

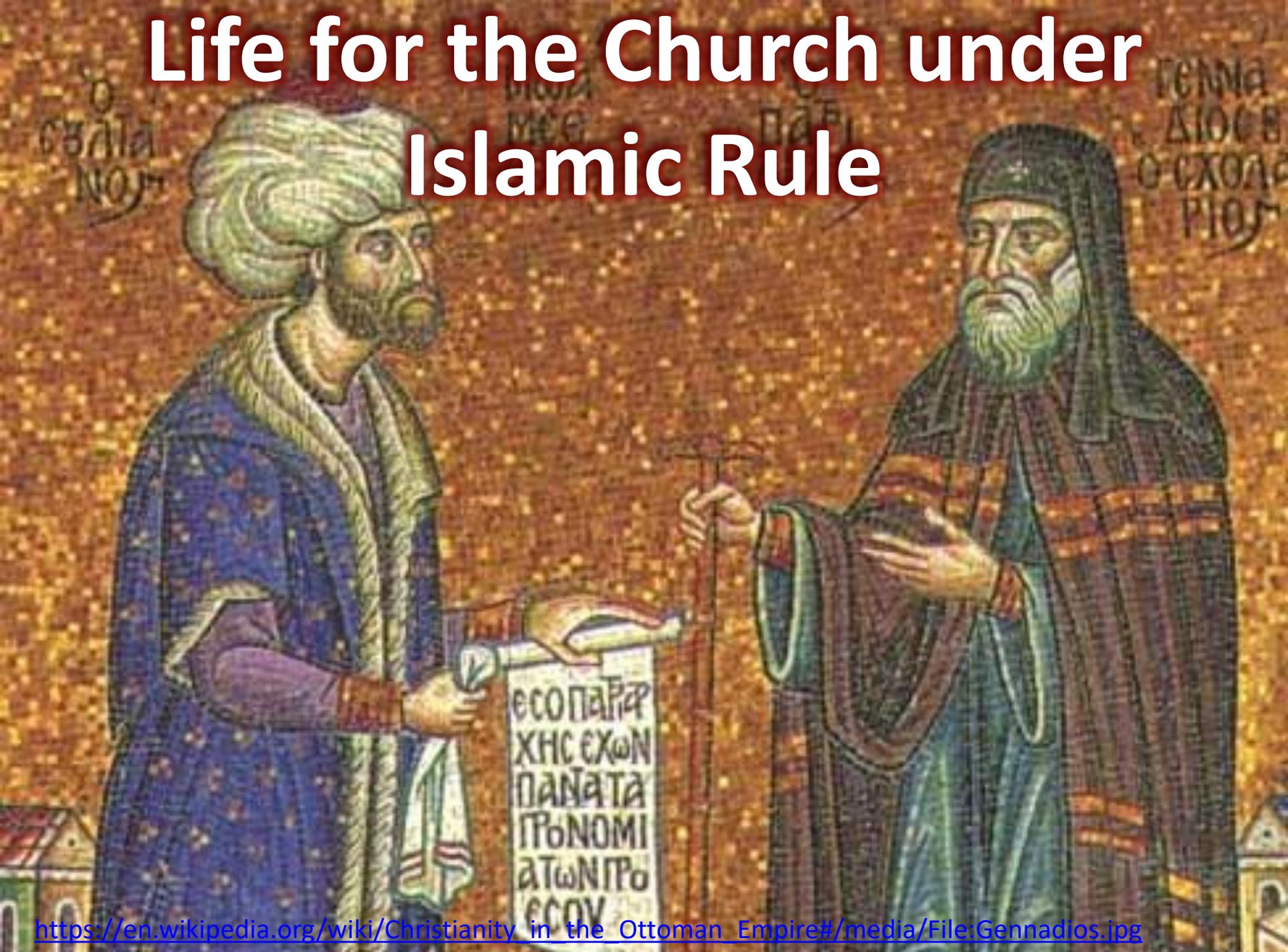
Review

- After Muhammad's death in 632, many Arabian tribes rebelled against his successor Abu Bakr, who ruled as caliph from AD 632 to 634, but under the next caliph Omar (AD 634-44), the Muslim armies came streaming out of Arabia.
- Give the names of some of the cities the Muslim armies conquered in that ten year period.
 - Damascus
 - Jerusalem
 - Antioch
 - Caesarea
 - Alexandria
- What happened when the Muslims tried to conquer Constantinople from AD 673-78?
 - The Muslims met with total failure and defeat.
- What weapon did the Byzantine army use to effectively repel the Muslims attempting to invade Constantinople?
 - Greek Fire

Review

- In the West, Muslim armies swept on from Egypt into North-West Africa. How far did they eventually get in their western conquests and where and by whom were they eventually turned back?
 - All the way through Spain
 - They were turned back in France by Charles “the Hammer” at the battle of Tours
- What are the two major parties into which the Muslims divided?
 - Sunnis
 - Shias
- Which party contains the most adherents?
 - The Sunnis (about 85% of the world’s Muslims today)
- In which modern country do we find the most Shias?
 - Iran

Life for the Church under Islamic Rule



ΕΣΟΠΑΡΑΡ
ΧΗΣ ΕΧΩΝ
ΠΑΝΤΑ
ΠΡΟΝΟΜΙ
ΑΤΩΝ ΠΡΟ
ΕΣΟΥ

Life for the Church under Islamic Rule

- The attitude of the Islamic rulers towards their non-Muslim subjects was ***twofold***.
 - In ***Arabia itself***, the general policy was to regard to all Arabs as bound in perpetuity to Islam, and to use force to uphold this Islamic unity.
 - However, the policy towards ***non-Arabs*** was different.
- When, for example, the Muslims conquered Persia, they made no attempt to force Persians to abandon their ancestral Zoroastrian faith and accept Islam.
- In fact, the Persian aristocracy continued to practice Zoroastrianism for many years under Islamic rule.

Life for the Church under Islamic Rule

- Jews and Christians enjoyed a specially favored status in Islam.
- Muhammad had recognized both groups as worshippers of Allah, the one true God – those who had received His previous revelations (“people of the book”), although Muhammad thought they had corrupted those revelations.
- So Muslim rulers did not attempt to force Jews or Christians to convert to Islam.
- They were allowed to continue worshipping God in their own way.

Life for the Church under Islamic Rule

- The Churches of Syria and Egypt, and the Nestorian Church in Persia, therefore, survived the Muslim conquest.
- In Damascus, the capital of the Islamic Empire until AD 750, Christians and Muslims even shared a common building for worship – the Church of Saint John.
- However, there were ***serious disadvantages*** for Christians under Muslim rule.
- Christians in the Islamic Empire became segregated communities of ***second-class citizens***.

Life for the Church under Islamic Rule

- A non-Muslim community within an Islamic state were said by the Muslims to be in a condition of ***dhimmitude***.
- This comes from ***dhimmi***, an Arabic word meaning “protected”.
- All Christians in dhimmitude had to pay a heavy poll tax.
- Christians had to wear distinctive clothing.
- They were forbidden to own or use swords or horses.
- No public processions carrying crosses or icons were allowed.
- Christians were not permitted to ring bells or beat drums to announce services of worship.

Life for the Church under Islamic Rule

- Marriage between Christians and Muslims was forbidden.
- Most damaging of all, Islamic law prohibited Christians from evangelizing Muslims; conversion from Islam to Christianity was punished by death.
- Given these conditions, it is not surprising that the Churches under Islam declined steadily in numbers.
- Over time, many professing Christians converted to Islam to secure the benefits of full citizenship.

Life for the Church under Islamic Rule

- Despite the ***official*** policy of tolerance, Muslims often violently persecuted Christians in local areas.
- What is perhaps surprising is the extent to which Christians were able to ***flourish*** under Muslim rule.
- The caliphs employed many Christians (and Jews) as civil servants, much as the German Arian conquerors of the Western Roman Empire had employed Catholics.
- This was especially true in Persia, where Muslim rulers employed Nestorian Christian scholars to translate the great works of Greek philosophy into Arabic, thus channeling the wisdom of ancient Greece into the new world of Islam.

Great Christian Thinkers under Islamic Rule

- The most distinguished Nestorian thinker and writer under Muslim rule was ***Timothy I*** (AD 728-823).
- Timothy was elected leader of the Nestorian Church in AD 780.
- Highly educated in Greek philosophy and the early church fathers, he translated Aristotle into Arabic and wrote the classic work of Christian apologetics, *Dialogue with al-Mahdi*, which was directed towards Muslims.
- Al-Mahdi was the caliph from AD 775 to 785; Timothy enjoyed close and friendly relations with him and his successor Harun-al-Rashid (AD 786-809).
- Timothy also energetically promoted missionary work among Turks, Tartars, and the tribes of the Caspian Sea.

Great Christian Thinkers under Islamic Rule

- Timothy was great, but perhaps the most outstanding Christian figure who lived and worked under Islamic rule was ***John of Damascus*** (AD 675-749), often called the last of the Greek church fathers.
- John was served as prime minister under the caliph Abd-ul-Malek in Damascus in the earlier part of his life.
- Later he retired to a monastery near Jerusalem, where he wrote his theological masterpiece, ***The Fountain of Knowledge***.
- John was a firm adherent of the Creed of Chalcedon, and opposed both Nestorianism and Monophysitism; he based his teaching largely on the Cappadocian fathers.

Great Christian Thinkers under Islamic Rule

- John's book, *The Orthodox Faith* was translated into Latin in the 12th century and had quite an impact on the growth of Western systematic theology.
- John also wrote a thoughtful and powerful defense of icons in the iconoclastic controversy, and a number of the most beautiful and popular of all Greek hymns.
- Tradition tells us that he was the author of one of the most widely read books in the history of the Byzantine Empire, the religious novel *Barlaam and Josaphet*.
- The life and writings of John of Damascus, then, show how a great Christian theologian could live and flourish under Islam.

Christianity and Islam in Spain

- The most tolerant and fruitful Christian-Muslim relationships were those of Muslim Spain.
- The Berber Muslims in Spain (they were called “Moors”) practiced a remarkable degree of religious tolerance towards Christians and Jews; many Christian communities survived unmolested under Spanish Muslim rule for centuries.
- Islamic Spain had its fair share of Christian martyrs, but generally speaking the Muslim rulers left the Spanish Church alone as long as it made no attempts to criticize Islam or convert Muslims.
- In fact, it was in Islamic Spain that Western European culture and civilization reached their highest development in the early Middle Ages, with a strong contribution from the significant Spanish Christian minority.

Christianity and Islam in Spain

- Arab culture gained such a powerful hold over the Spanish Church that the Christian scholars of Spain had to translate the Bible and liturgy into Arabic.
- Through Muslim Spain the riches of Eastern civilization, which combined both Greek and Islamic elements, flowed into Western Europe, which was highly uncivilized by contrast.
- Western Christian scholars often visited the famous Spanish Muslim universities to learn philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, and medicine.
- Islam's religious policy of forbidding Muslim conversion to Christianity made missionary work virtually impossible.

Christian Attempts to Evangelize Muslims

- Still, there were some notable attempts in the Middle Ages by Christians to evangelize Muslims.
- The two great trail-blazers of Christian mission in the Islamic world were:
 - ***Francis of Assisi*** (AD 1182-1226), the founder of the Franciscan order
 - ***Raymond Lull*** (AD 1232-1316).

Christian Attempts to Evangelize Muslims

- Lull's early life was spent as private tutor to the sons of the Spanish Catholic king, James of Aragon.
- One of James's sons became king of Majorca (an island off the coast of Spain), and employed Lull as a royal counsellor, although Lull's chief interest at this point seems to have been chasing women and writing pornographic poems about his experiences.
- He was, however, shocked into an awareness of his folly when he discovered that one of his admired ladies had breast cancer.
- Lull then renounced the world, became a hermit for five years, and then attached himself to the Franciscan order.

Christian Attempts to Evangelize Muslims

- Living on Majorca put Lull in close contact with the Muslims of southern Spain, and he conceived it as his special mission in life to bring the Gospel to Muslims.
- He learned Arabic from a Spanish Muslim slave whose freedom he purchased, and with financial backing from the king of Aragon he established a special Franciscan convent on Majorca.
- Here other monks could learn Arabic and prepare for missionary work among Muslims.
- Lull is often seen as the great pioneer Christian missionary to Muslims.
- Lull himself went on three missionary journeys to Tunisia and Algeria in North-West Africa, where his preaching aroused such fierce Muslim opposition that he narrowly escaped with his life.

Christian Apologists to Islam

- The Church in the Middle Ages produced a stream of Christian literature aimed at exposing the falsehood of Muhammad's religion and defending the truths of Christianity against Muslim attack.
- We could compare this literature with the apologies for Christianity against Paganism in the early Roman Empire.

Christian Apologists to Islam

- The Christian apologists of the Middle Ages concentrated their criticisms of Islam on two major points:
 - Their claims of Muhammad;
 - Their doctrine of God.
- The Christian apologists portrayed Muhammad as a deliberate deceiver, who fabricated his new religion out of Jewish myths and Christian heresies.
- Often they identified Muhammad with the false prophet of the book of Revelation.
- They criticized his moral character, especially what they regarded as his excessive indulgence in sexual desire (after the death of his first wife Khadijah, Muhammad took at least 14 wives and several concubines too).

Christian Apologists to Islam

- Because no new doctrinal or moral revelations were to be expected after Christ and the apostles, they denied that Muhammad was a true prophet.
- They rejected Muslim attempts to find the coming of Muhammad prophesied in the New Testament as a distortion of genuine New Testament teaching (Muslims argued that Christ's predictions of the coming of "another Counsellor" in John 14-16 referred to Muhammad rather than to the Holy Spirit).
- The apologists also defended the reliability of the New Testament text against Muslim claims that Christians had corrupted it.
- The conflict between the Christian and Muslim doctrines of God centered on the Trinity, the incarnation, and the question of pure versus idolatrous worship.

Christian Apologists to Islam

- Christian apologists explained and defended the Trinity, seeking to show how it in no way violated the oneness of God.
- Muslims accused Christians of having three gods; the apologists responded that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit fully and equally possessed one single divine essence, nature, and being: one God in three persons.
- Clearly the status of Christ was central to the Christian-Muslim debate.
- The Christian apologists strove to show that Christ was God incarnate, not (as in the Muslim view) a mere prophet.

Christian Apologists to Islam

- Muslims accused Christians of idolatry because they worshipped the Virgin Mary (Muslims persistently misunderstood the Trinity to mean the Father, the Mother, and the Son).
- They also attacked Christians for venerating icons of Christ and the saints.
- The Christian apologists were on weaker ground here.
- They could easily refute the false understanding of the Trinity as including Mary, but it was more difficult for them to prove to Muslims that the religious veneration given to Mary was not worship in the strict sense of the term.

Christian Apologists to Islam

- Christian apologists defended the use of icons as teaching aids for those who could not read.
- The apologists also turned the accusation of idolatry back on the Muslims; they pointed out that at the “grass roots” level, ordinary Muslims placed all sorts of created powers between God and human beings, such as the *jinn* – spirits created from fire that lived on earth and had to be appeased and warded off by magic.
- At a theological level, the first Christian apologists against Islam laid down the basic arguments which Christians have traditionally followed ever since.

Attitudes Towards Islam in the West

- At a more popular level, the Muslim-Christian wars, and the loss of so much ancient Christian territory (especially the Holy Land) to Islam, created a deep emotional fear and hatred of Muslims in Christian lands, especially in the West.
- Eastern Christians were in constant contact with Muslims, and came to respect their culture and civilization; but most Westerners, who had comparatively little contact with Muslims, developed an almost mindless hostility towards them.
- The West came to see Islam as “the enemy”. This would produce bitter fruit in later centuries through the Crusades.

VOLUNTEERS ARE LIKE BROWNIES!

B BEST OF THE BEST
R REALLY GENEROUS
O OUTSTANDING
W WONDERFUL
N NATURALLY NICE
I INVALUABLE TO HOPE
E EXCELLENT
S SWEET



Class Discussion Time



*Class Discussion Time

- Christians who lived under Islamic rule, while they were allowed some “freedom” to hold to and practice their faith, they were severely restricted – especially in the area of evangelism.
- Do you see a parallel to here to the kinds of restrictions that are being imposed on Christians in our own culture with greater and greater frequency?
- As Christians, can we accept these kinds of restrictions and still remain faithful to God?
- How do you think you personally are going to fare in the continuation of your faith if these restrictions become even greater in the future?
- Do **you** have a topic or question that **you** would like to see us to discuss?