers no longer had discipline or **loyalty** to Rome.
- Soldiers had loyalty only to their **commanders**, who fought not for Rome, but to try to become the **emperor**.
- To defend Rome, **mercenaries** were recruited – foreign soldiers who fought for money.
Political Troubles

• Troubles in the empire made citizens lose patriotism for Rome
• Being a political official was no longer thought to be an honor
• Few people wanted to serve in the government
• Out of 26 generals who became emperors, 25 met violent deaths.
Temporary Help

• Diocletian in A.D. 284 became a strong leader
• He doubled the Roman armies and hired German mercenaries
• Persecuted Christians
• He divided the Roman empire into 2 sides
  – East: Greek speaking
  – West: Latin speaking
• He took over the East, but Civil war broke out after his death
Constantine

- Took over the West part of the empire in A.D. 312
- Moved the capital to a strategic location in Greece in the East in Byzantium and renamed it Constantinople
- He accepted Christianity
The West Falls

- The west faced worse problems than the east that was far from invaders.
- From A.D. 376 to 476, huge numbers of Germanic tribes poured into Rome to get away from the fierce Huns.
- Attila the Hun was a powerful chieftain who swept through the west.
The West Falls

- Negotiated with Pope Leo I and withdrew
- He died in 453 and was no longer a threat
- Germanic tribes continued to invade and finally the west was no longer Rome
- But the Eastern Roman empire will continue as the Byzantine Empire that will preserve Greek and Roman heritage.
Pictures Cited

• Slide 3 – http://www.davonline.com/images/rome_hbo_visuel.jpg
• Slide 4 – http://www.fallofromegame.com/images/centurion_illus.jpg
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