

## I. Introduction.

- A. From the beginning of the fourth century until 1198 A.D., the Catholic Church grew increasingly more powerful. The more power she received, the greater the effort she put forth to destroy all who refused to accept the errors she taught.
- B. During this period, the history of the true churches is almost washed away in their own blood.
- C. Also, during this time, the many errors that found a breeding place in the corruptness of this false church began to take concrete form.

## II. Pope Innocent III, 1198-1216

- A. Pope Innocent III was the most powerful of all the Popes.
  - 1. He claimed many titles:
    - a) "Vicar of Christ."
    - b) "Vicar of God."
    - c) "Supreme Sovereign over the Church and the World."
  - 2. He accomplished many things:
    - a) Claimed the right to depose kings and princes.
    - b) Claimed that "All things on earth and in heaven in hell are subject to the Vicar of Christ."
    - c) He brought the Catholic Church into supreme control of the State. The kings of Germany, France, England, and practically all the monarchs of Europe obeyed his will.
    - d) Declared the doctrine of "Papal Infallibility."
    - e) Forbid the reading of the Bible.
    - f) Ordered the "Inquisition."
- B. No one man in history ever exerted more power and influence.
- C. His main use of power was to exterminate all those who were not Catholic.

## III. The Inquisition. The Inquisition is the most infamous thing in all of history.

- A. The Inquisition was initiated by Pope Innocent III and perfected under Pope Gregory IX.
- B. It was a Church Court established by the Popes for the trying and punishing "heretics" – a "heretic" being anyone who did not agree with Catholicism.
  - 1. Under this court, everyone was required to inform against heretics and the proceedings were in secret.
  - 2. The subject was subject to torture without knowing the name of his accuser.

3. This Church Court pronounced the sentence and the victim was turned over to the church-controlled government for execution.
  4. The victim's property was confiscated and divided between Church and State.
  5. Vast multitudes of true believers were slain in France, Spain, Italy, Germany, and the Netherlands.
- C. The picture is difficult to believe but the pages of history record its stark reality.
1. Monks and priests directed, with heartless cruelty and inhuman brutality, the work of torturing and gurning alive innocent men and women by order of the Pope in the name of Christ.
  2. The Inquisition was devised by the Popes and then used by them for 500 years to maintain their power.
  3. For the record, none of the Popes who followed have ever apologized.  
[View the motion picture [The Name of the Rose](#) which is a 1986 historical mystery film during this time in history starring Sean Connery. It depicts the miserable existence during the Dark Ages and the power of the Catholic Church]

#### IV. Despite the fury of the Inquisition, true churches continued in existence throughout the world.

- A. All the combined efforts of hell did not prevail – the churches lived on! These loyal churches continued to be known by different names such as the Waldenses, Arnoldists, Albigenses, and Anabaptists.
- B. In addition to the true churches, the Catholic Church was beginning to feel opposition from within. The corruptness, brutality, and crimes of the Catholic Church had become repulsive to some who began working for reform.

#### V. The moral decay of the Catholic Church. During these infamous years, bribery, adultery, murder, **simony**, robbery, assassination, fornication, and practically every sin in the book was indulged by the hierarchy.

[**Simony** is the act of selling church offices and roles or sacred things. It is named after [Simon Magus](#), who is described in the [Acts of the Apostles](#) as having offered two disciples of [Jesus](#) payment in exchange for their empowering him to impart the power of the [Holy Spirit](#) to anyone on whom he would [place his hands](#). The term extends to other forms of trafficking for money in "spiritual things".

Read Acts 8:9-13

*<sup>9</sup>But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: <sup>10</sup>to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. <sup>11</sup>And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. <sup>12</sup>But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. <sup>13</sup>Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done.]*