

The Muslim and Ottoman Empires

While the Byzantine Empire was thriving, a new religion, founded by a prophet named Muhammad, originated in Arabia in the seventh century A.D. The people who lived in Arabia were called **Arabs**. This new religion was called **Islam**, and those who belonged to this religion were called **Muslims**. Islam means "surrender to the will of Allah." *Allah* is the Arabic name for God. The Muslims felt their religion was the only true religion and that it was their duty to tell everyone.

Under the leadership of Muhammad, the Muslim Empire began to grow and take land from the Persian Empire and the Byzantine Empire. The first capital of the Muslim Empire was Damascus, the present capital of Syria. Baghdad, the present capital of Iraq, later became its capital. Although Muhammad died in 632, the empire expanded, and by the eighth century, it extended from Spain to India.

As the empire expanded, millions of the conquered people became Muslims. However, many Christians and Jews refused to give up their own faith. Although Muslim rulers, called **caliphs**, did not force people to accept their faith, those that did become Muslims paid lower taxes and were given other benefits.

The Muslim Empire began to decline and was divided into several independent kingdoms. Eventually, the Turks, under their leader Seljuk, conquered most of the Near East. In 1258, the Seljuk Turks were defeated by the Mongols.

The Ottomans were descendants of Turks who were originally mercenary soldiers of the Seljuks. They took over the old Seljuk states and established a new Muslim Empire called the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman Empire was named after their leader, Osman I. For almost 700 years the empire was ruled by the descendants of Osman. The empire was located in northwestern Anatolia next to the Byzantine Empire.

The Ottomans felt it was their duty to defend their religion against those who were not Muslims. Osman, together with his son, Orkhan, conquered most of the Byzantine Empire by fighting a number of **jihads**, which are holy wars. Eventually, their empire expanded around Constantinople. However Osman and Orkhan were never able to capture Constantinople. Orkhan became sultan of the Ottoman Empire. **Sultan** is the Turkish name for "emperor." Constantinople was finally captured in 1453 by Mehmet II who was called the Conqueror. He ordered the largest Christian church, the Hagia Sophia, to become a **mosque**, a place where Muslims worship.

The empire expanded and reached its greatest power under Suleiman the Magnificent who ruled from 1520 to 1566. During his reign, the Ottomans conquered the Balkans, southern Russia, and northern Africa so that the empire now included much of eastern Europe and western Asia. Suleiman's accomplishments were not all military, however. He had mosques, monuments, bridges, roads, and schools built and also encouraged the arts and sciences.

The empire became weaker during the 18th and 19th centuries and came to an end after the First World War in 1923.

MUSLIM AND OTTOMAN EMPIRES AT A GLANCE

WHERE: The Near East, Balkans, Southern Russia, and Northern Africa

WHEN: A.D. 800–1923

ACHIEVEMENTS:

- Built many libraries, mosques, and schools
- Produced many great literary works
- Advanced the study of mathematics
- Developed and spread the Muslim religion
- Performed surgery and used chemicals to make medicine

Name: _____ Date: _____

Muslim and Ottoman Empires Quiz

Fill in the following sentences with the appropriate word or words.

1. Once the capital of the Muslim Empire, _____ is the present capital of Syria.
2. _____ is the Arabic name for God.
3. The people who lived in Arabia were called _____.
4. The Ottoman Empire was named after their leader, _____.
5. A prophet called _____ began a religion called Islam; he died in 632.
6. The Ottomans were descendants of _____.
7. In 1258, the Seljuks were defeated by the _____.
8. Osman's son was named _____.
9. Muslim rulers were called _____.
10. The _____ Empire lasted until the end of the First World War in 1923.
11. _____ means "surrender to the will of Allah".
12. The _____ Empire was in northwestern Anatolia, next to the Byzantine Empire.
13. _____ are holy wars.
14. _____ is the Turkish name for "emperor."
15. _____ was finally captured in 1453 by Mehmet II.
16. Mehmet II was called "_____."
17. The Muslim Empire took land from the _____ and the _____ Empires.
18. The _____ under their leader Seljuk, conquered most of the Near East.
19. Those who practice Islam are called _____.
20. Those who were conquered by the Muslims and who did not convert to Islam were required to pay higher _____.
21. The _____ felt it was their duty to defend their religion against those who were not Muslims.
22. Constantinople was renamed _____.
23. The largest Christian church in Constantinople was the _____.
24. Mehmet II decreed that this church become a _____.
25. The Ottomans conquered the _____ Empire by 1453.