European Christendom

AP World History Notes
Chapter 10
The Fall of the Roman Empire

- 395 CE = final division of Roman Empire into eastern and western halves
- 476 = end of the western Roman Empire
- Eastern half remained intact = the Byzantine Empire (aka Byzantium)
Western Europe After Rome

- Roads in disrepair
- Cities falling apart
- Central government broke down
- Long-distance trade stopped
- People moved to rural areas
- Christianity still dominant = Roman Catholicism
The Byzantine Empire

- Unified and centralized government
- Capital = Constantinople
- Religion = Eastern Orthodox Christianity
- Attempted to preserve some elements of the Roman Empire
The Byzantine Empire

- Enjoyed many advantages that allowed it to stay intact, unlike the western Roman Empire
  - Wealthier and more urbanized
  - More defensible capital; Constantinople was walled in
  - Shorter frontier to guard
  - Stronger army and navy
  - Strong leaders and clever diplomacy
Preservation of the Roman Empire

- Elements of the Roman Empire within Byzantium:
  - Roads
  - Taxation system
  - Military structures
  - Centralized administration
  - Laws and court system
  - Roman–style robes and sandals

- But a lot changed as well
The Byzantine State

- Never as large as the Roman Empire
- Reached its largest size during the reign of Emperor Justinian
- Lost many territories due to Arab/Muslim expansion in the 7th century = Syria/Palestine, Egypt, and North Africa
- Still controlled: the eastern Mediterranean, Greece, the Balkans, and Anatolia
Centralized authority in Constantinople
- Emperor viewed as “God’s earthly representative”

Imperial court filled with grandeur, wealth, and court ceremonies

Provinces within the empire ruled by generals who had civil authority and could raise their own armies

Government focused on: collecting taxes, maintaining order, and suppressing revolts

Did not become heavily involved in the lives of most people

Empress Theodora (Justinian’s Wife)
Began to face invasions after 1085 CE from:
- Catholic Crusaders from Western Europe
- Turkic Muslim invaders

Empire officially fell when Ottoman Turks conquered Constantinople in 1453
Caesaropapism = Church and state were connected
- Unlike in Western Europe where the Roman Catholic Church was independent from political authorities

Emperor = assumed roles of head of state and head of the Church
- Appointed Church leaders
- Called Church councils into session
- Made decisions about religious doctrine/rules
- Treated the Church as a government department
Eastern Orthodox Christianity provided a cultural identity for people within the Byzantine Empire.

Empire (especially Constantinople) was filled with churches, relics of saints, and icons.

Icons = religious paintings of Jesus, Mary, and other saints/holy figures.
Eastern Orthodox came from the Roman Empire originally, so it shares many common elements with Roman Catholic Christianity:

- Teachings of Jesus
- The Bible
- The Sacraments
- A church hierarchy with patriarchs, bishops, and priests
- Missionaries
- Intolerance toward other religions
The Byzantine Church

- Byzantine Empire
- Greek
- Priests grew long beards
- Priests could get married
- Rejected the authority of the Pope of Rome

- Western Europe
- Latin
- Priests shaved
- Priests = celibate
- Accepted the Roman Pope as the sole authority for Christians everywhere

Eastern Orthodox

Roman Catholic
Further separation came between the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church in 1054

- Both Churches excommunicated each other
- Declared that those in the opposing Christian tradition were not real Christians
Byzantium faced many threats from outsiders
- Persian Empire
- Arab armies/the Islamic world
- Crusaders from Western Europe

Biggest military weapon = “Greek fire”
- Combination of oil, sulfur, and lime launched from bronze tubes
- Worked like a flamethrower
Byzantium & the World

- Central player in long-distance trade of Eurasia
- Products made by Byzantine craftspeople in high demand
  - Jewelry
  - Gemstones
  - Silver and gold work
  - Linen, woolen, and silk textiles
  - Purple dyes
Significant cultural influence in the world

Preserved ancient Greek learning and transmitted it to the Islamic world and Western Europe

Impacted scientists, philosophers, theologians, and intellectuals
spread of Eastern Orthodox religion --> especially to Slavic-speaking peoples in the Balkans and Russia

Cyril and Methodius = created a Slavic alphabet
  ◦ Called Cyrillic script
  ◦ Made it possible to translate the Bible and other religious texts
  ◦ Helped in mass conversion
## Slavic Peoples

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Cyrillic Alphabet
Conversion of Russia

- Most significant expansion of Eastern Orthodox Christianity = to Kievan Rus
  - Modern-day Ukraine and western Russia
  - Major city = Kiev
  - Highly stratified society
  - Ruled by many different princes
    - Prince Vladimir = Prince of Kiev
Conversion of Russia

- Prince Vladimir = wanted to bring a new faith to Rus that would unify the many diverse peoples of the region
- He also wanted to link Rus into wider networks of communication and exchange in the world
Conversion of Russia

Prince Vladimir was drawn to Eastern Orthodox Christianity because of:
- The splendor and wealth of Constantinople
- The beauty of Eastern Orthodox churches

As a result of this conversion he received:
- A sister of the Byzantine emperor as a bride
- Byzantine priests and advisors
Conversion of Russia

Kievan Rus consequently adopted many Byzantine cultural elements:
- Architectural styles
- Cyrillic alphabet
- Use of icons
- Monastic tradition stressing prayer and service
- Idea of imperial/state control of the Church
The Barbarian Kingdoms about 500