

Why the early middle ages are often referred to as the dark ages

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Why the Early Middle Ages are often referred to as the "Dark Ages"? Was there any learning during this period?

The period in Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire was named "the Dark Ages" by Renaissance scholars in order to criticize the old ways. One of the main reasons for that is the cultural and economic deterioration, as well as developed political fragmentation. Many regional leaders or feudal lords controlled small areas of the country and, moreover, people were more loyal to a tribe, not to a country. It was time of the Great Migration, when hordes of nomadic tribes, who were seeking for a new life in new lands, invaded Europe. Kingdoms were instantly arising and rapidly disintegrating along this time, while the military chiefs kept the power and authority of rulers. Thus, the kings had less power, and Church became the only institution which could unify the people due to its hierarchical nature and centralized authority.

During this period the foundations of society of former ages were completely destroyed, so the "building site" for the erection of a new civilization - the Christian world has been cleared. Religion became a new factor, the value of which has never before been so great in all aspects of society along the previous history. So the Christianity in the Dark Ages became one of the crucial components of the social life and faith started to be the main driver of all human life.

In spiritual terms Dark Ages were a period of birth of a new type of personality, a new mentality, both individual and collective. In times when the collection of earthly treasures became impossible, people, following the precepts of Christ, began to collect the treasures of heaven. The Christian

religion was given the support for people and helped not to lose heart and humbly endure all the trials, which he met. Hunger, barbarian attacks, diseases - it seemed that Christian God was testing people in order to prepare believers for promised in the Gospel, "the millennial kingdom of Christ." Philosophers were analyzing not the nature of man - a transient phenomenon, but the divine nature. Theology, which flourished in the High Middle Ages, took its beginning in the monasteries of the Dark Ages. All knowledge about the world of medieval man was based on the knowledge of God.

During the Dark Ages the decline of common knowledge took place, and existing science survived only in monasteries, as only the Church succeeded in preserving of ancient and Biblical writings. So it was assumed, that no-one was literate properly. But not everything was as worse as it seems to be, and in the 19th century a number of sources were found, which proved the existence of culture development. As the Church was powerful, it did its best to promote learning and literacy (for instance, it was churchmen who created first universities in Europe). In addition, European people were adopting and transforming such legacy of the Roman Empire as Roman law, administrative and taxation practices, literature, trade and economy and so on.

During the Dark Ages the new nations took their beginning, united by the territorial and linguistic heritage. People were still far away from the emergence of the first nation states, but the first steps in this direction were made by the VIII century society.

Dark Ages and the Early Middle Ages were as controversial in the spiritual and the religious sphere as no other era did. Differences between the Old

Testament and the New Testament gave the rise to the internal conflict in the souls of the medieval people. At the same time both Testaments perfectly coexisted with each other.

Works Cited

1. Hillerbrand, Hans. The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation. Oxford University Press, 2006.