

# Lesson 1

## MAIN IDEAS

- 1 **Belief Systems** The Catholic Church was weakened by internal conflict.
- 2 **Culture** People began to question and speak out against some Church practices.
- 3 **Belief Systems** Reformation begins as a result of Martin Luther's Ninety-Five Theses.

## TAKING NOTES

### Reading Skill: Summarizing

When you summarize, restate the passage in fewer words and include only the main ideas and most important details. In Lesson 1, summarize each of the main sections using a chart like the one below.

Section	Summary
The Great Schism	
Criticism of the Church	
Martin Luther confronts the Church	

 Skillbuilder Handbook, page R3



▲ Pope Clement V and King Philip IV of France **Pope Clement** (in the green robe) moved the center of the Church from Italy to France, which was ruled by King Philip (in the red robe).

## CALIFORNIA STANDARDS

**7.9.1** List the causes for the internal turmoil in and weakening of the Catholic church (e.g., tax policies, selling of indulgences).

**7.9.2** Describe the theological, political, and economic ideas of the major figures during the Reformation (e.g., Desiderius Erasmus, Martin Luther, John Calvin, William Tyndale).

**CST 1** Students explain how major events are related to one another in time.

# Trouble for the Catholic Church

## TERMS & NAMES

Great Schism  
indulgence  
Martin Luther  
Protestant  
Reformation

**Build on What You Know** Have you ever disagreed with a friend's behavior and decided to spend less time with that person? In the 1300s and 1400s, many followers disagreed with the Catholic Church—and some left the Church.

## The Great Schism

**1 ESSENTIAL QUESTION** How did internal differences weaken the Catholic Church?

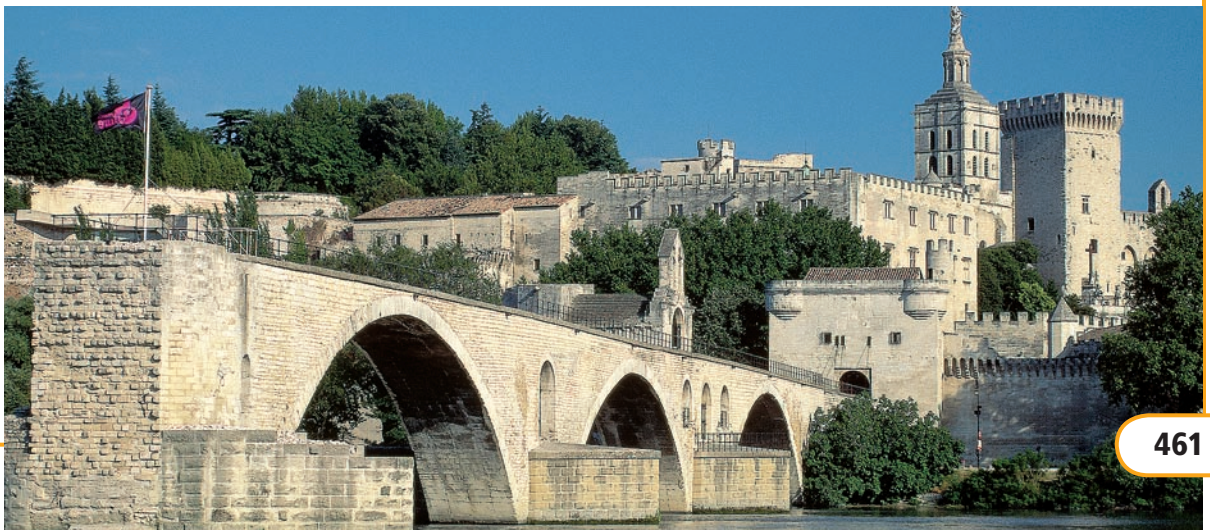
The power of the Roman Catholic Church was divided from 1378 until 1417. A major cause of the split was the decision of Pope Clement V to move the Catholic government from Rome, Italy, to Avignon (ah•vee•NYAWN), France.

**French Popes** In the 1300s, the growth of national states weakened the power of the Church. Some monarchs grew powerful enough to force the Church to support their policies.

In 1305, the French king used his political power to have Clement V elected pope. Two years later, the pope moved the center of the Church to Avignon. After the move to Avignon, most of the popes were French. This made other Europeans, and many Church officials, feel that the French king was controlling the pope. This resulted in a struggle for control of the Church.

## Connect to Today

The Papal Palace at Avignon, France **This palace was used by one of the popes during the Great Schism.** ▼





**A Struggle for Power** The Church developed two centers of power—Avignon and Rome. In 1378, the two sides split and elected different popes. The split is known as the **Great Schism** (SKIHZ•uhm). Each pope demanded obedience from the faithful, and excommunicated, or excluded from the Church, the rival pope's followers. This caused confusion and doubt among Christians and weakened the Church.

**Healing the Church** In 1414, the Holy Roman Emperor summoned a conference to end the schism and reform the Church. Remember that the Holy Roman Empire ruled much of central Europe and was closely associated with the Roman Catholic Church. As a result, the Holy Roman Emperor was very influential. The conference took place in Germany and met from 1414 to 1418. Church officials removed the French pope and persuaded the Roman pope to resign. In 1417, they elected Pope Martin V. He was based in Rome, and began to unify the Church once again.



▲ Pope Clement VII  
This painting shows the election of Pope Clement VII, the first rival to the pope in Rome during the Great Schism.

**REVIEW** How did the Great Schism weaken the Church?

## Criticism of the Church

**2 ESSENTIAL QUESTION** Why did people begin to question some Church practices?

The efforts of the Church to heal itself strengthened the pope's authority. Even so, the Church fell short in its efforts to reform. There was distrust between Church officials and the pope, and believers were uncertain of the Church's authority. Throughout the 14th and 15th centuries, demands for reform grew more intense.

**A Corrupt Church** Over the centuries, the medieval Church had become an enormous institution. By some estimates, the Church owned from one-fifth to one-third of all of the lands of Europe. Church leaders needed huge sums of money to maintain such an institution. Critics and reformers were angered by some of the ways in which the Church earned and spent its money.

Many Europeans, especially those who lived outside Italy, disliked paying taxes to the Church in Rome. They were also upset that the Church paid no taxes on its vast landholdings.

Reformers also objected to the sale of indulgences. An **indulgence** was a pardon for a sin. People bought indulgences to avoid punishment by God in the afterlife. Reformers were enraged that the Church would act as if someone could buy their way into heaven.

Critics also did not like the way the Church spent money. During the Renaissance, many popes spent large sums supporting the arts and their own personal pleasure. Other Church officials followed their example. People from all levels of society, including nobles, townspeople, and peasants, began to call on the Church to emphasize spiritual over material values.

**Reformers Take a Stand** During the 14th and 15th centuries, a number of important reformers spoke out against Church practices. In England, a philosopher and priest named John Wycliffe (c. 1330–1384) called for Church reform. He questioned the pope’s right to levy taxes and to appoint Church officials without the king’s approval.

Dutch priest and scholar Desiderius Erasmus (DEHZ•ih•DEER•ee•uhs ih•RAZ•muhs) (1469–1536), urged people to pursue a true Christian faith. He criticized Church officials for neglecting Christian values. But Erasmus also criticized reformers for trying to divide the Church. As a result, he was not wholly trusted by either side. The work of Erasmus and other Renaissance humanists would have a strong influence on Martin Luther, the man who started the 16th-century movement known as the Reformation.

**Martin Luther** Martin Luther challenged the Church and began the Reformation. ▼

**REVIEW** What sort of reforms did critics of the Church demand from the 1300s through the 1500s?

## Luther Confronts the Church

**3 ESSENTIAL QUESTION** Who is credited with beginning the Reformation?

Early Church reformers wanted to improve the Church. They thought the Church was basically a good institution that just needed some improvement. Later reformers, however, saw the Church as a corruption of the original Christian faith. The ideas of one man came to represent this new reform movement. His name was **Martin Luther**.





## Primary Source

**Background:** On October 31, 1517, it is said that Martin Luther posted his theses on the church door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, an event considered to be the start of the Reformation. Today, this document is known as the Ninety-Five Theses. At right are three of the theses posted by Luther.



## from *Disputation of Doctor Martin Luther on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences*

By Martin Luther

Translated by Adolph Spaeth, L.D. Reed, Henry Eyster Jacobs, et al.

21. Therefore those preachers . . . are in error, who say that by the pope's indulgences a man is freed from every penalty, and saved.

52. The assurance of salvation by letters of pardon is vain,<sup>1</sup> even though . . . the pope himself, were to stake his soul upon it.

68. Yet [indulgences] are in truth the very smallest graces compared with the grace of God and the piety of the Cross.

1. vain: foolish.

### DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTION

What groups of people might Luther have angered by posting his theses?

**Martin Luther** Martin Luther was born in Germany in 1483. He had a good education, and his father wanted him to study law. But in 1505, Luther was caught in a thunderstorm and nearly struck by lightning. Fearing for his life, he vowed to become a monk.

Luther tried to live as the Church instructed. But he still felt that he was a sinner and that an angry God would punish him. Luther's fears led him to think about God as a God of mercy. He came to believe that people could be saved only if they had faith in Christ. As a result, he questioned the idea that salvation could be won through good works.

**Luther's Ninety-Five Theses** Luther's ideas led to conflict with the Catholic Church. The conflict began in 1517 in Wittenberg (WIHT•n•BURG), Germany. Church officials were selling indulgences to finance St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome. Luther disapproved and wrote out all his disputes with the Church in his Ninety-Five Theses. The theses were ideas that Luther wanted to debate, such as the selling of indulgences. Luther's ideas included the following:

- The Bible is the only source of religious truth.
- People do not need the clergy to interpret the Bible.
- Salvation can be gained only through faith in Christ.

Such beliefs were a direct challenge to the Church's authority.

In 1529, German princes who remained loyal to the Church agreed to unite against Luther's ideas. Princes who supported Luther signed a protest against the agreement. The protest earned them the name *Protestants*. Eventually, **Protestant** became the name for Christians who broke with the Catholic Church during and after the 16th century. Protestants used the term **Reformation** to describe the movement of opposition to the Catholic Church.

**REVIEW** What were important ideas from the Reformation?

## Lesson Summary

- The Great Schism weakened the Church.
- From the 14th through the 16th centuries, many Christians were troubled by the way the Church earned and spent its income.
- At the beginning of the 16th century, Martin Luther unintentionally became the leader of a revolutionary attack on the Roman Catholic Church.

## Why It Matters Now . . .

Competition between Catholics and Protestants in Europe caused each to try and spread their version of Christianity throughout the world. Today, Catholics and Protestants are found on every continent.

## 1 Lesson Review

### Terms & Names

1. Explain the importance of

Great Schism      Martin Luther      Reformation  
indulgence      Protestant

### Using Your Notes

**Summarizing** Use your completed chart to answer the following question:

2. What was the Great Schism? (7.9.1)

Section	Summary
The Great Schism	
Criticism of the Church	
Martin Luther confronts the Church	

### Main Ideas

3. How did the Great Schism weaken the Church? (7.9.1)
4. What were some of the Church practices that reformers spoke out against from the 14th through the 16th centuries? (7.9.1)
5. What were some of the ideas Luther wanted to debate? (7.9.2)

### Critical Thinking

6. **Understanding Causes** How did the growing strength of national states affect the papacy? (CST 1)
7. **Drawing Conclusions** How did Luther's ideas about religious truth threaten the Church? (7.9.2)



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## Activity

**Writing a Newspaper Article** The reformer Desiderius Erasmus was influential not only in religious reform but also in educational reform. Research to learn more about Erasmus, then write a brief article about his participation. (7.9.2)