The Byzantines 330-1453

- Development of the Byzantine Empire
  - Strengths of the Empire
  - Split between East and West
  - Preserving Roman Law
  - Decline of the Empire
**STRENGTHS OF THE EMPIRE**

- The Byzantine Empire lasted over 1000 years, from 395-1453.
- Byzantine Emperors exercised absolute Power. Their will was LAW!
- They ruled over an efficient Bureaucracy, which took care of the daily business of Government.
- There was a loyal, well-trained Army and a strong Economy.
BUILDING AND DEFENDING THE EMPIRE

• In A.D. 395 Rome split into two separate empires, in order to make it easier to rule its massive territory.

• The Western Roman Empire fell in 476 AD
• The western empire kept the name of Rome, while the eastern empire took the name of Byzantium.

• By A.D. 476 Rome had fallen into decline, and was soon conquered. The Byzantine Empire, on the other hand, would endure for another 1,000 years.
• From A.D. 500 to A.D. 1200 the Byzantines would be the wealthiest nation in Europe and western Asia.

• Their standard of living would be higher than that of other nations in Europe, and they would lead much of the world in art, science, and building.
The city of Constantinople lay at the heart of a powerful Byzantium Empire. Constantinople reflected a blending of Roman, Christian, Greek, and Muslim cultures. Byzantine emperors contributed to preserving western culture. They collected classical works in mathematics, science, and philosophy and stored them in libraries.
The city was the center of world commerce.

Constantinople overlooks the Bosporus straits which divide Europe from Asia and connect the Black sea with the Aegean sea.

A city of about one million people, reflected extremes of wealth and poverty.
DIVISIONS BETWEEN EAST AND WEST

- The church in Byzantium did not recognize the Pope as the leader of Christianity.
- Instead they recognized the Emperor as their leader.
- The Emperor then appointed Patriarchs or Bishops to administer religion over the major cities.
- There were other differences that developed between the Roman Catholics of Western Europe and the Orthodox Church in the East.
OTHER DIFFERENCES

• The Orthodox Church choose to use Greek rather than Latin.
• The clergy (priesthood) was allowed to marry in eastern orthodox.
• The church in the east was more tolerant of different religions.
• In the 8\textsuperscript{th} century, a dispute arose between the churches over the use of Icons, eventually the Pope. excommunicated the Emperor and the Emperor did the same to the Pope!
CONSTANTINE 312–327

- After Diocletian was forced to retire in 305, a power struggle resulted and eventually, Constantine would come to the throne in 312 AD.
- First Roman Emperor to convert to Christianity.
- Moved the capital city of the Empire from Rome to Byzantium and renamed it Constantinople.
The story goes that Constantine had a vision of the words "in hoc signo vinces" upon a Christian cross and that this vision prompted Constantine to pledge to convert if he actually did win the battle at the Milvian Bridge.

Since Constantine was the victor, the vision led to his conversion to Christianity. Constantine probably experienced his great "in hoc signo vinces" vision in 312.
Justinian

- Ruled from 527-565.
- Was married to Theodora.
- Attempted to reunite the old Roman Empire.
- Ordered scholars to summarize all existing Roman Law.
- Their work would be known as “Justinian’s code”.
- The code helped shape the legal systems of Europe and later the U.S.
DECLINE OF THE EMPIRE

✓ Internal and External pressures led to the decline of Byzantium.
✓ In the 11th and 12th centuries Crusader knights moved through on their way to Palestine and many times they attacked and looted Byzantine cities along the way.
✓ A line of corrupt rulers caused the government fall apart.
The siege of Constantinople began on April 6, 1453, with 50,000 Ottoman troops facing off against only 8,500 Byzantine troops. Since their introduction to firearms 30 years earlier, the Ottomans had drastically improved their artillery, and now possessed among the strongest weapons in the world at the time. The Ottomans used the largest cannons yet seen in Europe, and Constantinople's city walls, although the strongest of the Middle Ages, were no match for the Ottomans' modern weaponry.
On May 29, 1453, after 54 days of battle, Sultan Mehmed II entered Constantinople and prayed at Hagia Sophia, which was built by the Emperor Constantine, and was the oldest Byzantine church in the city.

He then ordered it turned into a mosque, and renamed the city Islambol - "Islam abounds" - or Istanbul.

With the capital firmly in Ottoman hands, the rest of the Byzantine Empire quickly crumbled. The Ottomans absorbed the territory, and the Empire of Orthodox Christianity, after ruling for over a thousand years, was gone.
THE
END!