

The Roman Empire

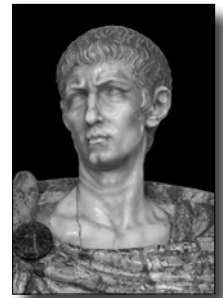
In 753 B.C., Rome was founded on seven hills. The city overlooked the Tiber River. Rome grew as a result of wars fought with its neighbors. By 100 B.C., Rome ruled much of the Mediterranean world. Romans built roads to connect their empire. They also built aqueducts to carry water. These and many Roman public buildings still stand. The Roman Empire once stretched from England to Northern Africa and the Middle East. It included many people from many cultures.

Romans worshiped many gods. They did not force people to adopt their religion. They did make people worship the emperor as a god, though. Some people would not do it. Christians were one group that would not worship the emperor. They were punished for their beliefs. **Christianity** was a religion founded in Judea about 2,000 years ago. This religion grew throughout the empire. Bishops were chosen as leaders in the local churches. A **pope** was chosen as head over all the churches.

The Empire Is Divided

In A.D. 284, an emperor named Diocletian became the ruler. He decided the Roman Empire had gotten too big for one man to rule. The Roman army could not defend the Empire's borders. He divided the **empire** into two parts. The parts were called the Eastern Empire and the Western Empire.

Constantine became ruler in 306. He converted to Christianity after winning an important battle. He made Christianity legal in the Roman Empire. In 330, he made the capital of the Eastern Empire the city of Byzantium. The capital was later renamed Constantinople. Today, the city is called Istanbul. It is located in the country of Turkey.



Diocletian

Barbarians Attack Rome

While the Eastern Empire grew stronger, the western part grew weaker. **Barbarian** tribes lived on the edges of the Roman Empire. They murdered and stole whatever they wanted. In 407, Vandals and Burgundians crossed the Rhine River on the ice. They were Germanic tribes. They attacked the Roman legions in Gaul. This area is now known as France. The tribes took land for themselves southwest of Paris. Today, this area is called Burgundy. The Vandals spread into Spain and Africa. Their reputation was so bad that we still use the words "vandal" and "**vandalism**" to describe property destruction.

The Visigoths also moved into the empire. By 410, they were **looting** and burning in Italy. After looting Rome, they **raided** southern Gaul and Hispania, which is now known as Spain. The kingdom they started in Spain lasted 200 years. The Romans and Visigoths joined forces to defeat Attila the Hun in 434. The Roman Empire was already in bad shape by then.



The Sack of Rome

Roman strength was reduced in England. This allowed the native Celts to become targets for sea-roving **invaders**. The invading groups were the Jutes, Angles, and Saxons.

The Vandals left Africa and attacked Italy in 455. Rome was captured and looted. Odovacer was a Germanic chief. He captured Romulus Augustulus, the last emperor of the West. He sent him to a country house near Naples in 476. The barbarians had taken over. The Roman Empire had vanished, but its influence remains today.

Islam Spreads Rapidly

A New Religion

Europeans had faced invasions by many groups. Some of these were the Goths, Huns, and Franks. These groups had looted and destroyed everything in their path. They were now being faced with another problem. It was the rapid spread of **Islam**, a new religion.

The founder was **Muhammad**. He was a camel driver and traveling merchant. He was born in the town of Mecca. Mecca was a center for pagan worship. There were 300 gods honored by the people in this town. Muhammad talked with **Jews** and **Christians**. He became convinced there was only one God, whom he called Allah. His public attacks on the **pagan** gods created enemies for him. In A.D. 622, he left the city with his family. His escape from Mecca to live in the city of Medina was called the **Hegira**. This means "flight." This event was "Year One" for the **Muslim** or Islamic faithful. Muhammad's teachings were written in the **Koran** (Qur'an).

Islam expanded quickly. Arabs were great warriors. They believed they were fighting a **jihad**, or holy war. People in the Middle East were tired of Byzantine taxes and rules. The Byzantine Empire was worn out by warfare. As a result, the Byzantine Empire, except for Turkey, came under Muslim control.

Islam Threatens Rome

Islam was like a mighty sword. It cut its way across the Middle East. By 639, the region from Iraq across Egypt was Muslim. Then it spread across North Africa. The Byzantines tried to stop the Muslims from taking any more of their land in Africa. But they were defeated in 640. In 711, the Muslims crossed from Africa into Spain. The Pillars of Hercules were renamed the Straits of Gibraltar. This was done in honor of a Muslim general.

On the other side of the Mediterranean, the Muslims took over Constantinople. The Eastern Empire was in danger of falling. However, the **siege** failed. In Spain, the Spanish Muslims were known as **Moors**. They wiped out the old kingdom of the Visigoths. They crossed over the Pyrenees Mountains into France. They took over southern France. The Moors were moving toward Paris. If they were able to destroy France, then they might be able to take over the rest of Europe.

Charles Martel was known as Charles the Hammer. He defeated the Muslims at the Battle of Tours in 732. The Muslims were pushed back into Spain. The Moors built a kingdom in Spain that lasted until 1492. This was the year Columbus sailed.

At first, the Europeans looked upon the Muslims as more barbarians. However, the Moors were to play a valuable role in the future of Europe. They preserved the literature of the Greeks. The Moors had high regard for Aristotle. They called him the Philosopher. They expanded on the mathematical work of Ptolemy and Euclid. Their medical schools taught the importance of being clean. They also taught how to diagnose diseases and the uses and effects of drugs. Our language still uses many of their terms, such as alcohol, algebra, and zero. In later years, their sailing instruments would be important to sailors who traveled beyond sight of land.



Moors during the Middle Ages



The Battle of Tours

Charlemagne Rises Above the Rest

Merovingian Rulers

The **Merovingians** were Franks who had ruled France for 300 years. There was little that was royal about the Merovingians. They were either fools or corrupt. They had to have outside help to run their affairs. They relied on a chief administrator. This person was known as the **Mayor of the Palace**. Charles Martel had been the Mayor of the Palace when he had beat the Muslims in 732. As Mayor of the Palace, Martel was more powerful than the king. Martel's son, Pepin, wasn't satisfied with being Mayor of the Palace. He wanted to be king. In 754, he went to the pope. The pope agreed to set aside the Merovingian king. He crowned Pepin king. **Pepin the Short** was a fine king. He was moral and wise. Pepin was a much better king than the Merovingian ruler.

Pepin died in 768. Then his two sons, Charles and Carloman II, became joint rulers. Three years later, Carloman died, and Charles ruled alone. Charles was only 26 years old. Much of his next 46 years would be spent fighting 50 **campaigns** against **Germanic** enemies. He also helped the pope against the **Lombards**. This group threatened Rome. Charles was loyal to the church. He demanded that the **Saxons** he had defeated in Germany either become Christians or die. Most chose to be **baptized** as Christians. Some refused to **convert**. Charles was a man of his word. He had 4,500 of them beheaded.



Pepin the Short



Charlemagne

Charles the Great

In Rome, Pope Leo III was attacked and left for dead by a group of rowdies. Leo's wounds were bound. He was taken to Charles' camp. The **Frankish army** restored order. They helped Pope Leo return to the palace. The next Christmas, in the year 800, Charles attended church in Rome. While there, the pope placed a crown on his head and called him Emperor of the Romans. Charles was now so powerful that he was known as **Charlemagne**. This meant Charles the Great.

Charlemagne knew how to win battles. He also knew how to rule. He divided his empire into counties. The head of civil government was the "**count**." In each county, there was a **bishop** or **archbishop** in charge of the churches. The county's main landowners met several times a year to pass laws and act as a court. The king sent special agents (**missi domenici**) to check on local officials. They made sure the officials were not taking bribes or abusing the people. Charlemagne was concerned about education. He brought in a great scholar to teach his children.

Charlemagne was much taller than the average man of his time (6'4"). He was well built and kept himself in good shape with exercise and a good diet. He had four wives during his long lifetime. They produced 18 children. He was a good father who enjoyed his family. Charlemagne also enjoyed music and singing. He hoped to learn to write, so he practiced holding a pen. In case the skill should come in the middle of the night, he slept with paper under his pillow and a pen by his side. He developed interests in science, law, literature, and religion. His **reign** brought a degree of civilization to Europe. This had been missing since before the invasions began.

The Viking Plague From the North

The Northmen Threaten Europe

Charlemagne died in 814. Shortly after that, a new threat came to loot and destroy Europe. There was no trouble recognizing the new threat. They wore layers of animal hides and leather helmets. They carried round, wooden shields. Their long, wooden ships had a snake or dragon head on the **pro**w and a single sail. The ships moved swiftly to attack. They left quickly after they had robbed and burned. Of all the invaders who had attacked Europe, they were the most feared. The people prayed: "God, deliver us from the fury of the Northmen."



Odin

Scandinavia was home to the **Vikings**. They were ancestors to the Swedes, Norwegians, and Danes. At home, they lived in small villages, grew crops, and raised livestock. Their villages were well organized. They were governed by a council, known as the **Thing**. It was the Thing, not a king, who made the decisions for the community. The council decided when they would go to war. Vikings may have loved the thrill of war more than any other people in history. In battle, Vikings often used a two-edged sword and aimed at the enemy's arms and legs. They also used a broad axe, arrows, and spears. Their most fierce warriors were the **berserkers**. They wore shirts made from bear skins. They worked themselves into a frenzy before battle. They were fearless and terrifying.



Berserkers

The Vikings were **pagan** worshippers of the gods Odin and Thor. **Odin** was the god of battle and death. **Thor** ruled the sky and controlled the storms and winds. At sea, Thor helped them more. When they landed, Odin became more important. They attacked in small raiding parties. Small seacoast towns, churches, and **monasteries** were favorite targets.

Explorers and Raiders

The Viking sailors were daring. They explored distant lands. They reached Iceland in 870. Eric the Red landed in Greenland in 982. About the year 1000, Eric's son, Lief Ericson, landed on the North American coast. He found wild grapes and named his discovery Vinland.

Vikings attacked Dublin in Ireland in 795. That was followed by raids along the coasts of Ireland, western England, France, and Germany. Eventually, the raids spread as far south as Sicily. Overland raids from Sweden spread into Russia. Then they went down the rivers to Baku on the Caspian Sea and Constantinople on the Black Sea. By about 875, some Vikings continued to raid, but others were ready to settle down. A group of Danish Vikings, called **Normans**, settled on the coast of France. With William the Conqueror as their leader, they attacked and defeated the English in 1066.

The Vikings eventually established peaceful kingdoms in the Baltic area. They became **Christian** and began to fit in better with other Europeans. The problems they had created were harmful to the peace of others. People turned to local leaders to protect them. This led to the system of **feudalism** that controlled Europe for many years.



William the Conqueror
landing in England

Feudalism Comes to Europe

Citizens Need Protection

Imagine that you live in an area where there are several hills. The people on one hill live in great fear of what the people on the next hill might do to them. They are hungry and tired, so they find a leader. If he will protect them, they will promise to serve him the rest of their lives. As long as they are near the hill, they feel more secure, but they dare not travel away from that hill. They become wary of outsiders, fearing strangers are trying to find a way to attack them. A few merchants may come with goods to sell, but how will they pay for the goods?



The lord's castle, where vassals could seek protection, was usually in the center of the feudal manor.

What would happen to trade in the area? How would they eat? What would they wear? People would have to produce everything themselves, wouldn't they? They could not get to outside goods, and goods could not get to them. They would have to learn to make their own. If you can imagine this, then you can understand the **feudal system**.

The Feudal System

The **vassal** was the one who wanted the help. He came to the **lord** who could give the help. In return for protection, food, and clothing, the vassal would be the lord's servant for the rest of his or her life. The nobles were vassals of the king. The peasant was vassal to the nobleman. The king had authority over the nobles, but could not give orders to the peasant. The peasant was the noble's servant. The exception to that rule was in England. The land the noble received from the king was called a **fiefdom**.

If you were my vassal, what kinds of power did I have over you? I would have **military** power over you. I could expect you to fight for me. If I were the one attacked, you would serve without pay for as long as necessary. If I were the one attacking, then you would be my soldier for six weeks. After that, I would have to pay all your expenses. Even when there was no war, I could call on you to guard my castle from time to time.

You might have to give **political** service. I might want you to come to my castle for your advice. This could be on any subject like war, marriage, or anything else. You would have to come when I called. I could also expect your **financial** help if I were going to fight a Crusade or get married. When your father died, you would have to pay for the right to continue as my vassal. If you were a girl, you would need my permission to marry. You would also need my approval to give any land to the church.

If I failed to protect you as I promised, you could protest to my lord (if I had one). If I were the king (and had no lord), then you might ask for the help of someone strong enough to oppose me. If they were able to beat me, they would become your new lord and protector. If you did not live up to your end of the bargain, I could put you on trial. The court would be made up of my other vassals. If you were found guilty, you would have to give up your fiefdom.

Wars were common. There were rules about fighting. You could not fight from Friday through Sunday. If it was Holy Week (Easter), there was no fighting from Thursday through Sunday. There was no fighting on certain holy days. There was usually no fighting during the winter or harvest. These limits helped reduce the violence.

Showdown at Canossa

Reforming the Church

The **feudal system** created difficult relationships between **lords** and **vassals**. There were also problems between kings and the church. What if the vassal was a **bishop** who controlled church lands? Who should appoint that bishop? Would it be the king as his lord or the **pope** as head of the church? These were important issues when **nobles** became bishops in order to control church land. Then the church became a major landholder within a kingdom. During the **Middle Ages**, the church held about one-third of the land in Europe. Kings insisted that the bishop or **abbot** (head of a monastery) was a vassal. He should receive the symbols of that office from the king. That was called **lay investiture**. Church reformers did not like this. They felt it divided the loyalty and duties of local church officials.

The modern person usually sees the pope as a holy man, devoted to serving God and the church. In the early Middle Ages, the pope had a different image. At first, the popes had been appointed by the **clergy** (priests) of Rome and nearby regions. Then the German nobles began choosing the pope. In 1059, the **College of Cardinals** was formed to select future popes.

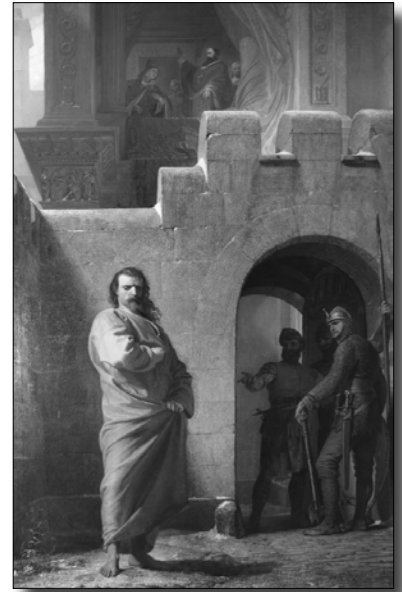
Pope Nicholas I (858–867) had tried to bring all clergy under the control of the pope. After he died, they returned to ignoring the pope's orders. Churchmen practiced **simony**. This was the buying and selling of their positions. The pope's control was very weak. **Reformers** met at Cluny, France. They demanded an end to church corruption. They wanted the pope to control the church. They believed that kings should have no power to choose church officials.

Challenge to Papal Authority

A leader in this reform movement was Hildebrand. He was a high Roman Church official. In 1059, he was elected Pope Gregory VII by the **cardinals**. He began making changes. In the future, no priests could be married. The pope would choose the bishops. If the pope made a decision, only the pope could change it. Gregory's claim of more **papal** authority was bold. It was not going to be popular among the rulers.

The Holy Roman Emperor at the time was Henry IV. He was furious with Gregory. He called him a "false monk." In 1077, they clashed over the choice of an **archbishop**. The pope **excommunicated** or expelled Henry IV from the church. This meant that Christians would not have to obey the king. This could lead to the king losing his throne. Henry crossed the mountains and went to Canossa where Gregory was staying. The king stood barefoot in the snow three days begging for forgiveness. At last, Gregory forgave him.

Henry returned to Germany. He won the support of the nobles, so he did not always obey the pope. In 1080, Gregory expelled the king again. This time, the king didn't beg for forgiveness. Instead, Henry brought an army into Italy. Pope Gregory was chased out of Rome. Henry appointed an **antipope**. This person was installed as a rival to the real pope. Gregory was bitter to the end. His last words were: "I have loved righteousness and hated iniquity. Therefore, I die in exile."



Henry IV begging for forgiveness from Pope Gregory VII

Great Minds in the Dark Ages

The Dark Ages

The **Middle Ages** are sometimes called the “dark ages.” This was a time when education was limited. People knew little about the outside world. War seemed to be more important than ideas. Yet there were still people who continued to think and began to affect the way others thought. We will look briefly at their teachings.

People Who Influenced Thinking in the Middle Ages

St. Augustine (354–430) was born in North Africa. He grew up lazy and wild. His mother prayed that he would shape up. When he was 33 and living in Milan, Italy, he changed his behavior. Augustine returned to North Africa. He sold his **inheritance** and gave the money to the poor. He saw life as two-sided. One side was the “City of Man,” which is the human society. The other side is the “City of God,” which is the spiritual world. He thought war should only be fought if the cause was just and all other solutions had failed. The most glory, he wrote, goes to the one who ends war. His most famous book is *The City of God*.

The Venerable Bede (673–735) was an English **priest** and **scholar**. He was interested in learning. He turned down the offer to be an abbot. This job would have interfered with his studies. He had many interests: languages, astronomy, mathematics, and music. One of the things he is famous for coming up with is the formula to decide when Easter should fall each year.

Peter Abelard (1079–1142) was a well-known teacher in Paris. Students came from many nations to attend his classes. He had strong opinions on many subjects. He was often in trouble with the church. His most famous work was *Sic et Non*. This means “Yes and No.” This work debated both sides of issues. He wrote: “By doubting, we are led to inquiry; from inquiry, we perceive the truth.”

St. Thomas à Becket (1118–1176) was **archbishop** of Canterbury. He was a longtime friend of King Henry II of England. The king wanted to limit church power, but Becket defended the church. When government officials tried to seize church lands, some of the bishops agreed to it. Becket expelled them all. The king was very angry with Becket. Four of Henry’s barons went to Canterbury and killed Becket in the **cathedral**. The public was so outraged that the murderers were forced to go to the Holy Land for 14 years. The king denied responsibility, but he allowed himself to be flogged at Becket’s tomb.



St. Francis



St. Augustine

St. Francis of Assisi (1182–1226) gave away his riches. He lived as a beggar preaching to the poorest people in the cities of Italy. He loved nature and found God revealed in every living thing. He believed everything that God had created was for the good of man.

St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) became a **monk** even though his family did not want him to. His brothers even held him prisoner in a castle for a year. His main interest was **theology**, the study of God. He also developed new approaches to thinking. He believed that the people should have a role in government. His views were helpful to **democratic** thought later on in history.

Monks and Hermits Reject the World

Difficult Times

The Medieval world was a terrible place. It was full of violence and sin. For some people, there was too little of the **virtues** taught by the **Old and New Testament** writers. Fear had caused some early Christians to hide away in deserts or on mountainsides. They were called **hermits**. One lived in the desert for 90 years. The most famous hermit was **St. Simeon Stylites**. He lived on a 60-foot-tall pillar for 30 years. **St. Anthony** was an Egyptian Christian who lived on a mountain near the Nile River around A.D. 300. He gathered other hermits together in groups of two or three. They would all come together for worship. These were the first **monks**. In the difficult times of the Middle Ages, more people wanted to escape from the wars. They wanted to live a quiet life of books and prayer.

Monasteries and Convents

Some people feared they might not live a good enough life to reach heaven. Some moved to remote places and lived as hermits. Some men went to live in **monasteries**. Some women went to live in **convents**. After a year in the monastery or convent, they would join the order and agree to live by its rules. Their life was filled with hard work and simple food. They were isolated from normal family life.

About 529, a hermit named **Benedict** started a monastery on a mountaintop in Italy. This was the first of many Benedictine monasteries. Benedict wrote tough rules for his monks. The first rule was total obedience to the **abbot**. He was the head of the monastery. The monks could own nothing. Even their clothes belonged to the order. Their workday began at 6 a.m. and continued until sunset. Then they ate supper and then went to **Vespers**. At 2 a.m., they went to another prayer service. Their days were spent doing manual labor, copying books, and praying.

In the 1200s, new orders of monks were formed. There were monks who lived away from the world. There were also **friars**. These monks lived out among the people. Each order was easily identified by their cloak. Each order stressed different virtues. These groups often disagreed over religious issues. They became rivals for public support.

Women might join convents, which are also called nunneries. **Nuns** followed strict rules similar to the monks. In the early days, nuns were freer to leave the convent. Later in the Middle Ages, they were usually required to stay inside its walls.

A monastery might start with a few monks who lived by the strict rules of the order. Sometimes it would change when donations of land and money were received. As **vassal** to a **lord**, the abbot became involved in politics. With greater wealth, the order could afford more luxuries. This led to a more appealing lifestyle. Rules were not enforced. This led to criticism and demands for **reform**. Still, monasteries provided valuable services. They provided education, care of the sick, and safety for travelers.



St. Benedict

Rulers With “Uneasy Heads”

Feudal Traditions

The Vikings were raiding France in 912. To stop the raiding, King Charles tried to bribe a **Norman** chief named Rollo with land in northern France. Rollo accepted, which made him the king’s **vassal**. **Feudal** tradition required that the vassal kiss the lord’s foot. Rollo refused to do it and ordered one of his men to do it for him. The man obeyed. As he knelt and kissed the king’s foot, he raised it so high that Charles tipped over.

The more intelligent feudal kings were careful with nobles. When the nobles were rebellious, they could easily overthrow the king. All his robes, thrones, and crowns would be of little use. Shakespeare wrote in his play, *Henry IV*, “Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.” In the Middle Ages, it was more common to defy the king than to obey him.



Hugh Capet

Defying the King

In France, that was true for King **Hugh Capet** (987-996). Hugh was the Count of Paris. He was then chosen by the great nobles of northern France to be king. However, Hugh found that his title didn’t help much. He had no national army and could collect no national **tax**. In southern France, the nobles barely recognized that he was king. They did not plan to obey him. On one occasion, Hugh got into an argument with a **count** who was his vassal. Hugh yelled: “Who made you a count?” The count shouted back: “Who made you a king?” It would take many years before French kings began to get respect.



Stephen

England was developing a degree of order before the Normans arrived. Their system of money was already in place. The first English coin was the **penny**, and 240 pennies weighed a **pound**. The **shilling** was one twentieth of a pound, or 12 pennies. In the county or **shire**, courts were held. Important local citizens and royal officials debated and decided issues. In such an orderly society, the king’s role should have been simple. It was not.

King Stephen (1135–1154) was a good example of that. His cousin, **Matilda**, had a better claim to the throne. Matilda was unpopular and a woman, so the nobles swore to support Stephen. He was kind and likeable, so the nobles took advantage of him. Nobles were not supposed to build castles. They ignored the law, and soon many forts went up in England. The forts were not to protect against invaders. They were built just to defy the king.

Matilda was in France plotting against Stephen. When she had enough support, she marched on London and captured him. She ruled as Lady of England but was so cruel the nobles turned against her. The nobles put Stephen back on the throne and put Matilda in prison. Finally, she escaped to France.

The Germans had no king. Their **dukes** were too strong for anyone to rule over them. If they were not fighting each other, they sometimes invaded Italy and drove the pope from Rome. They would then install a new pope in his place. When that happened, some German dukes would side with the old pope. Some Italian nobles would support the new pope. This caused many problems. In 962, **Otto I**, a German duke, was crowned **Holy Roman Emperor** by the pope. The title meant little among the German nobles. The title was used by a German nobleman until the 19th century.



Matilda

The Nobility of Europe

Titles of Rank

The king and queen were not the only **nobles**. There were others, but they held titles lower in rank than the king and queen. A title might have a different meaning in another country. A **prince** is the son of a king. The daughter of a king is a **princess**. Following these, the order of rank was duke, marquis, earl or count, viscount, and baron.



Court life was defined by rank.

- **Duke:** In England, a duke ranks just below a prince. A member of the king's family was a royal duke. In some European countries, a duke ruled a province or duchy. The wife of a duke was a **duchess**.
- **Marquis:** (pronounced [MAR-kwis]) Originally an officer in charge of defenses along the marches. The marches were the frontier regions of the kingdom. Later, the title became a rank of nobility. His wife was a **marquise** [mar-KEEZ]. In England, the titles were **marquess** [MAR-kwis] and **marchioness** [MAR-shu-nis].
- **Earl:** In England, a rank equal to a count on the European continent. The earl's wife was addressed as **lady**.
- **Count:** This was a title used on the continent. In some countries, a count was a member of the royal court. In other countries, he ruled a district for the king. His wife was a **countess**.
- **Viscount:** [VIE-kount] An English officer who acted as a substitute for the earl. Later, it became an honorary rank. His actual duties went to the sheriff who acted as the substitute for the king. His wife was a **viscountess**.
- **Baron:** A major vassal of the king or a person who had given major military service. The wife was a **baroness**. The children were **baronets**. In 1611, King James I of England created an order of hereditary **knights** also called baronets.

The Life of a Nobleman

Being a **nobleman** could be dangerous. These were violent times. From youth, the sons of nobles prepared for the life of a warrior. They fought wars with outsiders. If none were available, they fought each other. They wore a **suit of armor** or chain mail with a helmet on their heads.

Nobles built high forts for protection and surrounded them with **moats**. These were trenches filled with water. The forts were designed more for protection than comfort. The attacker used **catapults** and **battering rams** to attempt to make a hole in the wall or gate. Ladders were used to climb over the walls. The defender used a variety of weapons. Boiling water, rocks, and arrows were used against the attackers.

Arguments broke out often among the nobles. They developed ways to settle their disputes in court. In Germany, the accused was guilty unless proven innocent. One way to find the truth was trial by ordeal. The accused would pick up a red hot iron and carry it a few paces. If his hands healed in the required time, it was proof he was innocent. There were also trials by combat. The two parties would fight each other to see who was right.

To protect against the Vikings, or some other barbarian threat, was a good reason to have fighting men. After the invaders left or settled in, the fighting men looked for other reasons to fight. They found these excuses in defense of the church, in the code of **chivalry**, and in the noblest of all causes: the Crusades.

Knights in Shining Armor

Horsemen Wearing Armor

Around the eighth century, the nobility began to see the need for an army made up of **cavalry**, or horsemen. These horsemen were called **knights**. They wore **armor**, which are suits made of metal. They did this to protect their bodies in battle. For these men to afford the equipment and horses they needed, the lord would grant them lands. This made the knights vassals. Charles Martel used this system to raise a national army with which to fight the **Muslims**. Soon other local nobles began using the same system.



Edward III of England with
his son, the Black Prince

Knighthood

Becoming a knight took a long time. First a boy from a good family offered to serve a **baron** or warrior. The boy would follow the baron into combat. He would carry the baron's shield and spear. It required a lot of exercise. He had to learn to ride. He practiced with the weapons of the trade. The boy had to cope with being tired. It also involved learning proper manners around ladies. The boy was taught politeness, courtesy, and helpfulness. When he reached manhood, he prepared to receive **knighthood**. He was taught by a priest the true meaning of knighthood. He prayed and fasted. He wore robes with colors that stood for purity and devotion. He then took the vow of **chivalry**. The oath included purity, valor, compassion, defense of the church, and loyalty to the king. He knelt before a prince. The prince would strike him lightly on the shoulder with the flat of his sword. The prince then said "In the name of God, St. Michael, and St. George, I make thee a knight; be valiant, bold, and loyal."

In the earlier years of the **feudal system**, becoming a knight was a way to improve one's position in life. Later, the path to knighthood changed. People born into the upper class believed it was family, not service, that should determine a person's status. The process of becoming a knight became more ritualistic. A boy from an upper-class family would automatically become a **page** at the age of 7. He would become a **squire** at about 14 or 15. He then went through the ritual ceremony of becoming a knight. Fewer and fewer boys from poor backgrounds were let into the knighthood.

Weapons Used Against Knights

The purpose of the knight was to fight. Much of his life was spent in warfare. In the earlier days of knighthood, a charge by men on horseback was more than enough to scatter men on foot. In time, however, new weapons came along that lessened the shock of a knight's attack. In the 13th century, the **crossbow** was developed. An arrow shot from a crossbow could go through a knight's armor. However, it had major problems. The crossbow was bulky. It had to be loaded mechanically. It had a short range. The **longbow** was another useful weapon. It could not pierce armor, but when fired in volleys, it broke up charges on horseback. Anything that caused the horseman to fall off his horse was helpful. With the weight and bulk of his armor, the knight was defenseless on foot.

Orders of Knights

The high point for knighthood was the **Crusades**. Many knights formed **orders**. These were like religious orders, only the orders of knights were dedicated to fighting the Muslims. French knights formed the **Knights Hospitalers**. The **Knights Templars** was an order composed of knights from many nations. The **Teutonic Knights** were German. A group dedicated to freeing Spain from the Muslims was the **Knights of the Santiago de Compostella**.

Ladies of the Court

Lady of the Manor

In the Middle Ages, where did the women fit? The chief activity of the time was war. Women were not warriors. The main part of the household work was done by women of the lower class. What did the “lady of the manor” do?

It is hard for the modern woman to understand the Medieval woman. In the Middle Ages, a woman was considered to be lower in rank than a man. The status was set by the teachings of **Aristotle**. He believed women and slaves were born inferior. **St. Paul** stated women were to be silent in the church. **Germanic laws** allowed women to be treated as their husband’s property.

When looking for a wife, the **nobleman** did not care much about love. He wanted to find a woman who could bring him some benefit. She would either provide him with money or political power. Couples were often married after their families had bargained a long time over the amount of **dowry** the bride’s father must pay. Sometimes, the couple never even met before they were married. The whole **courtship** and wedding ceremony took place through letters and contracts.

In southern France, a much more romantic approach to courtship began in the 11th century. The roving **troubadour** would sing and play for the woman and win her love. Stories in song told of the **knight** who would slay dragons or win contests for his lady love. An example would be the romantic tale of Sir Lancelot and Queen Guinevere at the court of King Arthur.

Once married, a woman’s husband was, in theory, her lord and master. Everything she owned belonged to her husband. He could use it or waste it as he saw fit. She ran the household. She managed the spinning, weaving, and cooking. When the husband was away, she ran the outdoor work. If the castle was attacked while her husband was away, she was in charge of the defense.



Although not a real person, Queen Guinevere was idolized in Medieval romance

Women Rebel

The system was against them, but women did not always play the lowly servant’s role. When Norman men invaded England in 1066, some of them stayed too long. Their wives protested and said that if their husbands did not come home quickly, the women would find new husbands. The men said farewell to their army and went home.

Some women told their opinions bluntly. Isabella, the Countess of Arundel, clashed with King Henry III. She told the king that he was not a good ruler for the nation. Wives were not always obedient and silent. Couples that never argued were rare in England. If a couple could swear that they had not fought in their first year of marriage, they could win a side of bacon.

Other women followed the advice of a character in Chaucer’s “Clerk’s Tale.” “The best way to rule a man,” they were told, “was to give him what he pleased.” Some women used Chaucer’s advice in their dealings with men.

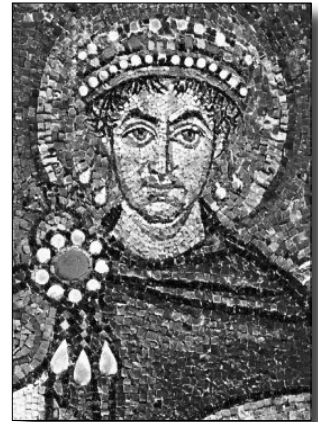
The Byzantine Empire Is in Trouble

The Eastern Roman Empire

The Roman Empire was divided into two empires: Western and Eastern. The **Eastern Empire** was also called **Byzantium** or the **Byzantine Empire**. The Eastern Empire was stronger and more orderly than the system of feudalism in the Western Empire. **Constantinople** was ideally located for defense. It was surrounded on three sides by water. High walls were built along the only side connected to land. Its army was one of the best in the world. Its navy was strong. Financially, the Empire was in good shape. It was at the crossroads of trade between East and West. Businesses in the city were growing. It was a safe place to trade. The government was very capable. It ran the same no matter who was emperor.

The **Eastern (Orthodox) Church** had little to do with the Roman Church. The most important person in the Eastern Church was the **Patriarch of Constantinople**. Like the Western Church, there were archbishops and bishops in major cities. There were also differences between the two churches. The Orthodox baptized by dipping a person into water three times. Bishops could not marry. They had to be **celibate**. But married men could be priests.

The legal system of Byzantium went back to **Justinian** (527–565). He wrote **Corpus Juris Civilis** (*The Body of Civil Law*). It gave all the power to the emperor. “The emperor alone can make laws,” said Justinian. The emperor also had the power to decide how the laws should be interpreted. People who lived in Constantinople could consider themselves lucky. They did not have the confusion that was found in the Western end of the old **Roman Empire**.



Justinian

Threats to the Empire

However, there were serious threats to this good life in the Eastern Empire. In the West, the eldest son of the king was next in line. In the East, there were no lines of succession to the throne. This was called the **Malady of the Purple**, because the emperor wore a purple robe. In the Byzantine Empire, any nobleman might decide to replace a dying emperor.

Like the West, the East was threatened by invaders. **Slavic** tribes came in the 6th century and settled in remote areas. People from Finland would sometimes raid the empire. In the 7th century, Russians sometimes attacked the frontiers. A few times, these invaders had to be driven from the walls of the city.

In 1054, a representative of the pope (a **legate**) had been refused when he tried to see the patriarch. Each church had then accused the other of **heresy**. These were ideas not accepted by the established Christian church. The two churches broke all ties with each other.

By 1081, the Byzantines were in trouble. Emperor Alexius I faced attack by Turkish pirates from the sea. He also faced attacks from the north. He tried to save Constantinople. He melted down church treasure to pay another group of Turkish people to support him. Still, the **Muslims** kept coming, and Alexius panicked. He turned to the pope for help. Gregory VII could not help. He was too busy fighting off Henry IV. The next pope, Urban II, saw that it might be good to go to the aid of the Eastern Empire. It would unite Western **Christians** in a common cause. It would strengthen the image of the pope as leader of the Christian world. It might bring the Eastern Church under the control of the Western Church. He decided to call for a **Crusade**.

“God wills it!” The First Crusade

The Holy City

In 1095, **Pope Urban II** traveled north to France. He gave a speech to the church leaders and nobles who came to hear him. It was one of the most remarkable speeches in history. He called on the **descendants** of Charlemagne to rescue their fellow Christians in the East and the holy city of **Jerusalem** from the **Muslims**. He told them to forget family and wealth. He told them to forget their past feuds and wars. He told them to take up the Cross for the holy cause. The pope also promised them everlasting life in heaven if they went. The people cried out: “God wills it! God wills it!” Their symbol was a cross worn on their tunics. **Crusade** means “to take the cross.” The message spread quickly.



Crusaders throwing the heads of Muslims over rampart walls

The First Crusade

Peter the Hermit was a preacher who rode around France on his donkey. His sermons caused **commoners** to leave their work. They wanted to follow his banner to free the **Holy City** from the Muslims. Five divisions of commoners were formed in April 1096 and started east. The first two were led by Walter the Penniless. They arrived in Constantinople in mid-July. The others arrived two weeks later. The commoners were weak, tired, and hungry at the end of their journey. They crossed the **Bosporus** to **Asia Minor** (now known Turkey) in August. Walter and his followers were wiped out by the Seljuk Turks. Their dead bodies were left to bleach in the sun.

The knights were a separate unit. They were led by Godfrey, Bohemund, and Robert. Some traveled to Constantinople by land and others by sea. Their motives for going varied. Some knights were going for purely religious reasons. Others were planning on using this as a way to get rich quick. The leaders were divided and jealous of each other. They often worked against each other. Luckily, the Muslims were also badly divided and plotting against each other.

In 1099, the Crusaders captured Antioch after a long siege. Just after they captured the city, they were surrounded by a newly arrived Muslim army. When the situation was at its worst, a warrior found what was said to be the lance that had pierced **Jesus’** side. This was seen as a sign that God was with them. The Crusaders rallied and fought their way out. They marched on to Jerusalem. There they easily overcame the Muslims. Once in the city, the Crusaders killed 10,000 **Jews** and Muslims. Godfrey was offered the title of king. He took a more modest title: Defender of the Holy Sepulcher. Three other kingdoms were set-up at Antioch, Tripoli, and Edessa. These kingdoms were known as **Crusader states**. They were not very strong. They depended heavily on Italian merchants who used their harbors for trade.

The Second Crusade

The Second Crusade began after the Muslims captured Edessa. The two leaders of the Crusade, Conrad III of Germany and Louis VII of France, did not work together. The Crusade failed. The followers went home in 1148. A new threat to the Crusader states came in the form of **Saladin**, a great military leader. In 1187, he captured Jerusalem and took its king as a prisoner.



Saladin

Richard the Lion Hearted and the Third Crusade

Crusading to Free Jerusalem

The fall of **Jerusalem** stunned people in the West. This made kings want to become involved in freeing the Holy City. The most famous of these is King Richard of England. His fame comes from the movies and books made about Robin Hood. **Robin Hood** is a character who fought to save England from the evil Prince John while King Richard was held hostage in Austria. Richard returned and became king once again. Robin, Maid Marian, the merry men of Sherwood Forest, and England lived happily ever after. At least part of the story is true.



Richard the Lion Hearted

Richard was the son of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine. He was called the Lion Hearted. Richard grew up in a family constantly at war with each other. He even had to struggle with his father to be considered an heir to the throne. He was crowned king in 1189. Almost at once, Richard prepared to go on the **Third Crusade**. To pay for the trip, he raised taxes. In Sicily, he joined forces with King Philip Augustus of France. On his way to the Holy Land, Richard conquered Cyprus. The wealth he gained helped pay for his trip. He then joined in the **siege** of Acre in June 1191. During the siege, Richard and leaders of the Germans and French quarreled constantly. At one time, the French and English armies almost came to blows. Acre fell in July. In August, Philip returned to France.

Battling Saladin

Richard was a brave soldier. After the French left, he found a new enemy to fight: **Saladin**, the **sultan** of Egypt. Saladin was determined to drive the crusaders out. He said: "Let us purge the air of the air they breathe." Richard's army was stopped when he tried to capture Jerusalem in 1191. He was forced to retreat to Ascalon. He tried three more times to capture Jerusalem but never succeeded.

Richard finally realized that he was never going to take Jerusalem. He worked out a **treaty** with Saladin. The treaty left the Crusaders with only a fringe of land along the coastline. Their base at Ascalon was destroyed.

Going Home to England

Richard faced another problem. There was no good way to go home. His enemies controlled all the sea and land routes. Richard started his journey back home in 1192. He wore a disguise while passing through Austria. However, King Leopold was watching for him. Richard was captured in Vienna. Leopold turned him over to Holy Roman Emperor Henry VI. The emperor required a **ransom** of 150,000 marks before he would release the king. The English quickly raised taxes to meet the demands. Even though the English were not able to pay the full amount, Richard was released.

Richard came home in 1194. He was in England for a few weeks. He then left for France to fight Philip. He was wounded in the shoulder by a crossbow while in France. He died from the injury in 1199. In his eleven years as king, he was on English soil less than one year. He never accomplished anything important during his reign of England. Even so, he has always been a popular figure.

The Crusading Spirit Declines

End of the Crusades

Interest for crusading was strong at times. Other times interest dropped. The later Crusades often did not have a religious motive to them. These Crusades were not successful.

The **Fourth Crusade** from 1202 to 1204 was called by Pope Innocent III. The **Venetians** transported the 12,000 Crusaders on their ships. They had the Crusaders attack Zara and Constantinople. **Zara** was a port belonging to the Christian ruler of Hungary. The Crusaders never went beyond the Byzantine capital. Their behavior shamed the pope. He did what he could to stop them from their cruel deeds. He even threatened the Crusaders with **excommunication**. This did not stop their bad behavior.

The **Children's Crusade** of 1212 ended in disaster. The children of Germany and France were caught up in the Crusading spirit. They believed that they could get done what the older Crusaders could not. They were led by a **peasant** boy named Nicholas. The children were encouraged by their parents and some priests to join the Crusade. Many died while trying to cross the Alps. Others who managed to get to ships were taken to North Africa and sold as slaves.

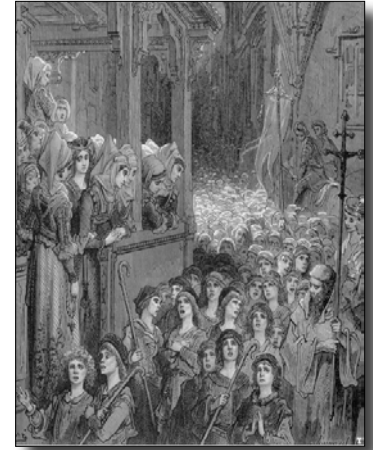
The **Fifth Crusade** from 1217 to 1221 was fought to conquer Egypt. After the Egyptians lost the Battle of Damietta, they offered to trade Jerusalem for Damietta. The Crusaders rejected the deal. After losing the battle for Cairo, the Crusaders were forced to trade their lives for Damietta.

There were no battles fought during the **Sixth Crusade** from 1228 to 1229. Emperor Frederick II got Jerusalem from the Muslims through diplomatic means. The **Seventh Crusade** was led by King Louis IX of France. He was captured. The French nation had to pay a large ransom to get him back. After he returned to France, he attacked Tunis in North Africa. This event began the **Eighth Crusade** in 1270. This effort was also a failure. King Louis IX died during the siege. The Crusaders returned home. That was the end of the Crusades.

Results of the Crusades

Several important changes occurred as the result of the crusades.

- They were the first united effort of Western Europe.
- Fighting for a religious motive was considered a noble cause.
- They stopped the Muslim growth that threatened to overwhelm Europe.
- They increased the power of kings, since vassals were away fighting.
- They sped up the rise of cities. The feudal lords needed the cities' help to pay for their trips.
- They improved the dealings between lords and peasants.
- Europeans became more familiar with geography.
- Europeans learned about new products, new methods of farming, and the writings of Greeks and Romans that had been long forgotten in Europe.
- Europeans discovered that the Muslims were not idolaters or barbarians. Their level of learning was above that of Europeans.
- There were negative effects too. Europeans got the idea that religious wars were pleasing to God. This led to killing and persecuting minority groups in Europe.



The Children's Crusade ended in disaster.

A Legal System Develops in England

Power of the King

In many parts of Europe, rulers could do whatever they liked. If they wanted property, they took it. If someone argued with them too much, that person was tried for **treason** in a king's court. If a commoner was found guilty, he was hanged. If a nobleman was found guilty, he was beheaded. There was little effort made to decide who was innocent or guilty.

In England, by the 13th century, some interesting changes were being made to the justice system. These changes had a great effect on the legal systems used later in the United Kingdom and the United States.

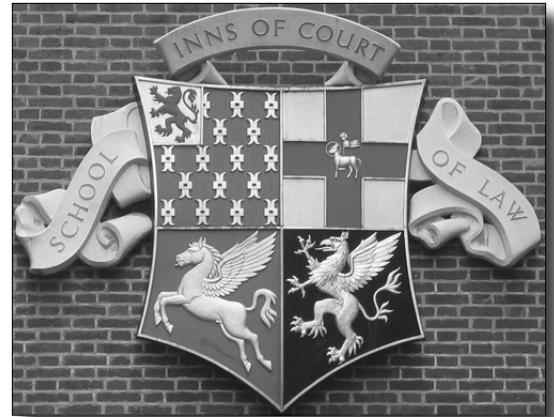
Change in the Law

By the time Henry II became king in 1154, civil and criminal law had already been split. **Civil law** usually is an argument over property. The court's role is to be an umpire. For example in the case of Smith v. Jones, Smith is the **plaintiff**. He is the one who claims to have been wronged. Jones is the **defendant**. He is the one accused. The court decides if Smith has a **legitimate** complaint. **Criminal law** covers actions by a person that the government says is illegal. In the terms of that time, the action violated the king's peace. The punishment under criminal law for violating the king's peace was a fine, imprisonment, or death. Henry ordered that every county have a jail.

The **jury** of that time was much different than our juries today. In 1166, Henry II ordered that each sheriff appoint 12 good men out of every 100 to be jurors. The jurors of that time investigated rumors they had heard about a local person breaking the law. If they were sure the person might have done it, the jury ordered the sheriff to arrest that person. The sheriff would bring him before the judge. These charges were called **presentments**. In the 13th century, a second jury was formed. It was called a **petit jury** or petty jury. The jury, not the judge, decided if someone was guilty or innocent. However, most trials were decided by a judge.

Another of Henry's major changes was developing **common law**. These changes were to make the laws the same all over England. When a judge wanted to decide a case, he looked up opinions that had been given by judges in similar cases. If the judge saw something similar, but his case had different facts, he wrote up his own opinion. At the end of a year, these opinions were gathered in the **Year Book**.

Men need to be trained to deal with common law cases for the system to work. This training was provided in Gray's Inn, Lincoln's Inn, Middle Temple, or Inner Temple. These four schools are now known as the Inns of Court. Students read during the day. At night, they argued practice cases in **moot** trials. Three languages were needed. Latin was used for the official records. English was used to talk with the client. Norman French was used for the courtroom. When the student was ready to argue a case in court, he was called to the bar. Much of what we in America and England know as our law system goes back to ideas present around the year 1200.



The Inns of Court is the oldest law school in England. Each coat of arms represents one of the old schools: Lincoln's Inn, Middle Temple, Inner Temple, and Gray's Inn.

King John Signs the Magna Carta

Henry II did a good job creating a justice system for England. He did not do a good job when it came to dealing fairly with family matters. He was married to Eleanor of Aquitaine. Two of their sons were Richard and John. Henry never liked Richard. John was his favorite son.

Henry had his wife put in prison. She got back at him by stirring up their sons against Henry. Richard and John plotted with the French King Philip Augustus against Henry.

After Henry's death, Richard the Lion Hearted, became king. While Richard added little to the **monarchy**, he did nothing to tear down the good changes that his father had made. In 1199, Richard died, and John became king.

The Rule of King John

John was an evil man. He broke nearly every code of justice his father had created. He wanted his nephew's land. He stole it, and the nephew suddenly disappeared. He fell in love with a 12-year-old girl who was engaged to one of his vassals. John married her despite public protests. John had a bitter quarrel with the pope and was **excommunicated**. He said he would punish the nobles if they obeyed the pope. John locked up a noble lady and her son. He ordered that they only be fed raw bacon and uncooked oats. They soon died. Stories spread about a Jew in Bristol who refused to pay a special tax. Each day, John had one of the man's teeth knocked out. The man gave in on the eighth day. The common people did not like John. They began to look to the barons for help.

The Magna Carta

The **nobility** were complaining even more than the **commoners**. They began to gather around Stephen Langton, the Archbishop of Canterbury. He openly criticized the king. King John wanted the **barons** to help him invade France. Most of the barons refused to go. John hired professional soldiers called **mercenaries**. He raised taxes on the nobles to pay for the soldiers. The war went badly. The nobles decided it was time to act.

On June 12, 1215, the barons rode out to a meadow along the Thames River. The meadow was called Runnymede. They met King John. They brought a paper listing their demands. King John and the nobles debated the demands for a week. Finally, the king gave in to the demands. He could not write, so he put his seal on the paper. This paper is known as the **Magna Carta**, or the Great Charter. It limited the power of the king.

There were 63 points in the charter. Many of them were minor points. There were major points as well. Every person was entitled to justice. Only those who knew the law and obeyed it should be made officials. Also, the king was to refund illegally collected fines and grant a general **pardon**.

Two parts of the Magna Carta were very important. The 12th article said there must be no tax levied unless by "common consent of our kingdom." This led to "no taxation without representation." The 39th article provided that no **freeman** could be tried except by the "lawful judgment of his peers." The only "freemen" were nobles, but out of this grew our current jury system.



King John signs the Magna Carta.

Castles and Forts Give More Power to the Nobility

Lords Build Castles

In Europe, on steep hillsides and mountains, there are tall towers to remind us of the Middle Ages. Wars were common, and the lords built castles for defense. We have all seen these in movies and television shows. Some castles were very fancy. Others were plain and might even be high piles of earth flattened on the top. Why were they built? What were they like?

Castles were built so the nobility and the rich could feel safe from other lords and from the commoners. The inside walls were stone and the only decoration was usually a **tapestry**. It was used to provide a little color and to cut down on the draft.

Outside, the castle was built to discourage unwanted intruders. Safety was the most important thing to consider when building a castle. Style or comfort was not as important. The castle had to be able to withstand an attack or a siege. In a **siege**, the enemy would surround the castle and wait for the defenders to grow weak from hunger or thirst. Castles needed to be sturdy. They also had to provide storage space for food and water. There had to be a safe place for livestock to be kept during sieges.

Defending the Castle

To give some idea of a castle's design, imagine we are **vassals** of Prince Charming. His beautiful girlfriend, Cinderella, has been kidnapped by the cruel Baron Meanandugly. He has taken her to his castle. Like other castles of the time, this one stands on a high hill. Its tall walls stand 50 feet above. Above the walls are the towers. Armed with a sword or **mace** (a spiked club), we set out to rescue Cinderella.

As we approach the castle, our first barrier is water. A **moat**, a ditch filled with water, surrounds the castle. Usually the only way across the moat was the castle's **drawbridge**. The baron raises the bridge when he sees us coming. We must use our **siege machine** to cross the moat. We now run into our second problem. The castle is surrounded by two or three short walls. These had been added to the castle's defenses after the Crusades. Between the walls are grassy areas called **baileys**. They are used to graze livestock during a siege. After we cross one bailey with some **casualties**, the defenders withdraw behind the second wall. They cause more casualties. Finally, we reach the castle's high walls. Our task is even more difficult now.

Some of our men begin climbing ladders up the wall. As they climb, they are hit by scalding water poured down from the top of the wall. We are also using a **battering ram** to pound our way through the gate. The enemies stand on walkways called **ramparts** and shoot arrows at us. Hanging out over the walls are **battlements**. They give the baron's men a better angle from which to shoot. We finally break through the gate. We find ourselves in the inner bailey, a large courtyard.

Now we come to the strongest defense the baron has—the **keep**. It is the tall tower where the baron lives. It has its own wells, living quarters for some of his troops, and storage space. Once inside, we must fight our way up the stairs and into the tower where Cinderella is being held.



The keep of Windsor Castle in England

Cities Grow in Size and Influence

Medieval Cities

Today, cities are where the action is. They are centers of business, industry, government, and the news media. Our view of cities is far different from what it was in the Middle Ages. After the Roman Empire fell, there was little need for cities. This changed around A.D. 1000 when trade began to pick up. Cities began to grow. Medieval cities were far smaller than ours. They had few people. Cities were of little importance to most people of that time.

Many cities of the Middle Ages owed much to the Roman **era**. One of these cities was Paris. It had long been settled by a tribe called the Parisii. Paris was then known as **Lutetia**, or Mudtown. The Romans made it part of their road network. The roadways tied Paris to Lyon, Marseilles, and other key points in France. London's history goes back to Celtic times. The Romans called it **Londonium**. The old Roman town was destroyed by a fire in 1087. It was quickly rebuilt and became the political center of England. Others were new cities. For example, when Kaiserschloss Castle was built in 1050, the town of Nuremburg grew up around it.



A 1593 map of London

Design of the Castle City

Medieval cities all grew up around a castle called a **bourg**. This was a place where people could escape to in case of an attack. The lord who built the castle was glad to have these people around. They could supply him with soldiers in case of war. The lord could tax the people. The number of people living around the castle grew. The people became wealthier. The people built walls around the city to protect their property from outside attack. Cities were built near rivers. **Drawbridges** were built that could be raised in case of war.

The people who lived in the cities were vassals. They were under the rule and protection of the king or a powerful lord. Like other vassals, they had to pay their dues in service. There was a difference. The people in cities might tax themselves to pay for the privilege of not having to work the lord's land or fight in his wars. As long as they paid their taxes, the king did not interfere with the details of their lives. The people could choose their own leaders and make their own rules.

In the center of the city was the marketplace, the ruler's palace, and the **cathedral**. The city was divided into **districts**. Often it was divided into 12 districts, to honor the 12 **apostles**. The pattern was usually circular. At the middle were the homes of the wealthy merchants and local nobility. Near the middle were the shops, churches, and schools. At the outer edge were the huts of the poor.

Space was in short supply within the city's walls. This caused the streets to be narrow and buildings to be five and six stories tall. After it got too crowded, cities built new walls. Sometimes the old walls were torn down. Sometimes the old walls were kept. These walls were used to divide towns into districts that separated the classes.



Medieval streets were dark and crowded.

Cathedrals: Monuments to Faith

What makes one city different from another? Today, we build stadiums, arches, zoos, and statues for people to see. In the Middle Ages, city leaders also wanted to make their city great. One way this was done was by building an outstanding **cathedral**.

The cathedral was the home church for the bishop or archbishop. It had a special chair for the bishop. The chair was called a **cathedra**. The early cathedrals were built like the Greek and Roman temples. The design was as simple as when a child lays a block across two upright blocks. Around the 11th century, the **Romanesque** style of cathedral came in style. It was made of stone. The walls were thick. There were narrow openings to let in light. There were rounded arches. The statues in them had to follow the guidelines of the church. Sculptors were not allowed to be creative in the design.

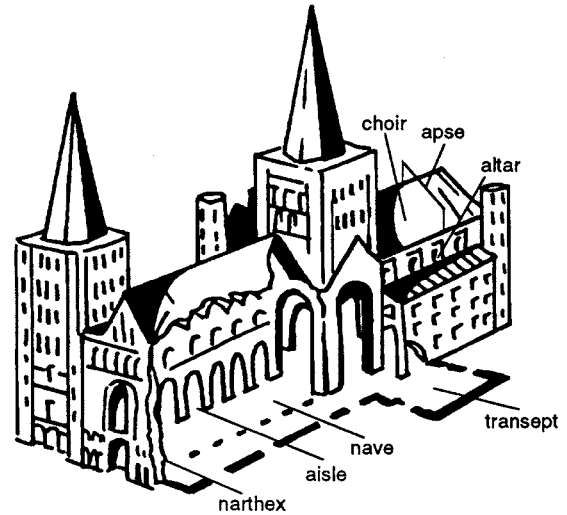


Diagram of a typical cathedral

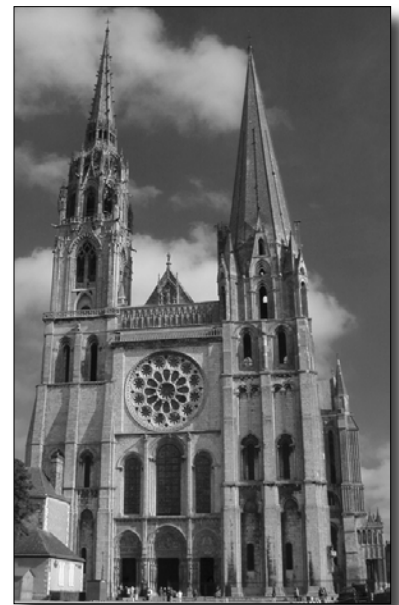
Gothic Style Cathedrals

During the 13th century, the **Gothic** style cathedral became very popular in Germany, France, and England. It was stunning in size, height, and design. Its walls were heavier than those that had been built before. To keep them from falling outward, **flying buttresses** were used to hold up the walls. Like arrows pointing to heaven, steeples and spires were placed on the top. Doors and windows were pointed too, like hands at prayer. The **glaziers** were people who set glass in windows. They used glass of many colors. Each color and every part of the church's design had a symbolic meaning.

The Gothic cathedral was usually shaped like a large cross. A visitor entered through the large doors at the front into the inside entrance. This is known as the **narthex** and is located on the west side of the cathedral. The visitor would walk down the **nave** toward the altar. About halfway down the nave, the visitor saw the arms of the cross, or the **transepts**, off to the north and south. Walking straight to the east, the visitor came to the **apse**. This is where the choir and altar were.

Building a Cathedral

Cathedrals often took 50 to 100 years to build. Thousands of workers were used to do the building. Many workers worked for free. They did it because they were proud of their community or because of their religious zeal. Other workers were paid. The unskilled workers received low wages for the very hard work of cutting stones, moving them to the building site, and setting them in place.



Chartres is a classic Gothic cathedral.

Masons cut the stone into just the right size and shape to fit their spot in the building. The best masons made the statues. Masons were well paid. Becoming a mason required seven years of **apprenticeship**. They also had to pass a test. There was always a shortage of masons. One reason was because other masons did not want too much competition. Another reason was many masons died of lung disease. This was caused by the stone dust they breathed.

Most of the great cathedrals built during the Middle Ages still stand. When you enter these huge buildings, you see the pride and care to detail that made them monuments to faith.

Medieval Universities: Centers of Learning

Colleges and Universities

Another way cities stood out was by building a university. In our time, going to a **college** or **university** is common. There was a time, even in the United States, when there were few colleges. Harvard, William and Mary, and Yale were the earliest colleges. Students who went there had many classes of Latin and Greek. They were set up just like the universities in England. They all followed the same pattern of Medieval universities. Students had to take notes, attend lectures, and take tests. When they graduated, they received a diploma and wore a cap and gown. Colleges of today still follow some of these practices.

Medieval universities started without a campus. A famous **scholar** would come to town. Students would come to learn from him. The students sat on the floor or on benches. The teacher **lectured**, and the students took notes. By the time the course was over, the student had a book full of notes. He either kept the notes or sold them to a new student. These notebooks cost a lot of money. Students often wrote home for more money. Lectures were all in **Latin**. The area of Paris where students lived came to be called the "**Latin Quarter**." Latin was the common language of the educated. No matter which country was the student's homeland, he could talk with and understand other students.

One of the two main universities at that time was in **Paris**. This city was famous for its study of theology and philosophy. The other was in **Bologna**, Italy. This city was famous for its law school. Another university at **Salerno** was becoming famous for its study of medicine.

Life of a Student

Many students were very serious and eager to learn. Others were troublemakers and spent their days attending parties and enjoying life. Wealthy students lived much better than those from poor families. Some aid was available for the poor. Robert Sorbon gave money for a hall in Paris where 16 poor students could live for free. The school that grew around that hall came to be the **Sorbonne**. This is one of the most famous universities in the world today.

The students in town were easily identified by the academic gowns they wore. They often clashed with the local young people. They thought the students were snobs and foreigners. Students complained about the prices they were charged for food and a place to live. To protect themselves, teachers and students formed guilds. These were like the craft guilds of the time. These guilds were called **universitas**, meaning "all who belong to the guild." In 1200, students in Paris had a fight with local police. After some of the students were killed, they said they would move elsewhere unless they were given the right to be free from local rule. The king gave them a charter saying they only had to follow church law.

The young man who passed all the tests was awarded a B.A. degree. If he continued his studies, he could earn an A.M. degree. He had to have at least this degree in order to be admitted to the teaching guild at the university level. Doctoral degrees were received by those who could teach law, medicine, or **theology**. Other doors were open to a young man with university training in the church, government, law, or medicine. For the poor, it was one way to rise above their humble status in life.



A university lecture

Life in the Middle Ages: The Cities

Cities Grow

Trade began to revive at the end of the 11th century. Towns began to develop and the number of people living in them grew. There were many reasons peasants might want to move to the city. They could be freer. A person living in a city for a year and a day was free from any feudal contract they had made before. They could own land and either rent or sell it. They could learn a trade. They might even become a leader. Most cities were located near the walls of a **burgh**, or fort. Those who led the local people were known as **burgesses** by the English. By the French, these leaders were known as the **bourgeois**, and as **burghers** by the Germans. Many burgesses were from lower-class families but had become successful in the city.

The upper class in cities lived well. They had large homes with many rooms, glass windows, and carpets on the floor. Their hope was to marry their daughters off to nobles. This would bring titles of nobility into the family and add status. The old upper class looked down on burghers. They insultingly called them **nouveaux riches**, or the new rich.

Centers of Trade

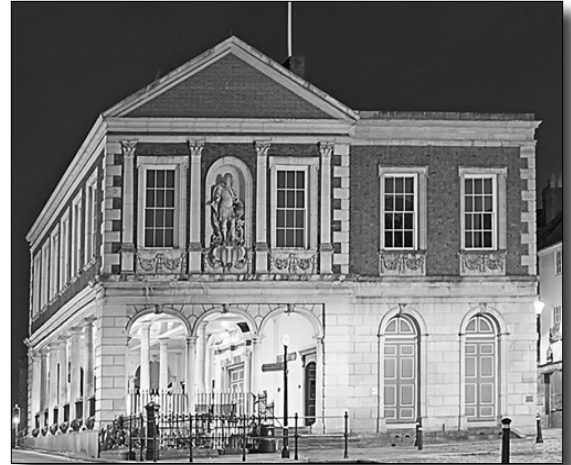
Guilds in the city played a big part. The **tailors** in the city, for example, formed a guild. They blocked anyone who was not a member from selling clothing. This meant that customers received better quality clothes. They paid higher prices for the clothing because guild merchants could charge more. Guild members did not do all the work. They hired others to work for them. The tailors gave cloth to **seamstresses** to turn into clothes and paid them by the piece. In Florence, Italy, there were seven important guilds and about 15 minor guilds.

Cities were centers of trade as well as production. Part of the business was with local customers. Another part of it involved bringing in goods from distant places and sending them on to other trading centers. The Italian cities like Genoa, Venice, and Florence had large navies and drove competitors off of the Mediterranean Sea.

Problems Come With Growth

As cities grew, they became overcrowded. Medieval cities were filthy. People shared space with rats, fleas, pigs, horses, and oxen. Italian cities were the first to begin to pave streets. Streets in other cities were either dust or mud. Cities did not have people to pick up the garbage. People did not have bathrooms. They would dump waste out their windows. Men walked next to the street to protect the women from garbage dumped out of upper windows. The well water was polluted. It caused **epidemics** that wiped out whole sections of cities. The rich had large homes, but the poor lived in overcrowded huts. **Contagious** diseases spread rapidly in the crowded cities. When health conditions got too bad, the whole city might move to a new location.

Travelers often spoke badly about cities they visited. Rome was noted for crime, bad food, scorpions, and mosquitoes. A Frenchman warned friends to avoid London because of its **degenerates**, gamblers, belly dancers, and beggars. Cities had their problems, but it was a way to escape life as a peasant in the country.



Windsor Guildhall

Life in the Middle Ages: The Peasants' Lot

The Medieval **peasant** was at the bottom of the pile. They were hidden away and almost forgotten. Upper classes rarely talked about them. When they did, it was to complain of their smell, ignorance, ugliness, or dishonesty.

Classes of Peasants

There were four different classes of peasants: **villeins**, **serfs**, **crofters**, and **cotters**. Feudal law most protected the villein. The ancestors of the villein had made a contract with a lord for protection. In comparison, serfs were the subjects of the lord. The serfs in a village had all been made subjects as a group. They were tied to the land. If one lord took the land away from another, he got the serfs too. Crofters and cotters had no land. They rented their services to nobles or rich villeins.



Peasants led a hard, short life.

Life as a Peasant

A peasant worked hard for what little he received. The lands he farmed were not all in one place. They were in strips separated by open fields. It was common for peasants to work in groups. They did this for the company. Also, it was too hard for just one peasant to handle the oxen and heavy plows that were used.

The French peasant explained how he felt about the unfair situation. The king demanded **taxes**. The noble paid no tax. The priest demanded his **tithe**. The merchant needed his profit. The soldier paid for nothing he took. Finally, the beggar had nothing to take. The peasant complained he alone was supporting the king, noble, priest, merchant, soldier, and beggar. He was also at the mercy of these people. If the lord had a bishop as guest, he took up a collection from the serfs. They might ride across his land on a fox hunt. Then the peasant lost hours of hard labor.

Peasants Revolt

Most of the time peasants were **docile** and did not cause trouble. But there were times when anger broke out in mob violence. In 1358, French peasants were fed up with high taxes. They revolted in the north and west of France. This was known as the **Jacquerie rebellion**. Out of it came a demand for the taxpayers to have more say in decisions to raise taxes.

In 1381, England was at war with France. New tax money was needed to pay for the war. The merchants and large landowners were tired of being taxed. **Parliament** came up with a head tax. Everyone, except beggars, was forced to pay one **shilling**. Those with the greatest burden from this tax were the poorest peasants. They did not want to give up their shillings to the king. When collectors were sent to catch those who wouldn't pay, rebellion spread. Wat Tyler, a peasant, killed a tax collector. He became a hero to the poor. The peasants marched on London. King Richard II rode out to talk with them. The peasants returned home with new respect for the king. But the empty promises they got didn't mean much.

The largest peasant **revolt** came in Germany in 1524–1525. Peasants and city workers rebelled over higher **rents** and the loss of privileges. They attacked nobles and wealthy priests. Then the rulers sent in armies to crush the **rebels**. The rebel leaders were sentenced to death.

Life in the Middle Ages: Recreation

Entertainment for the Nobles

People of the Medieval period looked for ways to enjoy themselves. Upper-class men liked hunting and hawking. They would ride through fields and forests chasing deer or boars. **Hawking** was a sport that had started in Asia and then spread to Rome. Hawks were trained to bring down hares, pigeons, and herons. Women sometimes would go with the men on these hawking trips.

The work of a knight was war. He would spend hours practicing with weapons. The **tournament** was invented to make practice more fun. The contests were with swords and lances. Knights who took part represented noble families or a region. The knights and their supporters met in a field. The fight continued until one knight had defeated the other. These contests were dangerous, but it was a way to gain wealth. The winner received the horse and weapons of the loser.

Jugglers and **jesters** performed for the rich. The jesters wore silly costumes and gave witty answers to questions. For their efforts, they received food, a place to sleep, and small donations.

Entertainment for the Poor

Even for the peasant, there were some fun activities. The lord gave dinners for his vassals on certain feast days, at planting time, and when the harvest was over. **Feast days** were happy times for the peasants. They gathered at the church for physical contests. There were wrestling and jumping matches, shooting with bow and arrow, and tugs of war. Plays were performed. The plays were supposed to be religious. However, some got so obscene that the church barred them from the churchyard.

Poaching was also a dangerous peasant activity. The forests were only to be used by the lord for hunting. When peasants needed food, they might go hunting. If caught, the poacher's foot was cut off.

The poor in cities also had festival days. They were allowed to have fun at the expense of their betters. The **Feast of Fools** was celebrated in London with a woman of bad reputation sitting on the bishop's throne in the cathedral. The soles of old shoes were burned instead of incense. A town idiot was given a robe and crown to wear, and he sat on a throne. He was honored as if he were king for the day by the lower classes. No effort was made to stop these little displays of disrespect. It was seen as a way to let the poor blow off steam.

Plays were popular and educational. They were used by the church to teach the public, most of which could not read. There were three types of plays. Stories from the **Bible** were **mystery plays**. Those about **saints** were **miracle plays**. Plays where the characters represented certain **virtues** and **vices** were **morality plays**. The stage was often a box. The play lasted 10 to 20 minutes. Guilds often paid the cost of putting on the play. They would also act in the plays.



Hawking was popular among nobles.



Jesters were Medieval comedians.

Life in the Middle Ages: Music, Art, and Literature

In the Middle Ages, the lives of the people were centered on war, **chivalry**, and religion. Those topics also became the themes for music, art, and literature. The arts that survived help us to understand medieval life and times.

Art and Music

Painters and **sculptors** had to please those who bought their services. These included churches, religious orders, and noblemen. Art work was **commissioned** for both the inside and outside of buildings. Someone paid the artist and told them what they wanted. Some painters and sculptors were seen as **masters**. To learn the trade, the beginner studied with a master. Soon masters had many imitators who spread their style. Their style became the fashion for others to copy.

A painter named Cimabue (1240–1302) was the son of a rich noble. Unlike many of his class, he wanted to do something worthwhile with his life. He became a painter. One of his best paintings was of the **Madonna**. She was the mother of Jesus. It was so famous that the French king came to Florence to see the painting. He was also successful in finding new talented artists to train.

Fra (Brother) Angelico (1400–1455) was a painter. He was also a Dominican monk. He bridged the time between the Medieval period and the **Renaissance**. His work involved many types of art. He was trained as a **miniaturist**. He learned how to draw precisely. He could also create large paintings. One of the things he developed was the use of **perspective**. This was the technique of having some figures look more distant than others.

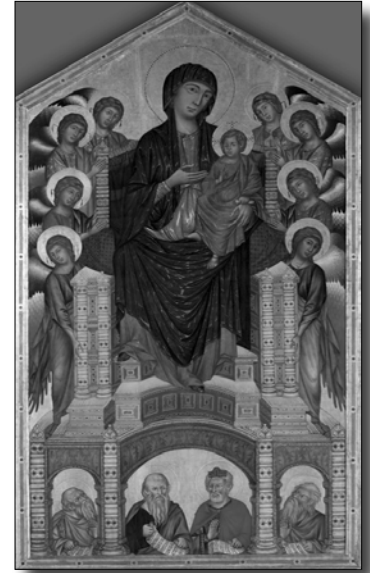
The most important music of the Middle Ages was religious. The people of that time were often in church. They wanted music pleasing to their ears. The Gregorian chant was popular with the church. It was sung by a person and a choir without musical instruments to support them.

Literature

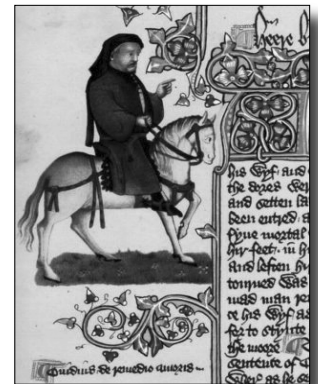
Geoffrey Chaucer was the greatest English writer of the Middle Ages. His best-known work is *Canterbury Tales*. It is a story centered around 29 travelers on their way to London. They stop at an inn. To pass the time, each traveler tells two stories on their way to the city and two on their way home. Chaucer never finished his tales. The tales provide a description of the people of 14th century England.

Dante's *Divine Comedy* was also written in the 1300s. The story begins with Dante lost in a deep forest. There he meets the Roman poet, Virgil, who helps him find his way through hell. Then they travel through **purgatory**. For his journey through heaven to the throne of God, his guide is Beatrice.

In 1455, the Gutenberg Bible was published at Mainz, Germany, on a printing press. William Caxton set up the first printing press in England about 20 years later. Earlier printers had printed books in **Latin**. Caxton published books in English.



Madonna and Child,
by Cimabue, 1285



**Chaucer, shown in
miniature in a copy
of *Canterbury Tales*,
circa 1387.**

Life in the Middle Ages: Science

The study of science seemed to move backward during the Medieval period. The word **science** comes from the Latin meaning “to know.” Today, science involves observation, experiments, and drawing logical conclusions.

In the Middle Ages, science fell behind where it had been in the year A.D. 200. Scientists did not make new findings. Instead, they quoted what others had said in the past. They quoted Galen about medicine. They also quoted Ptolemy, who said the earth was the center of the universe. Nothing that was written could **deviate** from church teachings. What passed for science in Europe seems more like magic to us.



Alchemists were early scientists.

Turning Metals Into Gold

Alchemy was one of the sciences of the Middle Ages. Its goal was to turn base metals like lead into gold. Geber, a Spanish alchemist, explained that metals were made up of sulfur and mercury. They thought any metal could be changed into gold. The alchemist's problem was to find the exact blend of metals, temperatures, and methods. This would then make the mix turn in to gold. When found, the new substance would be the **Philosopher's Stone**. If taken as medicine, gold would cure disease. It might even give the person **immortality**. They tried for many years, but they failed. However, their research did help them learn more about chemicals.



Roger Bacon

Many **alchemists** were true scientists. One was Roger Bacon, a 13th century Englishman. Bacon found ways a lens could be used to improve eyesight. He studied explosives. He predicted that someday ships would sail without the aid of the wind. He also said carriages would be able to move without the use of animals.

Paracelsus was a Swiss-born scientist of the late Middle Ages. He gave us our word *zinc* from his studies. He started out as an alchemist. His interests changed. He started to experiment with medicines. He was very outspoken and made many enemies. Others began looking to medicine rather than herbs to cure illness.

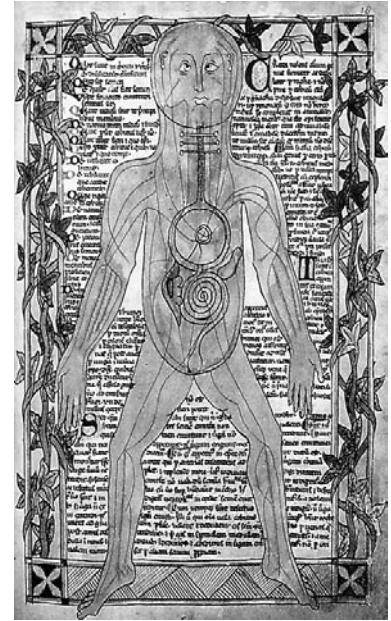
Scientific Discoveries by Arab Scientists

While Europeans worried about the Philosopher's Stone, Arab scientists were making progress in many areas. The Arabs took over Egypt. They took the Greek records from the library at Alexandria back to Baghdad. There they **translated** them into Arabic. They also made scientific discoveries on their own. An Arab physician, Avicenna, wrote a medical book called *Canon of Medicine*. In the book, he described diseases like meningitis and tetanus. Another Arab, Alhazen, found out that we see through the reflection of light from objects into our eyes.

Life in the Middle Ages: Health

In 1524, Erasmus wrote a letter to a friend: "I often wonder and grieve to think why Britain has now been afflicted so many years with chronic pestilence, especially the Sweating Disease..." It is surprising that Medieval people somehow were able to live to be 30 or 40 years old. They lived in bad conditions and at unhealthy food. Cleanliness was not a big concern for them. Baths were taken once or twice a year at most. In castles, bath water and body waste were flushed out into the moat surrounding the castle. The meat people ate was often old and poorly cooked. Vegetables were boiled until little nutritional value was left.

Homes had very poor heating systems. They were both cold and smoke-filled. Swiss homes were an exception. Travelers noted that people did not need hats and coats when they were indoors. The poor had no floors in their houses. Even the rich put trash under their floors to insulate them. Straw was strewn to sleep on. In time, it began to smell. Bad odors in cities came from open sewers, piles of manure, and garbage tossed on the streets. Lice, flies, ticks, bugs, spiders, mice, and rats spread diseases. **Epidemics** were common.



This 13th century anatomy drawing shows a limited knowledge of blood vessels.

Home Remedies and Superstitions

People had no knowledge of medicine. They relied on **superstition** to save them. Gregory of Tours believed that God worked through saints. He trusted St. Martin to cure him. The dust from the saint's **shrine** solved his stomach problems. Licking the rail at St. Martin's tomb healed his sore tongue. To free a fishbone he had swallowed, Gregory rubbed his throat with a cloth that hung at the tomb. Such **remedies** were often used.

Even when the person relied on science, his **physician** was usually incorrect. Physicians believed there were four **humors**: blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile. Whenever the supply of any of these became too great or too small, a person would become ill. The doctor's cure was to restore the balance. The leading medical **university** of Europe was at Salerno. Students were told that onions cured baldness. If a woman did not wish to have a child, she should wear a red ribbon around her head. However, some sound medical advice was also taught. Students were told that they should not overeat or drink too much. Students studied animal and human **cadavers**, or dead bodies. Trained doctors felt that doing surgery was beneath their dignity. They left surgery to butchers and barbers.

Early Hospitals

The **Byzantines** were the first to have hospitals. The first **hospitals** in the West were places for travelers and sick people to find shelter and food. In the 11th century, monks began to take care of the ill. Their main treatment was spiritual healing. There were about 19,000 **leprosaria** (leper hospitals) in Europe in the 13th century.

Europeans lacked medical knowledge. They lived in overcrowded cities. They allowed rats to run around freely. All these factors caused a huge loss of life in the 14th century.

The Black Death

John was one of those in the 14th century who began running a high fever and whose lymph glands swelled up in his neck. Jeanne, his sister, began vomiting blood. No doctor was needed to tell them the reason for their problem. They had the plague. There was no cure. They would live only a few days. After their painful deaths, John and Jeanne's bodies were taken out of the house by one of the city's poor. The bodies were dumped in an open grave. No one understood why they died. Since they were commoners, no one cared.



Plague pits were mass graves where the dead were dumped.

The Plague Strikes

Today, we know John and Jeanne died from the **bubonic plague**. It was also called the **Black Death**. It was spread because of the fleas on black rats. It also spread through contact with a person who had the disease. Ships carried the plague from the **Middle East** to Italy in 1347. It quickly spread to France, Spain, England, and Russia. It killed saint and sinner, poor and rich, male and female. There was not much **discrimination**. Cities were jammed with people. This made it easy for people to come into contact with plague carriers. There were fewer people in rural areas, but no one was safe.

There was no known way to avoid the disease. People were scared. They began to look for any possible solution. Some joined the **flagellation** movement. They beat themselves until their bodies were black and blue. It was hoped that by confessing their sins and tormenting themselves, God's anger would be satisfied. The movement was finally stopped by Pope Clement VI. He threatened to **excommunicate** those who were beating themselves. Many rulers refused to allow the beating to be done in public.

Jews had long drunk water from moving streams rather than wells. In this time of mass fear, some charged that was because Jews were poisoning the wells. It did not seem to matter that Jews were also dying from the plague. Jews were killed in Strasbourg, Mainz, and other European cities.

No one was allowed to enter or leave the houses of the infected. This meant they were **quarantined**. However, some plague victims were able to escape their houses at night. Officers let them go because they were afraid to touch them.

The worst of the crisis was over by 1350. By then, between 25 and 33 percent of the people in Europe had died from the plague. Some cities were really hard hit. Florence lost about two out of three people. Outbreaks of the plague continued to kill people for the next 400 years. Modern medicine and cleanliness habits finally stopped it.



The bubonic plague left black sores on victims' bodies.

Effects of the Plague

There were many effects of the plague. The number of people in Europe was greatly reduced. Feudal duties ended with the death of the noble and his family. After the plague threat had lessened, people could leave the peasant's life and go to the cities. Workers received higher wages than ever before, but costs went up too. Many **monks** and priests had died. The men who took their places were of poor quality. It would take centuries for Europe to recover from the plague.

The Beginnings of Parliament

Medieval Courts

The Middle Ages was not a time of **democratic** freedoms. **Ab-solutism** was much more in style. This meant unrestricted power ruled. Yet, very slowly, the first tiny steps were being taken toward allowing groups rather than individuals to make decisions.



The Parliament building today.

It was normal under **feudalism** for the lord to call in his vassals for a meeting. He would talk with them about major problems or ask their permission to raise taxes. These meetings were not on a regular basis. Delegates were not chosen by elections to represent the people. Yet, there were arguments. The vassals demanded changes. If the vassals had enough power, the lord had little choice except to agree to their terms.

In Anglo-Saxon England, there was a council called the **Witan**. It was made up of important leaders of the church and nobility. Its purpose was to advise the king. Sometimes it acted as a court. The Norman invaders brought a similar group with them. It was known as the **Magnum Concilium**, or the Great Council. It met three times a year. It was too large to get much done, so a smaller group was formed. It was known as the **Curia Regis**, or the King's Court. The most important member of the court was the **chancellor**. He came to be the king's most important advisor. The court became more important when it started handling the king's money matters. A checkered cloth was used to count the money. The one in charge was called the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Parliament

King Henry III gathered a **parliament** of important officials in London in 1258. *Parliament* was a French word meaning to "talk" or "discuss." This gathering has been called the "Mad Parliament." They were angry with the king for letting the pope and Frenchmen have too much influence. The king was forced to approve the **Provisions of Oxford**. This placed government in the hands of the nobles. Henry tried to back out of the agreement. He was captured by his most outspoken critic, Lord Simon de Montfort, in 1264. From then until his death, Henry became a "rubber stamp." This meant he approved whatever Lord Simon wanted.

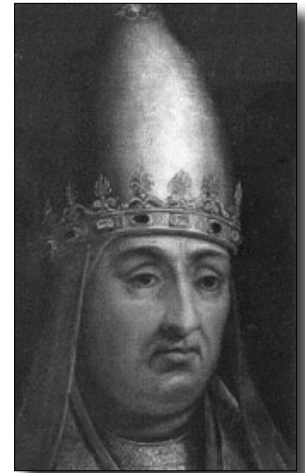
Simon called Parliament together in 1265. For the first time, citizens of towns, knights, barons, and high churchmen met. Kings could no longer ignore the people. From then on, the people's voices would be heard when laws were being considered.

Prince Edward was heir to the throne. He was also held **hostage**. He escaped and went on the Seventh Crusade. When he returned in 1274, he was crowned king. He knew that to keep power, he must appeal to the people. Edward I was faced with many problems. England was at war with France. **Rebellions** by the Welsh and Scots were another problem.

Edward I called for a meeting of Parliament in 1295. This was called the Model Parliament. He wrote, "...common dangers should be met by measures agreed upon in common." High churchmen, nobles, and commoners met. They divided into two houses. The two houses were the **House of Lords** and the **House of Commons**. Parliament would keep that form to the present day.

The Church and Its Critics

The Medieval church was different from the modern church. It was an **economic** and **political** power as well as a religious power. It controlled much of the land in Europe. The church was very wealthy. It used its power to threaten kings. It had control over religion. Nearly everyone belonged to the church. Often, where there is power and wealth, greedy and ambitious men will use it for gain. This was true of the Medieval church. Rulers wanted their man in as **pope**. If their man was not chosen, they worked to limit the damage the new pope could do. Popes were angered by this attempt to control the church. Pope Boniface VIII issued a papal bull called *Clericos Laicos* in 1294. A **papal bull** is a statement made by the pope. This bull banned lay rulers (kings) from taxing church property without the pope's say-so. Edward I of England and Philip the Fair of France began taking protection away from the church. Boniface backed down.



Pope Boniface VIII

Boniface's prestige returned during religious festivals held in 1300. He decided to put the kings in their place with another bull, *Unam Sanctum*. In this bull, he claimed the power to remove any king. He said obeying the pope was needed to gain **salvation**. Philip reacted strongly. He almost captured Boniface. The next pope, Benedict XI, died within a year. After much debate, Clement V (1305–14) was chosen as pope. He moved to Avignon. This was **papal** territory next to France. He never returned to Rome. Scared by the French king, he reversed *Unam Sanctum*. The English saw him as a French puppet and ignored him.

Babylonian Captivity

This began the **Babylonian Captivity** of the church. From 1309–77, the popes lived in Avignon. When Pope Gregory XI moved back to Rome in 1377, he found Rome in chaos. He wanted to return to Avignon. He died in 1378 before he was able to return. The French **cardinals** left Rome after an Italian had been chosen as pope. They elected a different pope. This split was called the **Great Schism**. Now there were two popes. Each pope excommunicated the other. In 1409, a meeting at Pisa decided neither pope was valid. They chose a third pope. The other two did not resign, so then there were three. Finally in 1417, the Council of Constance fired two popes. The third pope resigned. Then Martin V was named as the new pope.

Critics of the Church

As you can guess, this was all very confusing to faithful Christians. Two who spoke up in protest were John Wycliffe and John Huss. Wycliffe (1320–1384) was an Oxford professor. He saw the suffering caused by the plague and the Hundred Years' War. He felt neither kings nor popes cared about the people. He argued that man must obey God over king or pope. He felt that the **Bible**, not the church, had authority over Christians. In 1382, his followers translated the Bible into English. In 1415, the Council of Constance ordered that his body be dug up and burned.



John Wycliffe's bones are dug up and burned.

John Huss (1369–1415) was also critical of the church. He was ordered to appear before the Council of Constance. He was given a promise of safe passage. But he was captured and burned at the stake.

The Hundred Years' War

When a king was vassal to another king, there was sure to be trouble. When they were the kings of France and England, it added up to 116 years of trouble. Each was determined to hold on to what was his. The **Hundred Years' War**, as it was called, was not nonstop by any means. There were long lulls in the fighting and many distractions. There were revolts, political disputes, and the plague years.

There had been bad blood between English and French rulers since the **Norman** invasion. Each tried to stir up trouble for the other. The English had **allies** in France who were opposed to the French king. The French helped the Scots fight the English. They also stirred up the people of Aquitaine against English rule. In 1337, Edward III of England claimed the throne of France was rightfully his. This was nine years after Philip VI was crowned the French king. The war was officially on. Still, little happened until 1346 when both armies met at Crécy.



The Battle at Crécy

The French and British Armies

The French army was made up of 15,000 **mercenaries**. These were soldiers from Genoa who were paid to fight. When the battle started, they were tired from an 18-mile march in heavy armor. Adding to their troubles, there was a heavy rainstorm. It left their bowstrings wet and nearly useless. The English **archers** were rested and had kept their strings dry. The English brought three or four small cannons with them. The French troops had never heard the boom of a cannon before. They thought that "God thundered." The Genoese survived that, but not the volley of white arrows that hit them like a "snowstorm." Crécy was a great victory for England.

John the Good followed Philip to the throne. He wanted to stop the raids of the **Black Prince**, who was the son of England's Edward III. John the Good wanted to get revenge for the defeat at Crécy. With 60,000 men, John faced an English army of only 10,000 men at Poitiers. The English defeated the French and captured John. French peasants were made to pay a high tax to ransom the king. This led to the **Jacquerie revolt** in 1358.

Troubles in England

The English also had their troubles. For a time, England seemed to pull together. National pride ran strong. Then taxes went up, hitting the poor the hardest. In 1381, **Wat Tyler's Rebellion** protested the **head tax**. This was a tax on everyone over the age of 15. Rioting also occurred in London. The **Lord Chancellor**, collector of the tax, was beheaded. The Black Death also visited both countries and took people's minds off war.



The Battle at Agincourt

Henry V Picks a Fight

Later, Henry V decided that war would bring the nation together again. He picked a fight with the French. In 1415, at Agincourt, a French army of 50,000 met Henry's army of 7,000 to 8,000 men. Again, the situation favored the English. A heavy rainstorm made the land so wet that the French horsemen sank deep in the mud. Henry's men put sharpened stakes in the ground to stop the French **cavalry**. The confused French faced a volley of arrows and once again were defeated.

Joan of Arc Steps In to Save the French

The long war with England had produced only defeat and sadness for France. The French ruler, Charles VII, was an uncrowned king. The **coronation** (crowning ceremony) had to take place at Rheims, but it was in English hands. Then a 17-year-old girl came to the French court with a message from God. She claimed He had chosen her to drive the English from French soil. It was hard to believe and almost as strange as the events of her young life.

Divinely Inspired

Joan of Arc was a peasant girl from the small town of Domrémy. She had not learned to read or write but was devoted to God. She began hearing voices that made her believe God had chosen her to give France victory over the English. Charles knew she was coming. To test her, he put another man on the throne. He hid among the crowd. She had never seen the king before. Yet she walked past everyone else in the crowded room and bowed before the real king. He still wasn't convinced. She then told him what he had prayed for in his private **chapel**. Priests came to test her. They left believing she was **divinely** inspired.

She was given command of the army. At first, the generals refused to obey her. Then they discovered her voices won victories. Whenever they did not obey her, the French lost. Dressed in simple armor, she rode at the head of attacks. Common soldiers had such trust in her that they overcame stronger **foes**. The common English soldier lost courage and fought with little joy. She drove the English from Rheims. She was proud to see the crowning of her king.

The Voices Go Silent

Then her voices did not speak to her. Joan wanted to return to Domrémy. However, the king wanted her to attack English-held Paris. She was badly wounded in the battle. The French forces withdrew to Compiègne. The mayor raised the drawbridge as she approached the city. She was captured by the **Burgundians**. They were allies of the English. They sold her to the English for the small sum of 16,000 francs. Joan was tried before English churchmen as a heretic who listened to voices. Her trial lasted a year. During that time, Charles made no effort to **ransom** or rescue her.

Under the pressure of constant questioning, she was ready to **recant**. She would admit her sin. However, the visions and voices returned and gave her new strength. She was found guilty of **heresy** and sentenced to death.

Burned at the Stake

At the marketplace of Rouen, Joan was burned at the stake in 1431. As the flames roared around her, she raised a rude cross made of firewood. She looked to heaven and said "Jesus!" An English soldier said "We are lost. We have burnt a **saint**."

Despite all of the early successes, the English were never again able to win any major battles. Their army fought with little spirit or joy. The French fought with revenge in their hearts. In 1453, the English sailed home defeated. The separate identities of France and England were now firmly set.



Joan of Arc

The Decline of Feudalism

No announcement was made when the **Middle Ages** ended and the **Renaissance** began. It had started in Europe with barbarian invasions. At the end, these **barbarians** were farmers, merchants, sailors, and priests. They were no different than those they had conquered.

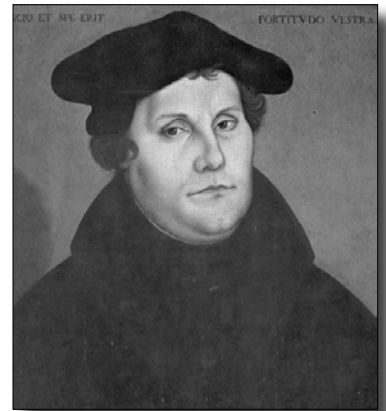
Dynasties Appear

Many things worked together to break **feudalism**. One of the most important was strong rulers and ruling families. These ruling families were known as **dynasties**. They took power away from the local lords. The local lords had controlled people in Europe for hundreds of years. Events began to play into the hands of kings. The Black Death had wiped out many of the **nobility**. The church had less power over those who ruled. The church had also been made weak by too much arguing among by its members. Growing cities were closely allied to their rulers. Merchants needed trade. It was far easier to move goods where there were fewer tax collectors. Cannons also made it easier for the king's army to keep local lords under control. Dynasties began to appear in Portugal, Spain, England, and France.

A New Age Begins

By 1500, there were many doubts about the feudal system—with its lords, vassals, knights, and wars. People questioned if society should be this way. They did not know if some of the practices within the church were proper. They wondered if it was right to limit the creativity of artists and writers.

The role of the church was changing. It had lost some of its power during the time it was in France. This time was known as the Babylonian Captivity. Then two or three men had claimed to be pope at the same time. This was known as the Great Schism. In the early 16th century, Martin Luther and John Calvin were able to bring great change through the **Protestant Reformation**.



Martin Luther



Leonardo da Vinci

By the 16th century, people were viewing science in a different way. In the Middle Ages, it was a popular belief that the earth was the center of the universe. People started to doubt this theory. Galileo, Leonardo da Vinci, and others were beginning to have a new understanding of physics. People began to learn more about the human body. In the 14th century, human bodies were dissected at the University of Bologna. A dead human body is called a **cadaver**.

Clever writers made people think about the events of the Middle Ages in a new way. William Shakespeare was an author in England. His plays contained many Medieval themes.

A new age called the Renaissance had arrived. During this time period, people would increase their knowledge of the world, cities, technology, and education. People began to have faith in the human ability to control history.