



Summary

Throughout the Middle Ages, Western Europe was officially Catholic and almost everyone believed in God. People used religion to explain things they could not understand, like bad harvests or illnesses. They believed heaven and hell were real places, and how you behaved everyday affected what would happen to you after you died. As a result, the Church had a lot of power over people. However, at the same time, the monarch believed they should have the most power over their country. Because of this desire for power, there were sometimes tensions between the Church and government over who had the most power.

Key Figures

Henry II	became King of England in 1154 and wanted more control over the Church, so appointed his friend Thomas Becket as the Archbishop of Canterbury. The father of Richard the Lionheart and King John.
Thomas Becket	was the Archbishop of Canterbury, murdered in 1170 by four knights hoping to please Henry II.
King John	agreed to sign the Magna Carta in 1215, a list of demands drawn up by his barons, promising to change the way he ruled England.
Edward I	ensured Wales was officially under English rule by 1274, after building an Iron Ring of castles and defeating the Welsh Prince Llewelyn.



Key Vocabulary

The Church	The collective name for Christians across England and the world
Pope	The head (in charge) of the Catholic Church. Lives in Rome
Crusade	A series of holy wars to spread Christianity and take back Holy Land from Muslims
Magna Carta	A document (charter) that King John was forced to sign by his barons in 1215 setting out people's rights
Excommunicate	To expel someone from the Christian Church. It meant you were doomed to an afterlife in Hell
Monk	A man who lives under religious vows in a monastery.
Monastery	A building where a community of monks live.
Pilgrimage	A journey to a holy place for religious reasons
Purgatory	A place where those who have sinned must wait before God allows them into heaven

Other Resources

Watch this video about the Crusades <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X0zudTQelzI>

Challenge

Throughout the Middle Ages, there was a constant struggle between the monarch and the Church for power. In your opinion, who was more powerful: The Church or government? Why?

