Absolute Monarchy And France

Ch 18.2
Synopsis

After Protestant Reformation, France was a divided country. Henry IV became king by a religious compromise and brought limited religious tolerance into France in order to promote healing. French kings after Henry IV, aided by skillful advisors, successively built up France’s economy and military power, as they asserted the power of the French monarchy over both the nobility and the Church. French monarchs achieved the pinnacle of power and prestige under King Louis XIV, but Louis’ ambitions in foreign wars exhausted the country financially, setting the stage for The French Revolution 75 years after his death.
Religious War and Henry IV

- Effects of Protestant Reformation
  - 1) Northern Portion of France (including Paris) remains Catholic
  - 2) Southwestern Portion becomes Protestant
  - 3) French Protestants called Huguenots
  - 4) Split is political as well as religious
Conflict and a New King

- War between Catholics and Huguenots breaks out in 1562
- 1572 St. Bartholomew’s day Massacre
  - Catholics murdering Protestants in Paris (possibly on orders of the Queen)
  - 10-70,000 dead throughout France
- Henry Navarre
  - Protestant Leader
  - Converts to Catholicism in order to be accepted by both parties
  - Becomes King Henry IV in 1593
  - “Paris is well worth a Mass”
Compromise and Progress

- Edict of Nantes 1598
  - Freedom of worship for Huguenots
  - Right to maintain fortified towns in Huguenot areas
- Catholicism still the official religion in France
- Henry IV repairs French Economy
  - Builds roads & canals
  - Stimulates trade
  - Encourages agriculture
  - Eliminates national debt
Louis XIII and Richelieu

- 1610 Henry IV is assassinated
- Louis XIII very young
- Mother rules as regent
- Cardinal Richelieu becomes chief advisor
- 1627 siege of Huguenot fortress of La Rochelle
- Richelieu suppresses nobles
  - Outlaws dueling
  - Confiscates property
- Thirty Years War
  - Sides with Protestants
  - Real issue is politics (reducing power of Spain) not religion and therefore Richelieu is willing to side with an opposing religion
The Monarchy of Louis XIV

The summit of Absolute Monarchy
The Rise of the Sun King

- Louis XIII dies in 1643 and Louis XIV becomes king as a boy (5 years old)
- Trained to be king by his mother and Cardinal Mazarin
- Assumed full power at age 18
- Chose the Sun as his symbol (just as the sun, he was at the center)
- “L’état c’est moi” (I am the State) was his personal quote
Absolutism at Versailles

- **Absolute Monarch**: controls all aspects of the state
  - Military, financial, and political matters
- **Divine Right King**: King by God’s will (not subject to the pope) and decides religious matters
- **Palace of Versailles**: Magnificent palace outside of Paris where the royal family and most of the nobility reside
  - 1) Shows the grandeur and power of Louis XIV
  - 2) Keeps the nobles under watch, where they can’t plot against him and makes them dependent upon the king
  - 3) Tremendous expense (5% of France’s annual revenue)
Palace of Versailles
Louis XIV and Protestantism

- Smashes Huguenot power once and for all
- 1685 Louis XIV revokes the Edict of Nantes
- Outlaws Protestantism
- 200,000 Huguenots flee from France
  - Hurts French economy as many of them were prosperous merchants
Money and the Military

- Colbert as Minister of Finance
  - Reforms tax system
  - Limits imports
  - Increases exports

- Modern Military
  - 1) Increased from 70,000 to more than 200,000 (400,000 at the greatest extent)
  - 2) Improved equipment
  - 3) Improved supply system
War Over a Throne

- Louis wants to increase France’s territory and its power
- War of Spanish Succession 1701-1713
  1) 1701 Louis Tries to place his grandson on the throne of Spain
  2) Coalition of European countries fight to keep France from becoming too powerful
- 1713 Treaty of Utrecht
  1) Louis’ grandson does become King of Spain, but France and Spain can not be ruled by the same monarch
  2) England gains territories in the New World
  3) France is exhausted economically