

How important was the Church in medieval England?

Key dates:

1095	The beginning of the First Crusade. Pope Urban II encouraged Christians to travel to Anatolia
1291	The end of the Crusades.
Early 1300s	The beginning of the Renaissance. This period saw people beginning to question religious beliefs.
1382	John Wycliffe translated the Bible into English.
1450s	Due to new printing methods, the Bible became more widely available.

Key terms:

Pilgrimage	A long journey, usually to an important religious site.
Doom painting	A large painting in a medieval church, usually showing scenes from Heaven, Hell and the afterlife.
Crusade	Expedition made to 'take back' the Holy Lands from Muslims.
Relic	An object thought to have religious importance, like a cross once owned by a saint.
Purgatory	The place where a sinner goes before his or her soul is allowed to enter Heaven.
Mass	A religious ceremony or service.
Superstition	A belief based on magic or the unknown, like good or bad luck.
Afterlife	The place where your soul goes after you die.
Renaissance	A period of History known for its questioning of old beliefs and ideas.

Evidence that the Church was central to people's lives:

Medieval people went on pilgrimages, visiting holy sites in the hope of curing illnesses and gaining entry to Heaven after they died.

People went on Crusade, fighting to claim back the 'Holy Lands' from the Muslims.

Doom paintings showed scenes from the afterlife, and encouraged medieval people to behave properly so they could enter Heaven.

Evidence that the Church was NOT central to people's lives:

Some people went on pilgrimages for non-religious reasons. Sometimes they hoped to make money, and sometimes they just wanted adventure.

The Crusaders could steal and loot from the Holy Lands. Some Crusaders acted violently towards the people in the Holy Lands.

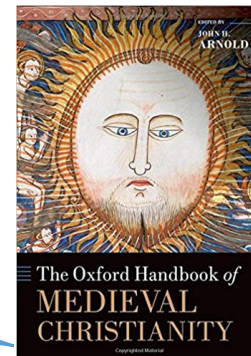
Not everyone held a strong Christian faith. With new Renaissance ideas, some began to question traditional Church teachings.

'Medieval people were united by their religious beliefs. Nearly everyone in Europe during the Middle Ages was a Roman Catholic. People's beliefs helped them to accept their situation in this life because they could look forward to a better life after they died.'

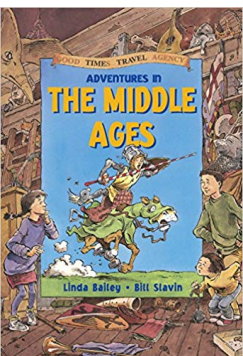
Linda Bailey and Bill Slavin, *Adventures in the Middle Ages* (2000).

'The idea of the Middle Ages as an 'Age of Faith' is a myth. No Christian belief - purgatory, heaven and hell, the authority of the pope - was left unquestioned.'

Dorothea Weltecke, from a chapter in *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Christianity* (2014).



The Oxford Handbook of
**MEDIEVAL
CHRISTIANITY**



Linda Bailey - Bill Slavin