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Medieval Europe – Rise and Spread of Christianity



Learning objectives

Having read the lesson, you will be able to

- trace the origin and spread of Christianity;
- reflect on the basic principles and teachings of Christianity;
- discuss and analyse the relevance of Christ's teachings in the present day context;
- analyse the relationship between the decline of the Roman empire and the spread of Christianity;
- study the impact of crusades in Europe;
- analyse the influence of the church on the life of people in Europe.

THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD

Meaning of the term 'Medieval'

In history, the word 'medieval' means the 'middle age', or the middle period. It lies between the **ancient** and the **modern periods**.

Medieval period in India and the world

The medieval period in Indian history began in the 8th century CE and came to an end in the 18th century CE. Many important changes occurred in the 8th century. It was around this time that a new stage in Indian history began. Therefore, historians treat 8th century as a turning point. Changes in Indian society had begun earlier than the eighth century. The process of change continued even after the eighth century. But the new phase took root in the eighth century. Political disunity, the rise of Indian feudalism and increased contacts with other civilisations were some of the changes that

occurred around this time. These changes were so important that they influenced many aspects of Indian society.

Another landmark is the 18th century when medieval period came to an end. The eighteenth century saw the breakup of the mighty Mughal Empire and the rise of the British. With this, the medieval period comes to end and the modern period starts in Indian history. Thus, the medieval period in India lasted from the eighth century to the eighteenth century.

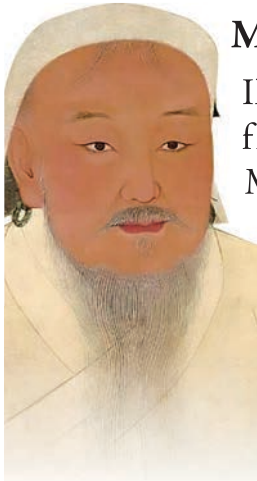
However, the medieval period did not last for the same period throughout the world history. In Europe, medieval period began in the sixth century and ended in the fifteenth century.

The medieval period in the world history saw the steady onward march of Christianity, and the rise and spread of a new religion, called Islam.

The period also thus saw clashes between the rulers professing the two religions.

Iqta System: Iltutmish introduced a method of managing the nobles and ruling the state. This was the iqta system. He did not pay his nobles in cash. Instead, he granted them revenue of land. The piece of land thus given was called **iqta**. In this way, the Sultan tried to control the conquered areas with the help of nobles. These nobles helped Iltutmish but created trouble for his successors. However, the iqta system was retained.

Coinage: Iltutmish gave Sultanate a new currency called **tanka**. The tanka became standard currency for the Sultanate period.



Chenghiz Khan

Mongol Invasion

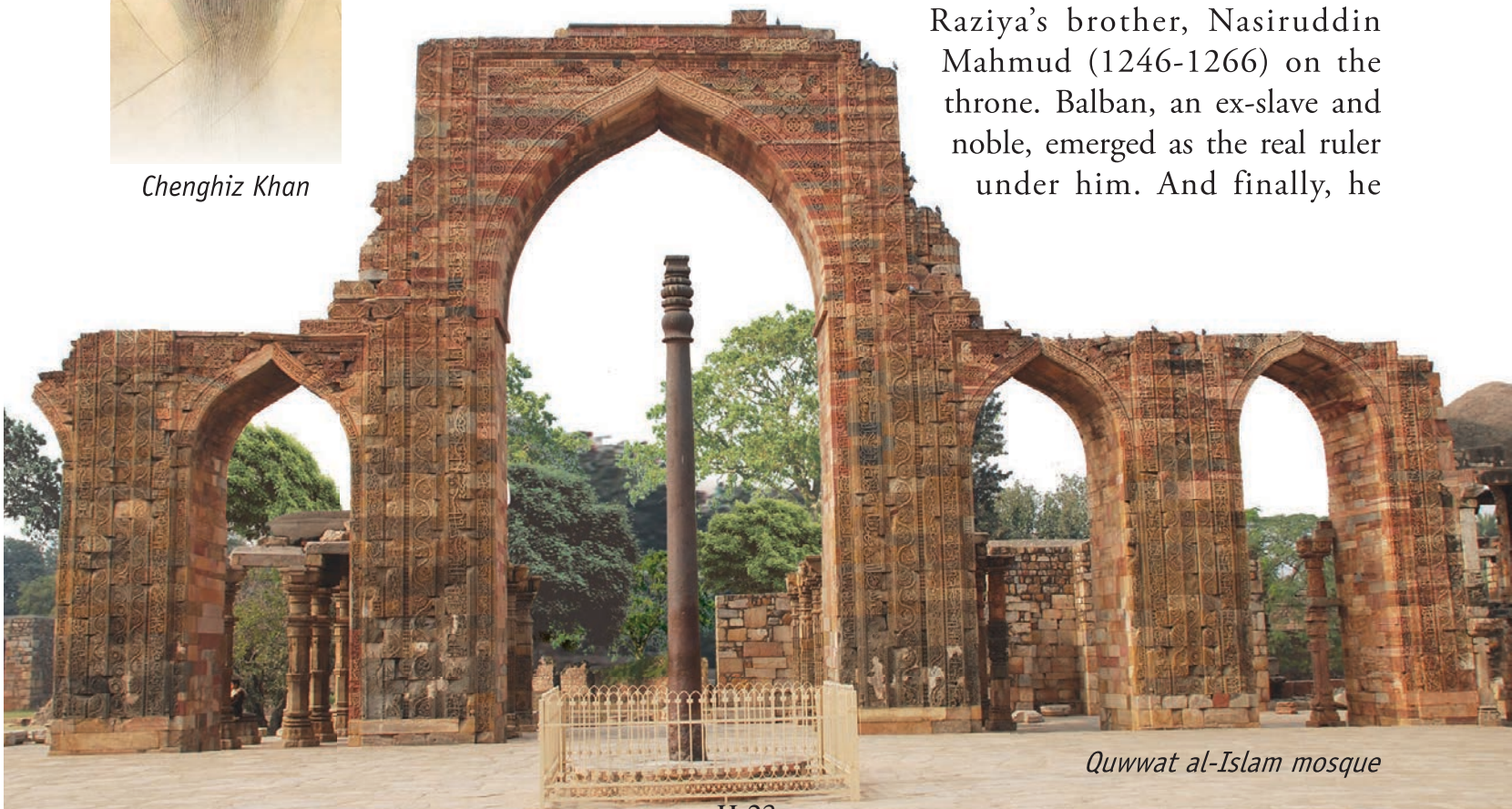
Iltutmish saved the Sultanate from Mongol attack. The Mongol chief, **Chenghiz Khan** reached Punjab in pursuit of the prince of a Central Asian

Kingdom. The prince asked Iltutmish for shelter but Iltutmish politely refused. This saved India and the Sultanate from Mongol attack.

Iltutmish thus completed the tasks which Aibak had left unfinished, and provided a solid administrative foundation to the Sultanate. Also, he completed the constructions of the Qutub Minar, and enlarged the **Quwwat al-Islam mosque**.

Raziya, the daughter of Iltutmish, ruled for less than four years, between 1236 and 1240. She was the only Muslim woman ruler of Delhi. Her reign marked the beginning of a struggle for power between the Sultan and the Turkish nobles. The male nobility could not accept a woman as Sultan. Moreover, Raziya acted like a true monarch. Consequently she was killed. She had succeeded because she was bold and wise, but failed because she was a woman and was determined to rule like a true monarch.

Balban (1266–1286): The nobles placed Raziya's brother, Nasiruddin Mahmud (1246-1266) on the throne. Balban, an ex-slave and noble, emerged as the real ruler under him. And finally, he



Quwwat al-Islam mosque