



Life in the 'Dark Ages'

UNIT 2: THE MIDDLE AGES

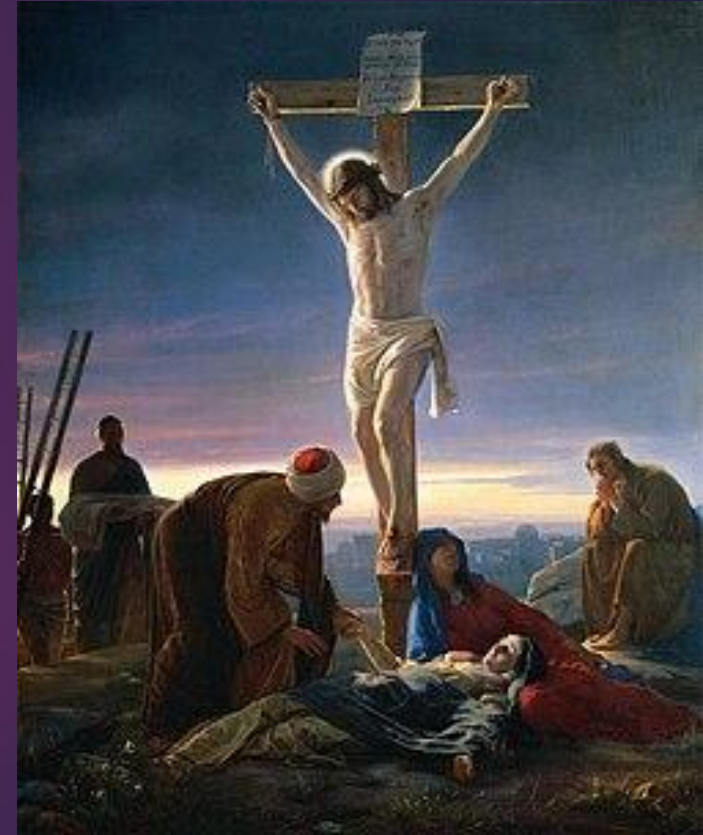
What does 'Dark Ages' mean?

- ▶ The Middle Ages last from the fall of Rome (476 CE) until the 'discovery' of the Americas (1492 CE).
- ▶ The Early Middle Ages (476 CE-1000 CE) is often called the Dark Ages because:
 - ▶ There is very little surviving written records of this time.
 - ▶ This leaves a "dark spot" in history.



Religion in Europe

- ▶ Religion in Europe was dominated by Christianity.
- ▶ Roman Catholicism was the specific Christianity that was most followed.
- ▶ This was led by the Pope in Rome with Bishops spread around Europe.
- ▶ Some important parts of Roman Catholicism are:
 - ▶ Taking Sunday to rest and go to church.
 - ▶ Paying a tithe to the church (10% of your income).
 - ▶ Getting married by the church.



How did people live?

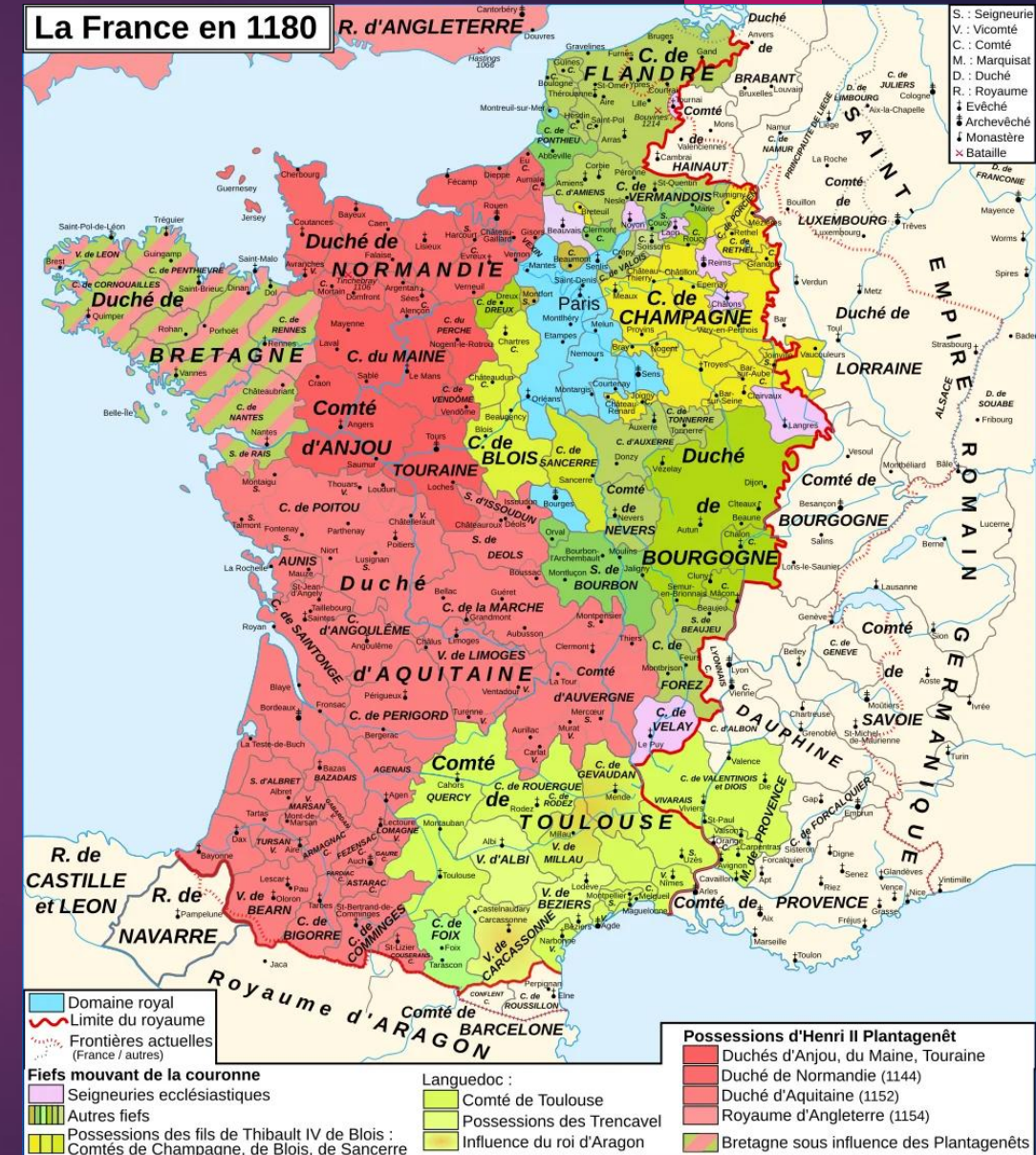
- ▶ With the fall of the Roman Empire, there was a large power vacuum.
- ▶ There was no longer a central authority to send an army out to protect territory when invaders arrived.
- ▶ People had to scramble to find ways to protect themselves.
- ▶ Generally, rallied towards whoever was strongest in their area.
- ▶ This formed many smaller kingdoms.

Europe: 600 AD



Feudalism

- ▶ Feudalism is the system that was largely adopted.
- ▶ It involved power and land ownership being all collected around one person.
- ▶ The person in charge would then dole out land and power to certain trusted people.
- ▶ But who were these people?



Feudalism- The King

- ▶ The king held all the power.
- ▶ This power was given to him directly by God.
- ▶ The king distributed land to the nobility.
- ▶ The nobility had to send some profits from the land to the king and had to answer the call to war.



Feudalism- The Nobles

- ▶ The nobles are given sections of land from the king.
- ▶ The nobles distributed land to their vassals.
- ▶ The vassals had to send some profits from the land to the nobles and had to answer the call to war.



Feudalism- The Vassals/Knights

- ▶ Vassals received land from the nobles.
- ▶ The vassals chose which serfs worked which parts of the land and what they used the land for.
- ▶ The vassals had to send some profits from the land to the nobles and had to answer the call to war.



Feudalism- The Peasants/Serfs

- ▶ The serfs had to work the land for the vassals that allow them to live on their land.
- ▶ Some also had to answer the call to war.
- ▶ The serfs are not paid but get 2 main benefits:
 - ▶ A portion of what they farm,
 - ▶ Protection in the castle if invaders arrive.



- ▶ This was a pyramid scheme.
- ▶ The people on top benefit from the labour of those further down without having to do much work themselves.
- ▶ It was basically impossible to move from your place in the system.
- ▶ At least 90% of people were serfs.

