

Did bad king john desrve his reputation essay



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In this assessment, I will talk about whether King John was really as bad as people say he was by looking carefully at different sources and evidence. To many, John was cruel, greedy and ultimately a failure as King. John's reputation as England's worst monarch is partly due to hostile chroniclers, but also to an unfortunate reign. In the beginning of his reign (1202) John's nephew died and everyone thought John was to blame and so they rebelled. In the early 13th century, a group of monks said that when John died, no-one mourned his passing.

A TV show called Most Evil compares John to Adolf Hitler, a mass-murderer who committed genocide, and Dracula, a semi-fictional character, as one of the most evil men who ever lived. The Disney film called Robin Hood portrays John as a greedy, self-centered king who will do anything to get his own way, and he is often shown counting his money. They also make out that everyone in England hates him. However, this film was based on legend which isn't really a reliable source of evidence.

People might think this opinion is true because John did many bad things in his reign, such as raising taxes and supposedly killing his nephew. The monks didn't like him because he annoyed the Pope, so they wrote exaggerated things about him that people believe today. Most Evil and the film Robin Hood were probably also exaggerated as they were meant for entertainment. Because of this, more people who have watched the Robin Hood TV series and the Robin Hood Disney film now believe that John really was bad. John also fell out with the pope in 1207.

They quarrelled about who should become the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Pope excommunicated John and put England under a Church law that stated that no christening or marriage would be legal until the time the pope said that they would be. Church law said that only christened people could get to Heaven while children born out of marriage were doomed to Hell. This placed people in England under a terrible strain and they blamed one person for this - John. However, a lot of people thought that John didn't deserve his reputation and wasn't as bad as some people made out.

WL Warren says that John had the ability to become a great ruler but never had the chance. In 1873, W Stubbs said that John had " the administrative ability of a great ruler but, from the moment he began to rule, rivals and traitors tried to cheat him out of his inheritance. As he wrestled with one problem, more enemies sprang upon his back. ". What's odd is that two years later (1875) W Stubbs quotes: " John was the worst of our kings, a faithless son and treacherous brother, a vain money-grabber with no redeeming features whatsoever. ".

Maurice Ashley said in 1972 that King John was a first class general and a ruler who devoloped English law. This might have been true, but it is more probable that Ashley just wanted to publish a different book, so that more people would buy it and he would earn more. Most of the evidence I have obtained points towards bad, but I think that King John has been unfairly given a bad reputation. He might have done some bad things, but I don't think he deserved to go down in history as being bad. Perhaps it was not uncommon for kings to have their name tarnished when they are not alive to defend themselves!