

DECLINE OF MEDIEVAL SOCIETY



The Black Death

- Political and economic changes were undermining the very foundations of medieval society
- Poor harvests in the 1300's led to terrible famines
 - ▣ Agriculture, trade, and commerce decline
- Bubonic plague strikes in 1348
 - ▣ Carried by rats and fleas
 - ▣ Spread quickly along trade routes
 - ▣ Panic and fear led to desperate measures
 - ▣ 1/3 of Western Europeans died
 - ▣ Would not recover for 100 years

Attack on the Church

- Medieval monarchs opposed the Church on several grounds:
 - ▣ Land and lack of tax income (Rome)
 - ▣ Resentment of Church courts
 - ▣ Church officials interfered with political matters

Attack on the Church

- Babylonian Captivity:
 - Philip IV of France
 - Tried to tax clergy – Pope refused
 - Summons Estates General
 - Kidnapped Pope
 - Engineered election of French Pope
 - Avignon 1309 – 1378 (Popes pawns of French King)

Attack on the Church

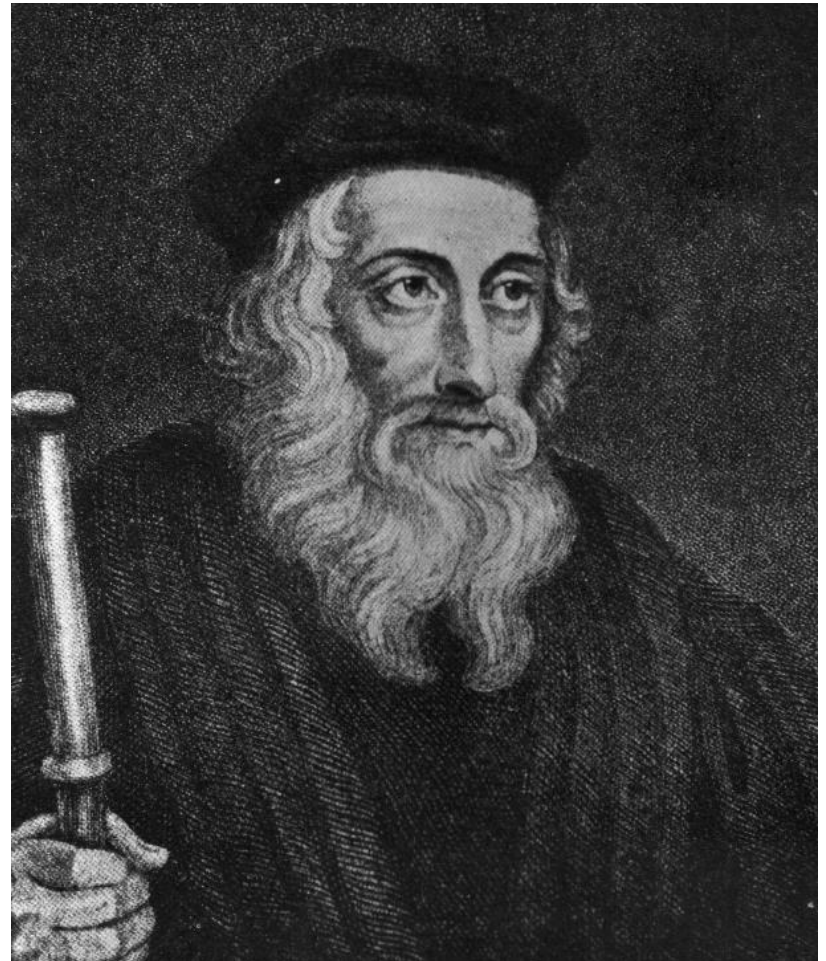
- The Great Schism (1348 – 1417)
 - 2 popes at one time
 - 1 in Avignon, 1 in Rome
- During these scandals the Church lost much of its political power and religious authority:
 - France:
 - Kings taxed clergy
 - England:
 - King Edward I removed Papal fiefdom
 - Great Schism provoked outrage about spiritual authority

Demand for Reforms

- Reformers attacked the Church because of the Church's wealth and the clergy's worldly concerns.
 - ▣ Accused clergy of corruption and failure to perform religious duties

Demand for Reforms

- John Wycliffe:
 - ▣ Teacher of theology at Oxford
 - ▣ Questioned spiritual authority of the Church
 - ▣ Claimed sacraments and priests were not necessary for salvation
 - ▣ Encouraged followers to translate bible to English
 - ▣ Followers persecuted as heretics



Demand for Reforms



- John Huss:
 - ▣ Bohemian who preached against corruption in the Church
 - ▣ Burned at the stake
 - ▣ Church waged a crusade against his followers

The Hundred Years War

- Medieval monarchs battled with the Church and each other as they centralized power:
 - ▣ 100 Years War (1337 – 1453)
 - France vs. England

Origins of the War

- England owned vast amounts of land in France
- Economic rivalries
- Edward III attempted to seize French throne

Hundred Years War

- Early English victories:
 - ▣ Crécy, Poitiers
- Victories were due in part to superior English technology:
 - ▣ Longbow and gun powder
- English soldiers plundered French countryside
- French king increased taxes:
 - ▣ Combination of war, famine and heavy taxes led to revolt

Hundred Years War

- Just as the English looked to be on track for complete victory the French rallied behind an uneducated peasant girl named Joan of Arc



Joan of Arc

- 1429: Joan of Arc told Charles VII that God had told her to lead the French armies
- Her patriotism and absolute faith inspired the French to victories
- Captured by the Burgundians and sold to the English
- Tried and convicted of heresy and burned at the stake
- She would continue to inspire the French in death
- English would be forced from most French territory except Calais

Effects of the 100 Years' War

- French:
 - Growing sense of national pride
 - Loyalty to the king
 - Louis XI:
 - Established basis for absolute power of French kings
 - Ruled an efficient bureaucracy
 - Improved quality of standing army
 - Restored economic prosperity
 - Limited power of feudal lords
- Estates General asked Louis XI to govern without consultation

Effects of the 100 Years' War

- English:
 - King and Parliament emerged stronger because they did not have to pay attention to their fiefs in France (full attention to England)
 - Parliament benefited from king's need of money (additional rights)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d6CrOGoxtMI>

Effects of the 100 Years' War

- War of the Roses:
 - Civil war in England for throne (Lancaster and York)
 - Red and White roses as symbols on each side
 - Most feudal lords killed
 - 1485:
 - War ends
 - Henry VII establishes Tudor dynasty



Effects of the 100 Years' War

- France:
 - ▣ Absolute control by monarch
- England:
 - ▣ Limited control by monarch (parliament)

Decline of Feudalism

- Contribution to the demise of feudal lords:
 - ▣ Emerging monarchs
 - ▣ Money economy
 - ▣ Growth of towns
 - ▣ Death (Hundred Years War, War of the Roses)
- Changing Warfare:
 - ▣ No need for mounted knights (long bows, cannons)
 - ▣ Standing armies employed by Kings
- Nobles would not disappear, but take their place at splendid royal courts