

Church History



Church History

- *Introduction to Church History*
- *The Ancient Church* AD 1st-3rd centuries
- *The Rise of Christendom* AD 4th-5th centuries
- *The Early Middle Ages* AD 6th-10th centuries
- *The Age of Crusades* AD 11th-13th centuries
- *The Renaissance* AD 14th-15th centuries
- *Conquest and Reformation* AD 16th century
- *The Age of Enlightenment* AD 17th-18th centuries
- *The Age of Revolution* AD 19th century
- *The Modern Age* AD 20th century
- *The Postmodern Age* AD 21st century



Church History

- *Introduction to Church History*
- *The Ancient Church* AD 1st-3rd centuries
- *The Rise of Christendom* AD 4th-5th centuries
- *The Early Middle Ages* AD 6th-10th centuries
 - *The “Dark Ages” Overview*



The Early Middle Ages

- We left off with the Fall of Rome
 - 455 The Vandals sacked the city of Rome
 - They spent two full weeks raping and pillaging to their hearts' content, but Pope Leo convinced them not to completely destroy it



The Early Middle Ages

- We left off with the Fall of Rome
 - 455 The Vandals sacked the city of Rome
 - 475 Romulus Augustus was installed as Emperor
 - (Remember: the capital of the Western Roman Empire was no longer actually the city of Rome, but rather Ravenna, to the north)



The Early Middle Ages

- We left off with the Fall of Rome

455

The Vandals sacked the city of Rome

475

Romulus Augustus was installed as Emperor

476

Romulus Augustus was *deposed* as Emperor

- He was utterly pointless, and he had the support of absolutely nobody but his father, Orestes
- The barbarians were fed up with Roman rule, so they killed Orestes, forced Romulus to step down as emperor, and declared Odoacer the king of a new, independent, Italian *kingdom*
 - Thus began what became known as the “Dark Ages” in Europe



The Early Middle Ages

- Funky little teaching moment—
 - There's a lot of debate about the “Dark Ages”—including whether there ever was a “Dark Ages”
 - The concept of thinking about the next few, post-Roman centuries as “dark” was first developed by a 14th century historian named Francesco Petrarco—more commonly known as “Petrarch”
 - He loved and wrote about classical Rome—which he saw as the most enlightened time period and society that the world had ever known—so he saw the post-Roman era as, by definition, “darkened” without the pure light of Roman culture
 - (Ironically, up *until* Petrarch, the Church had depicted the *Classical*—i.e.; pre-Christian—era as “dark,” since it had been a time dominated by paganism rather than by the Church)



The Early Middle Ages

- **Funky little teaching moment—**
 - There's a lot of debate about the “Dark Ages”—including whether there ever was a “Dark Ages”
 - **The concept of thinking about the next few, post-Roman centuries as “dark” was first developed by a 14th century historian named Francesco Petrarco—more commonly known as “Petrarch”**
 - He loved and wrote about classical Rome—which he saw as the most enlightened time period and society that the world had ever known—so he saw the post-Roman era as, by definition, “darkened” without the pure light of Roman culture
 - **Petrarch spent most of his time writing histories and rescuing pieces of Classical literature from rubbish bins, private libraries, and out-of-the-way monasteries where the Irish monks had hidden them centuries before**
 - In the process of his studies, Petrarch launched a new wave of what has since become known as “humanism”—a philosophy that reacted against the common notion that scholasticism only existed to draw people to God, arguing that learning is a goal in and of itself that elevates humanity



The Early Middle Ages

- **Funky little teaching moment—**
 - There's a lot of debate about the “Dark Ages”—including whether there ever was a “Dark Ages”
 - The concept of thinking about the next few, post-Roman centuries as “dark” was first developed by a 14th century historian named Francesco Petrarco—more commonly known as “Petrarch”
 - **In the 15th century, an historian named Leonardo Bruni used Petrarch's ideas and broke history down into three distinct eras—**
 - 1) *The Classical Ages*
 - The Greek and Roman eras—including both the Roman Republic and the later Empire—leading up to the Fall of Rome



The Early Middle Ages

- **Funky little teaching moment—**
 - There's a lot of debate about the “Dark Ages”—including whether there ever was a “Dark Ages”
 - The concept of thinking about the next few, post-Roman centuries as “dark” was first developed by a 14th century historian named Francesco Petrarco—more commonly known as “Petrarch”
 - **In the 15th century, an historian named Leonardo Bruni used Petrarch's ideas and broke history down into three distinct eras—**
 - 1) The *Classical* Ages
 - 2) The *Dark* Ages
 - Officially coining the term that people often use today to talk about the time after “Rome's holy light went out”



The Early Middle Ages

- **Funky little teaching moment—**
 - There's a lot of debate about the “Dark Ages”—including whether there ever was a “Dark Ages”
 - The concept of thinking about the next few, post-Roman centuries as “dark” was first developed by a 14th century historian named Francesco Petrarco—more commonly known as “Petrarch”
 - **In the 15th century, an historian named Leonardo Bruni used Petrarch's ideas and broke history down into three distinct eras—**
 - 1) The *Classical* Ages
 - 2) The *Dark* Ages
 - 3) The *Modern* Age
 - Or what he referred to as the “*Better* Age” (i.e.; his own, contemporary time period)
 - It was “better” because Europe had rediscovered the Roman classics and started adopting a neo-Roman culture (thus, Bruni is generally considered the first modern *secular humanist* historian, in opposition to all of the *Church* historians who had come before)



The Early Middle Ages

- **Funky little teaching moment—**
 - There's a lot of debate about the “Dark Ages”—including whether there ever was a “Dark Ages”
 - The concept of thinking about the next few, post-Roman centuries as “dark” was first developed by a 14th century historian named Francesco Petrarco—more commonly known as “Petrarch”
 - **In the 15th century, an historian named Leonardo Bruni used Petrarch's ideas and broke history down into three distinct eras—**
 - 1) *The Classical Ages*
 - 2) ***The Dark Ages*** ←
 - 3) *The Modern Age*
- NOTE: the so-called “dark” ages were in the *middle* of two “better” ages, thus leading to another label—the “*Middle Ages*”
 - This is how *we're* going to refer to the time period in this class—it's a more *value-neutral* way of looking at the era, though the label makes less sense unless you know the context of Bruni's breakdown of history



The Early Middle Ages

- **Funky little teaching moment—**
 - There's a lot of debate about the “Dark Ages”—including whether there ever was a “Dark Ages”
 - The concept of thinking about the next few, post-Roman centuries as “dark” was first developed by a 14th century historian named Francesco Petrarco—more commonly known as “Petrarch”
 - In the 15th century, an historian named Leonardo Bruni used Petrarch's ideas and broke history down into three distinct eras—
 - 1) The *Classical Ages*
 - 2) **The Dark Ages**
 - 3) The *Modern Age*
 - NOTE²: the Protestants during the 16th century Reformation played up the concept of the “Dark Ages,” citing what they saw as the “oppressive rule” of the Catholic Church as the *darkest* element of that era



The Early Middle

- **Funky little teaching moment**

- There's a lot of debate about including whether there even was a Middle Ages
- The concept of thinking about Roman centuries as “dark” by a 14th century historian, Petrarcho—more common

the 15th century, an historian used Petrarch's idea to divide history into three distinct eras:

1) *The Classical Ages*

2) ~~*The Dark Ages*~~ **The High Middle Ages**

3) *The Modern Age*

- NOTE³: so the Catholic Church began referring to this time period as the “*High Middle Ages*” (which sounds much nicer)

- Church historians emphasized the majesty, pageantry, beautiful building projects, spectacular holy wars, and—from *their* perspective—relative religious harmony of the Middle Ages



The Early Middle Ages

- Funky little teaching moment²—
 - Having said all that, it's worth looking for a moment at how dark the “Dark Middle Ages” actually were—and *why*
 - First, with the fall of the Western Roman Empire came a dissolution of centralized government—
 - 1) That meant no macro-infrastructure
 - a) That meant no centralized law enforcement
 - With no Roman military in place, who keeps the peace on the local level? And what's their *motivation* for doing so?
 - Ultimately, governance of local areas devolved into “rule of the strongest,” with tribal chiefs, local barons, and petty kings sprouting up, supported by gangs of thugs who realized that *protecting* your stolen goose is easier than running around, stealing golden eggs all the time
 - How would that affect, say, the Church?



The Early Middle Ages

- Funky little teaching moment²—
 - Having said all that, it's worth looking for a moment at how dark the “Dark Middle Ages” actually were—and *why*
 - First, with the fall of the Western Roman Empire came a dissolution of centralized government—
 - 1) That meant no macro-infrastructure
 - a) That meant no centralized law enforcement
 - b) That meant no federal-funded public utilities
 - With no Roman Empire in place, whose job is it to keep, say, the aqueducts working?

Or the highways? Or the sewers?

- More importantly, how would they *pay* for it, and what expert engineers would they find to do it *right*?
- Increasingly, it became local farmers, etc., who did a hodge-podge job of it... and ultimately stopped trying altogether
- How would *this* sort of problem affect the Church?



The Early Middle Ages

- Funky little teaching moment²—
 - Having said all that, it's worth looking for a moment at how dark the “Dark Middle Ages” actually were—and *why*
 - First, with the fall of the Western Roman Empire came a dissolution of centralized government—
 - 1) That meant no macro-infrastructure
 - a) That meant no centralized law enforcement
 - b) That meant no federal-funded public utilities
 - c) That meant no federal-funded services
 - No hospitals, no schools, no libraries, etc.
 - So medicine, education, literacy, etc., all began to dwindle down to what *you* and your community could do on a purely *local* level—your little village would have to pay your own teachers, doctors, librarians, etc., to do *those* things instead of, say, to grow food
 - How would *this* state of affairs affect the Church?



The Early Middle Ages

- Funky little teaching moment²—
 - Having said all that, it's worth looking for a moment at how dark the “Dark Middle Ages” actually were—and *why*
 - First, with the fall of the Western Roman Empire came a dissolution of centralized government—
 - 1) That meant no macro-infrastructure
 - a) That meant no centralized law enforcement
 - b) That meant no federal-funded public utilities
 - c) That meant no federal-funded services
 - No hospitals, no schools, no libraries, etc.
 - So now villages have to be more self-sufficient than ever, using fewer resources
 - Mortonites now have to have their *own* full-service hospital, or else risk the now dangerous journey—see a) above—to Peoria
 - Peoria no longer receives any aid, doctors, etc., from anyone else
 - And does Morton have its own refinery for gas?



The Early Middle Ages

- Funky little teaching moment²—
 - Having said all that, it's worth looking for a moment at how dark the “Dark Middle Ages” actually were—and *why*
 - First, with the fall of the Western Roman Empire came a dissolution of centralized government—
 - 1) That meant no macro-infrastructure
 - a) That meant no centralized law enforcement
 - b) That meant no federal-funded public utilities
 - c) That meant no federal-funded services
 - No hospitals, no schools, no libraries, etc.
 - So now villages have to be more self-sufficient than ever, using fewer resources
 - Now communities simply had to learn to live without the luxuries and services that *previous* generations had perceived as so commonplace and so important
 - And now, one half of all children died by the age of 12...



The Early Middle Ages

- Funky little teaching moment²—
 - Having said all that, it's worth looking for a moment at how dark the “Dark Middle Ages” actually were—and *why*
 - First, with the fall of the Western Roman Empire came a dissolution of centralized government—
 - 1) That meant no macro-infrastructure
 - 2) That meant that civilization *micro-sized*
 - a) Large urban centers and public buildings are hard to maintain without sewers, running water, police forces, etc.
 - So they focused on building smaller villages (smaller central buildings, smaller homes, smaller populations, with really big walls)
 - Everything was focused on—and conceptualized around—purely *local* life
 - *Who* cares what's going on in Athens? How could that affect a little town in Gaul?
 - Imagine no more armies, no more emperors, no more mail service, etc.



The Early Middle Ages

- Funky little teaching moment²—
 - Having said all that, it's worth looking for a moment at how dark the “Dark Middle Ages” actually were—and *why*
 - First, with the fall of the Western Roman Empire came a dissolution of centralized government—
 - 1) That meant no macro-infrastructure
 - 2) That meant that civilization *micro-sized*
 - a) Large urban centers and public buildings are hard to maintain without sewers, running water, police forces, etc.
 - So they focused on building smaller villages (smaller central buildings, smaller homes, smaller populations, with really big walls)
 - How would all of that affect your everyday life (pretend that Y2K had been as disastrous as the *worst* predictions predicted)?
 - How would all of that affect the Church at large?



The Early Middle Ages

- Funky little teaching moment²—
 - Having said all that, it's worth looking for a moment at how dark the “Dark Middle Ages” actually were—and *why*
 - First, with the fall of the Western Roman Empire came a dissolution of centralized government
 - Add to all of that two huge *natural* factors—
 - 1) Around 600 AD, Europe experienced a significant drop in temperatures that lasted for roughly three centuries—a “mini Ice Age”
 - Before then, for instance, the best wines had come *not* from France or Italy, but from *England* and northern Europe, where the vineyards had grown the best
 - For many small farms and communities, simply *surviving* became a difficult task
 - How would *this* affect Christianity?



The Early Middle Ages

- Funky little teaching moment²—
 - Having said all that, it's worth looking for a moment at how dark the “Dark Middle Ages” actually were—and *why*
 - First, with the fall of the Western Roman Empire came a dissolution of centralized government
 - Add to all of that two huge *natural* factors—
 - 1) Around 600 AD, Europe experienced a significant drop in temperatures
 - 2) Around 540 AD, Europe and Asia Minor were struck with a devastating plague



- At least 40% of the population of Constantinople died from the plague—even the *Emperor Justinian* contracted it
- Upwards of 25-50 million people died throughout Europe in just a little over a year, leaving the continent pretty much devastated—especially the urban centers
 - Whole cities filled with dead bodies were summarily abandoned, and soon became overrun by packs of wild animals



The Early Middle Ages

- Funky little teaching moment²—
 - Having said all that, it's worth looking for a moment at how dark the “Dark Middle Ages” actually were—and *why*
 - First, with the fall of the Western Roman Empire came a dissolution of centralized government
 - Add to all of that two huge *natural* factors—
 - 1) Around 600 AD, Europe experienced a significant drop in temperatures
 - 2) Around 540 AD, Europe and Asia Minor were struck with a devastating plague



- It's not hard to see why—given reduced education, decimated populations, encroaching forests filled with roving bandits, ruins filled with corpses and ravenous beasts, and the everyday struggle to simply survive—“Dark Age” Europe increasingly became the source of stories that reflected a fear of going into the dark woods, and the myriad dangers that lay in wait for the foolish traveller who wandered too far from the relative safety of home...
- How would *that* affect the Church?

