The 2nd millennium

From cathedrals to the Moon.

The thousand years in which the West changed the world. It built universities and cathedrals, put the king under the law, printed books, crossed the oceans, found the laws of nature, ended slavery, harnessed steam and electricity, learned to fly, and walked on the Moon. It also lived through the Black Death and the two worst wars in history.

What rose

1088. The University of Bologna, the first university, is founded by tradition this year. Source: University of Bologna

1215. Magna Carta puts the king under the law. Source: Magna Carta

c. 1450. Gutenberg's printing press. Source: Printing press

1492. Columbus crosses the Atlantic. Source: Voyages of Christopher Columbus

1687. Newton's Principia sets out the laws of motion and gravity. Source: Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica

1776. The Declaration of Independence. Source: United States Declaration of Independence

1800s. The Industrial Revolution, the end of slavery in the West, and electric power. Source: Industrial Revolution

1903. The first powered flight. Source: Wright Flyer

1969. People walk on the Moon. Source: Apollo 11

What fell or stalled

The Black Death (1347–1351) killed roughly a third to a half of Europe's people. Source: Black Death

The two world wars of the 20th century killed tens of millions; the Second alone killed an estimated 70 to 85 million people. Source: World War II casualties

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