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.

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?
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?
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.