

Post Classical World: Rise of Islam

Post Roman Western Civilization

- Power vacuum left by Romans
 - Britannia taken by Saxons, Angles, Britons, Picts, Scots
 - Germanic and Celtic People
 - North taken by Germanic tribes
 - Saxons, Angles, Jutes
 - Eastern Europe divided by different Slavic tribes
 - West divided between different tribes
 - Franks take former roman province of Gaul
 - Burgundians take western Alpine regions
 - Spain divided between Visigoths, Basques, and Sueves
 - Mediterranean island and former Carthage go to Vandals
 - SE Europe and Middle East controlled by Byzantines
 - Aka Eastern Roman Empire
 - Took on role of protectors of Christianity

Beginnings of Islam

- Pre Islamic Arabia
 - Nomadic Tribes of Bedouins
 - Desert dwellers
 - Valued family
 - Began centering around oases
- Importance of trade
 - Unique position allowing access to Asia, Africa, and Europe
- Mecca major center for Sea-based trade
 - Major connector to Northern Africa
 - Home of Ka'ba
 - Ancient shrine
 - Contains shrines of 360 tribes
- Medina base for land based trade
 - Allowed for easy spread of goods and ideas
 - Heavily connected with Byzantium, Sassanid (Persia)
 - Also had access and later control of silk road
- Christianity had replaced the old polytheistic religions in region during the Roman occupation
 - Led to the founding of the Egyptian Coptic church and Berber Maghrib church
 - Both were African Christian churches
 - Arabs had adopted some ideas from Judaism and Christianity
 - Abraham as father of religion
 - Monotheistic
 - *Allah*

Birth of Islam

Muhammad

- Born in Mecca around 570 C.E.
- Raised by Grandfather and uncle
 - o Born into respectable clan of Quraysh
- Worked in caravan trade
 - o Traveled to Syria where he came into contact with Christians and Jews
- Married at age of 25 to Khadijah
 - o Business and love based marriage
- Became aware of division between clans
 - o Some very rich
 - Umayyads – Commerce based
 - Poor mostly maintained nomadic life
 - o Created rivalries between clans
- Spent much time in meditation
 - o Visited by angel Gabriel
 - C. 610 C.E.
 - Believed himself to be last of God's prophets
 - Allah was true god
 - Proclaimed that there is only one god
 - All others must be abandoned
 - o Revelations collected to form Qur'an
 - Islamic holy book
- Muhammad the preacher
 - o Started with small following
 - o Threatened by Umayyads
 - Worried Ka'ba roll might be diminished
 - Muhammad forced to flee danger
 - Accepted by Medina
 - o Hijra
 - Muhammad's flight to Medina from Mecca in 622 C.E.
 - Marks first year of Muslim calendar
- Medina
 - o Muhammad helped settle Bedouin dispute in town
 - Highly respected for wisdom and knowledge = CONVERTS!
 - o Growth of Muhammad threat to Umayyads
 - Worried about growing power of Medina
 - Did not want faith to be overtaken
 - o Led to war between Muhammad and Umayyads
 - Muhammad proved to be skillful and courageous
 - o Victory in 628 C.E for Muhammad
 - Allowed Muslims to visit Ka'ba during season of truce
 - o 629 C.E. Muhammad returns to Mecca
 - Smashes shrines to old gods at Ka'ba
 - Eventually converts most of Umayyads
 - o 632 C.E.
 - Muhammad dies leading to division in Muslim world

Importance of Islam

- Unified Arab tribes
 - o Connected in common religion
 - o Distinctly Arab in origin
 - o Put Arabs spiritually on same line as Christians and Jews
- No longer divided based on tribes
 - o Did not resent each other for having separate gods
- Political unity
 - o Peaceful resolution to old rivalries
 - o Created umma
 - Community of the faithful
- Effective fighting force
 - o Turned energies from fighting each other to spreading faith
 - Militarily if need be

Tenants of Islam

- Islamic Law
 - o Laws based on teachings of Qu'ran
 - Held them accountable on earth
 - Established strict standards for interactions here on Earth
 - Empowered through fact this was also God's law
- Pillars of Islam
 - o Iman - Faith or belief in the Oneness of God and the finality of the prophethood of Muhammad;
 - o Salah - Establishment of the daily prayers
 - 5 times a day facing Mecca
 - o Zakah - Concern for and almsgiving to the needy
 - Strengthened connection between community
 - o Sawm - Self-purification through fasting
 - During the month of Rammadan
 - o Hajj - The pilgrimage to Mecca for those who are able.