CAUSES OF THE DARK AGES

* Barbarian invasion brought down the Roman Empire
* Roman Empire was already in decline militarily, economically, socially, politically

ABSENCE OF CIVILIZATION

* 5 key traits of civilization (Writing; advanced technology; Specialization of workers; Growth of Cities; Complex Institutions;)
  o Writing and learning suffered
  o Barbarians destroyed much of existing literature
  o Christians strongly supported that the only acceptable literature was the Bible
  o as a result, almost all education took place in church schools and monasteries
  o Technology
  o with absence of learning supported by lack of reading materials, few would have the knowledge required to make improvements
  o with most learning centered in the church, little interest in technological improvement
  o Specialization of Workers
  o With the absence of large trading centers (cities) there was little need for specialization and strong need of self-sufficiency (many skills required).
  o Cities
  o Barbarians destroyed many of the largest cities
  o Lack of Government and Trade meant there was little need to rebuild them
  o Complex Institutions
  o Barbarians destroyed the existing government
  o lack of large cities meant little need for larger organizations
  o Only significant institution left was the church
  o this led to the church gaining significant power throughout Europe

GOVERNMENT

* Family ties and personal loyalty replace government as the force holding people together
  o Warriors banded together in groups of 15-30
  o Pledged loyalty to one leader in each group. Lived under their leader's roof
* German kingdoms begin to spring up throughout Europe
* German warriors would not follow unfamiliar kings. They would only be loyal to their clan leader.
* All of this combined to make larger government virtually impossible

http://staff.rfsd.k12.co.us/~mcook/html/dark_ages_notes.html