

1 **The Church in the Late Middle Ages**

2 **The political power of the church, and especially of the popes, declined rapidly.**

- Large nations such as France and England were united under kings with the power to rival the pope.
- The king of France managed to control the papacy for his own purposes.
 - In 1309, the papal residence was moved from Rome to the French city of Avignon, and did not return to Rome until 1377.
 - This time is known as the “Babylonian captivity of the church.”

3

- The Great Schism lasted from 1378–1423, in which two or more men claimed to be the rightful pope.
 - Soon after the papacy returned to Rome, the French appointed their own pope again, in opposition to the pope in Rome.
 - Europe and the church were divided into factions, each supporting one of the popes.
 - A church council finally united the church behind a single pope after much difficulty.

4 **Even as its political power decreased, the church seemed to grow more corrupt, and dissatisfaction with the church increased.**

- John Wycliff of England pointed out many of the church’s false teachings.
 - He took steps away from the idea of Christendom.
 - He advocated the reading of the Bible.
 - His followers, called Lollards, spread his views across England.

5

- Jan Hus of Bohemia (known today as the Czech Republic) was influenced by Wycliff and preached a similar message in central Europe.
 - Hus was condemned and executed by the Council of Constance (the same council that ended the Great Schism).
 - Many of Hus’s followers remained in central Europe, and churches tracing their beginnings to Hus remain to this day.
- Many turned to mysticism, seeking a direct relationship with God that bypassed the corrupt church.