



Why Henry VIII Broke Away from Rome

KS3 Ages 11-14 ⌚ 3 min read

The Problem with Anne Boleyn

Henry VIII was the **King of England** from **1509** to **1547**. He was married to **Catherine of Aragon**, a Spanish princess, but their marriage had a big problem: they had no sons. In those days, people believed a king needed a son to rule the kingdom after him.

Henry wanted to divorce Catherine and marry **Anne Boleyn**, a lady-in-waiting who he thought might give him a son. But there was a massive obstacle: the **Pope in Rome** said "no." The Pope was the head of the **Roman Catholic Church**, and the Church said divorce was sinful and forbidden.

Think of it like asking your headteacher for permission to do something, but they say no—and they're the ultimate authority, so nobody else can override them.

Breaking Free from Rome

Henry was furious. He wasn't used to being told "no," especially by the Pope. So in **1534**, he made a bold and shocking decision: he declared himself the **Supreme Head of the Church of England**. This meant England's church was no longer under the Pope's control.

Now Henry could make his own rules. He granted himself a divorce, married Anne Boleyn, and got his wish—eventually. (Though Anne gave him a daughter, **Elizabeth I**, not a son.)

Think of it like leaving a club because the club leader won't let you do something you want. Instead, you start your own club where you make the rules.

More Than Just Divorce

This break was about more than just Henry's personal life. It was also about **power and money**. The Roman Catholic Church owned vast amounts of land and wealth in England. By breaking away, Henry could seize Church lands and treasure for himself and his nobles. This made him very rich and popular with powerful people.

The split was controversial and dangerous. Some people, including **Sir Thomas More** (Henry's friend), refused to accept it and paid with their lives. But Henry was determined, and the break stuck. This moment changed **English history** forever, creating the **Church of England** that still exists today.