

Explore More—The Roman and Byzantine Empires: Two Distinct European Civilizations!

Directions: Listen to your teacher talk about the Roman and Byzantine Empires. You will learn how two distinct European civilizations developed. He will learn about the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches and how they had very different views on church-state relations. Refer to the maps in your Explore Geography Picture Dictionary to locate the places your teacher mentions and to see the topography of the continent. Circle any words you don't understand. Underline or highlight important ideas in the text. Write notes in the margins to help you understand key points. Then answer the questions in your own words.

Constantine and Constantinople

Constantine became emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire in 306.

Point to the date on the class time line.

He built a new capital city, called Constantinople, on the site of the old Greek city of Byzantium. Constantine modeled his city after Rome.

Point to Constantinople and Rome on the map.

He even called Constantinople the “new Rome.” Another name for the Eastern Roman Empire is the Byzantine Empire.

Constantine and the early rulers of the Byzantine Empire were Romans. Their Roman ideas and culture influenced them greatly. They had a Senate in their government and organized their armies the way the Romans did. They built arenas similar to the Colosseum in Rome. They built a stadium in Constantinople just like the Circus Maximus in Rome. Many of their other buildings were exactly like Roman buildings. They even spoke Latin—just like their Roman counterparts.

A Drifting Apart of Western and Eastern Empires

Over time, Rome's influence on Constantinople was not as great. Perhaps the most significant reason is that Constantinople was located on an important trade route connecting Europe and Asia.

Continued on next page

Point to Europe and Asia on the map.

Most people who traveled through and who lived in Constantinople were not Roman. They were Greek or from some other area in the eastern Mediterranean. The city of Constantinople became a crossroad for people from East and West. As more people with different cultural backgrounds came to Constantinople, the Roman influence became less important. There were not lots of significant disagreements or arguments between East and West. It was more that they did not stay in close touch and drifted apart.

Two Distinct Churches, Two Distinct European Civilizations

However, there was one important area of disagreement between Rome and the Byzantine Empire. This disagreement had to do with religion and government. The Byzantine Empire was a Christian Empire. Constantine was a Christian, and there were many Christian churches in Constantinople. One of the most powerful bishops of the church was located in Constantinople. A council of bishops had the power to decide which religious ideas were correct. However, what if the bishops on this council could not agree? The bishop of Rome said he should make the final decision. He argued that he was St. Peter's successor, which made him head of the church. Over time, bishops in the West began to think of the bishop of Rome as the head of the church. He became known as the pope. If a ruler and a pope disagreed, some people thought the pope had greater power.

Christians in the Byzantine Empire did not all agree on the same Christian teachings. However, they did agree the emperor should have power over the church. The emperor even debated with bishops and settled any arguments they had about religious ideas. Religion was almost a branch of the government. Over time, Christians in the Byzantine Empire disagreed strongly with Christians in the West. One of the most important disagreements was about whose power was greater—the state's or the church's. This distinct view of the relationship between church and state fostered the development of two distinct European civilizations. ❖

YOUR TURN!

Write your answers to the following questions.

1. Who was Constantine?

2. Describe Constantinople.

3. Why did the Eastern and Western Roman Empires drift apart?

4. How did the two civilizations differ in terms of the relationship between church and state?

5. Complete the chart below to compare and contrast the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches.

	Eastern Orthodox Church	Roman Catholic Church
What is the view on church-state relations?		
In a disagreement between the church and the state, who had more power?		

Questions for further discussion:

- Explain the cause, effect, sequence, and correlation in the development of two distinct European civilizations.
- What were the short-term and long-term causal relations?
- What were the sources of historical continuity?
- How did the combination of ideas and events explain the emergence of new patterns?