

# Lesson 3 The Byzantine Empire

## MAIN IDEAS

**Culture** Roman culture continued in the Byzantine Empire for a thousand years after the fall of Rome.

**Belief Systems** Christianity developed different forms in the western and eastern parts of the former Roman Empire.

**Belief Systems** The Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church had different relationships with governments.

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## A Continuing Empire

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION** How did Justinian restore the Eastern Roman Empire?

### Outlasting the Western Empire

- Historians call Eastern Empire **Byzantine Empire**
  - named after the capital city's original name of Byzantium
- Byzantine Empire lasted about 1,000 years after Western Empire
- Emperors were absolute rulers
  - struggled against Germanic peoples, Huns, other groups
  - lost much land to invaders

### Justinian

- Justinian was emperor from A.D. 527 to 565
  - reconquered lost Eastern Empire lands in Italy, Africa, Spain

### Rebuilding Constantinople

- Justinian began rebuilding the capital, which was damaged in a revolt
  - rebuilt city walls; built schools, hospitals, courts, churches
  - most famous church was Hagia Sophia

## Preserving Roman Culture

- **Justinian Code**—uniform code of law based on Roman law
  - included laws on marriage, slavery, property, women's rights, crime
- Byzantines spoke Greek, but considered themselves culturally Roman
  - studied Latin, Greek, Roman literature and history
- Eastern Empire preserved Greek, Roman culture
  - in former Western Empire, Germanic and Roman cultures blended

### REVIEW QUESTION

How did the Byzantine Empire preserve Roman culture?

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# The Church Divides

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION** Why did the Christian church divide?

## The Church Divides

- Division of the empire affected the Christian church
  - caused by different cultural practices, limited contact between areas
  - religious practices developed differently
- In east, emperor had control over head of church
- In west, the lack of an emperor gave pope more responsibilities
- Western pope claimed control over churches in both east and west
- Eastern church rejected authority of pope
- Christian Church split in 1054
  - **Roman Catholic Church** in west, **Eastern Orthodox Church** in east
  - *orthodox*—“holding established beliefs”; *catholic*—“universal”
- Split led to creation of two separate European civilizations

## Religion and Government

- Pope claimed authority over Christian emperors, kings
  - Roman Catholic Church influenced government in the west
  - disagreements between church and kings later caused conflicts
- Byzantine emperor was absolute ruler
  - had power over spiritual head of Eastern Orthodox Church
  - overall, had greater power than rulers in the west

## REVIEW QUESTION

How did governments and the Christian churches interact?

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# The Byzantine Empire Collapses

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION** What happened to the Byzantine Empire?

## Constantinople Falls

- New Arabian religion of Islam began in 600s
  - Muslim armies attacked Constantinople
- Civil wars, attacks by Ottoman Turks, Serbs hurt Byzantine Empire
- Only small section of empire remained by 1350
- Ottoman Turks captured Constantinople in 1453
  - ended Byzantine Empire

## REVIEW QUESTION

What was a cause of the fall of the Byzantine Empire?

## Lesson Summary

- Emperor Justinian regained much of the Roman Empire's land and helped preserve Roman law and culture.
- In 1054, the Christian church divided into the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches.
- The pope of the Roman Catholic Church played a greater role in government in the west than the leader of the Eastern Orthodox Church played in the east.

## Why It Matters Now . . .

Today millions of people practice their faith as members of the Roman Catholic Church or the Eastern Orthodox Church.