Lesson 3

MAIN IDEAS

1. **Government** The legacy of Rome continued with the Byzantine Empire.

2. **Geography** Located between the East and the West, the Byzantines created a unique society.

3. **Belief Systems** Christianity thrived in the Byzantine Empire but eventually split into two separate churches.

TAKING NOTES

**Reading Skill:**

**Understanding Cause and Effect**

Cause and effect deals with why an event happened and what impact it had. Fill in a chart like the one below to help you recognize the causes and effects of the split in Christianity.

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<th>Causes</th>
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Skillbuilder Handbook, page R26

▲ Emperor Constantine This stone bust depicts Constantine, the Roman emperor after whom the city of Constantinople was named.

CALIFORNIA STANDARDS

7.1.3 Describe the establishment by Constantine of the new capital in Constantinople and the development of the Byzantine Empire, with an emphasis on the consequences of the development of two distinct European civilizations, Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic, and their two distinct views on church-state relations.

HI 1 Students explain the central issues and problems from the past, placing people and events in a matrix of time and place.

CST 3 Students use a variety of maps and documents to identify physical and cultural features of neighborhoods, cities, states, and countries and to explain the historical migration of people, expansion and disintegration of empires, and the growth of economic systems.
The Early Byzantine Empire

Build on What You Know  You have learned that during the later years of Rome, the empire split into east and west. The western part fell to invaders. The eastern part survived and became known as the **Byzantine Empire**. It carried on the glory of Rome for many more centuries.

**Justinian Builds a New Rome**

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION**  What were the main characteristics of the Byzantine Empire?

In the years after the Western Roman Empire fell, the Byzantine Empire rose to great heights. This was due in large part to the efforts of a powerful ruler named **Justinian I**.

**The Rule of Justinian**  During his reign (527–565), Justinian expanded the Byzantine Empire and recaptured some of the land Rome had lost. Justinian also enacted key measures at home. He is best remembered for the legal code developed during his rule. The **Justinian Code** regulated much of Byzantine life and served the Byzantine Empire for 900 years.

Justinian also left his mark on Byzantine society through his many public works and building projects. He built a large and impressive palace complex, where he lived and ruled with his wife and trusted adviser, Empress Theodora.

** TERMS & NAMES **

Byzantine Empire  Justinian I
 Justinian Code  schism
 Roman Catholic  Orthodox

**Hagia Sophia**

The Hagia Sophia is an enduring symbol of the Byzantine Empire. Justinian built the church after an earlier church was damaged during a public uprising.
Justinian also built churches and directed the building of the famous church of Hagia Sophia (HAY•ee•uh soh•FEE•uh). Visitors hailed its beauty. “Such an abundance of light poured into this church,” said one observer, “you would declare that the place is not lighted by the sun from without, but that the rays are produced within.”

**The Rise of Constantinople**

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION** What was life like in Constantinople?

Hagia Sophia was just one of the magnificent structures that towered over the empire’s impressive capital, Constantinople.

**The Capital City** Constantinople’s location played a key role in its growth. It stood between Europe and southwest Asia. As a result, it became a thriving center of business and trade. The wealth and energy of Constantinople could be seen in its everyday activities. The main street running through the city was the Mese (MEHS•ee), or “Middle Way.” Merchant stalls lined the street and sold products from distant corners of Asia, Africa, and Europe. Citizens also could enjoy free entertainment at the city’s large arena, the Hippodrome.

**History Makers**

**Theodora (c. 500–548)** and **Justinian (482–565)**

Justinian met Theodora when she was an actress. An old Roman law actually forbade government officials from marrying actresses. So Justinian got rid of the law—and the couple became husband and wife.

As empress, Theodora displayed much power and influence. In 532, for example, she convinced her husband and advisers to put down a rebellion instead of fleeing the palace. Tens of thousands of protestors were killed. However, many historians believe that Theodora’s actions saved Justinian’s crown.
Disagreements Split Christianity

ESSENTIAL QUESTION What two churches emerged from the split in Christianity?

The location of the Byzantine Empire on the edge of both Europe and Asia meant that the empire was influenced by ideas and goods from both regions. While the empire was built on Roman foundations, it developed its own ways. An example of this can be seen in the area of religion. Christianity was the main religion in both the Byzantine Empire and the West. Over time, however, Christianity developed differently in each place. These differences led to a split in the Christian church—and the emergence of two distinct European civilizations.

Christianity Remains Strong As you recall from your reading, Christianity emerged during the Roman Empire. By the fall of Rome, Christianity had developed a well-defined structure. At the local level, a priest led small groups of Christians. A bishop supervised several churches. The bishop of Rome was known as the pope. He was the head of the entire Christian church. After the Western Roman Empire fell, Christianity remained a strong influence in the region. Despite its fall from glory, the city of Rome remained the home of the pope—and the center of Christianity.
Tensions Rise  As the Byzantine Empire grew, popes and Byzantine emperors often clashed. Byzantine emperors took a great interest in religious matters. They considered themselves the final authority on religious issues. The popes, however, insisted that they had the ultimate say on such matters.

One of the most intense debates over religious power occurred in the eighth century. In 730, the Byzantine emperor Leo III banned the use of icons. Icons are religious images used by Eastern Christians to aid their prayers. The emperor viewed the use of icons as idol worship, or the belief in false gods.

The pope quickly weighed in on this Eastern dispute. He supported the use of icons. He also excommunicated, or removed from the church, the Byzantine emperor.

The Church Splits  Differences between the Eastern and Western Christian churches continued to grow. In 1054, these disagreements led to a schism, or official split, between the two groups. The result was the creation of two new Christian religions: the Roman Catholic Church in the West and the Orthodox church in the East.

Both churches continued to embrace many of the same principles of Christianity. Still, each church established different structures and beliefs that set them apart. One of the most significant differences occurred in the area of church-state relations.
As Roman Catholicism developed, the pope claimed authority over not just the church but also kings and emperors. Under Eastern Orthodoxy, the emperor ruled over the patriarch, the leader of the Orthodox church.

The schism of 1054 highlights how the Byzantine Empire gradually developed its own unique civilization. Rome’s influence, however, would live on. As you will read in Lesson 4, Rome’s ideas, customs, and institutions have played a key role in the development of Western civilization—and still do today.

How did the schism of 1054 affect the Christian church?

Lesson Summary

- After the Western Roman Empire fell, the Byzantine Empire continued many Roman ways.
- Influenced by both Rome and the East, the Byzantines developed a unique culture.
- Disagreements within the Christian church caused it to split into two separate churches.

Why It Matters Now . . .

Today, millions of people still practice Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy.

Terms & Names

1. Explain the importance of
   - Byzantine Empire
   - schism
   - Justinian I
   - Roman Catholic
   - Justinian Code
   - Orthodox

Using Your Notes

Understanding Cause and Effect  Use your completed chart to answer the following question:

2. What event caused a strain in the Christian church in 730? (HI 1)

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Main Ideas

3. What factors helped Constantinople to become a thriving city? (CST 3)
4. What two churches emerged from the schism in the Christian church? (7.1.3)
5. How did the two churches differ in their views on church-state relations? (7.1.3)

Critical Thinking

6. Evaluating Information  How did Justinian help to strengthen the Byzantine Empire? (7.1.3)
7. Making Inferences  Which church leader appeared to be more powerful, the pope or the patriarch? Why? (7.1.3)

Activity

Creating a Chart  Use research materials to determine the approximate number of members of the Roman Catholic and the Eastern Orthodox churches today. Then show the numbers in a chart or graphic. (7.1.3)