Summary: Muslim Empires

**Muslim Empire**

The most important teachings of Muhammad are summed up in the Five Pillars of Islam. These teachings say that there is just one God, and God’s only true prophet is Muhammad. The teachings also say that Muslims must look toward Mecca and pray five times a day. They must also give to the poor, fast during Ramadan, and visit Mecca.

After Muhammad’s death, caliphs were elected to continue his work. A caliph’s empire was called a caliphate. It was a theocracy. Over time, the caliphs built a huge trading system. Muslims used the trade routes to spread ideas and culture as well as goods. Caliphs also spread culture by force. They conquered Spain. Then they tried to go farther. In 732, though, Muslim armies were beaten by France. Even so, they managed to conquer and influence other parts of Europe.

**The Ottoman Empire**

The Muslim Ottoman Empire controlled what is now Turkey and parts of North Africa, Southwest Asia, and Southeast Europe. Constantinople, now called Istanbul, was the capital. The rulers were called sultans.

Suleiman I ruled from 1520 to 1566. Muslims called him “The Lawgiver” because he created laws that brought justice to the empire. Suleiman turned Constantinople into a beautiful Islamic city. The empire was powerful and wealthy while Suleiman ruled.

Many people in the empire lived well, but many did not. Some were slaves or soldiers. In the late 1300s, slaves formed a special group of soldiers called Janissaries. This group became very powerful. At first, the Janissaries were loyal to the empire. In 1826, some turned against the sultan. The sultan disbanded the force.

The Ottoman Empire had to fight to protect its holdings. The powerful empire grew weaker. It lost its wealth. It could not compete with industrialized nations. The empire was on the losing side in World War I. As a result, it gave up its Arab lands. By 1924, the Ottoman Empire was replaced by the country of Turkey.