

The background of the slide features a faded, sepia-toned photograph of four large stone statues of men in historical religious attire, likely the Reformers. They are standing in a row, with the second figure from the left holding a book. The statues are set against a light-colored wall. At the bottom of the image, there is a faint, embossed Latin inscription: "IHS" flanked by two decorative flourishes.

# A SURVEY OF THE REFORMATION

ITS HISTORY & IMPACT

# HISTORY

1. Intro & Early Church History
2. Church Schisms, & the Decline of the Roman Church
3. **Forerunners of the Reformation**
4. The Protestant Reformation
5. Puritanism & the Legacy of the Reformers

# IMPACT

6. Reformation Doctrine: 5 Solas & the Sovereignty of God
7. Why the Reformation Matters Today

# RECAP OF EARLY CHURCH HISTORY

- As **persecution** waned, the Church stabilized and spread even more.
- **Church fathers** comforted & defended the Church.
- The Church grew in her understanding of doctrine **progressively** over time, often after the birth of new heresies, and the convening of councils.
- Oriental Orthodox Churches (Middle East, Africa and Asia) **split** as they did not agree with the Council of Chalcedon's definition of the Trinity.
- Much later, the Eastern (Greek Orthodox) and Western (Roman Catholic) Churches **split**.
- Our focus from here on will primarily be the Western Church.

The background of the slide features a faded image of four large, standing statues of medieval church figures, likely saints or reformers, dressed in long, flowing robes. They are positioned in a row, with the central figure holding a book. The statues are set against a light, textured background. Below the statues, there is a stone ledge with a faint, carved inscription that appears to be the IHS monogram.

# THE FORERUNNERS OF THE REFORMATION

MEDIEVAL CHURCH HISTORY (A.D. 1100-1500)

# THE FORERUNNERS OF THE REFORMATION

- The “High” Middle Ages (A.D. 1100-1300)
- The Decline of the Later Middle Ages (A.D. 1300-1500)
- Reform Movements

The background of the slide features four large, light-colored stone statues of bearded men in medieval ecclesiastical robes, standing in a row. Below them, on a stone ledge, is a carved inscription of the IHS monogram, flanked by decorative flourishes. The entire scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent white box containing the title and subtitle.

# THE “HIGH” MIDDLE AGES

MEDIEVAL CHURCH HISTORY (A.D. 1100-1300)

# THE “HIGH” MIDDLE AGES

- **The West was rising** – prosperity & peace (Viking/Vandal raids had ceased and the whole of Europe was basically Christian), widespread & dependable agriculture and a population boom bolstered the society of the West.
- **Decline of Empire & growth of nationalism** – the era of empire was on the way out. Charlemagne’s French empire crumbled after his death. The Holy Roman Empire became a jumble of different and equal states.
- **Feudalism** – in the absence of empire, a new societal structure arose: the feudal system. The king owned the whole country, but leased it out to lords, who leased out land to serfs/peasants. Not all peasants were miserable, and there were many good times, feasting, and camaraderie. “A place for everyone and everyone in his place.” Stability and greater agriculture resulted.

# FEUDALISM AND THE CHURCH

- **Hierarchicalism** – in the church fit with feudalism. God was thought of, as a feudal monarch, with angels & high-ranking churchmen as his vassals, exercising power on his behalf. (Anselm)
- **Monasteries** – owned land, and farmers on the land would pay the monastery not a lord.
- **Church officers** could also own land, gifted to them by Lords, or already theirs as lords who were appointed to church offices. Many churchmen became wealthy and were enmeshed within the feudal system of the day.
- **Investiture** – Feudal lords & kings claimed the right to invest people of their choosing into open church offices, irrespective of the wishes of church leaders.
- **Simony** – This was the outright purchase of church offices. Name comes from Simon Magus in Acts who thought he could buy power from Peter in Acts 8.



# GROWTH OF PAPAL POWER

- **Emperors vs. Popes** – Emperors thought they should appoint popes, and could depose them at will.
- **The papacy tried to vie for more power** – Gregory VII (1073-1085) in A.D. 1073 consolidated the papal election procedure (by cardinals, as done today), reformed church structure, tried to enforce priest celibacy (and hence separation from secular/laity influence), and opposed simony and investiture.
- He excommunicated emperor **Henry IV** who was forced to stand in the snow 3 days in penance before being allowed to kiss the pope's foot.
- **Gradually the papal office grew in status** – went from merely commenting and judging affairs of the day, to instigating events.
- **Innocent III**, the pope of greatest power (1198-1216) put all of England under an interdict (no marriage or baptisms, no sacred celebrations, as if the whole nation were excommunicated) – this was the era when King John had to sign the Magna Carta. Eventually a deal was made – but the power of the papacy was never higher.



# A GOTHIC VIEW OF LIFE

- **Cathedrals & Gothic Architecture** – the technological advances of this age, centered mostly on architecture with the ever taller and more grand cathedrals.
- **A Gothic view of life** – just as a Gothic cathedral draws one's view upward and emphasizes the grandeur of God, his descent to us and our ascent to him. So the feudal structure ascended in the church and out, all of culture and society reflecting this order.
- **All of life** – was together under God's purview. Secular and Sacred were together. This explains why crusades were religious, why heresy was considered treasonous, and also explains the dominance of the visible Roman church structures of power.

# CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

- **The Seven Sacraments** – the sacraments were emphasized and systematized. Peter Lombard organized the system with seven sacraments: baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, matrimony, ordination, penance and extreme unction.
- **Holidays & the Calendar** – the secular calendar was governed by the church (the Gregorian Calendar system), more and more holy days for more and more saints and reasons.
- **Other public institutions** – the church helped sponsor hospitals and almshouses.
- **A cult of saints** – the church also allowed a cult of saints to arise. Pilgrimages to Canterbury, Rome, Jerusalem and the supposed spiritual & physical cures from the relics of saints and martyrs. This would intersect with the indulgence controversy later.

# THE CRUSADES

- **Objective** – to rescue the Holy Land – a religious war. (Earlier centuries of Christianity had held that war was antithetical to Christianity – Tertullian.)
- **Ulterior motives** – continuing rivalry of West vs. East, desire to keep Muslims in their place. Participants could gain prestige and money, and they would also gain a waiver from penance.
- **Growth of Chivalry** – the ideal of a holy warrior grew from the Crusades. Knightly monastic orders arose: Knights Templar, Hospitallers of St. John, & the Teutonic Knights.
- **Assessment** – for a time the holy land was rescued, but ultimately after a century and a half it was lost (although concessions were given to ensure safety for pilgrims). A black eye on Christianity ever since: sacking of Constantinople, and the saintly Saladin vs. the barbaric Christian Franks (cannibalism!)

# KEY FIGURES

- **Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153)** – widely respected leader, who led a monastic reform movement and founded the Cistercian order of monks. Viewed the Christian message as one of love. Famous for his hymns: “O, Sacred Head, Now Wounded,” “Jesus, the Very Thought of Thee,” and “Jesus, Thou Joy of Loving Hearts.” Also encouraged the 2<sup>nd</sup> Crusade.
- **Francis of Assisi (1182-1226)** – emphasized poverty and founded the Franciscan order of monks. The “friars” (lesser brothers) owned nothing and travelled about supporting themselves by preaching to the people.
- **Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109)** – great thinker, known for championing substitutionary atonement. Faith must inform reason: “I believe, in order that I may understand.” Developed the **ontological argument** for God.

# KEY FIGURES

- **Peter Abelard (1079-1142)** – great teacher, sparked a love for learning and universities as we know them owe a debt to Abelard
- **Peter Lombard (1096-1164)** – brilliant scholar, his systematic theology *The Four Books of Sentences* was highly influential until long after the Reformation. His taught in favor of definite atonement: Christ's death was "sufficient for all, efficient for some."
- **Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)** – the greatest scholastic of the era, his *Summa Theologiae* is still widely read by philosophers and theologians today. He and the scholastics (using Aristotelian logic) helped solidify the sacramental positions of the Roman Catholic church. Developed the "First Cause" argument for God.

The background of the slide features a photograph of four large, light-colored stone statues of medieval church figures, likely popes or cardinals, standing in a row. They are wearing long, flowing robes and have long, full beards. The statues are set against a stone wall. In the foreground, below the statues, there is a stone ledge with a carved inscription in the IHS monogram style, flanked by decorative flourishes.

# THE DECLINE OF THE LATE MIDDLE AGES

MEDIEVAL CHURCH HISTORY (A.D. 1300-1500)



# SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISASTER

- **Famine** – bad weather, and little un-farmed land resulted in a food shortage & widespread famine in the early 1300s. 10-25% of Europe's population had died by 1320.
- **The Black Death** – Bubonic Plague decimated Europe throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. From 1347-1351 between 33% and 50% of Europe's population had died. With periodic outbreaks over the next 100 years.
- **Wars** – the Hundred Years war between France and England waged between 1337-1453. And numerous lesser wars in other parts of Europe added to the crisis.
- **Revolts** – with fewer laborers, feudal lords demanded more work. This led to worker's revolts and widespread discontent.
- **This all seemed like divine punishment!**

# THE CHURCH IN DISARRAY

- **Absentee priests** – During the plagues, often priests would vacate their posts to save their lives – showing no care for their flock.
- **Simony** – the buying and selling of church offices continued to be a problem.
- **Incredible moral decline** – although priests were not supposed to marry, illegitimate children abounded.
  - Example: in Bamberg, in one year, 300 cases of fines paid to the bishop for illegitimate children
  - In Constance (larger area), 1875 cases also in one year!

# THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY

- **Avignon Papacy** – For a period of time the church became so close to France that the papacy moved to Avignon, France.
- **Two Popes!!** – after a while, after an attempt to move the papacy back to Rome, a pope was elected who was so different than the cardinals themselves, that they fled to Avignon and elected a different pope.
- **Three Popes!!!** – After 30 years of 2 popes, a church council met in Pisa (1409) to fix the problem, they deposed both popes and picked a new pope. This resulted in three popes as no one backed down! Finally the Council of Constance (1415-17) deposed all 3 & their new pope was accepted by all.
- **Loss of confidence in the papacy** – this understandably weakened the papacy and strengthened nationalistic impulses. Loyalty to the king was greater than to the pope (whichever one was the true pope).

# REACTIONS

- **Anti-clericalism** – Understandably people started resenting clerics, and yearned for church reform. *Reformatio in capite et membris!* (“**Reform in Head and Members!**”) was the cry.
- **Conciliarism** – since a council deposed the pope(s), the thought arose that perhaps councils are above the pope. Due to failures in the council system to govern, this idea was discredited and the papacy marched on.
- **ROMA** – A common bit of graffiti from this era expressed the frustration with the papacy of Rome (Latin = ROMA)
  - *Radix Omnium Malorum Avaritia* (“the root of all evils is avarice”)

# EVEN MORE DECLINE

The Renaissance popes were not much better.

- Focused on **extravagant living** (banquets, shows and balls)
- Sponsored **elaborate art projects** (Sistine Chapel)
- **Pope Alexander VI** (1492-1503) openly flaunted his violation of celibacy, by promoting his children to special positions. He even had his nine year old son made a cardinal of the church!
- **Leo X** (1513-1521) said it well: “God has given us the papacy! Let us enjoy it!”

The background of the slide features a photograph of four large, weathered stone statues of medieval church reformers. They are standing side-by-side in a stone wall. The statues are dressed in long, flowing robes and have long, full beards. The central figure is holding a book. The overall tone is historical and scholarly.

# REFORM MOVEMENTS

MEDIEVAL CHURCH HISTORY (A.D. 1100-1500)

# THE POOR IN SPIRIT

- **Arnold of Brescia** (1090-1155) – an abbot in northern Italy, decried the worldly church and its interference in secular affairs. He advocated a return to simplicity and poverty. The pope condemned him, but when the pope was away he came to Rome and joined a revolt, finding himself set up as the new pope for a short 10 years. He was martyred in 1155.
- Other monastic movements promoted poverty. The **Franciscans** (led by Francis of Assisi) and the **Dominicans** (led by Dominic).

# THE WALDENSIANS

- **Peter Waldo (1140-1205)** – a wealthy merchant in Lyons, France, was moved by Matt. 19:21 to sell most of his goods and help the poor. He provided for his wife and daughters and became an itinerant preacher. His followers marched two-by-two following Jesus' commission to his disciples in Matt. 10.
- They were denied the right to preach by Rome in 1179 but they determined to “obey God rather than men.” They were orthodox, but resisted Roman church rule.
- Over time their beliefs became similar to those of the Reformers. They seemed to emphasize preaching by men and women, and avoided a laity-clergy distinction. During the Reformation, a large number of them developed a confession and were accepted by the Reformed church. They exist to this day in some places, and suffered persecutions over the centuries.



# THE CATHARS

- Another group that emphasized poverty and opposed worldliness was the **Cathars** (means “pure ones”) also known as **the Albigenses** since they were plentiful near the town of Albi in France.
- This group is connected with the **Bogomils** from Bulgaria and was actually quite heretical.
- Believed in **dualism**: matter is evil, spirit is good. Jesus wasn't incarnate, but rather a life-giving spirit who taught us the true (special knowledge) that saves.
- They were persecuted by the Inquisition and an official crusade, but they relished death (as bringing freedom from their mortal/evil bodies).

# RHINELAND MYSTICS

- Learned Mystics emphasized a **personal connection with God** apart from the visible church.
- **Meister Eckhart (1260-1328)** – and others like Johan Tauler and Geert Groote in the mid 1350s taught in northern Europe, and Germany emphasizing:
  - Abandonment of one's self with its will, passions and vices
  - Outward religious observance is minimized
  - Learning is a danger, solitude, contemplation, and the love of God are all-important.
- This was called the **Devotio Moderna** (or “Modern Devotion”)
- **Thomas À Kempis** is the most famous of this group, known for his *Of the Imitation of Christ*.
- **The Brethren of Common Life** developed from this movement. They emphasized Bible reading, meditation, prayer, personal piety and religious education. And ultimately influenced both Erasmus and Martin Luther.

# REFORMER PREACHERS

- Another reform movement resulted in **open-air preaching** to commoners, calling them to repentance.
- They called for an ascetic and penitential lifestyle which was difficult for normal people, though.
- Some of the names remembered are: Bernardino of Siena, Vincent Ferrer, John Capistrano, and Geiler von Keysersberg.
- **Savonarola (1452-1498)** – is another famous preacher who reformed the city of Florence in the 1480s. He preached against extravagance and greed, as well as against the infatuation with paganism that he saw the Renaissance to be. In 1495 he became virtual dictator of Florence. He seems to have been a pious man who believed in justification by faith, but his public preaching and stance didn't differ with established church teachings. He was martyred for opposing the pope's pronouncements concerning him (for social and political reasons as much as religious).

# JOHN WYCLIFFE (1330-1384)



- Lectured in Oxford
- Argued that English government had an obligation to correct the abuses of the church.
- Taught that every man is equal in eyes of God, and condemned papal abuses as contrary to apostolic example.
- The Great Schism validated his criticisms.
- Emphasized the universal church as “invisible” and distinct from the visible Catholic church.
- Eventually attacked almost all unbiblical church teachings.
- Worked to get the Bible translated into English so laypeople could have the scriptures.
- Protected by distance, after his death, he was later dug up and burned.

**“Neither the testimony of Augustine nor Jerome, nor any other saint should be accepted except as it was based upon Scripture.”**

# WYCLIFFE QUOTES

- **Against indulgences:** “...in granting indulgences [they] ...blaspheme the wisdom of God”
- **Against the Confessional:** “Private confession ... was not ordered by Christ [or] used by the apostles.”
- **On Faith alone:** “Trust wholly in Christ; rely altogether on his sufferings; beware of seeking to be justified in any other way than by his righteousness. Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ is sufficient for salvation”
- **On Bible translation:** “Englishmen learn Christ's law best in English. Moses heard God's law in his own tongue; so did Christ's apostles.”

# JAN HUS (1372-1415)

- Due to Bohemia's close ties with England, Hus was influenced by Wycliffe's writings.
- He preached at Bethlehem Chapel in Prague – which had art juxtaposing the pope's finery and Christ's poverty.
- Hus's fiery sermons garnered widespread support, and there were even student riots for & against Wycliffe's teachings
- Hus started openly criticizing indulgences causing him to go into exile.
- The Inquisition condemned him to death.
- His alleged last words are a prophecy: "In 100 years, God will raise up a man whose calls for reform cannot be suppressed"



**“God is my witness that the evidence against me is false. I have never thought nor preached except with the one intention of winning men, if possible, from their sins. In the truth of the gospel I have written, taught, and preached, today I will gladly die.”**

# THEIR FOLLOWERS

- **The Lollards** – Wycliffe's followers finished his English translation of the entire Bible (hand copied as the printing press was not available yet). They became itinerant preachers who passed out portions of Scripture and spread the Reformation ideas that Wycliffe had taught far and wide.
- **The Hussites** – Hus's followers split into a militant and non-militant camp. The militant group fought a war with Rome over their ideas, which included social reforms. From these groups the Unity of the Brethren, and the Moravian Brethren emerged.
- Both movements continued, albeit underground due to persecution, up until the time of the Reformation.

# CONCLUSION

- Reform Movements were common throughout the history of the church. The various monastic reforms would fizzle and fade and another new monastic reform would appear later.
- Some of the laity reform movements, like the Waldensians were orthodox and ultimately successful. But breaking away from the Church was very hard to do and almost unthinkable in the medieval mindset.
- The ever-growing decline of the church brought about the ultimate rise of the Protestant Reformation.
- The Reformation should not be viewed as an altogether brand new movement, but as a natural outgrowth from the medieval call for church reform.