

The background image shows the interior of a large, dark stone cathedral. A massive, ornate chandelier hangs from the ceiling, with several lit candles. In the distance, a bright, glowing light source, possibly a fire or a large window, illuminates the space. The architecture features high, vaulted ceilings and numerous arches. The overall atmosphere is somber and historical.

# Europe in the Early Middle Ages

Ch. 21/Sec.1

# New Kingdoms in Europe

- After the fall of the Roman Empire the Franks took power in Europe.
  - By the early 530s, the Franks controlled much of Gaul (present-day France)
- Charles Martel aka Charles the Hammer, united Frankish lands under his rule
  - Battle of Tours was his most famous victory; in 732 AD
  - This battle ended one of the last Muslim military invasions of Western Europe

# The Age of Charlemagne

## Did You Know?

- He was the son of Pepin the Short

- Believed to be 6 feet to 6'4"

- He had blonde hair that seemed to glow in the sun.

- He was always laughing.

- He had a horrible singing voice, but he often burst into song, as he strode through village after village.

- His dogs were his constant companions, forever racing around his feet, wherever he went.

- He knew everyone in his castle by name, from his top advisors to the lowliest peasant.

- Martel's grandson, Charles, became king of the Franks.
  - Aka Charlemagne or Charles the Great
  - He built an empire that stretched across what is now France, Germany, and Italy.
  - He ruled for 46 years
  - His military victories reunited much of what used to be the western Roman empire.
  - He believed education could unite his kingdom and encouraged the creation of schools

Did You Know?

When Charlemagne came to power as king of the Frankish Empire, he agreed that the court system was unfair.

*Trial by ordeal.*

If you were a peasant and you were accused of a crime, to prove your innocence, you had to hold a red hot metal poker until your hand was deeply burned. If your burnt hand healed in three days, you were found innocent. If it did not, you were guilty.

If you were a noble, you could prove your innocence in ordeal by fight. You could hire someone to fight for you. If the person you hired lived, you were found innocent. If the person you hired died, you were found guilty, but you had paid your punishment - you had paid with "your" life, so to speak, or at least the life of the person you had hired - thus, you were free to go.

Charlemagne did not think much of this system of justice. He started a new system - *trial by panel*.

Under Charlemagne's system, each accused person would be heard by a panel of honorable men, men who had taken an oath to listen and to judge fairly based on the evidence presented. There was still corruption, but this system had a much better chance of being fair than did the old one.

# Charlemagne and Christianity

- Devout Christian
  - Many of his advisors were members of the clergy
  - He wanted to create a unified Christian Europe
  - He worked closely with the Catholic Church to spread Christianity throughout Europe

Did You Know?

When the Frankish Empire went to war, Charlemagne was in the thick of things. He was easy to spot. Besides being so tall, he often wore a blue cape over his fur coat, which made him appear even larger. He had to have been a most visible target.

Yet, somehow, he managed to survive battle after battle. He died of old age in his seventies, which for the times was a really old age.



## A New Emperor

- Charlemagne helped protect Pope Leo III from enemies in Rome
  - The pope showed his thanks by crowning Charlemagne emperor of Rome
  - The emperor had a lot of authority over the Church, but only the pope possessed the power to crown an emperor.

# Europe After Charlemagne

- After Charlemagne's death in 814 AD, his son Louis I took the throne.
  - His sons struggled and fought for power
  - In 843, they agreed to the Treaty of Verdun, which split the empire into 3 parts.



# Charlemagne's Impact

## Did You Know?

Charlemagne ruled his vast empire by using local officials called counts (nobles) to help him. Each count was responsible for solving local problems. They also had the job of finding men and raising armies for the kingdom.

At least once a year, Charlemagne paid surprise visits to his various counts to make sure they were managing fairly and effectively.

1. Extended Christianity into northern Europe
2. Blended Germanic, Roman, and Christian traditions
3. Set up a strong and efficient government
4. Created standardized money using silver coins
5. Was an example for later rulers because he was considered one of Europe's most successful monarchs.