

SHORT ANSWER

10 minutes for these questions (4 points each)

1. The Byzantine Empire was in existence from A.D. 395, when the eastern and western Roman Empire split, until 1453, when the Turks conquered Constantinople.
2. The above empire was responsible for blending two cultures: the Greek culture and the Roman culture.
3. Who was Justinian?
Justinian (A.D. 482-565) was a Byzantine emperor who ruled over the Byzantine Empire at its greatest extent, reconquering much of the former Western Roman Empire from the barbarians. He built the Hagia Sophia, and compiled all the existing Roman laws into one unified code, the Justinian Code, which forms the basis of European law to this day.
4. Name two achievements for which Justinian is famous.
Any two of these would be correct:
 - Empire expansion
 - Building the Hagia Sophia
 - Compiling the Justinian Code
 - Consolidation of the Eastern Church and State
5. True or False: Justinian ruled from Rome, where he lived in a magnificent palace on the Palatine Hill.
False. Justinian ruled from Constantinople, which was the capital of the Byzantine Empire.
6. Who founded Constantinople, and when?
Constantine founded Constantinople on the site of the old city of Byzantium in A.D. 330.
7. What does the term *asceticism* mean?
This is the deprivation of the body for the good of the soul. It can include such things as fasting, celibacy, prayer vigils (sleep deprivation), poverty, and solitary living.
8. What are icons?
Icons are pictures of holy people, such as the Virgin and the Christ Child, used as portals for prayer.
9. Name one of the three major orders of Eastern Orthodox clergy.
Any one of these would be correct:
 - Bishop
 - Priest
 - Deacon
10. Eastern Orthodox Christians disagree with Roman Catholics and other Western Christians over the Nicene Creed and the doctrine of the (Holy) Trinity.

ESSAY QUESTION

20 minutes for one of these questions (60 points)

1. “For a thousand years, while the West disintegrated and was slowly rebuilt, God used the Byzantine Empire to safeguard Greco-Roman treasures.” Assess the validity of this statement, touching on written works, artistry, and architecture.

Points an Excellent Answer Might Include

Written Works

- Law, especially the Justinian Code
- Classical books on law, art, and architecture
- Drama
- Philosophy

Artistry

- Icon-painting
- Text-illumination
- Carved ivory
- Intricate mosaics
- Golden or silver book covers
- Enameling
- Beautifully engraved caskets and chests
- Delicate frescoes

Architecture

- Cathedrals, especially the dome
- As with written works and artistry, the Byzantine Empire preserved (and even improved) architectural knowledge when the West had no time or money for such things during its struggle for survival.

Sample Answer

For a thousand years, while the West disintegrated and was slowly rebuilt, God used the Byzantine Empire to safeguard Greco-Roman treasures. This was especially true of Greco-Roman written works, artistry, and architecture.

As the Western Roman Empire fell, scholars in the East were busy collecting, copying, and maintaining important Greco-Roman manuscripts. Because of this, books on law, philosophy, architecture, and art were kept safe. Without the Byzantine Empire, these ancient texts might easily have been lost. God used the Byzantine Empire to safeguard the texts that He wanted to preserve for the future.

When Rome fell and there was suddenly no time or money for art, God used the Byzantine Empire as a place where artistry could still flourish. The Byzantines practiced painting, illuminating texts, carving ivory, and making intricate mosaics and metalwork. Without the Byzantine Empire, many of these Greco-Roman arts might have been forgotten. Because of the Byzantine Empire, they were kept and even improved.

In the West, people were too busy surviving to worry about architecture. In the East, secrets of building technology were preserved and used to erect the cathedrals, palaces, and public buildings that would become a pattern of loveliness for later generations. Without the Byzantines, the arch and column may not have survived. God used the Byzantine Empire to protect the architectural knowledge of the Greco-Romans.

Indeed, God did use the Byzantine Empire to safeguard the acquired knowledge of the Greco-Roman world, so that this knowledge would not be lost while the Roman Empire of the West crumbled. In this way, God ensured that these Greco-Roman treasures would be preserved until the West had been rebuilt enough to make use of it again.

2. Analyze the strengths and weaknesses of Justinian's reign in relation to his social, political, and military endeavors. How would you assess Justinian's reign as a whole?

Points an Excellent Answer Might Include

Social Strengths and Weaknesses

- Because he wanted to rebuild Constantinople on a grand scale, Justinian initiated elaborate construction projects, most notably the empire's largest and most splendid Christian church, the Hagia Sophia.
- He also built aqueducts, monasteries and public buildings all over the empire.
- Byzantine art and architecture flourished during his reign.
- His building projects drained treasuries. Subsequent rulers were forced to tax people heavily.
- Justinian persecuted non-Christians.

Political Strengths and Weaknesses

- Trade thrived as many oriental products and Eastern traders were introduced into the empire.
- Justinian reorganized and unified the codification of Roman law, known as Justinian's Code or Codex Justinianus.
- The Code had considerable influence on Western legal thinking later on in history, as well as in the establishment of universities and legal practices.
- The Code has served as the basis of legal systems in many countries today.
- Modern commercial law is rooted in the Code as well.
- Justinian's government was oriental in style. It was despotic and his subjects had little access to him as their ruler.

Military Strengths and Weaknesses

- They were able to maintain an independent empire (unlike Rome).
- They experienced some success in conquests.
- Although Justinian regained additional territory in the West (Italy, the southeastern coast of Spain, and much of North Africa), the territory was soon lost after he died because attacks from the East and a scattered military made reconquest of the entire West impossible.
- Depleted resources due to years of military campaigns made it impossible for Justinian's successors to maintain his territorial gains.
- Justinian was captured and killed by Persians.

Sample Answer

Emperor Justinian took the Byzantine Empire to new heights. Socially and politically, Justinian's endeavors demonstrated great strength, although his military efforts and leadership were marked by significant weaknesses.

One clear example of Justinian's strength as a ruler was his interest in social matters, including architecture and the arts. He rebuilt Constantinople on a grand scale, initiating building projects such as the Hagia Sophia, a beautiful domed cathedral. Throughout the empire, Justinian also sponsored the construction of aqueducts, monasteries, and public buildings. These projects fostered the continued development of architecture and the arts, which richly enhanced Byzantine culture. This enrichment came with a cost, however. Because the money spent on building drained the empire's treasuries, subsequent rulers were forced to tax the people heavily.

Justinian's political advancements, particularly in trade and law, further evidence the strength of his reign. Economically, the empire expanded. Trade flourished after the introduction of oriental products and Eastern traders to the Byzantine Empire. Justinian's greatest political achievement, however, was the reorganization and codification of Roman law into Justinian's Code. Not only did his Code unite and clarify older laws, it also became a foundation for Western legal thought. Its influence is apparent today in universities, legal practices, and modern commercial law. Nevertheless, one weakness in Justinian's government, despite his emphasis on law, was that he patterned his reign after the despotic Eastern rulers who had absolute authority and made themselves unavailable to their subjects.

While Justinian’s reign was strong within his empire and although he was responsible for the greatest territorial expansion the Byzantine Empire had ever experienced, his military endeavors were short-lived. Even though he was able to maintain an independent empire and make military advances, Justinian failed to reclaim the Western empire from its invaders. The scattering of Justinian’s armies across the entire empire made it vulnerable to attack, and the expense of supplying these armies put another strain on the empire’s treasuries.

Justinian’s reign had several military and economic weaknesses, but the strengths of his reign far outweighed its limitations and failings. He maintained his empire, built up trade, and made architectural and legal advancements that still influence us today. Justinian is rightly called a great Byzantine emperor.

3. Compare and contrast Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism with regard to differences in their views of mankind’s nature and relationship to God, their theology of salvation, and their approaches to worship.¹

Points an Excellent Answer Might Include

Eastern Orthodoxy

- Mankind’s nature and relationship with God:
 - Eastern Orthodoxy focuses on the incarnation of God and the re-creation of man.
 - Man carries within himself an icon of God.
 - When man sins, he doesn’t so much violate a *legal* relationship as he “reduces the divine likeness” and inflicts a wound on the image of God.
- Salvation:
 - Major themes are rebirth, re-creation, and man’s transfiguration.
 - Christ came to restore fully the icon of God in man.
 - Man is restored to the likeness of God in a community of love consisting of the mystical body of Christ, which is constantly renewed by the life of the Holy Spirit flowing through it.
- Worship:
 - Focuses on icons
 - Beautifully decorated churches
 - Domes to draw the eye heavenward
 - Atmosphere of mystic communion between God and His people

Roman Catholicism

- Mankind’s nature and relationship with God:
 - Man is sinful; this is his primary characteristic as a fallen creature.
 - God is just.
 - Roman Catholicism emphasizes the *legal* relationship between sinful men and a just God.
 - Man cannot meet God’s demands and desperately needs a Savior.
- Salvation:
 - Man’s need for a suffering Savior
 - God’s mercy in the legal relationship
 - The glory and thanksgiving for salvation which are due to God
- Worship:
 - Focuses on the crucifix
 - More of a “memorial” service, remembering Christ’s act of atonement
 - Instruction as well as worship
 - Atonement through the celebration of the mass

¹ The sample essay and points are based on Teacher’s Notes for week 2, taken from *Church History in Plain Language*.

Sample Answer

Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism were both Christian religious groups, but they had different opinions on many points of doctrine. These included different views on mankind's nature and relationship to God, on the theology of salvation, and on approaches to worship.

Eastern Orthodoxy and Catholicism emphasize different aspects of man's nature. Eastern Orthodox doctrine holds, with respect to the nature of man and his relationship to God, that man carries in himself the image or "icon" of God. When man sins, he is not so much violating a legal relationship with God as degrading and wounding the original image of God. By contrast, Roman Catholics emphasize man's violation of the legal relationship between man, who is sinful, and God, who is just. This is a very different emphasis regarding man's one basic problem, sin.

Because of this different understanding of man, the two groups differ in their understanding of salvation. Eastern Orthodoxy teaches that salvation means a restoration of God's full image. Christ came to earth to restore the icon of God in man. Man needs to be re-created and transfigured. By contrast, Roman Catholicism focuses on man as a fallen creature in need of a Savior, emphasizing God's legal mercy towards him, as well as the necessity that man should express gratitude for salvation and glorify his new King. These reflect basic differences in perspective between the two.

Worship practices similarly differ in the East and West. Eastern Orthodox worship makes heavy use of icons, which are viewed as a window between earth and heaven. Through icons, that which is heavenly appears to that which is earthly and unites with it. Roman Catholic worship, by contrast, focuses on the crucifix, on the remembrance of what Christ did, and on instruction as well as worship.

Clearly, there are many differences between Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism, though both are Christian religious groups. Their understanding of man and God, salvation, and worship reflect different basic perspectives on Christianity.