

YEAR 7 History: Religion and Power in Medieval England in Medieval England

SECTION 1 – KEYWORDS

Henry II (r. 1154-1189)	King of England from 1184 until his death in 1189. He believed the Church had too much power, so challenged this. Responsible for the death of Becket.
King John	The 2 nd son of Henry II. John was very unpopular. In 1215, John was made to sign the Magna Carta by his barons – which limited his power.
Henry III	The son of King John. He tried to break the terms of the Magna Carta, which led to a rebellion. He was forced to agree to the setting up of a Parliament.
Thomas Becket	Became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1162. Before this, was good friends with Henry II, however the two men clashed over their different ideas about the role of the Church. He was murdered in 1170.
Simon de Monfort	Known as 'The Father of Parliament'. One of the leading barons in England. Captured Henry III at the Battle of Lewes and called Parliament in 1265
The Church	Means all of Christianity in England, not just one building. This means the Catholic Church in Rome in the Medieval Period.
Doom Painting	A painting in a church designed to show people images of heaven and hell
Tithe	The tenth of the food peasants grew that had to be given to the Church
Excommunicate	The Pope officially excludes (someone) from participation in the sacraments and services of the Christian Church.
Flagellation	The act of whipping oneself to say sorry to God
Magna Carta	A document signed by King John which sets out in law the power of the English king
Parliament	An elected group who a monarch consults in the running of the country.
Martyr	Someone who dies standing up for their religion. They're celebrated by their religion.
Chancellor	The most important person in England after the king. It involved sending out royal letters and charters.

SECTION 2 - THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH

Churches were important as meeting places – most people went to Church at least once a week. They were the heart of the village and used for many purposes. The village priest was very important, acting as an adviser and a local leader. At church services he would tell people what they needed to do in order to get to heaven and avoid Hell. There were also Doom Paintings to remind people of this. Ideas about Heaven/Hell were very important to people. People lived their lives following the Church's rules so they'd go to Heaven when they died. The villages had to pay a tithe to the church which could be difficult during times of poor harvest. Hospitals were run by priests and not doctors – people used prayer to cure illnesses not medicine. This included the Black Death, where people whipped themselves to say sorry to God in the hope of avoiding the disease.

SECTION 3– Henry II challenged the power of the Church

Henry II tried to limit the power of the Church by passing the Constitutions of Clarendon. Archbishop Thomas Becket was very unhappy about this, leading to the two men clashing and falling out. Due to this, Henry II supposedly organised Becket to be killed when he ushered the famous words 'Is there no one who will rid me of this troublesome priest?' This prompted 4 knights to ride to Canterbury Cathedral where Becket was brutally murdered. Henry was punished by the Church for this. He had to give up the Constitutions of Clarendon and was whipped by monks. Becket was later canonized and became a saint.



Medieval Doom Painting Chaldon Church



SECTION 4 - TIMELINE: the main events 1016-1914

Date	Main Events
1164	Henry II brings in the Constitution of Clarendon . These were a set of rules/procedures that attempted to restrict church privileges and curb the power of the Church courts and papal authority in England.
1170	The murder of Thomas Becket in Canterbury Cathedral
1173	Becket was made a Saint by the Pope. Soon the journey to Becket's tomb was one of the most popular pilgrimages in Europe
1199	John becomes King of England. He was the 2 nd son of Henry II and younger brother of King Richard.
1215	The signing of the Magna Carta . This famous document was signed at Runnymede, near Windsor after 4 days of discussions between King John and his barons.
1216	King John dies and his son Henry takes the throne. He was only 9 years of age and as a boy regularly met with the Great Council and took advice.
1258	Henry III tries to break the terms of the Magna Carta.
1258	The Provisions of Oxford are signed. This document gave the barons a lot more power and stated that the king could not make decisions without the Great Council's agreement. King Henry was unhappy because it took away a lot of his power.
1264	A baron's army lead by Simon de Montfort fought against the King at The Battle of Lewes in Sussex. King Henry lost and was taken prisoner
1265	The first Parliament is called by Simon de Montfort. This not only included the important bishops and barons. He also included two ordinary people from each large town and two knights from each county.
1272	The death of Henry III

SECTION 5 – KING JOHN AND MAGNA CARTA

King John was very unpopular in England. When his older brother, King Richard, died, he had very little money left because Richard had spent so much of it fighting abroad in the Crusades. He charged high taxes to raise money and offended his barons. He also tried to interfere in religious matters. John was excommunicated by the Pope which stopped all religious services in England for 7 years. In 1215 his barons decided they had had enough and marched an army towards London. They gave John a choice – change the way he was running the country or fight. They made him sign the Magna Carta (The Great Charter) setting out the rights that they had. Over time this document became very significant and introduced the idea that there a certain laws and rules that even a king must accept. Many see this as the first step towards Britain becoming a Democracy.



This cartoon shows the barons clipping the wings of a tyrannical king. They established principles that still influence British justice today.

Tyrannical = using your power in a cruel and unfair way

SECTION 6 – HENRY III, SIMON DE MONFORT AND PARLIAMENT

John's son; Henry III, also had arguments with his baron's. Henry tried to raise taxes to fight in the Pope's Holy Wars, often without asking his barons. One of his barons, Simon de Montfort, forced Henry to sign the Provisions of Oxford. When Henry broke the Provisions of Oxford, de Montfort led a rebellion against the king. Henry was captured and Simon de Montfort called England's first parliament consisting of 2 commoners from each region. This became known as the House of Commons