

**World History Unit 4: The Rise of Other Civilizations**  
**NC Essential Standard 2: Ancient Civilizations and the Rise of Empires**

I. The Byzantine Empire

A. Located in the eastern half of the old Roman Empire; modern day Istanbul, Turkey

B. Early Period (324-632)

1. Constantinople – Emperor Constantine had transferred the capital of the Roman Empire from Rome to Constantinople (New Rome) in 324. He did this primarily for military reasons to protect the wealthier eastern part of the empire.

2. Constantinople – located on an important commercial intersection (both east-west trade and north-south trade) which allowed it to dominate commerce and become wealthy

3. The eastern empire was spared the difficulties faced by the west due to an established urban culture and greater financial resources. They could placate invaders with tribute and pay foreign mercenaries.

4. Theodosius II fortified the walls of Constantinople, leaving them impervious to most attacks.

5. Justinian the Great (527 – 565) - urged to fight rather than flee by his wife Theodora and crushed a revolt in Constantinople which ended with the death of 30,000 rioters (allegedly) – this solidified his power and he was able to carry out his goals:

a. Restoration of the western provinces to the empire

1. fought against the Vandals, Ostrogoths, and Visigoths while trying to maintain peace with the Persians on the eastern border, but following Justinian’s death, most of the territorial acquisitions were lost

2. he came closer to restoring a united Roman Empire than any other Byzantine Emperor

b. Reformation of Laws

1. Corpus Juris Civilis (Body of Civil Law) – known as Justinian’s Code

2. this codification of the law became one of the greatest works of the Byzantine Empire and has become the basis of the modern legal system in the US and most western countries

c. Beautification of Constantinople

1. Justinian wanted to make Constantinople reflect the physical splendor of Rome so he had new churches and palaces built

2. Hagia Sophia (Church of the Holy Wisdom) – the largest church built

6. End of the early period – in 542, terrible plagues repeatedly struck the lands of the empire. This, combined with wars involving the Persians stopped further internal beautification. The wars exhausted both the Byzantine and Persian Empire and left them vulnerable to the Arab forces which emerged in the following years.

C. Middle Period (632-1054)

1. the policy of restoring the old empire was abandoned and the empire focused on Asia Minor

2. The greatest threat to the empire at this time was the wars of conquest waged by the followers of Muhammad. These Muslims overran much of the Byzantine Empire in the 630’s and 640’s.

3. Emperor Leo III (717-741) defeated Muslim attacks on Constantinople and began the reconquest of Asia Minor from the Muslims. His victories gave the empire a two century respite from further Muslim encroachment.

a. In 726, Leo III introduced Iconoclasm (image-breaking), which forbade the veneration of images within churches. This had a disastrous effect on relations with the west. The western and eastern churches grew further apart.

b. The military power of the Byzantine Empire was based on an army and navy of free people, divided into a system called “themes.” The Byzantine navy often used “Greek Fire” shot from hot tubes on the prow of their ships. No one knows for sure how Greek Fire was made.

c. The Byzantine Empire had a strong central government with the emperor having absolute authority.

d. The greatest accomplishment of Byzantine scholars was the preservation of classical Greek and Roman literature.

D. Late Period (1054-1453)

1. By the end of the Middle Period, the system of “themes” declined as many were conquered by the Muslims. The emperor was forced to seek outside help (mercenaries- soldiers paid to fight).
2. Schism (1054) – the split with the Roman Catholic Church (Western Christians)
  - a. the popes and patriarchs had been at odds with each other since the Iconoclastic Controversy (worshipping images and statues)
  - b. The Pope in Rome and the patriarch in Constantinople both excommunicated each other.
  - c. The schism destroyed any hope of a united Christian Church. Only in 1965 did the Pope and the Patriarch formally remove the excommunication of 1054.
3. Turks and Manzikert (1071) - The Turks (Muslim) successfully broke down the eastern defenses of the Byzantine Empire. When the Byzantines attempted to stop them, they fought a battle at Manzikurt in 1071. The Turks routed the Byzantine army and captured the Emperor Romanus. Afterwards, the empire was confined to a small area around Constantinople.

E. Eastern Orthodox Church

1. Secular Supervision – The Byzantine Emperor told the Patriarch what to do and the Patriarch did it because the Byzantines believed the emperor was a Holy figure who exercised an impressive authority over ecclesiastical affairs.
2. The emperor created bishoprics and appointed patriarchs (sometimes forced them to resign).
3. Caesaropapism – mix of Caesar and Pope – the emperor’s position within the church

F. Differences between the eastern and western church

1. Eastern Christianity (Orthodox) – allows priests to marry, allows divorce, used the vernacular (everyday common language) of Greek in Greece, Russian in Russia, etc., stayed out of politics
2. Western Christianity (Roman Catholic) – did not allow priests to marry, did not allow divorce, only spoke Latin, the Pope was involved in politics

G. Legacy of the Byzantine Empire

1. preserved classical literature
2. served as a model of civilization
3. protected western Europe from destructive invasions of Arabs, Persians, Turks and others

II. Early Russia (Kiev)

A. Slavic People – the direct heirs of the Byzantine civilization

B. Vikings – established trade routes to Constantinople through modern day Russia.

1. The Vikings were called the “Rus” – hence, Rus is Russia.
2. Oleg – Viking chieftain who created the first Rus state around the city of Kiev

C. Prince Vladimir the Great

1. When he accepted a new faith instead of the traditional idol worship and paganism of the Slavs, he sent out some of his most valued advisors and warriors as emissaries to different parts of Europe
2. the emissaries visited Christians, Jews, and Muslims, and then arrived in Constantinople
3. they rejected Roman because church was dull, Judaism because God allowed the chosen people to be deprived of their country, and Islam because it prohibited the use of alcohol
4. they chose the Orthodox faith of Constantinople because they were astounded by the beauty of the Hagia Sophia and its service; Vladimir then married Princess Anna, the sister of the

Byzantine emperor, Basil II

D. Yaroslav (1015-1054)

1. the principality of Kiev reached its greatest height under his rule by waging wars of expansion
2. Codification of Slavic Law took place under his reign

E. Decline of Kiev – caused by a cumbersome system of succession which often led to civil wars; nomadic warriors eventually cut off trade between Kiev and Constantinople which economically ruined Kiev

III. The Rise of Islam (The Arabian Peninsula)

A. Background

1. in a state of political and social ferment at the time of Muhammad
2. stronger powers (Persians, Byzantines, Abyssinians/Ethiopians) tried to subdue the Arabs, but failed repeatedly

3. Arabs were pagan which gave no promise of an afterlife (neither Jews nor Christians could convert them)

B. Muhammad

1. Arab merchant who claimed to have received revelations from the Angel Gabriel in 610
2. when preaching about these revelations, his city of Mecca rejected him; he fled to Medina in 622 to save his life (the flight is known as the hijra)
3. became governor of Medina and converted many; conquered Mecca in 630
4. Muhammad died in 632, but the Islamic religion continued to strengthen
5. Muhammad had considered himself the last of the Great Prophets (Abraham, Jesus, and others)

C. Tenants of Islam

1. Koran (Quran) – sacred book containing Muhammad’s revelations from Gabriel
  - a. it defined the ethical and legal requirements for an upright life
  - b. does not separate church and state– only one sacred community of Allah
2. Pillars of Islam – the 5 basic things Muslims have to believe and do
  - a. Faith – accepting the belief that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet
  - b. Prayer – facing Mecca, the Holy City of Islam, 5 times a day
  - c. Alms – charity; money to help the poor and needy
  - d. Fasting – Ramadan (holy month) – no food or water from sunrise to sunset
  - e. Pilgrimage – journey to Mecca at least once during one’s lifetime

D. Caliph – the Supreme religious and civil head of the Muslim world; differing versions of who should be the caliph after the death of Muhammad caused a split in Islam

1. Sunni – believe Muhammad’s friend, Abu Bakr, was the rightful successor
2. Shiites – believe Muhammad’s successor should be a family member

E. Expansion of Islam

1. Islam appealed to the racial and cultural pride of Arabs
2. Allah, according to Muhammad, instructed his followers to convert or conquer nonbelievers
3. Jihad – holy war – was used to spread Islam by conquering and converting others

F. Islamic Culture

1. urban, universal Arabic language; many classical books were translated into Arabic
2. men could have four legal wives and unlimited concubines (only afforded by the rich)
3. women were forced into seclusion after puberty
4. scholars added zero to the number system and developed Algebra

G. Decline of Islamic Civilization

1. Christian armies invaded the Middle East, started retaking the Iberian Peninsula (Spain)
2. Christian fleets broke Islamic domination of the Mediterranean Sea
3. commercial supremacy passed to the Italians and other westerners

H. Effects of Islamic Influence

1. spread of the Arabic language and Islamic culture
2. ongoing conflicts between Christians and Muslims; with western democratic nations
3. Islamic influences in western nations – new farming techniques, crops such as rice, citrus fruits, and medical theory came to the west from the Arabs
4. despite heavy borrowing of many Islamic accomplishments, Islamic civilization did not decisively change the course of western cultural developments; two distinct medieval cultures remained

IV. Ancient African Trading Kingdoms

A. Eastern and Southern Africa

1. Great Rift Valley in East Africa – home of the earliest people
2. Nubia (Kush) – 750 BC – 350 AD
  - a. located along the Nile River
  - b. iron ore – main trade item
  - c. adopted Egyptian religious beliefs; Apedemak – lion-headed warrior god
  - d. conquered by Axum
3. Axum – 350 AD
  - a. located in present-day Ethiopia

- b. practiced Christianity; Ezana (Christian king making it the official religion)
    - c. religion led to isolation among other African tribes and forced Axum to trade with India and the Mediterranean world
  - 4. Great Zimbabwe – 1300 - 1800 AD
    - a. known for stone buildings and enclosures
    - b. manufacturing center; wealthy from gold exports; traded with India and China
- B. Western Africa (all were along the Niger River)
  - 1. Islamic influence
    - a. religion, culture, Arabic language
    - b. Timbuktu – main trading center (gold and salt)
  - 2. Ghana (“Ghana” is ruler) – 700 – 1200 AD
    - a. Kumbi Saleh – capital and center of trade
    - b. conquered by Mali
  - 3. Mali (“Mali” – where the king dwells) – 1200 – 1500 AD
    - a. Mansa Musa – greatest ruler; took Mali empire to its greatest size
    - b. divided the empire into provinces ruled by mochrifs (mayors)
    - c. conquered by the Songhai
  - 4. Songhai – 1350 – 1600 AD
    - a. King Askia Muhammad – made a hajj (pilgrimage) to Mecca
      - 1. Aljahi (Aljaha) – term for Africans who make the journey to Mecca
      - 2. organized empire into provinces; created a navy of canoes
    - b. Sunni-Ali – soldier-king; created the largest state in Western Africa
    - c. some traces of the Songhai are in Nigeria today

## V. The Americas

- A. Land Bridge Theory (12,000 – 10,000 years ago)
  - 1. water froze into thick sheets of ice and sea level dropped
  - 2. land bridge was exposed between Siberia and Alaska
  - 3. people were nomadic and followed the animals they hunted, such as bison
  - 4. around 10,000 BC, the climate warmed and the ice melted, forming the Bering Strait
- B. Early Inhabitants of MesoAmerica
  - 1. Mesoamerica – the area between North and South America; Central America
  - 2. Similar cultural achievements – pyramids to the gods, astronomy, calendars based on the sun, human sacrifices, savage warriors
  - 3. Olmecs – 1400 – 500 BC (earliest American civilization)
    - a. located on the Gulf of Mexico coast
    - b. achievements included rubber (rubber balls for athletics), giant carved stone heads (weighing 40 tons), art with jaguars and serpents, ceremonial centers instead of cities
  - 4. Aztecs – 1200-1450 AD
    - a. located on an island in Lake Texcoco in central Mexico
    - b. Tenochtitlan – capital; becomes Mexico City
    - c. lake protected them against outside attacks; streets were canals
    - d. affected agriculture – built chinampas (floating gardens)
    - e. achievements included chocolate, pyramids (Templo Mayor), calendar
    - f. Montezuma II – last great ruler; ruled under control of Hernando Cortes when he conquered the Aztecs in the 1500s
  - 5. Mayas – 300 – 900 AD
    - a. located on the Yucatan Peninsula
    - b. Teotihuacan – capital; Tikal – largest city (in Guatemala)
    - c. Pyramid Temples – tallest American structures until skyscrapers; built in layers
      - 1. Pyramid of the Sun – marked the summer solstice
      - 2. El Castillo at Chichen Itza – study the stars; human sacrifices
    - d. Achievements – concept of zero, astronomy, maize (corn), 2 calendar system (one solar calendar of 365 days and the other a ritual calendar; made of 2 wheels that align once every 52 years marking a Mayan century); athletics (basketball/soccer game)

C. The Incas of South America (1400 – 1500 AD)

1. located in the Andes Mountains of Peru
2. Cuzco – capital; founded by the first Incan ruler
3. Sapa Inca – famous emperor; worshipped as a god and king
4. “Inca” – means children of the sun god Inti; later the title of rulers
5. Temple of the Sun – pyramid built in the middle of the city
6. Achievements – quipu (knotted strings for record-keeping), advanced roads (like the Romans), metalworks (especially with gold), number system based on 10, quechua (spoken language)
7. Agriculture – due to the mountainous geography, the Incas developed terraced or stepped areas of land for farming and created irrigation canals
8. Macchu Picchu – last stronghold before being conquered by Francisco Pizarro in the 1500s