The European Middle Ages
What happened to the Roman Empire?

By the end of the 5th century, Germanic invaders had destroyed the Roman Empire...

This led to...

- Disruption of trade
- Downfall of cities
- Population shifts
- Decline of learning
- Loss of common language
• ONE Roman institution survived...
The (Roman Catholic) CHURCH!

...More on that later...
Germanic Kingdoms Emerge

Europe
Just before the Reconquest by Justinian and Belisarius
530 A.D.
Between AD 400 – 600, small Germanic kingdoms replaced large Roman provinces.

In Gaul (France), a Germanic people called the Franks held power.
Influential Frankish rulers

• Clovis
  – Converted to Christianity
  – Gained support of the Church in Rome
  – United the Franks into one kingdom
Charles Martel

- Defeated the Muslims at the Battle of Tours (732)
  - (Remember: Islam develops in 622; spreads rapidly, huge Islamic empires emerge)
- He became a Christian hero
- His grandson is **CHARLEMAGNE** (Charles the Great)
Charlemagne’s Empire

- 2/3 of Italy
- All of present day France
- Small part of Spain
- Large parts of modern-day Germany
Charlemagne’s accomplishments

• Spread Christianity through his conquests of other lands
• AD 800 – Pope Leo III asks for Charlemagne’s help to crush an angry mob – SUCCESS!!
• In gratitude, the Pope crowned Charlemagne & called him ‘Roman Emperor’
Why does that matter?

– Christian Pope crowned a German king as the successor to the Roman emperors
– Gave him control over the former Roman Empire
– Revived the idea of a UNITED CHRISTIAN community
– Would eventually lead to future power struggles between the popes and emperors
Charlemagne in Power

- **Government**
  - Appointed nobles to rule over local regions
  - Strong, efficient, & orderly

- **Learning**
  - Revived Latin learning
  - Grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, geometry, music, astronomy
  - Becomes education model for medieval Europe
Charlemagne’s son (Louis the Pious) is heir to the throne; weak ruler

Louis’s sons fight for control of the empire: civil war!

Ends in 843; empire is divided into 3 kingdoms
Charlemagne's Legacy

- Extended Christianity into Northern Europe
- Blended Roman, German, & Christian traditions
- Educational model
- Government style is copied by future leaders
Feudalism & the Manor System
Problems in Western Europe

• The destruction of Charlemagne’s Empire led to widespread destruction & chaos
• Political turmoil, economic decline, enemy invasions, constant warfare
• Invaders attack!
  – Vikings, nomads, Muslims
• Central authority was powerless to protect people from this chaos
Emergence of Feudalism

• Who did the Europeans look to for protection?
  – Landowners (aka LORDS)

• Feudalism = new system of governing & landholding

• A political, economic, & social system based on mutual obligations between lords & vassals
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>OBLIGATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lord</td>
<td>Protection &amp; land for his vassals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knight</td>
<td>Loyalty to his lord &amp; defense of his lord’s land in exchange for a fief (land grant); could be wealthy or poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vassal</td>
<td>Loyalty to his lord (military service, payments &amp; advice) in exchange for a fief; could be wealthy nobles or serfs (peasants)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
King

- Appointed for protection and to handle territory.

Lords

- Appointed to protect both the lord and king.

Knights

- Appointed to work the land.

Serfs

Taxes
Rome fell in AD 476 as a result of invasion by the Germanic tribes.

Central govt. broke down & trade was disrupted.

Cities were abandoned & population centers shifted to rural areas.
Christianity remained a major unifying force throughout most of western Europe. The lack of centralized govt created the need for a new central order. Ties of personal loyalty & family bound people together.
Common needs for economic self-sufficiency & local protection led to a new pattern based on land ownership. The manor becomes the main economic unit. Church leaders helped to integrate community life. The feudal system developed with a king at the top & mutual duties linking local lords, vassals, & peasants.
Social Classes are well defined

- Medieval feudal system classifies people into 3 social groups
  - Those who fight: nobles & knights
  - Those who pray: monks, nuns, leaders of Church
  - Those who work: peasants
- Social class is usually inherited; majority of people are peasants
- Most peasants are serfs – people lawfully bound to place of birth
- Serfs aren’t slaves, but they can’t leave the land without permission
  - what they produce belongs to their lord
Manorialism (The Manor System)
• **Manor:** The Lord’s estate
• **Manorialism:** The economic side of feudalism

• **Manors varied in size. They included:**
  – The Lord’s house
  – Fields & pastures
  – Forests
  – Church
  – Village where peasants live

**Manors are SELF-SUFFICIENT!**
Typical Manor House

Ground Floor
- Linen Storage
- Laundry
- Servant
- Servant
- Servant
- Kitchen
- Larder
- Dining Room
- Sitting Room
- Main Hall
- Library or Study
- Closets

Second Floor
- Bedroom
- Bedroom
- Master Suite Bedroom
- Bedroom
- Bedroom
- Bedroom
- Bedroom
- Bedroom
- Reception Rooms
- Open Air (Above Main Hall)
- Closets or Bedroom

Scale: 0 Feet 20 Feet
The Harshness of Manor Life

- Peasants pay tax to use mill & bakery; pay a tithe to priest
- **Tithe** — church tax — is equal to 1/10\(^{\text{th}}\) of a peasant’s income
- Serfs live in crowded cottages with dirt floors, straw beds
- Daily life consists of raising crops, livestock; feeding & clothing family
- Poor diet, illness, malnutrition make life expectancy 35 years
- Serfs generally accept their lives as part of God’s Plan
Anatomy of a Castle

• Due to the lack of a strong central authority, warfare was VERY common during the Middle Ages
• Why were castles needed?
Anatomy of a Castle

- Medieval castles were designed in response to the weapons they had to withstand.
Anatomy of a Castle

- Common Features:
  - Stone, thick walls, rounded towers, reinforced doors, moat & keep
The World of Nobles

- Warfare was a way of life
- Constant battle for power between nobles
- From boyhood, many nobles were trained to become knights
- Feudal lords raised private armies of knights
- Knights rewarded with land, which provides income
- Other activities help knights train for battle
Knighthood

• Age 7 (PAGE):
  – Sent to the castle of a lord
  – Trained in weaponry, riding, & fighting

• Age 14 (SQUIRE):
  – Became a knight’s servant

• Age 21 (KNIGHT):
  – Full-fledged knighthood
Knighthood

• Knights compete in tournaments: mock battles characterized by fierce competition
  – Gain experience

• Warfare
  – Battles generally fought near castles
  – Used boiling water, crossbows, hot oil, molten lead, etc... to deter advancing enemy soldiers
Chivalry: A code of conduct followed by knights; a set of ideals for behavior

- Required knights to be brave, loyal, & honest
- Fight fairly; treat captured enemies with respect
- Protect & cherish women
Troubadours adopted this view of women

Wrote and performed love songs, poems that praised women

Traveled from village to village, town to town, etc...

Also recited/performed epic poems about hero’s and their adventures
The ‘Damsel in Distress’

Her ‘knight in shining armor’
Noblewomen

• Lady of the Manor:
  - While husband was at war, women supervised vassals & managed the household
  - They could inherit land, defend the castle, or send knights to war on the lord’s request
The Power of the Medieval Church
Role of Religion

• During the Middle Ages, the Catholic Church was the most powerful institution of W. Europe.

• Catholicism was the center of most people’s lives.

• The Church taught that:
  – All people were dependent on God’s grace.
  – To receive God’s grace one had to take part in the sacraments: church rituals.
    • Without God’s grace, can’t go to heaven.
7 Sacraments

- Baptism
- Penance
- Eucharist
- Confirmation
- Holy Orders
- Matrimony (marriage)
- Anointing of the sick
The power of Mass

• Mass = name for Church services

• Mass conducted in Latin
  – Most peasants did not understand it; gave priests lots of power over people
  – Peasants got their religious knowledge from statues, paintings, stained glass windows, etc...
Church Organization

- Church Hierarchy:
  - Pope
  - Archbishop
  - Bishop
  - Priest

- Regular clergy include monks & nuns: live apart from society

SECULAR clergy
Monastic Life

- Men (monks) live in monastery
- Women (nuns) live in convent
- Both...
  - Dress simply
  - Aid the community (i.e. schools & hospitals)
  - Some take vows of silence
  - Live separate from the rest of the world
  - Preserve ancient religious works & ancient writings; copy books by hand
The Power of the Medieval Church
The POWER of the Church

• Medieval Catholic Church was a powerful political force
• Helped to govern Western Europe during the Middle Ages
• Disobedience to the Church could lead to **excommunication**:
  can’t receive the sacraments, therefore can’t go to heaven!
• **Interdict**: king’s land (& all people on it) would be banned from receiving sacraments
Power of the Church

• Church became very wealthy from donations of land & money

• Where was this money & land coming from? Why?
  – NOBLES! Wanted to ‘ensure’ they would get to heaven
  – As a result, nobles began to dominate/control the Church
Church reform

- During this time, monasteries tried to rid the Church of influence from the nobility
- 1059: Pope would no longer be chosen by political leaders
- Pope would now be chosen by religious figures only (cardinals)
The Church as a judge

• The Church was very powerful & had courts where it tried people for crimes against the Church

• **Heresy**: denial of Church teachings; one of the biggest crimes

• **Heretics** (people who committed heresy) were excommunicated
  – What is excommunication?

• Heresy considered as bad as treason
The Inquisition

• A court set up to prosecute heretics in an attempt to outlaw heresy
• People could be accused of heresy by their enemies; then they would be investigated by the Church
• Often, heretics were tortured so they would confess
The Jewish community

• As the Catholic Church grew more powerful, the Jews were blamed for ALL misfortunes
• As a result, they were often attacked & killed
• Anti-Semitism: the hatred of Jews
  – Main source of anti-semitism came from flawed interpretations of Christian doctrine
• Christians blamed Jews for the crucifixion of Jesus
• Forced to live in separate communities called ghettos
Medieval Illuminated Manuscripts

• “An illuminated manuscript is a manuscript in which the text is supplemented by the addition of decoration or illustration, such as decorated initials, borders and miniatures”
My God be with you & bless you, O may you see your children's children, may you be poor in misfortunes & rich in blessings, may you know nothing but happiness from this day forward.

John Godwinson
The Crusades
Background on the Crusades

• During the Age of Faith in the European Middle Ages
• Byzantine emperor asks for help from Christian Western Europe against threatening Muslim Turks
• Popes begin to call for Crusades – holy wars - to gain control of the Holy Land
• Crusaders are promised a place in heaven if they died on a Crusade
• Over 300 years several Crusades are launched; all become weaker & soldiers get greedy
Motives for the Crusades

• Pope wants to reclaim Jerusalem & re-unite Christianity
• Kings use the Crusades as an excuse to send away unruly knights
• Younger sons join Crusades in hopes of earning land or winning glory through fighting
• Merchants join the Crusades to gain wealth through trade
• Pope promises Crusaders who die a place in heaven
The First Crusade

- **Pope Urban II** launches the First Crusade to recover Jerusalem from Muslim rule (1095)
- Armies from Western Europe pass through Constantinople
- They slaughter Jews & Muslims & establish a Christian kingdom
- Crusaders capture Jerusalem in 1099
- 4 ‘Crusader states’ are created from captured land
  - What religion would they be practicing?
The Second Crusade

- Launched after Muslims gain control of a ‘Crusader State’ in 1144
- Christian armies fail to defeat the Muslims
- Saladin leads the Seljuk Turks; conquers Jerusalem in 1187
The Third Crusade

- 3 powerful rulers:
  - Richard the Lionhearted (England)
  - Philip II (France)
  - Frederick I (Germany)
  - Phillip & Richard argue; Richard drops out and takes army home
  - Frederick I drowns during the journey; his army disbands
- Richard I makes peace with Saladin in 1192
- Agreement between Saladin & King Richard gives Jerusalem to Muslims, but allows Western pilgrims access to Christian holy places
Later Crusades...

- Other popes call for later crusades, but each one is weaker than the last.
- By the 13th century, the Western powers pose little problem for the Turks.
- The Crusades weaken Constantinople & the power of the Byzantine Empire.
  - During the 4th Crusade, Christians destroy Constantinople.
- 2 other Crusades strike Egypt but fail to weaken the Muslims.
The Effects of the Crusades

- Crusades demonstrate the power of the Church
- Merchants expand trade, bringing goods to Europe from Asia
- Failure of later Crusades weakens pope & nobles, strengthens the power of kings
- Create a lasting bitterness between Christians & Muslims