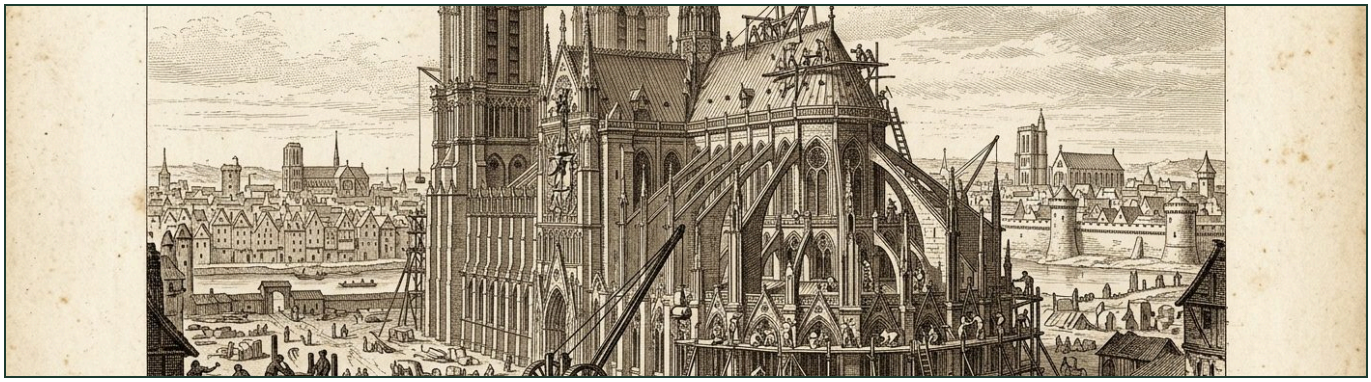


500 – 1500

Middle Ages Timeline

The Middle Ages lasted roughly a thousand years after the fall of Rome, shaped by feudalism, the Catholic Church, crusades, and plagues — ending on the eve of the Renaissance.

~500 — **The Early Middle Ages Begin**

After the fall of the Western Roman Empire, Europe fragments into small Germanic kingdoms and the Catholic Church becomes the main unifying force.

> **Why it mattered:** *The Church preserved learning, administered justice, and gave people a shared identity — without it, the chaos after Rome might have lasted far longer.*

800 — **Charlemagne Crowned Emperor**

Pope Leo III crowns the Frankish king Charlemagne as Emperor of the Romans on Christmas Day.

> **Why it mattered:** *Charlemagne briefly reunited much of Western Europe, promoted education and Christianity, and created a model of Christian kingship that influenced rulers for centuries.*

1066 — **Norman Conquest of England**

William the Conqueror defeats King Harold at the Battle of Hastings and takes the English throne.

> **Why it mattered:** *The Norman Conquest transformed England — bringing French language, feudal institutions, and a new ruling class that permanently reshaped English culture, government, and law.*

1095 — **The First Crusade**

Pope Urban II calls on Christian knights to take back Jerusalem from Muslim rulers; thousands respond and capture the city in 1099.

> **Why it mattered:** *The Crusades opened Europe to trade and new ideas from the Islamic world, but also triggered centuries of religious conflict and left deep wounds that lasted far beyond the Middle Ages.*

Middle Ages Timeline *continued*

1215 — **Magna Carta**

English barons force King John to sign the Magna Carta, limiting royal power and guaranteeing certain legal rights.

> **Why it mattered:** *The Magna Carta was a landmark step toward the rule of law — the idea that even a king must obey the law — and directly influenced the US Constitution and Bill of Rights.*

1347–51 — **The Black Death**

A devastating plague sweeps across Europe, killing an estimated one-third to one-half of the entire population.

> **Why it mattered:** *The Black Death was one of history's greatest catastrophes — it killed tens of millions, shattered the social order, weakened the Church's authority, and accelerated the end of the feudal system.*

1337–1453 — **Hundred Years' War**

England and France fight a series of wars over the French throne; French heroine Joan of Arc plays a decisive role before being burned at the stake.

> **Why it mattered:** *The war forged a sense of national identity in both England and France, and the use of longbows and early cannons began to transform medieval warfare.*

~1450s — **Gutenberg's Printing Press**

Johannes Gutenberg develops movable-type printing in Germany; his Gutenberg Bible, printed around 1455, is the first major book produced with the new press.

> **Why it mattered:** *The printing press was one of the most transformative inventions in history — it spread ideas, enabled the Reformation, and eventually helped launch the Scientific Revolution.*

1453 — **Fall of Constantinople**

Ottoman Turks capture Constantinople, ending the thousand-year Eastern Roman Empire.

> **Why it mattered:** *The fall drove many Greek scholars and their manuscripts west to Italy — helping trigger the Renaissance — and established the Ottoman Empire as the dominant power in the eastern Mediterranean.*

1492 — **End of the Middle Ages**

Columbus reaches the Americas and Spain completes the Reconquista, expelling the last Muslim rulers from the Iberian Peninsula.

> **Why it mattered:** *These events mark the conventional end of the Middle Ages and the dawn of a new era — European exploration, the Renaissance, and the modern world.*