LESSON 8

EASTERN CHRISTIANITY AND THE RISE OF ISLAM

Introduction

With the fall of the Western Empire to Germanic kings, the papacy gained greater power and eventually was able to bring society under the domination of the Church. Eastern Christianity continued under the authority of the Eastern Christianity continued under the authority of the Eastern emperor. The intellectual interests of Eastern theologians continued to focus on doctrinal problems, and much of the energy of the Church was consumed in controversy.

After the West fell to the Germanic tribes, the Roman Empire had its main centre in Constantinople which carried on without a lapse and has become commonly known as the Byzantine or Greek Empire. Such a close relationship existed between the Church and State that to attack Christianity was to rebel against the Empire itself. The rulers continued to intervene in many theological discussions. As a result, political power was felt in the spiritual realm, and the ecclesiastical organization was influenced by political leaders. Although the Western Church with its centre in Rome and the Eastern Church with its centre in Constantinople laid claim to the name of Catholic Orthodox Church, each continued with its distinctive characteristics; therefore, the separation between the two eventually became greater. There were a number of smaller Eastern churches outside the orthodox faith. They were primarily of the Monophysite doctrine and included the Coptic (Egyptian), Ethiopian, Jacobite, and Armenian groups. Nestorian Christianity also continued in the East.

The Church Under Justinian (527–565)

The Fourth Ecumenical Council (Chalcedon, 451) failed to settle the Christological controversy between those advocating the one divine nature (Monophysitism) and those advocating two natures, human and divine (Dyrophysitism). The Council decided in favour of the fully human and fully divine natures of Christ and condemned Monophysitism; however, the latter continued to be strongly supported in the East for a hundred years. Emperor Zeno I (474–491) attempted to unify the East in an edict of union (*henoticon*) which emphasized the decisions of the Councils of Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381) but played down the decision of the Chalcedon Council by using vague language. Most Monophysites of the East accepted the edict, but the West did not. Instead of effecting union, the document created more discord. Acacius, patriarch of Constantinople, supported it and was excommunicated by Felix III, bishop of Rome (484). This action brought about a schism between the East and the West which lasted until 518.

The next emperor, Anastasius (491–518), also favoured the Monophysite position; however, he tried to maintain a compromise between the two positions in order to solve the religious confusion in the Empire without sacrificing Eastern or Western interests. Eventually, he anathematized the Monophysite heretics in an attempt to reconcile Rome and Constantinople.

Justin I (518–527) made his nephew Justinian, who had received an excellent education in the capital, his chief adviser

Underline the correct word. After the fall of the Western Empire a (close, distant) relationship existed between the Church and the Eastern Empire.

(close)

Two results of the close relationship between Church and State were:

1. To attack C_____ was to rebel against the E_____ itself.
2. Political power had great influence in the s_____ realm.

(Christianity, Empire, spiritual)

Write either *unity* or *discord* in the blank to make the following statement correct.

Emperor Zeno's edict of union produced more _____ between the East and the West.

(discord)

and executive officer. Justin, who was strictly orthodox, adopted a policy of reconciliation with Rome and thus suppressed heresy. While healing the Acacian schism with Rome, he embittered Egypt and Syria and gained their opposition. Reconciliation with Rome required the signing of a statement which asserted the privileges of the see of Rome and made it an obligation to remain united to the bishop of Rome and to follow his instructions. The East was not unanimous in supporting the imperial submission to the papal requirements for reunion and continued to maintain unorthodox opinions about Jesus Christ. Towards the end of his reign, Justin deposed Severus, patriarch of Antioch, and more than fifty other bishops. In 524, he issued a strong edict against Arianism. Most of the centres of controversy returned to orthodoxy with only Alexandria remaining true to Monophysitism.

The Monophysites agreed that Christ could be of two natures, the Logos and humanity, but the two natures were united in one nature and person which could act only as one. Nature meant to them one concrete, living existence. Political preassure on those who held this view did not stamp them out completely. Justin's attempts to heal the schism, however, greatly increased the power of the bishop of Rome and began the trend of the State's submission to the Church.

Justinian the Great (527–656) succeeded to the throne upon his uncle's death. He was married to Thedora who had been an actress on the circus stage and had a questionable reputation. Thedora was Monophysite in conviction while her husband supported orthodoxy. Justinian's aim was to unite Church and State into one organism with himself as its head. Although he admitted the ecclesiastical primacy of Rome, he considered that his first duty as emperor was to care for God's true dogmas. He looked upon himself as the representative of God on earth, caring for the material and spiritual needs of his subjects. His primary goal was to unite the East and the West in religious and political matters and to eliminate Monphysitism. He passed suppresive legislation against heretical and pagan religious institutions, forbade pagans and heretics to teach in the schools, amd closed the Platonic Academy in Athens. Pagans were not permitted to practise their religion, but Jews were not persecuted as vigorously as they.

About 529 under the influence of Theodora, Justinian began a policy of conciliation towards the Menophysites. A Monophysite was appointed as patriarch of Constantinople in 535. This action renewed the controversy and brought forth the pope who deposed the patriarch and consecrated Menas in his place. Persecution of Monophysitism was renewed, but Theodora protected some of the leaders in her palace apartments.

Two notable works of Justinian were his law codes and church buildings. The Romans had two great bodies of law: the constitutions of the rulers and the interpretations of the jurists. Justinian appointed a commission headed by Tribonian to make a compilation and to reconcile conflicting opinions contained in the two bodies of law. The resulting work continues to be used.

A revolt occurred in 532 and resulted in the burning of much of Constantinople and the destroying of many churches. Justinian rebuilt the church of St. Sophia.

The Fifth Ecumenical Council

The majority of the Monophysites were interested in maintaining the idea of a unity of nature in Christ. Some believed that the human was absorbed into the divine, while others felt that the Logos vanished into the flesh or was condensed into the flesh. Others held to a mingling of divinity and humanity in an indefinable nature. The West saw Monphysitism as simply a heresy which opposed Leo's *Tome*. Although this movement had been suppressed under Justin, it had found new support in Thedora

Those who believed that the divine and human natures of Christ were united in one nature and person that could act only as one were known as _____.

(Compare your answer with the text.)

Emperor Justinian's aim was to unite _____ and _____.

He considered his first duty was to look after God's true _____ (doctrines).

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Justinian attempted to eliminate _____

(Monophysitism)

Notable in Justinian's accomplishments were his _____ codes and _____ buildings.

(law, church)

READ ALL OF THE TOPIC *THE FIFTH ECUMENICAL COUNCIL* BEFORE DOING THE FOLLOWING EXERCISES.

and the leaders whom she protected. In 538, Justinian assembled the Monophysite bishops in Constantinople. Thedora persuaded Justinian to involve them in the work of the Church. One of them, named Jacob, reorganized the Monophysite churches of the East under the protection of the court. In 544, Justinian attempted to reconcile the Monophysites and the orthodox in a religious decreee known as the "Three Chapters." The Monophysites disliked Theodore of Mopsuestia, who was the teacher of Nestorius and of two other theologians used by Nestorians but approved as orthodox by the Council of Chalcedon. Justinian issued the edict of Three Chapters in 546 which condemned Theodore of Mopsuestia, certain works of Theodoret, and a letter of Ibas of Edessa. The edict was generally opposed in the West. A second council of Constantinople opened in 553 without the Pope and Western bishops. Its purpose was to approve Justinian's edict. Approval of the edict failed to reconcile the vast majority of Monophysites; however, it did give a partial victory to the Alexandrine Monophysite doctrine and condemned the Antiochene theology of the two natures of Christ which had been approved at the Council of Chalcedon.

Evaluation of Justinian's Reign

Justinian attempted to dominate all parts of his Empire, including the doctrinal decisions of the Church. His decisions were often motivated by a combination of political expediency and theological conviction. His policy of persecuting Syrians and Egyptians made them easy prey for the Moslem invaders who promised toleration rather than persecution. His attempts to unify the East and West resulted in the opposite. Although he had re-established military control in parts of the Empire, he had exhausted economic and human resources to the extent that his successors were unable to maintain his accomplishments. Italy was lost within a decade of his death

Successors of Justinian

Justin II (565–578) sought to end the theological strife with an edict in which he professed orthodoxy and by which he prohibited quarrels about persons and syllables. He sent the Patriarch of Constantinople to Persia to attempt a reconciliation, but the Monphysite leaders refused to discuss any possible union. Then he began a fierce persecution of Monophysites, but Tiberius (578–582), his successor, ordered all persecution to cease.

Phocas (602–610) renewed persecution in an attempt to gain the support of the orthodox communities. His policy led to bloodshed, especially in Syria. Heraclius (610–641), his successor, attempted to reconcile the Monophysites by proposing the doctrine of Monothelitism (one will). This doctrine allowed two natures in Christ but held that Jesus had one activity working in and through these two natures. The same will worked through both natures.

Objections to Monothelitism were based on the arguments that there could not be human activity without a human will. The will is part of the nature and two natures require two wills, and several times Christ referred to His human will as over against the divine will: "I seek not my own will, but the will of Him who sent me." The orthodox argued that, although there were two wills, they were always in harmony, resulting in one objective action.

The doctrine which Emperor Heraclius hoped would bring unity throughout the Empire turned into an instrument of discord. Although Pope Honorius (625–638) accepted the one-will theory, his successors rejected it. A Lateran council was held in 649 which repudiated and anathematized Monothelitism. This

Justinian's Three Chapters contained condemnation of:

1. T_____ of M_____
2. certain works of T_____
3. a letter of I_____ of E_____

(1. Theodore, Mopsuestia; 2. Theodoret; 3. Ibas, Edessa)

Underline the correct word or words. The Fifth Ecumenical Council (approved, did not approve) Justinian's edict of Three Chapters.

(Compare your answer with the text.)

The Council's decision concerning Justinian's edict (did, did not) reconcile the majority of Monophysites.

(did not)

In an attempt to reconcile the Monophysites, Emperor Heraclius (610–641) proposed the doctrine M which allowed_____ natures in Christ but held that Jesus had _____ activity or will working in and through these _____ natures.

(Monothelitism, two, one, two)

council excommunicated the Patriarch of Constantinople for supporting the doctrine proposed by the Emperor. Pope Martin I (649–655) sent a representative to the East to depose heretical bishops. Emperor Constans II retaliated by bringing Martin as prisoner to Constantinople where he was stripped of his clothes and led through the city by an iron collar around his neck. Martin was charged with treason and condemned to death, but the Emperor was persuaded to change the penalty to exile.

The Sixth Ecumenical Council (681)

Emperor Constantine Pogonatus (668–685) attempted to arrange a reconciliation between the East and the West. When the Patriarch of Constantinople opposed the Emperor's conciliatory policy, the Patriarch was deposed. The Emperor called a council to meet in Constantinople and presided over the majority of the sessions. Only a few bishops attended. Most of the Monophysite provinces had been captured by the followers of Mohammed; therefore, the doctrine of Monothelitism had ceased to be so important. The Council concluded with the condemnation of the authors and supporters of the Monothelite heresy. The mystery of the Incarnation was further explained with the declaration that in Jesus Christ there were two natural wills and two natural operations–without division, conversion, confusion, or opposition. This Council marked a return to orthodoxy, the end of Monothelitism, and a triumph for Rome; however, the Council condemned Pope Honorius as a heretic.

The Sixth Ecumenical Council in _____ year condemned M_____.

Explanation of the Incarnation was that in Jesus Christ there were _____ natural wills and _____ natural operations without division or operation.

Which pope was condemned by the Sixth Council as a heretic? _____

(681, Monothelitism, two, two, Honorius)

The Smaller Eastern Churches

Many churches of the East broke away from the Catholic Church and ceased to be in communion with it. Most of these churches had limitations placed on them by Islam in the seventh century and eventually dwindled in numbers.

The Monophysites of Egypt, Nubia, and Ethiopia

Under the leadership of the Alexandrian Patriarch, the Coptic-speaking (the language spoken by the Copts, the native populace of Egypt) churches refused to accept the decisions of the Council of Chalcedon and continued to hold Monophysite views. Part of the resistance arose from opposition to Byzantine rule which persecuted them because of their doctrinal position. The Arab conquests in the seventh century brought initial relief to the Coptic Christians by freeing them from Byzantine persecution; however, both Catholic and Coptic Christians were placed under disabilities by the Moslem Arabs, which included a discriminative tax. The result was the winning over of many Christians to Islam. In the eighth century, Moslems tightened restrictions on Christians, increased financial burdens, and initiated persecution which led to the apostasy of many. Later, Christians were forbidden to attempt to convert Moslems or to marry Moslem women. The few Moslems who were converted usually experienced persecution and severe penalties.

The Coptic-speaking churches opposed orthodoxy by continuing to hold to _____ views. They also opposed the _____ rule which persecuted them.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Monophysites in Syria

The Jacobites were strong in Syria as a result of the organizing activities of Jacob Baradaeus. These Jacobites extended their faith when they travelled eastward as merchants and as fugitives from Catholic persecution. Their faith was planted in Mesopotamia and Persia.

Is this statement true or false?

Restrictions and burdens placed on Christians by Moslem Arabs led to many Christians' turning to the Moslem (Islam) religion. _____

(Compare your answer with the text.)

Monophysites in Armenia

Much of the Armenian populace had been brought to Christianity in the third century by Gregory the Illuminator. Armenia was a border state between the two great empires of the

Romans and the Persians; therefore, the Christians were caught between the Catholic Church and Zoroastrianism. The country was repeatedly invaded by both sides. Eventually, the Persians succeeded in conquering the land, and they attempted to force Zoroastrianism on the citizens. This attempt led to revolt, and eventually the Armenians were granted religious liberty. Armenian Christians held to the decrees of Nicaea againt Arianism but rejected those of Chalcedon and remained Monophysites. A definite separation from the Catholic Church came about in 491, and the decrees of Chalcedon were anathematized twice in the sixth century. When part of Armenia came under the Byzantine emperor late in the sixth century, a number of bishops in a council gave adherance to Chalcedon and named an orthodox bishop to head the Armenian Church. Bishops not under Byzantine control refused this action and precipitated a schism.

Arab conquests brought new threats to Armenian political and religious freedom. After two centuries of fighting, Arabs gained some control but had to concede religious liberty to the Armenians.

Nestorian Christianity

Nestorianism held the doctrine that there are two separate persons in the incarnate Christ, one divine and the other human, in opposition to the orthodox doctrine of one person with two natures. The Church took its name from Nestorius who was bishop of Constantinople in 428. His teachings were condemned by the Council of Ephesus in 431. A minority of churches in Asia Minor and Syria refused to accept the Council's decision and eventually became a separate Nestorian church. The theological school of Edessa, in eatern Syria, became the centre of Nestorian teachings. The Nestorians were expelled finally from Edessa by Emperor Zeno in 489, and the school was closed by an imperial decree. A vigorous Nestorian remnant migrated to Persia and became associated with a comparatively large body of Christians who had declared previously their independence from Rome. They had acknowledged Theodore of Mopsuestia as guardian of the right faith. The bishop of Seleucia-Ctesiphon was made head of the Church and was called the "Catholicus" to indicate his independence of all foreign control. A patriarch, five metropolitans, and as many bishops as there were administrative and judicial districts in the Persian Empire served under him.

The Arab conquest of Persia, completed by 651, did not change the legal status of the Nestorian Church. Instead, the Nestorians found two centuries of relative peace and prosperity. They were granted freedom of worship and the right to make converts among the Persians. The Moslems employed Christian scholars to translate the writings of the ancient Greek philosophers into Arabic; therefore, the Nestorian scholars preserved the ancient Greek writings which the Arabs later communicated to the Christians of the West.

The Nestorians were aggressive missionaries. Before the Arab conquest, they took Christianity to Yemen and to the eastern coast of Arabia. In spite of prohibitory laws, they won numbers of converts from Persian Zoroastrianism. They had missionaries stationed in some of the caravan cities of Central Asia. Their faith spread to such places as India, China, and Egypt. Inscriptions in South India indicate that Christianity was introduced there, perhaps in the sixth century, primarily by Nestorians. The first Nestorian missionary reached China in 631, but the fall of the Tang dynasty in the tenth century left little trace of Christianity.

After various invasions and revolts in Armenia during the sixth century, there came a schism between o _____ and Monophysitism.

(orthodoxy)

Identify these doctrines as *Nestorian* or *orthodox*.

_____1. Christ is one person with two natures.
_____2. Christ is two separate persons, one divine and the other human.

(1. orthodox, 2. Nestorian)

The centre of Nestorian teachings was first _____ and later _____.

(Edessa, Persia)

Name several countries to which the Nestorian faith spread. . . . . .
. . . . . .

(Compare your answers with the text.)

The Rise and Conquests of Islam

While the Church was making gains in northern and western Europe, Syria, Mesopotamia, Africa, Constantinople, and southern Europe were engaged in a struggle with an opposing ideology, the outcome of which would influence significantly the destiny of the Empire and civilization. Before the armies of Constantinople completed the battle with invading Persians, the Empire was assailed by the ferocious Arab warriors who were inspired by a fanatical faith.

The faith of the Arabs is known by the various names of Islam (resignation to God), Moslem or Muslim (one who resigns himself to God), and Mohammedanism after the name of its founder. This eclectic religion contains Arabic, Jewish, Christian, and Gnostic elements. Many Christians in the early Moslem era regarded Islam as a Christian heresy, but its adherents claimed it to be a fresh revelation from God, the final religion. Within a century following Mohammed's experience of a revelation from God, the Arabs had overrun about half of what had once been the Roman Empire and had become political masters of approximately half of what might be called Christendom.

The origin of Islam

Islam originated among the Arab tribes in the sandy desert between the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the Persian Gulf. The religious capital of Islam is Mecca, one of the oldest cities of Arabia. Most Arab tribes were still idolaters and carried on pagan worship at Mecca. They acknowledged the supreme being, God (Al-ilah), but they practised also polytheism. Mecca contained an ancient Semitic temple, called Kaaba (the cube), which enshrined the black stone (probably a meteor) which fell from heaven. Earlier the Arabs had worshipped stones, trees, and the spirits dwelling in them, but eventually their belief centred in a few major deities. Three goddesses are mentioned, one of which represented the moon and another fate. Many Jews had settled around Medina after the destruction of Jerusalem, and Christians of heretical sects who had been driven from the Roman Empire resided in the northern part of the peninsula. One group, the Hanifs, were neither Christian nor Jewish but held to a monotheism derived from Abraham.

Mohammed was born in Mecca about 570. He was an unschooled but self-taught person who was imaginative and energetic. He was destined to become the political and religious reformer of Arabia. His father, who claimed lineal descent from Ishmael, died at an early age and left to his young widow and only child five camels, some sheep, and a slave girl. At four years of age, Mohammed began to be subject to seizures, perhaps epilepsy. These seizures were interpreted later as miraculous occurences. He was subject to severe headaches and feverish convulsions. His mother died on the return from Medina where she had been visiting relatives when Mohammed was six. His nurse placed him with his aged grandfather in Mecca where he stayed for two years. He was then placed in the care of his uncle whom he accompanied on commercial journeys to Syria where he saw ruined cities and Jewish and Christian settlements. He earned a scanty living as an attendant of sheep and goats on caravans.

At the age of twenty-five, Mohammed married a rich widow who was then forty years old. He made a success of her mercantile business. Two sons and four daughters were born to them, but all died except Fatima. He was faithful to his wife who believed in him when nobody else did, but after her death in 619 he married a dozen or more women plus having a number of concubines.

During his travels, Mohammed acquired an imperfect

Read the second paragraph of the text and then list the various names by which the faith of the Arabs is known.

I_____, M_____ or M_____,

and M_____.

(Islam, Moslem, Muslim, Mohammedanism)

What is the religious capital of Islam?

_____

(Mecca)

knowledge of Christianity and Judaism. He spent much time in retirement, prayer, fasting, and meditation. His numerous convulsions were attributed to demonic possession at first but later to the overpowering presence of God. He became convinced that he was the chosen messenger of God, called to warn his countrymen of judgement and damnation if they did not forsake idolatry and worship the only true God. In 610, he received the call of Gabriel, the archangel at the right hand of God who announced the birth of the Saviour to the Virgin Mary. He was instructed to "cry in the name of the Lord." He was afraid, but his wife told him to rejoice for he would be the prophet of his people. During the next twenty years, he claimed numerous revelations through visions.

As he began preaching against idolatry, his wife, daughter, adopted son, and other relatives were converted. His attacks on Meccan idolatry endangered his life and forced his flight (the Hegira) to Medina before the pursuing merchants of Mecca. This flight inaugurated the Mohammedan era. He was recognized in Medina as prophet and law-giver by the merchants with whom he entered a pact for protection. At first he did not favour using force and compulsion, but later he concluded that unbelievers must be summoned to Islam—they must pay tribute or die by the sword. In 624, he gained victory in battle over the Meccan forces with an army of 305 followers. He conquered several Jewish and Christian tribes, ordered and watched the massacre of 600 Jews in one day, and sold their wives and children into slavery. In 625, he defeated a force of 3,000 Meccans and 10,000 in 627. The Meccans were forced to negotiate with the Moslems. In 629, he sent envoys to the king of Persia, the emperor of Byzantium, and the governor of Alexandria to persuade them to embrace Islam, but his envoys were not well received. In 630, he broke his treaty with Mecca and conquered the city, demolishing 360 idols. The citizens were overawed by his success and joined his movement. The tribal feuding became common fanatical hatred for infidels. Followers of other religions were to be exterminated unless they submitted to Islam. In 632, Nestorian Christians and Jews accepted Moslem protection. That same year, Mohammed rode a white camel on a pilgrimage of Islam and led 40,000 Moslems to Mecca where they were instructed in the important ordinances and were exhorted to protect the weak, the poor, and women. Before his planned campaign against the Greeks could be carried out, he died of a violent fever in Medina. His last words were: "The Lord destroy the Jews and Christians! Let his anger be kindled against those that turn the tombs of their prophets into places of worship!"

The doctrines of Islam

The chief doctrine is absolute surrender to the one true God which means the destruction of idolatry and the diffusion of monotheism. However, the monotheism is abstract, monotonous, divested of inner life and fullness, and antitrinitarian. The divinity of Christ is denied strongly. Allah is of infinite power and wisdom but is not a god of redeeming love. He requires believers to be kind to the poor and needy and to forgive. The followers must expect a just return for the wrongs they do.

Allah is surrounded by angels who serve him exactly as kings are served by their ministers and attendants. The chief angel is Gabriel who is the agent of revelation. The devil is a fallen angel who tempts man.

The Koran is the divine revelation given by angels through the visions of the prophet. Mohammed spoke the words of the Koran to his companions who stored it in their memories and eventually wrote it in an official recension. Each verse is regarded as a supernatural dictation communicated to Mohammed.

Mohammed's convulsions were attributed at first to _____ possession but later to the overpowering presence of _____.

(demonic, God)

Mohammed attacked Meccan idolatry and fled to _____ to escape merchants of Mecca. His flight was called the _____.

(Medina, Hegira)

Mohammed's plan was to exterminate followers of other religions unless they submitted to _____.

(Islam)

In the religion of Islam the chief doctrine of absolute surrender to one true God means the destruction of _____ and the diffusion of _____.

(Compare your answer with the text.)

Followers of Islam believe that divine revelation which came to Mohammed is recorded in the_____.

(Koran)

Moslems believe that the Bible is inspired revelation but that the Jews and Christians falsified their Scriptures. When the Koran differs from the Bible, the Koran is considered correct.

Islam claims Abraham as its fleshly father through Hagar and Ishmael. Moses and Jesus were prophets, but Mohammed was the last and greatest of all prophets. He did not claim divinity nor supernatural powers. His special relationship with heaven came in a "night journey." He was carried from the sacred temple at Mecca by Gabriel on the back of a winged steed. First he was taken to Jerusalem and then up through the seven heavens where he spoke with Adam, John the Baptist, Jesus, Joseph, Enoch, Aaron, Moses, and Abraham. Mohammed was then lifted on a flying carpet before Allah who spoke with him. This experience gave him the highest status of the prophets.

The upright attain the Garden of Eden or of Paradise, a cool mountain top with bubbling springs, trees with abundant fruit, and dark-eyed virgins. Unbelievers will be cast into hell which is beneath the lowest earth, an abyss filled with fiery flames.

Ordinary believers are restricted to four wives, but they can have unlimited concubines and female slaves. Women are ignorant and degraded, concealed from public sight by veils, and commanded not to pray since there is a question as to whether they have souls. Man's prayers carry him half way to God, fasting brings him to the door of God's palace, and alms secure admittance. War against unbelievers is legalized by the Koran.

Moslems are to face Mecca devotedly five times a day in prayer–before dawn, at noon, in the afternoon, before sunset, and at nightfall. One month is given to fasting in order that the Moslem will realize what hunger means and will have compassion on the poor. During the daylight hours of the month, he is to abstain from all food, drink, tobacco, and sexual intercourse; however, he is permitted to eat, drink, and celebrate after darkness.

The conquests of Islam

Mohammed said that the sword is the key of heaven and hell; a drop of blood shed in the cause of Allah is of more avail than two months of fasting or praying. The sins of those who fall in battle are forgiven. He justified the use of the sword against his enemies on the basis of the ill-treatment his envoys received by foreign courts. The Byzantine army defeated the Moslems in 630 but were defeated in a surprise attack three years later. Damascus fell in 635. On a hot and windy day in 636, the Byzantine army of 150,000 was defeated by the Moslems. The Persians were finally crushed in 641. Alexandria fell in 642, Carthage in 697, and Spain in the early part of the eighth century. The Moslems were halted finally in France by Charles Martel in 732.

The effects of Moslem conquests on Christianity

Christians were heavily taxed and deprived of privileges and social status of citizenship; however, conversion gave them the same privileges as Moslems. Others were tempted to defection since Moslem successes appeared to indicate God's blessings. Loyal Christians were hindered greatly in their missionary work because the death penalty was passed upon Moslem apostates. Areas where Christianity had been strong succumbed to Moslem military, political, social, and religious pressures.

Conclusion

While Eastern Christians and their emperors were divided over doctrinal issues, the Arab world was drawn together by the new religion of Mohammed which contained the challenge to rid the world of idolatry. Christianity and the Empire were

Which does Islam consider to be the last and greatest of all prophets-Moses, Jesus, or Mohammed?

_____

(Compare your answer with the text.)

Use the words *alms, prayers, fasting* to complete this doctrinal statement of the Moslem faith.

Man's _____ carry him half way to God, _____ brings him to the door of God's palace, and _____ secure admittance.

(Compare your answers with the text.)

Due to Moslem conquests, Christians suffered heavy _____ and lack of _____.

(Compare with the text.)

weakened by the use of persecution in forcing unity. The Arabs were unified by a common missionary understaking. Although orthodoxy was important, correcting the Monophysite and Monothelite errors weakened Christianity and contributed to the success of Islam.

Conditions after Arab Conquests

Christian losses

Moslems tolerated Christians and Jews because they were people of the Bible. In fact, many of the Arab rulers were not anxious for Christians to adopt Islam because of the loss of proceeds from the discriminatory taxes levied on Christians. At first non-Catholic Christians were better off under Arab rulers than under Byzantine rulers.

In North Africa where Catholic Christianity predominated, the Christians fled and took refuge in Sicily and Italy during the Arab conquests, leaving the churches of North Africa weak and struggling. Arab restrictions and deprivations of Christians left the churches on the defensive and rendered them stagnant. The leaders resisted change because they feared that any departure from the traditions of the past would further enhance disintegration of their entire life and faith. The churches under the Arabs were tenaciously persistent, but they gradually diminished because of lack of missionary zeal and of Arab restrictions on proselytizing. In Arabia most Christian communities died out before the tenth century. In North Africa their ranks were diminished greatly by the eleventh century.

Ecclesiastical changes

The patriarch of Constantinople became head of Eastern Catholicism when Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria came under Arab control. The jurisdiction of the patriarch increased to include forty metropolitans and about 400 diocesan bishops. Authority which had existed previously in local churches passed into the hands of the patriarch, and the churches which had been considered the people of God came to be considered mainly as administrative subdivisions of a greater whole. The bishop of an area became more of a representative or agent of the higher, central church authority in Constantinople. His consecration passed from the church which he served into the hands of the patriarchal synod.

Morals

Strict requirements were placed upon the clergymen. They were forbidden to attend horse races, theatres, and gambling rooms, and were to have no social contacts with women. The sacramental functions of bishops were to be performed without fees, and they were not to be absent from their churches for three consecutive Sundays. Commerical enterprises of any type were prohibited. The bishops were expected to spend their entire ministry in the diocese to which they had been ordained.

Byzantine Christians of the seventh century were very religious. They attended church regularly, participated in theological debates, and were intensely devoted to relics and icons (pictures, images). However, they had little evangelistic or missionary passion.

Worship

The liturgy of the Eastern Church was developed in form and refined. True to the mystical characteristic of the East, church services were ritualistic and centred on the solemn

Christian missionary work was greatly hindered because Moslems who gave up their religion were sentenced to _____.

(Compare your answer with the text.)

Moslems tolerated Christians because they were people of the _____ and they paid _____.

(Bible, taxes)

The jurisdiction of the patriarch of Constantinople increased greatly when Arab control held the cities of–

A_____, J_____, and A_____.

(Compare with the text.)

Underline the correct word.

Byzantine Christians of the seventh century had (much, little) evangelistic or missionary passion.

(little)

celebration of the mystery of salvation. The Lord's Supper did not represent merely the Incarnation, but its celebration was a spiritual drama in which the worshipper participated in the Incarnation. The service opened with the *Little Entrance* in which the bishop took his place in the sanctuary during the singing of an anthem to the Trinity. Three Scripture lessons were read (prophecy, epistle, and gospel), interspersed with chants, the quiet singing of Antiphon, and the Alleluia. After a short sermon (a homily), the catechumens were dismissed and the liturgy of the faithful continued. The bishop would leave his episcopal throne and go to the altar behind a screen. This service opened with prayers for the faithful, the ministry, and the emperor. Next was the *Great Entrance*–the bringing of the elements of the Eucharist into the sanctuary. The service continued in the following order: Diptychs reading of the names of the holy dead and living), Kiss of Peace, the Creed, Anaphora with Slutation, Sursum Corda, Preface, Sanctus, Thanksgiving or Consecration, Elevation, and Communion. The consecrated elements were placed in the hands of the people by the officiating clergyman. The service was concluded with a hymn. Sacramental worship, not preaching, was central in Eastern orthodoxy.

The baptism of infants indicated the belief in the necessity of baptism for salvation. Cathechetical instruction preceded baptism for those adults who were converted from paganism. Fasting was required before communion.

The Icon Controversy

Beginning in 726 and lasting for 120 years, there was controversy between the iconoclasts (iconsmashers) and the iconodules (venerators of icons). An icon was understood as a holy image. Orthodox theology taught that images had no mystical power, but popular belief quickly attached supernatural power to the images themselves. The worship of saints had become a common practice, and statues were believed to have performed miracles and to have been able to bless their worshippers. Images and pictures were used originally to instruct the unlearned, but they became objects of veneration.

Emperor Leo III (717–741) desired to win Jews and Moslems to Christianity, but he recognized that images must be removed from the churches to show that Christianity is not idolatrous. He had observed the removal of all idols from the Islamic mosques and was convinced that his losses to the Moslems were due to his idol worship. He also sought to reduce the power of the monks and to make the State master over the Church. He issued the "Decree Against Images" in 725 which required images and pictures to be placed above the reach of the people. In 730, he ordered their complete removal and forbade their use in churches. The removal of a famous picture of Christ from over the palace gate precipitated riots by women and monks against the army and the imperial court. Leo retaliated with exile and mutilation of the rioters and confiscation of their property.

John of Damascus defended the use of images, but Leo could not reach him because that city was under Moslem control. The arguments of the Icon controversy concerned the question of idolatry, the use of icons as teaching tools, and their doctrinal significance. The orthodox claimed that their use was not idolatrous because the veneration went beyond the icon to the person represented by it. John distinguished carefully between veneration shown to symbols and worship shown to God. He claimed value for icons as teaching aids for ignorant people. Concerning their doctrinal significance, the non-Greek emperors

With reference to Eastern Church liturgy, match each of the following terms with its significance.

____1. Little Entrance	a. Bringing the elements of the Eucharist into the sanctuary
____2. Great Entrance	b. Bishop's entering the sanctuary at the beginning of a worship service.

(b–1, a–2)

Icon is a holy _____.

For 120 years a controversy lasted between the I_____ and the I_____.

Which opposed the use of images? _____
Iconoclasts Iconodules

Which promoted use of images, pictures, and statues?

_____
Iconoclasts Iconodules

(Compare your answers with the text.)

claimed that the use of icons was an attempt to capture divinity. The orthodox countered with the argument that because of the Incarnation, God can be represented in art forms. God abrogated the Second Commandment when He became flesh. Pope Gregory II entered the controversy on the side of John of Damascus and wrote Leo III to leave ecclesiastical affairs to the Church. Leo answered that he would come to Rome, break the statue of Peter, and imprison the Pope. Leo claimed to be emperor and priest with the right to make ecclesiastical decrees.

Constantine V (741–775) sought a theological basis for opposition to icons. His father Leo had never looked for this. He called a council in 753 to be held in Constantinople. The attending bishops agreed that veneration of images was Satan's work and that divinity could not be portrayed. The Eucharist was the only proper representation of the Lord. Images either separated the two natures of Christ or circumscribed the person of the Word. The monks rejected the oath which forbade image worship. Their rejection led to persecution and the confiscation of their monasteries for military purposes. The Patriarch of Constantinople, who had been a monk, was deposed and beheaded. Rome reacted with a synod which published anathemas against the enemies of images.

Empress Irene gained political power until her ten-year-old son Constantine VI became of age. Since she was a Greek, she was pro-icon and reversed the decisions of the three former emperors. She deposed the iconoclastic patriarch and placed her secretary of state on the ecclesiastical thone. The Empress called a council in Constantinople to denounce iconoclasm, but the army, which remained iconoclastic, broke up the meeting. She renewed hostilities with the Moslems to occupy the army while she reconvened the council at Nicaea (787). Bishops from both the East and West were present and declared that images were right, proper, and necessary in worship. Holy icons were to receive "greeting and reverential respect" but not worship which belongs only to God. Worship of images was only relative since the worship was actually of the person represented by the image.

When Irene's son became of age, she denounced him because he divorced his wife and remarried. Irene deposed him, blinded him, and declared herself empress (797–802) after imprisoning him in the palace. She was later overthrown by one of her ministers who was a mild iconoclast. Michael I (811–813) immediately restored all the images but lost support of his army which persuaded him that the steadily declining position of the Eastern Empire was due to God's judgement on image worshippers. Leo V (813–820) deposed the Patriarch Nicephorus and put an iconoclast in his place. Leo called a council which repudiated Second Nicaea and which upheld the results of the council held by Constantine V in 754. Leo's successor forbade the use of icons in public places but did not hinder the people in their private beliefs and practices. Theophilus (828–842) persecuted image worshippers. He had monks and bishops beaten, tortured, and imprisoned. His widow Theodora, who succeeded him, restored images and released from prison the image worshippers. The Second Council of Nicaea was reaffirmed, images were replaced, and the victory was called "The Triumph of Orthodoxy."

John of Damascus

Some historians have concluded that the East was devoid of any significant development in theology after the fifth century, but not all hold this opinion. John of Damascus was the most important theologian of this period. His work was primarily to summarize and organize the previous five centuries of Eastern

READ ALL OF THE TOPIC *THE ICON CONTROVERSY* BEFORE DOING THE FOLLOWING EXERCISE.

Classify the following persons as *for* or *against* icons and state below each name his or her reason for that position.

John of Damascus
Constantine V
Emperor Leo III
Theodora
Leo V
Empress Irene

For icons

_____

_____

_____

Against icons

_____

_____

_____

_____

(Compare your answers with the text.)

thought. He preserved the teachings of the Fathers for the Greek Church.

John was born probably at Jerusalem about 700 and was educated by an Italian monk. As previously noted, he became the opponent of the iconoclastic decree of Leo in 726.

John's theology centred in Christology. He was a thoroughgoing Chalcedonian who accepted "one Hypostasis" in two natures and strongly opposed the idea of one will or one nature. He believed the Son did not unite Himself with a particular man in the Incarnation but rather took on Himself the whole of human nature so that he particularized it by assuming it. Therefore, Christ's human nature possessed no hypostasis of its own, but it received its hypostasis from the Son. The flesh of Jesus actually became God, and His divinity became human and shared man's humiliation. The divinity was not affected in its substance by its association with the human element. Since the human and divine natures were wholly shared by both, Christ was not limited by human ignorance or passion.

The main contribution of John of Damascus was to summarize and organize the _____ of the past five centuries, which he preserved for the _____ Church.

(Eastern thought, Greek)

Paulicianism

During the troubled years of iconoclasticims, the East was also annoyed by a competing religion called Paulicianism. It arose on the eastern border of the Empire, south of Armenia, in the second half of the seventh century. Its enemies claimed that it sprang from Manichaeism and that its first proponents were a woman, Callinice, and her two sons, Paul and John. The Paulicians claimed their founder and teacher to be Constantine of Armenia, and they condemned Callinice and her sons as heretics. They boasted of a history of persecution and suffering for their faith which they said was that of the Apostle Paul.

Constantine founded the first community during the reign of Emperor Constans II (641–668). He taught that the New Testament was the only guide; therefore, he left no writings. He and his successors took the names of Paul's companions (Timothy, Titus, etc.). Emperor Constantine V (841–775) is said to have transported some of them to Thrace where they apparently founded the Bulgarian Bogomiles. Later emperors were impressed by their work and encouraged them; however, Michael I (811–813) and Leo (813–820) persecuted those who refused to renounce their faith. Theodora (842) bathed them in blood. Approximately 100,000 Paulicians were put to death. The number executed reveals that the movement spread rapidly in eastern Asia Minor in the early ninth century. In the latter part of that century, some were converted to Christianity. The emperor Alexius I Comnenus (1081–1118) is credited with having put an end to the heresy by convincing them of their error. In Bulgaria the Bogomile sect lasted through the Middle Ages and spread to the West in the form of Cathari, Albigenses, and other Manichaean heresies.

A group called Paulicians claimed their founder and teacher to be _____ of Armenia.

(Constantine)

The Paulicians held a dualistic view of God since they believed all matter was evil. They distinguished between the Creator and Lord of this world and the true God of heaven. The heavenly God is the Creator of souls, rules heaven, and is the one to whom souls return. The God of the Old Testament is the Demiurge from whose creative work man must be freed. They held a Docetic view of the Incarnation since there could be no real union between divinity and human flesh. Christ was born of the good God and passed through His mother's body, like water through a pipe, without deriving anything from her flesh. Both His birth and death were unreal. His significance was chiefly in His teachings. Salvation came by believing in Christ and His teachings. They repudiated infant baptism since Jesus was not baptized until He was an adult. Some claimed the words of Christ

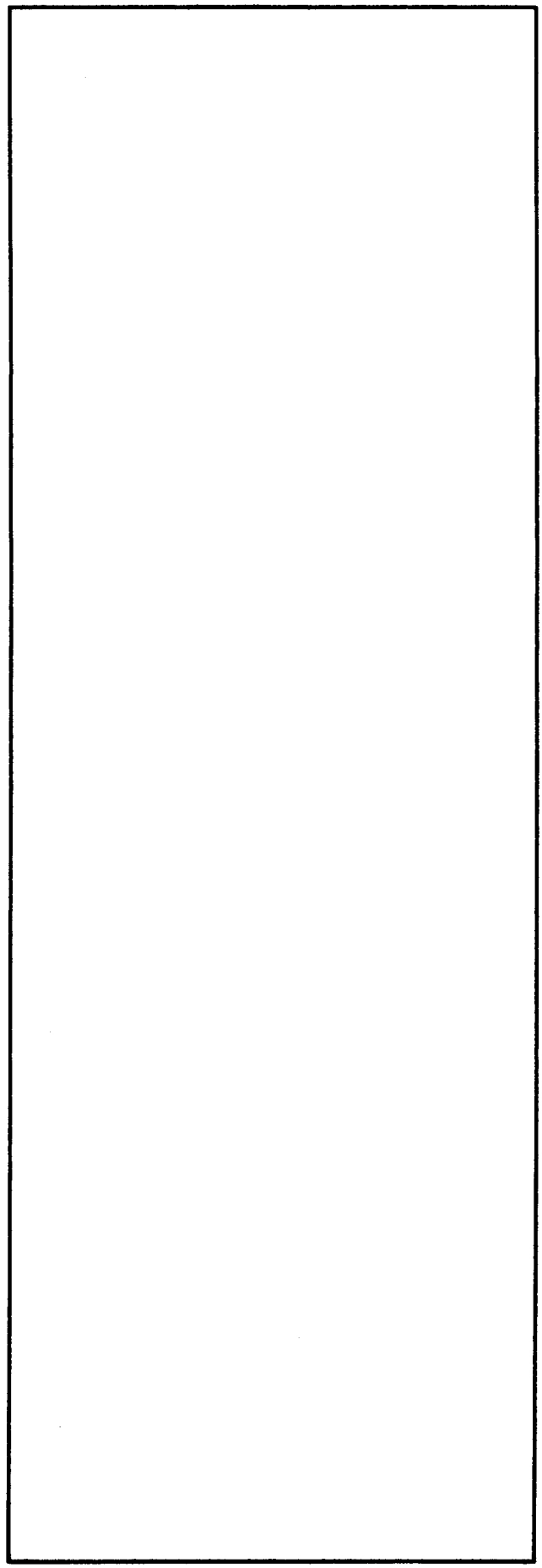
In their dualistic view of God, Paulicians distinguished between the _____ of this world and the true _____ of heaven.

(Creator, God)

The Paulicians' view was that salvation came by believing in _____ and His teachings.

(Christ)

were true baptism. The elements of the Eucharist were not looked upon as the body and blood of Christ. The Eucharist consisted in hearing His word, and water was used in the place of wine. The emphasis of the Paulicians was on a pious life rather than on doctrine and ritual. They were not ascetics and were willing to use the sword in defending themselves. The perfect abstained from sexual intercourse, but the common lived in marriage. Because of persecution many lived as Catholics externally while holding to Paulician beliefs.



Home Study Exercise

Basic activity Levels 1, 2, and 3). After reading the study guide text, answer the following questions.

1. Give two results of the close relation between the Church and the Empire in the East.

2. What was the purpose and effect of Emperor Zeno's edict of union?

3. What did the Monophysites believe about Christ's nature?

4. What did Justinian believe to be his duty and how did he plan to accomplish it?

5. What were the purpose and results of the Fifth Ecumenical Council?

6. Explain the doctrine of Monothelitism.

7. Give the date and two decisions of the Sixth Ecumenical Council.

8. Give two reasons the Coptic Church separated from orthodoxy.

9. How did Islam win converts among Christians?

10. How did Nestorianism differ from orthodoxy and where did the Nestorian Church develop?

11. To which countries did the Nestorian faith spread?

12. What are the sources of Islam? _____

13. How did Mohammed interpret his convulsions? _____

_____

14. What is the Hegira? _____

15. What was Mohammed's policy for spreading his faith? _____

_____

16. Give the four primary doctrines of Islam. _____

_____

_____

_____

17. What were the effects of Moslem conquests on Christianity? _____

_____

_____

_____

18. Give two reasons Moslems tolerated Christians. _____

_____

19. How did the patriarch of Constantinople profit from Moslem conquests? _____

_____

_____

20. What is meant by *Little Entrance* and *Great Entrance?* _____

_____

_____

_____

21. What was the Icon controversy? _____

22. Name three persons who opposed icons and three who supported icons and give the reasons for their positions.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

23. Give the primary contribution of John of Damascus. _____

24. Who were the Paulicians? _____

_____

25. What did the Paulicians believe about God and salvation? _____

_____

_____

Supplementary activity (Levels 2 and 3). Read pages 99–110 in *A Summary of Christian History* by Baker and answer the following questions.

1. What are the weaknesses and the claims for primacy by the Roman Church?

2. Briefly describe the competition between the Pope and the Patriarch and give the eventual results.

Advanced activity (Level 3). Read pages 123–130 in *Documents of the Christian Church* by Bettenson and answer the following questions.

1. What was the Henoticon of Zeno and what did it advocate?

2. What was the "Three Chapters" and what were its effects upon the East and the West?

3. How did the Second Council of Nicaea in 787 justify icons?

Seminar Discussion

1. How did the Monophysite controversy affect Eastern Christianity and how did the doctrine of Monophysitism differ from the orthodox view?

2. What was the purpose and decision of the Sixth Ecumenical Council?

3. How did Nestorianism differ from orthodoxy and Monophysitism?

4. How did a corrupt Christianity contribute to the rise of Islam, and how did the Moslems convert people to their faith?

5. Give five important doctrines and practices of Islam.

6. How did Arab conquest affect Christianity?

7. What arguments were used to support veneration of icons and why was the controversy so difficult to settle?

8. Who were the Paulicians and what did they believe?