



I. Introduction:

Implosions (*some good; some not so good*) & **Explosions** (*some good; some not so good*)

The thirteenth century was the high point of medieval civilization. With innocent III, the papacy reached the apex of its power. At the same time, the mendicant orders set out to bring the world to Christ, the universities developed impressive theological systems, and in Gothic art even the weight of stone seemed to have been overcome. In theory, Europe was united under a spiritual head, the pope, and a temporal one, the emperor. And, since the Crusaders had taken Constantinople, it seemed that the schism between the Eastern and Western branches of the church had been healed.

But in all these elements of unity there were tensions and weak points that would eventually bring down the imposing edifice of medieval Christianity. Already in 1261, The Latin Empire of Constantinople had come to an end, and so had the fictitious union between East and West that the fourth Crusade had accomplished. During the 14th and 15th centuries, new economic and political conditions would challenge the papacy and cause it to lose much of its authority. Nationalism, war, plague, corruption, and invasion would shatter the dreams of the 13th century, and open the way for the new order of the Modern Age.

—Justo González. *The Story of Christianity*, Vol. 1. page 324)

II. The Bourgeoisie* and Nationalism

A. Increasing power of the bourgeoisie

1. Trade and manufacturing gave money and purpose to the middle class
2. The growing influence of the middle class sparked greater conflict with the feudal lords who still tried to maintain their authority and control
3. To the bourgeoisie, a centralized government was in their best interests, and they looked to a strong monarchy to maintain order (especially when rich feudal lords often operated with little or no accountability)
4. It was in the best interests of kings to have a healthy bourgeoisie class to be able to quickly (and efficiently) raise revenue (taxes) and military power (an army)
5. These events helped form the beginning of the banking and investment industry

B. Nationalism

1. With the middle class growing in power and looking to kings, national boundaries of kingdoms were more important (previously emphasis was put on a county or city)
2. Nationalism took shape as citizens rallied behind “king and country”
3. Nationalism undermined both pope and emperor: universal control (in ecclesiastical matters and political matters) was weakened.

C. Implosions and Explosions

1. These events of nationalism helped spawn the Hundred Year’s War (1337-1475)
– in which Joan of Arc played a significant role
2. The great plague of 1347 (Bubonic Plague)
 - a. Spread from fleas of rats

* **Bourgeoisie** is a French term originally and generally [referring to], “those who live in the borough”, that is to say, the people of the city (including merchants and craftsmen), as opposed to those of rural areas; in this sense, the bourgeoisie began to grow in Europe from the 11th century and particularly during the Renaissance of the 12th century, with the first developments of rural exodus and urbanization (Wikipedia).

Notes

- b. Due to the booming shipping industry of merchants, more people were exposed
 - c. About a third of the population of Europe died of the plague or from related causes
3. A time of fear: people feared death (from the black plague), feared hell, feared the Supreme Judge
- a. As a result, it increased superstitions
 - b. Christians went on pilgrimages (to holy places) or venerated relics to deal with their fears
 - c. For many Jews, the plague brought death by violence. Christians could not understand why the plague seemed to make less headway in Jewish neighborhoods. Today some suggest that there were more cats and fewer rats in those areas, because among Christians cats had been associated with witchcraft. Whatever the case may be, at the time of the plague some came up with the simple explanation that Jews had poisoned the wells from which Christians drank. The result was violence and massacre. It was a time of fear, and fear demanded its victims. (Justo González. *The Story of Christianity*, Vol. 1. page 328).

D. Rise of the Renaissance and Humanism

1. Renaissance
 - a. Renaissance means “rebirth”
 - b. Began in Italy and spread through western Europe
 - c. Historians looked back on the 1000 years that followed the fall of Rome and considered them a “*negative intermission between classic antiquity and their own time*” (Gonzalez).
 - d. Predominant feeling: It was time to revive culture, especially in areas of art and literature – the need to get back to classic antiquity
2. Humanism
 - a. Historically speaking, humanism did not begin as we know it today as the supremacy of humanity (which is seen as atheistic)
 - b. Began as the study of humanities (liberal arts)
 - c. A “*literary movement that sought to return to the sources of classic literature, and to imitate its style*” (Gonzalez).
3. Products of the Renaissance and Humanism
 - a. John Wycliffe publishes the first Bible in English (1381)
 - b. The creation of the printing press (1440)
 - Easier to distribute the written word
 - Development of fonts and typeface
 - c. Leonardo Di Vinci (1452-1519)
 - d. Michelangelo (1475-1564)
 - e. Copernicus (1473-1543)

III. Expansion of Roman Catholicism

“Diligently seek to encourage and attract the natives of said Indies to all peace and quiet, that they may willingly serve us and be under our dominion and government, and above all that they may be converted to our holy catholic faith.” –Isabella and Ferdinand

Towards the end of the Middle Ages, and during the time of the Protestant Reformation, Spain and Portugal began a process of expansion that would have enormous consequences for the later history of the church... At [the Second Vatican Council] and in the life of the church thereafter, the impact of Roman Catholics from Latin America, Asia, and Africa has been prominent. (Justo González. The Story of Christianity, Vol. 1. page 379).

A. **The Spanish Inquisition (1478–1834)**

1. During the High Middle Ages, Spain and Portugal had the highest eclectic mix of Christians (Roman Catholics), Muslims (Moors), and Jews
2. Jews persecuted and forced to convert to Christianity (or be killed)
3. In 1492 160,000 Jews expelled from Spain; had been told by Ferdinand and Isabella that they either be baptized or expelled
4. The same treatment applied to Muslims in Spain, and by 1526 300,000 Muslims had been expelled.

B. **Spain expands its outreach**

1. Christopher Columbus (1492) discovers the new world
2. Political expansion and trade
 - a. Income of sugar, gold, and silver
 - b. Spanish conquistadores settling in the new world and gaining power as feudal lords
 - c. Ferdinand and Isabella feared they would lose control over new world if the Spanish settlers were not governed; therefore new laws were mandated from Spain (though not often followed)
 - d. Produced constant conflicts between new world and Spain, and the Indians paid the greatest price (being exploited by the Spaniards)
3. Religious expansion
 - a. Vision to convert the “infidels” in the new world
 - b. Practices of conversion used in the Crusades were used similarly in the conquest of the Indians
 - c. The popes (Alexander VI and Julius II) gave authority to the Spanish Crown to appoint bishops and church officers in the newly acquired lands. Some were good leaders with shepherd’s hearts and who cared about ecclesiastical matters and the masses, though most (especially as time wore on) focused less on the religion and were set up for more political reasons.
4. Missions expansion
 - a. Missionary efforts led by the Franciscans, Dominicans, and Jesuits
 - b. Missionaries had a true heart for the natives and saw their plight with the Spaniards
 - c. Because of vows of poverty, these missionaries were able to mingle with and relate to the natives more easily
 - d. Missionaries became defenders of the natives and their situations brought on by the Spanish settlers
 - e. Eventually caused more rifts in the church culture



Notes

IV. **Why this segment of history matters (or *should matter*) to me**

- A. How does this lesson enhance your knowledge of God?
- B. In what new ways are you challenged in your own walk with Christ?