

STUDY PACK 24

THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE AND RUSSIA

“When the city of Rome fell; the Eastern Roman Empire continued, not merely as a remnant of the old Rome, but as its important fulfillment. The idea of Rome gained a new lease on life by _____ and its long history is a very important one. Because the men of the Enlightenment _____, they created the myth of a stagnant and unimportant Eastern Roman Empire. Gibbon and others obscured and distorted history by their accounts. Byzantium, or the Eastern Roman Empire, had a 1100-year history, a continuous history which alone marks it as a central factor in history.”

~~ Rousas J. Rushdoony, *World History Notes*, p.99 ~~

I. THE EARLY BYZANTINE EMPIRE

During the early period of State Christianity, Constantine established a second capital in the Roman Empire; and the head of the church at Constantinople was made a patriarch. This was a high position which would be similar to that of the pope in Rome. Divisions between the two heads grew, including a language barrier with Latin used at Rome and Greek used at Constantinople. The eastern division was eventually called “Byzantine” from Byzantium, which was an earlier name for Constantinople.

II. JUSTINIAN

The most influential of all of the Byzantine emperors was clearly _____ (482-565 A.D.). He reigned 38 years from 527-565 A.D. It was Justinian’s goal to restore _____.

He understood that a strong government could not exist without _____. The Roman concept of law had been lost in thousands of pages of contradictory laws. The later Roman Emperors had used this confusion to _____.

Justinian appointed sixteen men to revise the law. They took six years and studied two thousand documents. They produced the “Justinian Code” which was the standard legal work in Europe until _____.

Justinian and his strong-willed wife, Theodora, made themselves the head of the Greek Orthodox church and took control of all religious matters. They had over 100,000 Paulicians executed for belonging _____.

Justinian and Theodora succeeded in conquering parts of Europe and North Africa. They briefly exerted control over Rome. They built Constantinople into a magnificent city.

The Patriarch of Constantinople eventually broke with Rome over doctrine, the church calendar, rituals and church language.

Justinian urged all Jews to be baptized as Christians. Later emperors made this mandatory and persecuted many Jews.

III. CENTURIES OF WARFARE

After the rise of Islam, the Byzantine empire was locked in a life and death struggle with _____. The Arabs conquered Palestine, Syria, Persia, Egypt, and North Africa. Arab armies attacked the borders of the Byzantine empire virtually every year.

The empire also fought with the Bulgars, a dominant tribe in eastern Europe. This led to significant Byzantine influence in Europe and eventually in Russia. Eventually the Bulgars were conquered and 15,000 soldiers were blinded and led back to Constantinople. This cruel act was designed to frighten other potential enemies.

From 867 A.D. to 1057 A.D., the Byzantine empire broke the power of the Arab advance. The empire controlled parts of Greece and Italy and looked to expand into Europe.

IV. THE DECLINE OF THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

After years of constant warfare, the decline of the Byzantine Empire began in 1204. _____ turned on its Byzantine hosts and sacked Constantinople, ending its image as _____. These Europeans removed much wealth and were busy destroying many priceless works of art and burning many churches and palaces. The end came in 1453 when a Turkish army of nearly _____ attacked Constantinople and killed the emperor, Constantine XI. During its one thousand years, the Byzantine empire lasted through sixty-five revolutions and the abdication or murder of more than sixty emperors.

V. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BYZANTINE EMPIRE

Constantinople was so important during the early Middle Ages that it became known as “_____”. Its wealth was greater than any city of the West; there were many scholarly and artistic efforts, and pomp and pageantry was a mark of the court and Church. Schools were common.

The Byzantine economy included a well-developed agricultural system and a variety of commercial and industrial efforts which adequately supported a stable population. Constantinople was located at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, resulting in a prosperous trade center stimulated by _____ which became _____.

Constantinople was dominated by the imperial palace; the Church of Hagia Sophia, unmatched in size and magnificence; and the Hippodrome, an enormous sports arena famous for its chariot races.

The Byzantine or Orthodox Church was also responsible for the spreading of Christianity to _____. Cyril and Methodius, two missionaries, left Constantinople around 863 with translations of the Bible and a modified alphabet adapted to the Slavic languages. Their work was successful as forms of the Orthodox Church are still a force in Europe and Russia today.

The Byzantine Empire preserved _____. The Greek language, classical tradition, literature, art, architecture, and legal systems were all preserved by the Byzantine Empire. The _____ was preserved in this empire.

The _____ was preserved in the Byzantine culture. It was this knowledge that made it possible for people to translate the New Testament into the many languages of the world.

For almost 800 years, the Byzantine Empire stood as _____. After its fall, Moslem armies would make several attempts to invade Eastern Europe.

VI. THE FORMATION OF THE RUSSIAN STATE

The Russian people developed from intermarriage between _____ (Meshech, Magog, Tubal), _____, and _____ established along Russian rivers.

Under the leadership of Prince Vladimir, many of the Russian tribes came under one government. Vladimir wanted to have a national religion to unite the people. He invited representatives from the Byzantine Orthodox Church, Islam, Judaism, and the Roman Catholic Church to make a presentation to the royal court. In 989, Vladimir and his advisors rejected Islam because of its prohibition against drinking alcohol. They rejected Roman Catholicism because they felt that the Pope exercised too much power over civil governments. They rejected Judaism because the Jews lost control of Palestine. As a result, the Orthodox Church became the official, national religion of Russia. As a result, the culture of the Byzantine Empire became the culture of Russia. This became the single most important factor in the development of Russia.

The Byzantine empire claimed to exercise the civil authority of the Roman Caesars. The Byzantine emperor used the title Caesar on occasion. When the Byzantine empire fell, some members of the royal family fled to Russia, taking with them the claim to the civil power and the title of the Roman Caesar. In Russia, the word _____.

In 1240 A.D., Russia was conquered by the Mongols. The Mongols intermarried with the Russians and largely adopted their culture.