



AGE OF FAITH

History of the Middle Ages



my homeschool

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INTRODUCTION

Understanding history can be a lifelong endeavour. There is so much to learn and a multitude of tales to tell. Your worldview colours your perception and interpretation of events. And differing opinions and controversy often make it hard when examining the motives behind events. History, in other words, can be unreliable when only seen from the perspective of one author. But we all need to start somewhere!

You may have already studied the Middle Ages, or this may be the first time, but you will soon come to realise there is a tapestry of stories that could be told. This collection only tells you some of them, but they are the ones that will help you grasp in your mind's eye this exciting and spiritual era in world history. Woven into this collection, you'll read about specific people, new religions and cultures, and changing geographical boundaries. Each story is a separate thread that cross stitches and weaves its way through the big picture of the Middle Ages.

Various names are given to this epoch in history such as the Dark Ages, Medieval Era or the Middle Ages. It is the period in European history from the collapse of Roman civilisation in the 5th century up to the Renaissance which was in full swing by the 15th Century. It is also referred to as the Age of Faith and that is an apt description.

During this period, we see the Byzantine and Holy Roman Empire rise from a crumbling Roman Empire. Christianity spreads across Europe. The Muslims establish themselves and their new religion, Islam, is a force to be reckoned with. New countries and kingdoms are founded. It is time of great change around the world.

A variety of living books have been used to make this resource. Most of these books were written in the early nineteenth century and the authors do not try to remove the impact of Christianity in this era of expanding faith – for such an undertaking would misrepresent the essence of much of the Middle Ages mindset. However, this is only history from one perspective. There are other resources and books that can help you strengthen your understanding.

These lessons give you the basics, but you are encouraged to dig deeper and read wider. We have included *Readings for Further Study* and we have also given you some links to explore in our online supplements which include maps, videos, artwork and music. Your parents also have a guide that will give them a summary of what you are learning and some discussion ideas to consider on this topic.

I hope you enjoy this resource.

Happy Homeschooling!

Michelle Morrow

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

FOR THE STUDENT

THERE ARE TWENTY-FOUR lesson readings with three assigned each week. After reading through a lesson you will either make an entry in your notebook of what you have learnt or do an oral narration with your parents where you tell them what you have learnt and discuss some of the discussion ideas provided in their guide. Try to make one lesson an oral narration, where you tell someone what you have learnt by the reading and one a written narration when you write out what you remember in a notebook.

NOTEBOOK

Your notebooking entry can include a retelling of what you have read (a narration) and additional information you have sourced from our online supplements and your own research. You will find that the addition of maps to your notebook will also aid your understanding. Add your own pictures and illustrations as desired. You may find it helpful to underline key phrases to help you remember important facts.

THE BOOK OF CENTURIES

At the end of each lesson dates are given to add to your Book of Centuries or Century Chart¹. You can make a Book of Centuries, download a free one or buy one. Instructions for making your own can be found in the Before You Start section of the My Homeschool Year 8 course.

END OF TERM EXAMS

At the end of term, you have an opportunity to share what you remember from your Middle Ages studies. This is not a test of what you don't know but rather a way to share what you do know. It is also a chance to demonstrate some of the new writing techniques you will have learnt. The examination questions are in the parent guide.

ONLINE SUPPLEMENT

For further exploration of the Middle Ages we have provided two online resources that can be used for additional study.

- **Age of Faith Complementary Links Moodle Book**

During this period of history European borders are in a state of transition from control by various kings and invaders, towards a national identity. Whilst the general landscape of Europe does not change, the cultural landscape does. This collection of maps and family trees will help you understand the geography and dynasties of the Middle Ages.

We also have a collection of videos and interesting articles.

- **Middle Ages Picture Study Moodle Book**

There are many famous paintings and some musical works that represent this time period. Explore these as desired.

¹ Instructions for using and making a Book of Centuries or a Century Chart can be found in the Virtual Cupboard of your Year 8 My Homeschool course.

I. EAST AND WEST DIVIDE

In THE FIRST CENTURY after Jesus's death², the one great power of the world was Rome. All southern Europe bowed beneath the conquering sword of the Romans. Judea, the land of the Jews was crumpled by their power. Africa and Asia, too, were under its influence. Many lands lost their cultural identity and became mere Roman provinces. For the Mediterranean, the great trade route of the then known world, was theirs, and the countries bordering upon it became mere provinces of Rome. Even the uttermost islands felt their might, and sailing beyond the "narrow seas," Caesar set his hand upon the island of Britain. From the Rhine and the Danube in the north, to the desert of Sahara in the south, from the borders of Wales in the west, to the Euphrates and the Tigris in the east, the empire stretched.

The Romans called themselves lords of the world. And so it seemed they were. All the trade and skill, all the art and learning of the known world, were theirs. Beyond the borders of the Roman Empire the world was given over to wild barbarians, who were skilled neither in the arts of war nor of peace. That the civilisation of Rome should go down before their ignorance seemed impossible.

Of this wide empire Rome was the capital. Secure upon her seven hills she sat, mistress of the world, a city without rival, until in 330AD emperor Constantine the Great resolved to build a new Rome upon the shores of the Bosphorus. Constantine called his new city New Rome. But men did not take readily to the name, and the capital upon the Bosphorus became known as Constantinople³, or the city of Constantine.

When the Emperor Theodosius died, about sixty years after the founding of Constantinople, he left two sons, both mere boys. They divided the empire between them, Arcadius, the elder, taking Constantinople for his capital, ruled over the Eastern Empire, and Honourius, a child of eleven, became ruler of the Western Empire, with Rome as his capital. The Roman Empire was now divided into two – the Western Roman Empire and the Eastern Roman Empire which eventually became known as the Byzantine Empire.

Early Christians had to endure under the Roman rule;—of how they were looked upon with scorn and suspicion; how they were persecuted; how they were forced to meet in secret caves called catacombs, where they worshiped, and buried their dead; but after many martyrs had shed their blood in witness to their faith, the Emperor Constantine allowed them to worship freely, and even himself became a Christian. After this, Christianity spread rapidly in the Roman Empire; so that by the time barbarian tribes began to pour across the borders, almost all of the people who were ruled by the Emperor had adopted the Christian religion.

When Christianity had become the religion of many people, it was necessary for the Church to have some form of organisation; and such an organisation speedily began to grow. First, we find some of the Christians set aside to act as priests and have charge of the services in the church. We find next among the priests in each city one who comes to be styled the "overseeing priest" or bishop, whose duty it was to look after the affairs of the churches in his district. Gradually, too, the bishops in the more important cities come to have certain powers over the bishops of the smaller cities about them; these were then called "archbishops." And finally, there came to be one out of the many hundred bishops of the Church who was looked up to more than any other person, and whose advice was sought in all important Church

² The terms anno Domini (AD) and before Christ (BC) are used to label or number years in the Julian and Gregorian calendars. The term anno Domini is Medieval Latin and means "in the year of the Lord", and is taken from the full original phrase "anno Domini nostri Jesu Christi", which translates to "in the year of our Lord Jesus Christ".

³ Modern day Istanbul in Turkey.

questions. This was because he had charge of the church in Rome, the most important city of the Empire, and because he was believed to be the successor of St. Peter, the chief of the Apostles. The name "Pope," which means father, was given to him; and it was his duty to watch over all the affairs of the Church on earth, as a father watches over the affairs of his family.

Of course, all this organisation did not spring up at once, ready-made. Great things grow slowly; and so it was only slowly that this organisation grew. Sometimes disputes arose as to the amount of power the priests should have over the "laymen," as those who were priests were called; and sometimes there were disputes among the "clergy" or churchmen, themselves. Sometimes these disputes were about power, and lands, and things of that sort; for now the Church had become wealthy and powerful, through gifts made to it by rulers and pious laymen. More often the questions to be settled had to do with the belief of the Church,—that is, with the exact meaning of the teachings of Christ and the Apostles, as they are recorded in the Bible and in the writings of the early Christian teachers. Many of the questions which were discussed seem strange to us; but men were very much in earnest about them then. And at times, when a hard question arose concerning the belief of the Church, men would travel hundreds of miles to the great Church Councils or meetings where the matter was to be decided, and undergo hardships and sufferings without number, to see that the question was decided as they thought was right.

One of the questions which caused most trouble was brought forward by an Egyptian priest named Arius. He claimed that Christ the Son was not equal in power and glory to God the Father. Another Egyptian priest named Athanasius thought this was a wrong belief, or "heresy"; so he combated the belief of Arius in every way that he could. Soon the whole Christian world rang with the controversy. To settle the dispute the first great Council of the Church was called by the Emperor Constantine in the year 325AD. It met at Nicaea, a city in Asia Minor. There "Arianism" was condemned, and the teaching of Athanasius was declared to be the true belief of the Church.

At this assembly of more than three hundred bishops, the Creed of Nicaea was written as a Christian statement of faith and beliefs. All but two bishops signed this statement of faith. Today, the Nicene Creed is accepted as authoritative by the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, and major Protestant churches. It is based on the Creed of Nicaea.

THE NICENE CREED

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
Maker of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

DIVISION IN THE CHURCH INTO EAST AND WEST

But this did not end the struggle. The followers of Arius would not give up, and for a while they were stronger than their opponents. Five times Athanasius was driven from his position of archbishop in Egypt, and for twenty years he was forced to live in exile from his native land. But he never faltered, and never ceased to write, preach, and argue for the belief which the Council had declared to be the true one. Even after Arius and Athanasius were both dead, the quarrel still went on. Indeed, it was nearly two hundred years before the last of the "Arians" gave up their view of the matter; but in the end the teachings of Athanasius became the belief of the whole Church.

One consequence of this dispute about Arianism was that the churches in the East and West began to drift apart. The Western churches followed the lead of the bishop of Rome and supported Athanasius in the struggle, while the Eastern churches for a time supported Arius. Even after Arianism had been given up, a quarrel still existed concerning the relation of the Holy Ghost to the Father and Son. As time went on, still other disputes arose between the East and West. The Roman clergy shaved their faces and were not permitted to marry, while the Greek clergy let their beards grow, and married and had children.

Moreover, Rome and Constantinople could not agree as to whether leavened or unleavened bread should be used in the Lord's Supper. Still less could the great bishop of Constantinople, where the Emperor held his court, admit that the power of the bishop of Rome was above his own. Each side looked with contempt and distrust upon the other; for the one were Greeks and the other Latins, and the differences of race and language made it difficult for them to understand one another.

Gradually the breach grew wider and wider. At last, after many, many years of ill feeling, the two churches broke off all relations, this event is referred to as The **East-West Schism**. After that there was always a Greek Catholic Church (which is called Orthodox today) as well as a Roman one; and the power of the Pope was acknowledged only by the churches in the Western or Latin half of the world.

DATES

- **325** **The Council of Nicaea**
- **330** **Constantine dedicates Constantinople as New Rome.**
- **395** **Roman Empire divided into East and West**
- **1054** **Church divided into East and West (The East-West Schism)**

FURTHER STUDY

Write up what you have learnt in your notebook and add dates to your Book of Centuries.

Look up the following complementary links for further study.

- **Age of Faith Complementary Links Moodle Book – Lesson 1**
- **Middle Ages Picture Study Moodle Book – Lesson 1**

II. JEROME & THE LATIN BIBLE

Jerome was born in the year 340. He went to school, and had for teacher old Donatus, whose Latin grammar was studied by all the schoolboys of Europe from that time forward for twelve hundred years. Jerome was an uncommonly good scholar and his chief delight was to sit down with a book. All his life long, in cities and in deserts, and on journeys, he carried a book with him.

The accounts which he heard of the monks in the East fascinated him so he went into the East, and entered that life of religious adventure. He became a monk. He found a desert in Syria, near Antioch, where monks were living, and settled down among them.

They used to tell the story of a lion which came one day to Jerome, holding out his paw with a thorn in it, and Jerome took out the thorn, and the lion became his devoted friend. Jerome himself, however, had much more to say about the devil. He said that the devil spoiled all the peace and happiness of his life. He had gone into the desert to get away from the sin of the world, but the temptations to sin followed him. The devil put evil thoughts into his heart.

Once he dreamed that God was angry with him for being so fond of Cicero⁴; in his dream, he was in the other world, and the angels beat him with sticks as his teachers used to do in school; his shoulders in the morning were black and blue. For a good while, he read the Bible instead of Cicero.

But he felt that God was angry with him for much more serious offenses than this. Day by day, he found himself thinking evil thoughts; and day by day, his temper, which had never been very good, grew worse. In trying to live without eating, he injured his health. In short, he met with the difficulties and suffered the pains which come naturally when people treat their bodies badly, and attempt to change the nature with which they were made.

Then he came to Rome, still believing in the kind of life in which he had been so unsuccessful. He devoted himself to teaching it. He became acquainted with Marcella. She was now a woman of forty, and lived in a splendid palace on the Aventine Hill. Jerome had classes in her house. All the girls in Roman society who desired to do better than to live the life of the world attended them. Jerome told them what a wicked world it was, and earnestly advised them not to get married. All the young men in Rome hated him.

The meetings in Marcella's house affected the social life of Rome. Good women came and brought their friends. The pleasures of society were neglected for these new studies. Nobody went, as yet, into the wilderness to pray, but many prayed and fasted and did their best to live like the monks, at home. Lea founded a convent of holy women. Melania went on a pilgrimage to the holy places in Palestine. Fabiola established a hospital.

The nearest friends of Jerome were the Lady Paula, and her daughters. They belonged, like the other members of this devout company, to the ancient aristocracy of Rome. They had social position, and wealth, and all the honours and luxuries of life. They gave them up to live in the new way. They spent their money in good works, and went about in poor clothes, and fasted.

One of the daughters died. She had been so fond of gaiety, and had so delighted in the pleasant life which, under Jerome's teaching she had given up, the people said she had been killed by the change. They laid the blame on Jerome. At her funeral there was a great

⁴ A Roman writer

indignation, and some proposed to stone the monk or throw him into the Tiber. Finally, when the feeling against Jerome so increased that he was in peril of his life, he left Rome and spent the rest of his days in Bethlehem. Paula and another daughter, Eustochium, went with him. There they built two monasteries, one for themselves and such other women as might join them; the other for Jerome.

JEROME TRANSLATES THE BIBLE INTO LATIN

The remainder of the life of Jerome was spent in those studies in which he had delighted from his youth. In the quiet of his monastic house, apart from the distractions of the world, he set about a task to which we are all in debt today. He translated the Bible into Latin.

After Jesus died there were documented accounts of the events of his life and teaching, and their letters from his apostles. All of these were collected, copied and circulated around the early churches. However, not all of these writings were considered to be apostolic in origin (accounts from the apostles) and inspired. Different bishops had different lists of books, some books were considered by most to have spiritual authority but there was no official list. In 367 Athanasius, an influential bishop wrote a widely circulated Easter letter which named the twenty-seven books which we now call the New Testament. He cautioned his followers to only use these books as Christian scripture. This list was confirmed in Rome by Pope Damasus in 382, after he took advice from Jerome. In 397 this list was confirmed at the Council of Carthage and it has become the Canon of the New Testament.

The Bible was the first book in the world to be translated from one language to another. It was brought over from Hebrew into Greek. That was done in Alexandria about two hundred years before the Christian era. The story was that seventy learned Jews, in seventy separate cells, turned the Hebrew into Greek in seventy days, and thus produced seventy Bibles which were all alike, even,—as the phrase is,—to the dotting of the i's and the crossing of the t's.

But Greek had ceased to hold its old place as the language of the great world. St. Paul, indeed, had written a Greek letter to the Romans, and for many years all Christian services in Rome had been in Greek. But two other languages had now appeared.

One was the language of the Goths, spoken in various dialects, by that vast multitude of barbarians who every year were drawing nearer to the Roman empire, until, at last, in Jerome's day, they captured Rome itself. This Teutonic language is one of interest to us because it was the parent of our English speech. Into this tongue an Arian bishop, Ulfilas, had already translated a great part of the Bible. It was the first book in all that mighty literature which is now German and English.

The other language was Latin. In Jerome's time, Greek was the language of the past and Gothic was the language of the future, but Latin was the language of the present. Into Latin, then, he translated the Bible. He studied Greek, he studied Hebrew. A friendly rabbi came over from Tiberias by night to teach him. The work occupied him fifteen years. He dedicated it to his faithful friends, Paula and Eustochium.

From that day to this, the Latin Bible of Jerome has been the authorised version of the Latin Church. The Vulgate, as it is called, is used in the West, as the Greek Bible, the Septuagint, is used in the East. When the Bible was at last translated into English, the translators knew Jerome's Bible by heart. They brought over into our book the splendid cadence of its sentences. Of course, English as we have it now is a combination of those two languages which in Jerome's time were of the present and the future. It is part Gothic and part Latin. But the words of Latin derivation in our English Bible correspond to the Latin words which Jerome chose. They were written over into our Bible out of his.

DATES

- **367** **Athanasius recognises the New Testament Canon**
- **405** **Jerome completes the Vulgate – Latin Bible**

FURTHER STUDY

Write up what you have learnt in your notebook and add dates to your Book of Centuries. Look up the following links for further study.

- **Age of Faith Complementary Links Moodle Book**
- **Middle Ages Picture Study Moodle Book**

Note: There is more to this story if you would like to read: The 100 Most Important Events in Christian History . p.45 - Jerome Completes the Vulgate.