The Byzantine Empire 330 – 1453 AD

Origins
- 330 AD, capital of Roman Empire shifts to city of Byzantium
- Renamed Constantinople in honor of Roman Emperor Constantine
- In the East became known as Byzantine Empire
- Quickly became a rich center of trade

Center of the World
- Major trading center
  - Between Black, Aegean & Mediterranean Seas
- Trade led to cultural diffusion that allowed for the promotion of Greek, Roman & Christian cultures
- Preserved Hellenistic culture which was moved to Rome in 1400s

Justinian
- Ruled from 526 – 565 AD
- Autocratic Ruler – sole ruler with complete authority
- Christ’s co-ruler on Earth
  - Wanted to reconquer Roman lands taken by Germanic tribes
  - Took Italy, southern Spain & N. Africa
  - Spent millions on wars
  - Did not hold new territory very long

Accomplishments under Justinian
- Hagia Sophia (Holy Wisdom)
  - Church (Mosque since 1453AD)
  - Romanesque Dome & Mosaics
- Code of Laws (Corpus Juris Civilis)
  - “Justinian’s Code”
  - Reorganized Roman laws
  - Later used by Catholic Church & medieval kings
  - United the Empire
The Most Powerful Woman
- Theodora (wife of Justinian)
  - Daughter of the Hippodrome’s zoo keeper
  - Traveling actress
  - Married Justinian in 525 AD
  - 527 AD made empress
- Extended women’s rights
- Set up hospitals
- Used army to put done riots
- Disliked by male courtiers
  - Historian Procopius said she was evil

Byzantine Church
- Rejected Papal authority from Rome
  - Emperor was patriarch
  - Clergy could marry
  - Greek was Biblical language
- Easter, not Christmas is the important holy day
- Great Schism 1054 AD
  - Emperor & Pope excommunicated each other
  - Byzantine’s (Greek Orthodox) refused to venerate icons
- Now two Christian Churches: Roman Catholic Church (West); Greek Orthodox Church (East)

Collapse of Empire
- Turkish Muslims (Seljuks) went after Asia Minor
- Norman conquerors took Italy
- 1st Crusade – Europeans helped Byzantines (1090)
- 4th Crusade – Europeans conquered Constantinople (Ruled for 50 years)
- 1453 Ottomans (Muslims) conquered Constantinople (Renamed Istanbul)