



WORKSHEET

Ancient: Episode 11

Constantine and Constantinople

Quote

“Seek not to understand that you may believe, but believe that you may understand.”
(Augustine of Hippo)

Summary

We drive deep into a city that once prevailed as the heart of Western Civilization, Constantinople (present-day Istanbul). We witness the battle of thrones over this legendary city, trail the footsteps of Roman Emperor Constantine, and examine the religious freedoms Constantine gave to the Christians through the Edict of Milan. We watch as Constantinople crumbles and Saint Augustine takes a stand, ending our journey at the incredible Hagia Sophia.

Discussion Questions

1. How many names has the city of Istanbul had throughout history? Can you name all of them?

2. What's the cultural delicacy Dave sinks his teeth into at the Spice Market?

3. Where is Istanbul located and why was its location significant throughout history?

4. Describe the events that led to Roman Emperor Constantine establishing Christianity as the state religion of Rome.

5. What is the Edict of Milan and why was it important to the foundation of Christianity in Western Civilization?

6. What was the Arian controversy and how did the Nicæan Creed address it?

7. Why were Christians blamed for the slow fall of the Roman Empire?

8. Why was the stance Saint Augustine took amidst the crumbling of the Roman Empire significant in Christian history?

9. Describe the exchange of hands of the Hagia Sophia.

Suggested Reading

Edict of Milan

Side Road

The Hagia Sophia of Constantinople was originally completed in 537 AD. For 916 years, the incredible structure was used as the main church of Orthodox Christianity. In 1453, Constantinople (now Istanbul) was conquered by the Sultan Mehmed of the Ottoman Empire, who converted the church to a Muslim mosque. In 1935, the mosque was finally changed into a museum under the command of Atatürk and the Council of Ministers. The central dome of the Hagia Sophia is massive, measuring approximately 100 feet in diameter and rising approximately 182 feet from ground level. 40 windows were added years after its initial construction to help sustain the dome's structure. The Hagia Sophia has endured fires and earthquakes, and has been repaired and restored multiple times over the centuries. For nearly a thousand years, the Hagia Sophia stood as the largest Christian cathedral on earth, and to this day, remains a symbol of the daring architectural feats of the Byzantine Empire.