*Horsemen**

Revelation 6:1-8 (1) And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals, and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder, one of the four beasts saying, Come and see.
(2) And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.
(3) And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come and see.
(4) And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword.
(5) And when he had opened the third seal, I heard the third beast say, Come and see. And I beheld, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.
(6) And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.
(7) And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come and see.
(8) And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.
Many within Christendom are preoccupied with dispensational theology, having embraced the millennial framework that prophesy a coming "rapture," "tribulation," "antichrist," "Armageddon," and "millennium." However there are convincing objections that should be considered. In the first place, several contextual indicators within the book of Revelation weigh heavily against the application of the book's contents to a yet-rapture time period. For example, the

events of the book of Revelation were to "shortly be done" (GB)—an expression that means the fulfillment of the symbols were to begin soon; The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must **shortly come to pass**; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: (Rev 1:1). *Near the end of the book;* And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which **must shortly be done** (Rev 22:6). *In addition is the statement the angel made to John;* And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand (Rev 22:10). *What did the angel mean? What he meant becomes apparent when one reflects upon the fact that Daniel was told to do the exact opposite of what John was told. After receiving a remarkable series of detailed prophecies, Daniel was told to;* shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end (Daniel 12:4). *The reason Daniel was told to seal the book was because the fulfillment of the prophecies that had been revealed to him were hundreds of years off in the future—far from his own day. The predictions, therefore, would be of no immediate value to the initial recipients of his book. The book could be closed and placed on the shelf, until those who would be living at the time of fulfillment could appreciate the relevance of its predictions. In stark contrast, John was ordered:* seal not the words of the prophecy of this book (Rev 22:10). *Why? The text answers-*for the time is at hand!*The things revealed here must begin to transpire….or the cause will be lost. However that does not mean everything was fulfilled at once, a horse leaving the starting gate does not mean the race is finished. Consider the little Book Open, its very phraseology, coming as it does just before the Seventh Trumpet, may be a symbolic hint there will be an era of the Open Bible just preceding the end of the world (Rev 10:7), as the Bible was banned several centuries. Another contextual feature is the use of the term "**signified**":*

And He sent and signified it by His angel to His servant John (Rev 1:1). *This term, as is evident from the English translation, means "to show by signs." Despite the fact these prophecies were to "shortly come to pass," the four horsemen have delighted the imagination of mankind for ages and continue to do so unto this day. Many commentaries begin their documentary proclaiming the first horseman to be antichrist. However there is a problem with this analysis. The first horse is white and its rider given a crown. The color of each of the four horses depicts a particular theme. White indicates purity and victory. I would think a horse for antichrist would have to be at least, spotted or soiled in some way so as to depict unpure. Therefore antichrist theories abound from the imaginations of man, so what should one believe? Or what should one not believe? Turn with me to;*
2Thessalonians 2:7-12 (7) For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.
(8) And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:
(9) Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,
(10) And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.
(11) And for this cause **God shall send them strong delusion**, that they should believe a lie:
(12) That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.
This is understandable, For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an **antichrist** (2John 1:7).
Antichrist appears 4 times in the Bible, 3 times in 1John and 1 time in 2John. Let's turn to;

1John 2:18-22 (18) Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that **antichrist** shall come, even now are there many **antichrists**; whereby we know that it is the last time.
(19) They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.
(20) But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.
(21) I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.
(22) Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is **antichrist**, that denieth the Father and the Son.
1John 4:1-3 (1) Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.
(2) Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:
(3) And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of **antichrist**, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.
Antichrist may have been abiding with the Red Horse of war, the Black Horse of famine and the Pale Horse of death, giving unholy advisement to each. But in any case, antichrist is not riding the white horse reserved for Christ. I acknowledge there are different opinions, may I share with you a portion of; The Plan and Method of the Apocalypse by Alexander Campbell. {We shall now read and examine the sixth chapter, having for the present disposed of the first five. In this no less than six seals are opened. The Lamb stands between the four seraphim and the throne of God. He is above them all. He takes into his right hand the roll. He holds it up before the universe. Then breaks the first seal, and unrolls one fold of the curious volume. At that instant stands forth one of the seraphim, and

with a loud voice summonses the attention of the universe to the mysterious inscription, saying, "Come and see." What is it? A milk-white horse, whose puissant rider is the Messiah himself, goes forth with his faithful followers to subdue the nations with the sceptre of his grace, or the rod of his anger. He has one crown upon his head, a bow in his hand, and a quiver full of arrows by his side, and his course is onward, "conquering and to conquer." That we have not mistaken the first seal, we shall now prove by a development that comes out of the last, or seventh seal, when the eventful campaign is coming to a close. It is found in chap. 19., verses 11-16, "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns: and he had a name written that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

He is in the field from the first to the end of the seventh seal. If he does not appear in them all, he is at work in them all, fighting by the sharp two-edged sword with which he smites the nations, against those who will not have him to rule over them, and still extending the victories of his love. All the symbols of this passage show that the Messiah is the person who mounted the white horse, having then but one crown, now returning covered with the blood of his enemies, and wearing the trophies of a thousand battles. Well did Isaiah say of, him, chap. 63. 1-6, "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel,

traveling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness mighty to save. Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the wine-press alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment. For the day of vengeance is in my heart, and the year of my redeemed is come. And I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own Am brought salvation unto me; and my fury, it upheld me. And I will tread down the people in mine anger, and make them drunk in my fury, and I will bring down their strength to the earth."

The first act of the first seal and the last act of the seventh seal are most unquestionably applicable to the Messiah, and to him only; and indicate, very clearly, what is intended in the Apocalypse, and therefore impart great assurance to those who view the treatise as indicative of the conflicts between King Jesus and Tiberias Cesar in some one of his Pagan or Papal successors, and of the various mutations and fortunes of a two thousand years' war between Christ and Belial--between his kingdom and the world.

I need not go into a prosing detail of the particular calamities to which the Christian Church was subjected down to the time Constantine, set forth under the figures of the three next seals. I need not give the history of the red or war-horse of the Cesars. They soon drew the sword. They called for the blood of Christians. That oracle of the Messiah was fully verified in them. They unsheathed the sword, and they perished with the sword. Our Captain commences his pacific and conciliatory career mounted on a milk-white steed. The Cesars mounted first the red horse of war; then the black horse of famine; and finally the pale horse of death. The ten, more or less, Pagan persecutions of the Christians, are most

clearly and strikingly set forth under these appropriate and intelligible symbols. Any one who makes himself well acquainted with the history of the first centuries of Christianity, and carefully reads Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," will feel the most satisfactory evidence that the Pagan persecutions are here set forth with an especial reference to the sufferings of the Christians and of the world under that idolatrous and wicked government. Each of the four seraphim attends in succession on the opening of the four seals, three of which develop the general character of the cruelties of the opposition.

The six seals, then, cover the whole period of the church's trials under the tyranny of those spirits and principles that first opposed the Messiah and his Apostles. Still there are yet in store for the Roman Empire innumerable woes to be developed under the seventh seal. That power yet exists in new forms and combinations, waiting for a day of complete and perpetual desolation.

The period of the six seals numbers the days of Pagan Rome so far as she opposed the rising empire of the King Messiah. The church, and not the Roman Empire, is the special object of the calamities inflicted during the first three centuries of the Christian era. The seventh seal is comprehensive of all the fortunes of the world and the church to the end of the awful career of Papal Rome. It reaches to the second coming of the Messiah. Indeed, it embraces the sequel of human history under the remedial system. The developments of the seventh seal constitute the main burthen of the revelation of Jesus Christ. It grasps the annals of almost seventeen centuries, and therefore it includes the fortunes of the Roman Empire from the days of Constantine till the fall of Babylon, or the utter ruin of Papal Rome.} *The Kingdom of Christ grew rapidly at its beginning (Acts 2:41). However as the first three centuries unfolded, fury and hatred for its citizens became the norm. Tacitus reports that after the Great Fire of Rome in AD 64 some in the*

population held Nero responsible and that to diffuse blame, he targeted and blamed the Christians. Persecution of Christians would be a recurring theme in the Empire for the next two centuries. Eusebius and Lactantius document the last great persecution of the Christians under Diocletian at the beginning of the 4th century at the urging of Galerius. This was the most vicious persecution of Christians in the Empire's history.

Historical records such as ***Martyrs Mirror*** *give chilling accounts of the terror inflicted upon the Christians by unscrupulous people under the authority of a conscienceless government.* {Beginning with Nero, he became so full of hatred, murder, and bloodshedding, that he seemed to delight in nothing more, than in killing, murdering, and fearfully torturing, not only malefactors, but even the saints of God who were praised even among their enemies for their Godfearing walk and conversation. Touching the manner in which the Christians were tortured and killed at the time of Nero, A. Mellinus gives the following account from Tacitus and other Roman writers: namely, that four extremely cruel and unnatural kinds of torture were employed against the Christians

Firstly, that they dressed them in the skins of tame and wild beasts, that they might be torn to pieces by dogs or other wild animals.

Secondly, that they, according to the example of their Saviour, were fastened alive on crosses, and that in many different ways.

Thirdly, that the innocent Christians were burned and smoked by the Romans, with torches.

Fourthly, that these miserable, accused Christian martyrs were used as candles, torches, or lanterns, to see by them at night. Of those who were burned, some were tied or nailed to stakes, and held still by a hook driven through the throat, so that they could not move the head when the pitch, wax, tallow, and other inflammable substances were poured boiling over their

heads, and set on fire,(Martyrs Mirror).}
Given the atrocities that occurred during the government of the Roman Empire it is difficult to imagine that previously it had been a Republic. The United States of America is a Republic, could our country lose that status? Thankfully the United States of America was founded during the era of the Little Book open and is the reason we enjoy freedom of religion tho under attack by LGBT, pro-choice and other Godless people that call good evil and evil good (Isaiah 5:20). I believe no one can read the history of our country without realizing that the Good Book and the spirit of the Savior have from the beginning been our guiding geniuses. "And he had in his hand a **little book open**: and he set his right foot upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth" (Rev 10:2). *The Bill of Rights came into existence because of the knowledge the founders had of the Bible and their belief in it: freedom of belief, of expression, of assembly, of petition, of life, the dignity of the individual, the sanctity of the home, equal justice under law, and the reservation of powers to the people. I would like to believe we are living today in the spirit of the Christian religion. I would also like to believe that as long as we do so, no great harm can come to our country as did the Roman Republic, when it ceased to exist and in its place the Roman Empire emerged, ruled by Emperors according to their own self-will. Sound familiar? Our liberties are being repressed repeatedly. From history we find that after the founding of Rome in 753 BC, powerful kings ruled until, according to patriotic legend, the Romans expelled the last monarch in 509 BC and established a more representative form of government known as the Roman Republic. In the five centuries the republic existed, Rome expanded from a small community on the hills beside the Tiber River into the major power of the Mediterranean world. In 44 BC Julius Caesar, the Roman leader who ruled the Roman Republic as a dictator, was assassinated.*

Rome descended into more than ten years of civil war and political upheaval. After Caesar's heir Octavius (also known as Octavian) defeated his last rivals, the Senate in 27 BC proclaimed him Augustus, meaning the exalted or holy one. In this way Augustus established the monarchy that became known as the Roman Empire. The Roman Republic, which had lasted nearly 500 years, was dead, never to be revived. The Roman Empire would endure for 500 years until AD 476. After that the Holy Roman Empire represented an effort in the Middle Ages to develop a government with some of the characteristics of the old Roman Empire with the help of the "church of men alienated from Christ" thus fulfilling; And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast (Rev 13:3). *However, the true Church has endured and the saved added to it by faith. What faith and how? Faith in Christ that is the effect of belief in His gospel and submitting to baptism that is the effect of faith. He accordingly has therein declared all men without distinction, who through faith as obedient children, heed, follow, and practice what faith contains, to be His children and lawful heirs. Therefore only those who first believe the testimony of God, and by faith repent of their sins, confess Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God, and are baptized into His death for remission of sins, have the full and explicit testimony of pardon. This is the gospel. It's invitation is always open, also prayer requests for other reasons, in either case let your request be made known while we persuade with song.*

This message approved by
Jack Warford
a minister for Christ

‘Horsemen’ Revised 01202020
Study Aids; Alexander Campbell. "The Plan and Method of the Apocalypse." The Millennial Harbinger 16 (September 1845):
MARTYRS MIRROR
Answers.com
Apologetics Press; Will There be a Millennium?
by Dave Miller, Ph.D.
This message presented to; PineMtAr-June2016/
WestvilleOk-July2016/

Benson Commentary
Revelation 6:1-2. And — Being all attention to this wonderful scene; I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seals — Of the book which he had taken from the hand of him that sat on the throne; and I heard, as it were the noise of thunder — Signifying the great importance of the event about to be disclosed; one of the four living creatures — That is, it seems, the first, which was like a lion, looking forward toward the east, toward Asia and Syria, where the prophecy had its principal accomplishment, and from whence Christ and his gospel came. Saying, Come and see — Pay particular attention to what is now to be exhibited. And I saw, and behold a white horse — The contents of this seal seem evidently to refer to the triumph of Christianity over Jewish and heathen opposition, by the labours of its first preachers. Therefore the person here represented is Jesus Christ, who had received a kingdom from the Father, which was to rule all nations, and concerning which it was foretold, that notwithstanding the efforts that would be made by earth and hell to oppose its progress, and even to destroy it, it should be preserved and prevail, so that at length all enemies to it should be subdued, and the kingdoms of this world should become the kingdom of our God and of his Christ. The white colour of the horse, the bow which he had that sat on it, shooting arrows afar off, the crown given unto him, and his going forth conquering and to conquer — All these circumstances betoken victory, triumph, prosperity, enlargement of empire, and dominion over many people. And all these figurative representations of authority, government, success, and conquest, may be properly applied to the gospel and the kingdom of Christ, which was now beginning to spread far and wide, and would tend greatly to comfort the faithful in Christ Jesus, assuring them that, however the Jews on the one hand, or the heathen Roman empire on the other, opposed and persecuted them, yet they should see the punishment of their enemies, both Jews and heathen, and the cause of Christianity prevailing over both, in the proper and appointed time. These expressions, and this interpretation of them, are elucidated by the words of the psalmist, Psalm 45:3, &c: Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, and in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth, &c. Thine arrows are sharp, &c., whereby the people fall under thee. Thy throne, O

God, is for ever, &c. The application of this prophecy to Christ is still further justified by Revelation 19:11, I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse. &c., a passage which all allow was intended of Christ; he only being worthy of being called, as he is there, Faithful and True, and THE WORD OF GOD. Thus, with great propriety to the order and design of this revelation, the dignity and power of Christ, and the protection and success of his gospel, are the first part of its prophecy for the consolation of his followers, which, it seems, is the chief end of the whole book.

6:1-8 Christ, the Lamb, opens the first seal: observe what appeared. A rider on a white horse. By the going forth of this white horse, a time of peace, or the early progress of the Christian religion, seems to be intended; its going forth in purity, at the time when its heavenly Founder sent his apostles to teach all nations, adding, Lo! I am with you alway, even to the end of the world. The Divine religion goes out crowned, having the Divine favour resting upon it, armed spiritually against its foes, and destined to be victorious in the end. On opening the second seal, a red horse appeared; this signifies desolating judgments. The sword of war and persecution is a dreadful judgment; it takes away peace from the earth, one of the greatest blessings; and men who should love one another, and help one another, are set upon killing one another. Such scenes also followed the pure age of early Christianity, when, neglectful of charity and the bond of peace, the Christian leaders, divided among themselves, appealed to the sword, and entangled themselves in guilt. On opening the third seal, a black horse appeared; a colour denoting mourning and woe, darkness and ignorance. He that sat on it had a yoke in his hand. Attempts were made to put a yoke of superstitious observances on the disciples. As the stream of Christianity flowed further from its pure fountain, it became more and more corrupt. During the progress of this black horse, the necessaries of life should be at excessive prices, and the more costly things should not be hurt. According to prophetic language, these articles signified that food of religious knowledge, by which the souls of men are sustained unto everlasting life; such we are invited to buy, Isa 55:1. But when the dark clouds of ignorance and superstition, denoted by the black horse, spread over the Christian world, the knowledge and practice of true religion became scarce. When a people loathe their spiritual food, God may justly deprive them of their daily bread. The famine of bread is a terrible judgment; but the famine of the word is more so. Upon opening the fourth seal, another horse appeared, of a pale colour. The rider was Death, the king of terrors. The attendants, or followers of this king of terrors, hell, a state of eternal misery to all who die in their sins; and in times of general destruction, multitudes go down unprepared into the pit. The period of the fourth seal is one of great slaughter and devastation, destroying

whatever may tend to make life happy, making ravages on the spiritual lives of men. Thus the mystery of iniquity was completed, and its power extended both over the lives and consciences of men. The exact times of these four seals cannot be ascertained, for the changes were gradual. God gave them power, that is, those instruments of his anger, or those judgments: all public calamities are at his command; they only go forth when God sends them, and no further than he permits.

Roman Republic

Definition by Donald L. Wasson published on 07 April 2016
Map of 2nd Century Roman Expansion (US Military Academy)
In the late 6th century BCE, the small city-state of Rome overthrew the shackles of monarchy and created a republican government that, in theory if not always in practice, represented the wishes of its citizens. From this basis the city would go on to conquer all of the Italian peninsula and large parts of the Mediterraean world and beyond. The Republic and its insitutions of government would endure for five centuries, until, wrecked by civil wars, it would transform into a Principate ruled by emperors. Even then many of the politcal bodies, notably the Senate, created in the Republican period would endure, albeit with a reduction in power.

Myth & Legend

The years prior to the rise of the Republic are lost to myth and legend. No contemporary written history of this period has survived. Although much of this history had been lost, the Roman historian Livy (59 BCE – 17 CE) was still able to write a remarkable History of Rome - 142 volumes - recounting the years of the monarchy through the fall of the Republic. Much of his history, however, especially the early years, was based purely on myth and oral accounts. Contrary to some interpretations, the fall of the monarchy and birth of the republic did not happen overnight. Some even claim it was far from bloodless. Historian Mary Beard in her SPQR wrote that the transformation from monarchy to republic was “borne over a period of decades, if not, centuries.”

Prior to the overthrow of the last king, Tarquinius Superbus or Tarquin the Proud in 510 BCE, the history of the city is mired in stories of valor and war. Even the founding of the city is mostly legend and many people have preferred the myth over fact anyway. For years Rome had admired the Hellenistic culture of the Greeks, and so it easily embraced the story of Aeneas and the founding of Rome as penned by Roman author Virgil in his heroic saga The Aeneid. This story gave the Romans a link to an ancient, albeit Greek, culture. This mythical tale is about Aeneas and his followers who, with the assistance of the goddess Venus, escaped the city of Troy as it fell to the Greeks in the Trojan War. Jupiter’s wife Juno constantly interfered with the story's hero Aeneas throughout the tale. After a brief stay in Carthage, Aeneas eventually made his way

to Italy and Latium, finally fulfilling his destiny. His descendants were the twins Romulus and Remus - the illegitimate sons of Mars, the god of war, and the princess Rhea Silvia, the daughter of the true king of Alba Longa. Rescued from drowning by a she-wolf and raised by a shepherd, Romulus eventually defeated his brother in battle and founded the city of Rome, becoming its first king. So the legend goes.

The Meeting of Dido and Aeneas

Early Years

After Tarquin's exit, Rome suffered from both external and internal conflict. Much of the 5th century BCE was spent struggling, not thriving. From 510 BCE to 275 BCE, while the government grappled with a number of internal political issues, the city grew to become the prevailing power over the entire Italian peninsula. From the Battle of Regallus (496 BCE), where Rome was victorious over the Latins, to the Pyrrhic Wars (280 – 275 BCE) against Pyrrhus of Epirus, Rome emerged as a dominant, warring superpower in the west. Through this expansion, the social and political structure of the Republic gradually evolved. From this simple beginning, the city would create a new government, a government that would one day dominate an area from the North Sea southward through Gaul and Germania, westward to Hispania, and eastward to Greece, Syria and North Africa. The great Mediterranean became a Roman lake. These lands would remain under the control of Rome throughout the Republic and well into the formative years of the Roman Empire.

Government of the Republic

However, before it could become this dominant military force, the city had to have a stable government, and it was paramount that they avoid the possibility of one individual seizing control. In the end they would create a system exhibiting a true balance of power. Initially, after the fall of the monarchy, the Republic fell under the control of the great families - the patricians, coming from the word patres or fathers. Only these great families could hold political or religious offices. The remaining citizens or plebians had no political authority although many of them were as wealthy as the patricians. However, much to the dismay of the patricians, this arrangement could not and would not last.

Tensions between the two classes continued to grow, especially

since the poorer residents of the city provided the bulk of the army. They asked themselves why they should fight in a war if all of the profits go to the wealthy. Finally, in 494 BCE the plebians went on strike, gathering outside Rome and refusing to move until they were granted representation; this was the famed Conflict of Orders or the First Succession of the Plebs. The strike worked, and the plebians would be rewarded with an assembly of their own - the Concilium Plebis or Council of the Plebs.

Cicero Denounces Catiline

Although the government of Rome could never be considered a true democracy, it did provide many of its citizens (women excluded) with a say in how their city was ruled. Through their rebellion, the plebians had entered into a system where power lay in a number of magistrates (the cursus honorum) and various assemblies. This executive power or imperium resided in two consuls. Elected by the Comitia Centuriata, a consul ruled for only one year, presiding over the Senate, proposing laws, and commanding the armies. Uniquely, each consul could veto the decision of the other. After his term was completed, he could become a pro-consul, governing one of the republic's many territories, which was an appointment that could make him quite wealthy.

Magistrates & Officials

There were several lesser magistrates: a praetor (the only other official with imperium power) who served as a judicial officer with civic and provincial jurisdiction, a quaestor who functioned as the financial administrator, and the aedile who supervised urban maintenance such as roads, water and food supplies, and the annual games and festivals. Lastly, there was the highly coveted position of censor, who held office for only 18 months. Elected every five years, he was the census taker, reviewing the list of citizens and their property. He could even remove members of the Senate for improper behavior. There was, however, one final position - the unique office of dictator. He was granted complete authority and was only named in times of emergency, usually serving for only six months. The most famous one, of course, was Julius Caesar; who was named dictator for life.

Assemblies

Aside from the magistrates there were also a number of assemblies.

These assemblies were the voice of the people (male citizens only), thereby allowing for the opinions of some to be heard. Foremost of all the assemblies was the Roman Senate (a remnant of the old monarchy). Although unpaid, Senators served for life unless they were removed by a censor for public or private misconduct. While this body had no true legislative power, serving only as advisors to the consul and later the emperor, they still wielded considerable authority. They could propose laws as well as oversee foreign policy, civic administration, and finances. Power to enact laws, however, was given to a number of popular assemblies. All of the Senate's proposals had to be approved by either of two popular assemblies: the Comitia Centuriata, who not only enacted laws but also elected consuls and declared war, and the Concilium Plebis, who conveyed the wishes of the plebians via their elected tribunes. These assemblies were divided into blocks and each of these blocks voted as a unit. Aside from these two major legislative bodies, there were also a number of smaller tribal assemblies.

The Curia

The Concilium Plebis came into existence as a result of the Conflict of Orders - a conflict between the plebians and patricians for political power. In the Concilium Plebis, aside from passing laws pertinent to the wishes of the plebians, the members elected a number of tribunes who spoke on their behalf. Although this "Council of the Plebs" initially gave the plebians some voice in government, it did not prove to be sufficient. In 450 BCE the Twelve Tables were enacted in order to appease a number of plebian concerns. It became the first recorded Roman law code. The Tables tackled domestic problems with an emphasis on both family life and private property. For instance, plebians were not only prohibited from imprisonment for debt but also granted the right to appeal a magistrate's decision. Later, plebians were even allowed to marry patricians and become consuls. Over time the rights of the plebians continued to increase. In 287 BCE the Lex Hortensia declared that all laws passed by the Concilium Plebis were binding to both plebians and patricians.

Rome's Growth

This unique government allowed the Republic to grow far beyond the city's walls. Victory in the three Punic Wars (264 – 146 BCE)

waged against Carthage was the first step of Rome growing beyond the confines of the peninsula. After years of war and the embarrassment of defeat at the hands of Hannibal, the Senate finally followed the advice of the outspoken Cato the Elder who said "Carthago delenda est!" or "Carthage must be destroyed!" Rome's destruction of the city after the Battle of Zama in 146 BCE and the defeat of the Greeks in the four Macedonian Wars established the Republic as a true Mediterranean power. The submission of the Greeks brought the rich Hellenistic culture to Rome, that is its art, philosophy and literature. Unfortunately, despite the growth of the Republic, the Roman government was never meant to run an empire. According to historian Tom Holland in his Rubicon, the Republic always seemed to be on the brink of political collapse. The old agrarian economy could not and would not be successfully transferred and only further broadened the gap between the rich and poor.

The Western Mediterranean 264 BCE

Rome, however, was more than just a warrior state. At home Romans believed in the importance of the family and the value of religion. They also believed that citizenship or civitas defined what it meant to be truly civilized. This concept of citizenship would soon be put to the test when the Roman territories began to challenge Roman authority. However, this constant state of war had not only made the Republic wealthy but it also helped mold its society. After the Macedonian Wars, the influence of the Greeks affected both Roman culture and religion. Under this Greek influence, the traditional Roman gods transformed. In Rome an individual's personal expression of belief was unimportant, only a strict adherence to a rigid set of rituals, avoiding the dangers of religious fervor. Temples honoring these gods would be built throughout the empire.

Elsewhere in Rome the division of the classes could best be seen within the city walls in the tenements. Rome was a refuge to many people who left the surrounding towns and farms seeking a better way of life. However, an unfulfilled promise of jobs forced many people to live in the poorer parts of the city. The jobs they sought were often not there, resulting in an epidemic of homeless inhabitants. While many of the wealthier citizens resided on

Palatine Hill, others lived in ramshackle apartments that were over-crowded and extremely dangerous - many lived in constant fear of fire and collapse. Although the lower floors of these buildings contained shops and more suitable housing, the upper floors were for the poorer residents, there was no access for natural light, no running water, and no toilets. The streets were poorly lit and since there was no police force, crime was rampant. Refuse, even human waste, was routinely dumped onto the streets, not only causing a terrible stench but served as a breeding ground for disease. All of this added to an already disgruntled populace.

The Gracchus Brothers

This continuing struggle between the have and have nots would remain until the Republic finally collapsed. owever, there were those in power who tried to find a solution to the existing problems. In the 2nd century BCE, two brothers, both tribunes, tried but failed to make the necessary changes. Among a number of reform proposals, Tiberius Gracchus suggested to give land to both the unemployed and small farmers. Of course, the Senate, many of whom were large landowners, vehemently objected. Even the Concilium Plebis rejected the idea. Although his suggestion eventually became law, it could not be enforced. Riots soon followed and 300 people, including Tiberius, were killed. Unfortunately, a similar destiny awaited his brother.

While Gaius Gracchus also supported the land distribution idea, his fate was sealed when he proposed to give citizenship to all Roman allies. Like his big brother, his proposals met with considerable resistance. 3,000 of his supporters were killed and he chose suicide. The failure of the brothers to achieve some balance in Rome would be one of a number of indicators that the Republic was doomed to fall. Later, another Roman would rise to initiate a series of reforms. Sulla and his army marched on Rome and seized power, defeating his enemy Gaius Marius. Assuming power in 88 BCE, Sulla quickly defeated King Mithridates of Pontus in the East, crushed the Samnites with the help of the generals Pompey and Crassus, purged the Roman Senate (80 were killed or exiled), reorganized the law courts, and enacted a number of reforms. He retired peacefully in 79 BCE.

Fall of the Republic

Unlike the Empire, the Republic would not collapse due to any external threat but instead fell to an internal menace. It came from the inability of the Republic to adjust to a constantly expanding empire. Even the ancient Sibylline prophecies predicted that failure would come internally, not by foreign invaders. There were a number of these internal warnings. The demand of the Roman allies for citizenship was one sign of this unrest - the so-called Social Wars of the 1st century BCE (90 – 88 BCE). For years the Roman allies had paid tribute and provided soldiers for war but were not considered citizens. Like their plebian kindred years earlier, they wanted representation. It took a rebellion for things to change. Although the Senate had warned the Roman citizens that awarding these people citizenship would be dangerous, full citizenship was finally granted to all people (slaves excluded) in the entire Italian peninsula. Later, Julius Caesar would extend citizenship beyond Italy and grant it to the people of Spain and Gaul.

About this time the city witnessed a serious threat to its very survival when Marcus Tillius Cicero, the Roman statesman and poet, uncovered a conspiracy led by the Roman senator Lucius Sergius Catiline to overthrow the Roman government. Cicero also believed that the Republic was declining due to moral decay. Problems such as this together with fear and unrest came to the attention of three men in 60 BCE: Julius Caesar, Gnaeus Pompey and Marcus Licinius Crassus. Crassus had gained fame by his defeat of Spartacus and his followers in 71 BCE. Pompey had distinguished himself in Spain as well as in the East. Caesar had proven himself as an able commander. Together, the three men formed what historians have named the First Triumvirate or Gang of Three. For almost a decade they controlled both consulships and military commands. After Caesar left the office of consul in 59 BCE, he and his army moved northward into Gaul and Germania. Pompey became the governor of Spain (although he ruled from Rome) while Crassus sought fame in the east where, unfortunately for him, he was eventually defeated and killed at the Battle of Carrhae.

Growing tension between Pompey and Caesar escalated. Pompey was jealous of Caesar’s success and fame while Caesar wanted a return to politics. Eventually these differences brought them to battle, and in 48 BCE they met at Pharsalus. Pompey was defeated,

escaping to Egypt where he was killed by Ptolemy XIII. Caesar fulfilled his destiny by securing both the eastern provinces and northern Africa, returning to Rome a hero only to be declared dictator for life. Many of his enemies, as well as several allies, saw his new position as a serious threat to the foundation of the Republic, and despite a number of popular reforms, his assassination on the Ides of March in 44 BCE brought the Republic to its knees. His heir and step-son Octavian subdued Mark Antony, eventually becoming the first emperor of Rome as Augustus. The Republic was gone and in its ashes rose the Roman Empire.

About the Author Donald L. Wasson

Donald L. Wasson

Donald has taught Ancient, Medieval and U.S. History at Lincoln College (Normal, Illinois)and has always been and will always be a student of history, ever since learning about Alexander the Great. He is eager to pass knowledge on to his students.

The Holy Roman Empire was a successor state to the empire founded in 800 by Charlemagne (see also Carolingians), who revived the title of Roman emperor in the West. According to Carolingian theory, the Roman Empire had merely been suspended, not ended, by the abdication of the last Roman emperor in 476. In 800, Pope Leo III crowned Charlemagne Roman emperor, probably perceived more as a personal title than as a reference to a particular territorial rule.
The Holy Roman Empire was a feudal monarchy that encompassed present-day Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Austria, the Czech and Slovak Republics, as well as parts of eastern France, northern Italy, Slovenia, and western Poland at the start of the early modern centuries. It was created by the coronation of the Frankish king Charlemagne as Roman emperor by Pope Leo III on Christmas Day in the year 800, thus restoring in their eyes the western Roman Empire that had been leaderless since 476. This coronation was seen to transfer the Roman imperial office to the heirs of the East Franks, the Germans. The position of emperor remained among the Germans until the Holy Roman Empire was abolished in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars in 1806.: (Answers.com).