

American Government & Politics: A Christian Worldview
Short Film: “How A Free Republic Becomes A Tyrannical Empire” (12-15 Minutes)
(TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS/KEY)

Goal

In this short film (8:58) students see additional similarities between the Ancient Roman Empire and America’s current government.

Instructions

1. Play this short film for students:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d7wg6WUuPWQ>
2. Put students in pairs/groups and discuss main points.
3. Ask students for their overall thoughts.

Film notes:

- Rome’s first 500 years functioned as a republic.
 - Similarities to America: overthrew king, set up an appointed senate, had popularly elected representatives, separation of powers, veto, right of habeas corpus.
 - Part of why Rome fell was that people started looking to the government as a savior and source of life.
 - Current “Christian conservative” approach doesn’t work well for the long run, either (the use of government power to enforce religion).
 - **ASK STUDENTS:** How does the Bible separate the duties of government and the Christian church?
 - Like Ancient Rome, America today has a similar “footprint around the world” (troops in 160 nations).
 - “Not every problem is America’s responsibility; ours is the safety and security of Americans.”
 - *Pax Romana* (period of “Roman peace” because Rome dominated and threatened anyone who challenged that dominance) bankrupted the Roman empire.
 - **PRINCIPLES** are important: limited government, rule of law, minding our own business
4. Ask students: “Again, what are the basic principles of why the Bible says government exists?” [Get volunteers to name as many as possible from memory—those Bible passages.]