



A SURVEY OF THE REFORMATION

ITS HISTORY & DOCTRINE

HISTORY

1. Intro & Overview of Church History
2. Forerunners of the Reformation
3. **The Protestant Reformation**
4. Puritanism & the Legacy of the Reformers

DOCTRINE

5. Reformation Doctrine: The Big Picture
6. Total Depravity & Irresistible Grace
7. Unconditional Election & Particular Redemption
8. Perseverance of the Saints & Answering Objections
9. The Other "Points" of Calvinism
10. Why the Reformation Matters Today



RECAP OF THE FORERUNNERS OF THE REFORMATION

- The grand integration of all spheres of life under the Roman Church began to crumble.
- **Church problems:** clergy scandals, unscriptural teachings, the harsh Inquisition, papal schism.
- **Social changes:** nationalism, feudalism, lower loyalty to the Roman pope
- **Economic disasters:** Bubonic plague, famine, wars & peasant revolts.
- This climate resulted in a widespread yearning for reform: **“Reform in head and members!”**
- Several **reform movements**, emphasizing a return to apostolic poverty, & a purer, simpler church sprang up:
 - Franciscans, Dominicans, Waldensians,
 - Mystics/Brethren of the Common Life (*Devotio Moderna*),
 - Reform preachers, Lollards (followers of John Wycliffe)
 - Hussites/Moravian Brethren (followers of Jan Hus)



THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION

THE 1500s A.D.

THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION

- Background to the Reformation
- The German Reformation
- The Swiss Reformation
- Conflict & Development
- The Anabaptists & the Radical Reformation
- The English & Scottish Reformations



BACKGROUND TO THE REFORMATION

A.D. 1400-1517

POLITICAL CLIMATE

- Nation states were emerging, and the pope's power was waning.
- The Spanish & French rulers were more centralized & powerful, & had gained **control over the church** in their realms (getting a cut on the proceeds, & doling out church positions to loyal nobility).
- The emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, **Charles V**, controlled Spain, the Netherlands and Germany – but was under threat from France to the east, and the Muslim Turks to the West.
- Charles V's German holdings were volatile (a loose confederation of semi-autonomous states). Saxony was one of the largest & most powerful. Saxony was controlled by **Frederick the Wise** who sponsored Luther the reformer.
- **Henry VIII** had political aims in mind, when he proclaimed the Church of England subservient to the throne. He had to keep up with other powerful rulers & wanted more say over the church, like the Lutheran kings had (i.e., Gustavus Vasa of Sweden)

RENAISSANCE SCHOLARSHIP

- A heady “**scholasticism**” dominated intellectual thought, emphasizing logic & argumentativeness.
- The Renaissance reacted against the increasingly irrelevant concerns of the scholastics.
- Renaissance scholars majored on **rhetoric & winsome speech** and a fuller education that **appreciates beauty**.
- Looked at **history afresh**, rather than assessing morality – try to understand the differences between the historical thought and today’s era.
- Focused on the **Greek/Roman cultural heritage** (as the movement was born in Italy) but grew to focus on the study of the early church fathers & the original Greek/Hebrew/Latin texts of the Bible and other classics.

NORTHERN RENAISSANCE

- Focused more on Christian concerns – New Testament and church fathers
- It was so different than Southern Renaissance that it is referred to as “**Northern Christian Humanism**”
- Humanist = study of the humanities/classics
- Many of the Reformers were “humanists.”
- **Rhetoric & winsome appeal** + a focus on studying Scripture and the church fathers in the **original languages** fit well with Reformation ideals.
- All Reformed universities (such as Calvin’s Academy in Geneva) set up courses in the humanities too.
- All the major first generation Reformers (except Luther) were trained as humanist scholars.

DESIDERIUS ERASMUS (1466-1536)

- The greatest “humanist”
- A satirist who lobbied for Church reform.
- Wrote *In Praise of Folly* in 1509.
- The Catholic Counter-Reformation movement derided Erasmus as “laying the egg that hatched the Reformation.”
- Most lasting achievement was editing the first Greek New Testament (1516) which became the basis for numerous minor revisions all referred to as the *Textus Receptus* (Received Text).



“I wish... the Scriptures might be translated into all languages, so that not only the Scots & the Irish, but also the Turk & the Saracen might read & understand them. I long that the farm-laborer might sing them as he follows his plough, the weaver hum them to the tune of his shuttle, the traveler beguile the weariness of his journey with their stories.”

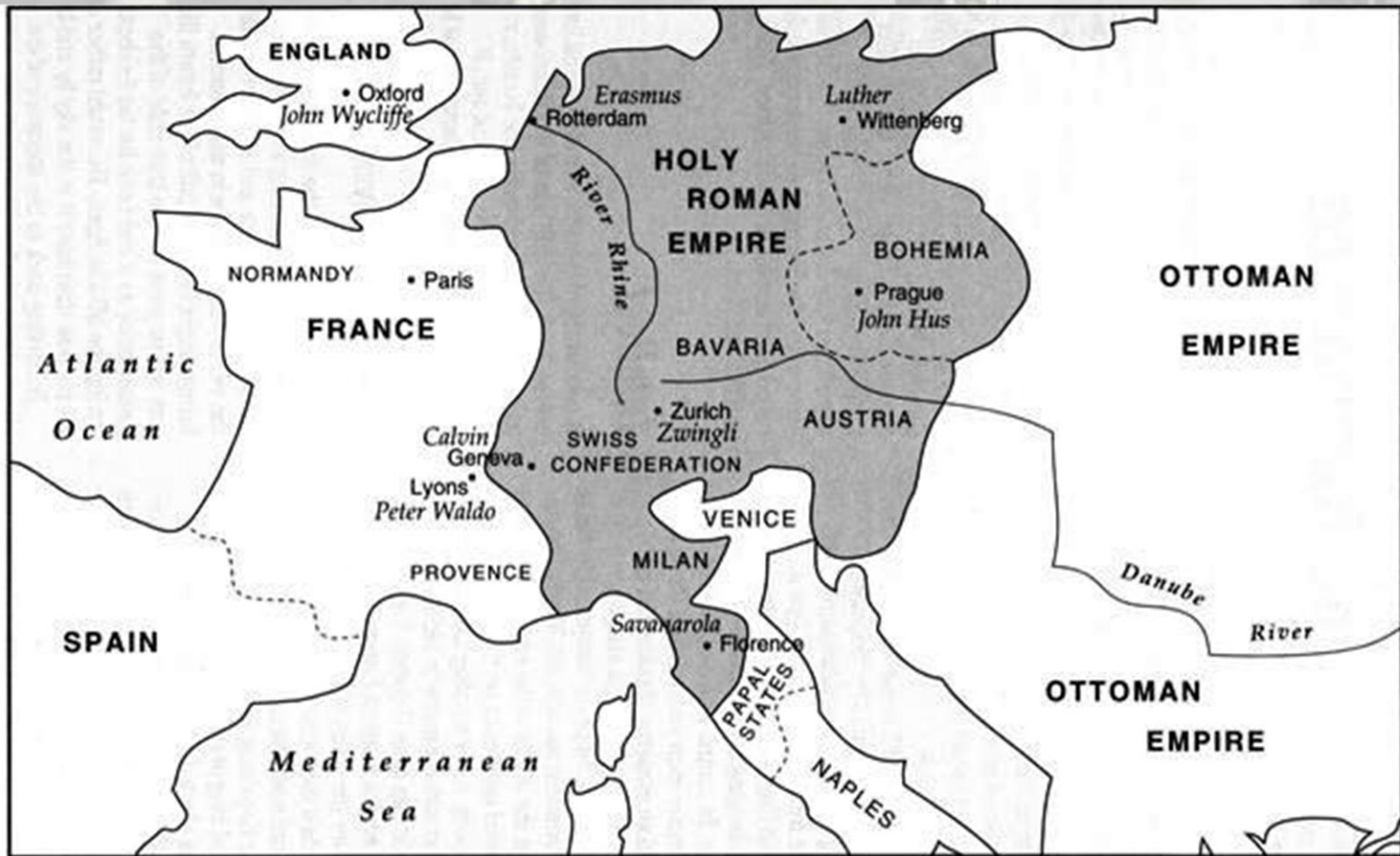
THE POWER OF PRINTING



- Who was the “man of the millennium” – Martin Luther or *Johannes Gutenberg*??
- The most revolutionary invention of the millennium was certainly the movable-type printing press.
- In A.D. 1440 Gutenberg perfected, movable-type printing & in 1455 his Gutenberg Bible was printed.
- Printing helped books become affordable, more laymen could read, & the humanists spread.
- The writings of Luther would find wide readership via the printing presses. In 2 years his 95 Theses had been translated into German and had over 300,000 copies printed.

THE RISE OF THE MIDDLE CLASS

- Feudalism and its entrenched privileged class of nobles and their land holdings was on the way out.
- A mobile **middle class**, viewed themselves the equal of nobles, even though their wealth wasn't in lands, it was in commercial and banking interests.
- There was a **rise in universities and learning**, and the middle class wanted their children educated and pursuing medicine or law as a career.
- Luther & Calvin both were sent to university due to their father's fortunes.
- The middle class and the younger culture, didn't like the old ways, and were eager to grab onto **something new** – especially as it fit their upward climb and desire to take the reigns of society.



EUROPE ON THE EVE OF THE REFORMATION

THE 1500s A.D.

~ adapted from *Exploring Church History* by
Howard F. Vos (Thomas Nelson, 1994), pg. 82



THE GERMAN REFORMATION

MARTIN LUTHER, PHILIPP MELANCHTHON

MARTIN LUTHER (1483-1546)



- The most significant figure of the millennium.
 - Almost single-handedly caused the Reformation.
 - Pursued a monastic life, to fulfill a vow (made in a thunderstorm)
 - Gradually became dissatisfied with what Rome had to offer, especially after his pilgrimage there.
 - Viewed God as austere & exacting, was extremely sensitive to his sins and fearful of judgment.
- Granted the doctor of theology degree in 1512 – a prestigious position, he was “professor of theology” at the University of Wittenberg.

“I began to understand that in this verse [Rom. 1:17] the ‘righteousness of God’ means the way... a righteous person lives through a gift of God – that is, by faith.

I began to understand that this verse means that the righteousness of God is revealed through the Gospel, but it is a passive righteousness – ...that by which the merciful God makes us righteous by faith... All at once I felt that I had been born again and entered into paradise itself through open gates. Immediately I saw the whole of Scripture in a different light.”

MARTIN LUTHER, cont.

- 1513-1518 lectured on Psalms, Romans, Galatians, Hebrews and Titus, and experienced his conversion at this time.
- 1515 he was appointed pastor of the City Church of Wittenberg, where he ministered until his death.
- In 1517, Luther nailed his 95 Theses on the door in Wittenberg, & the Reformation began.
- He was aiming for debate over the role of indulgences, but he **lit a spark** that set the whole of Europe ablaze.
- Luther grew more & more critical of Rome, as he learned the pope was aware of the excessive practices of Tetzel.
- **“As soon as a coin in the coffer rings / the soul from purgatory springs.”**
- Luther wrote and answered his critics, and everything he wrote became an instant bestseller – through the medium of printing.



DEALING WITH LUTHER

- The political culture in Germany made dealing with Luther more difficult.
- Eventually in 1521, Luther attended the Diet of Worms (a parliament of the Holy Roman Empire), under safe conduct.
- Asked to recant, Luther deliberated carefully knowing how momentous this was. After thinking it through he said these famous words:

“My conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, for to go against one’s conscience is neither honest nor safe. Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen.*”

***Editor’s note: This last line (in black) was an addition to Luther’s speech by a biographer and became the most famous line that Luther never actually spoke.**

LUTHER'S EXILE

- Frederick had Luther captured for safe keeping & kept him in a tower where he could still write but where he'd be safely hidden.
- Luther was officially excommunicated by the Roman church now, & he never had a chance to have public debate/conversation over his ideas. The Church was past reform, apparently.
- Luther used this time to **translate the New Testament** into German, and his translation became extremely influential (and served to solidify the development of the German language).
- Luther's movement became a new church. A number of German princes and free cities joined the movement and submitted an official "**protest**" to the Emperor against his forbidding the further spread of Lutheranism. (This is where "**Protestant**" comes from.)
- Distracted by the Turks showing up at the gates of Vienna, the emperor had to overlook religious differences to keep his nobles and their support in fighting the Turks.
- In 1532 he granted religious freedom.

LUTHER'S DISTINCTIVES

- He was a forceful leader and not afraid to speak his mind. In fact, he was viewed even by his contemporary reformers, as quite crass in his speech, and rude to the point of being vulgar as he disputed with opponents.
- He sought to counter the peasant's war that was in some ways spurred on by Lutheranism.
- He wrote for a wider audience and hoped to shape and mold the church in the way he thought it should go.
- He encouraged marriage for the priests, and disbanded the nunneries & monasteries.
- He married Katherina von Bora, a former nun.
- He was also known for promoting hymns. He set many to the tune of popular tavern songs.
- His most famous books are his commentary on Galatians, The Bondage of the Will (an answer to Erasmus), and his long and short catechisms.

PHILIPP MELANCHTHON (1497-1560)

- Was in many ways, Luther's right-hand man, both at Wittenberg (university), as well as with the development of the Lutheran church.
- He organized the **educational** and **publishing** side of the Reformation.
- Known as "**the teacher of Germany.**"
- Wrote a manual for the church, as well as a systematic theology and numerous commentaries.
- He helped prepare several of the **statements of faith** that the Lutherans presented in their long struggle for freedom and recognition as a separate church.
- Lutheranism spread to Scandinavia, Iceland and the Baltic States (Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia) and Prussia, pretty rapidly.
- Lutheranism stayed tied to the state.



**"Faith is nothing else than trust in the divine mercy promised in Christ....
A living faith... never fails to bring forth good fruits."**



THE SWISS REFORMATION

ZWINGLI, BULLINGER, BUCER, OECOLAMPADIUS, CALVIN

ULRICH ZWINGLI (1484-1531)

- Was a priest influenced by humanism, and began studying the New Testament intensively in 1516 in the city of Einsiedeln.
- He seems to have independently come to Reformation ideas, around the same time as Luther. And began preaching on the gospel.
- Became the priest of the cathedral of **Zurich** in 1519, and became more open and more solid in his evangelical views.
- He broke with the papacy, married, preached against celibacy, and even publicly transgressed the Lent tradition by eating sausages, remembered as "**The Affair of the Sausages.**"
- He was concerned about social reforms too, in his city-state where he ministered.
- Political problems, & wars with Catholic states, led to Zwingli's untimely death in 1531.



"Through Christ alone we are given salvation, blessedness, grace, pardon, & all that makes us in any way worthy in the sight of a righteous God."

ZWINGLI'S DISTINCTIVES

- Zwingli emphasized the **sovereignty of God** and His election in salvation.
- He originally held that the **Lord's Supper** contributed nothing to the elect, and was only a remembrance or symbol.
- It was this view that kept Luther from being able to extend communion to the Swiss (at the Marburg Colloquy, 1529), even though Zwingli was desirous of a united front against Catholicism, and a unity in the gospel.
- Later Zwingli's views lined up more with those of Calvin (later), whereby there is a spiritual presence of Christ at Communion.
- Zwingli's reform banner was picked up by his son-in-law **Heinrich Bullinger**, and eventually political freedom was won. The Zwinglians eventually merged with the Calvinist movement.

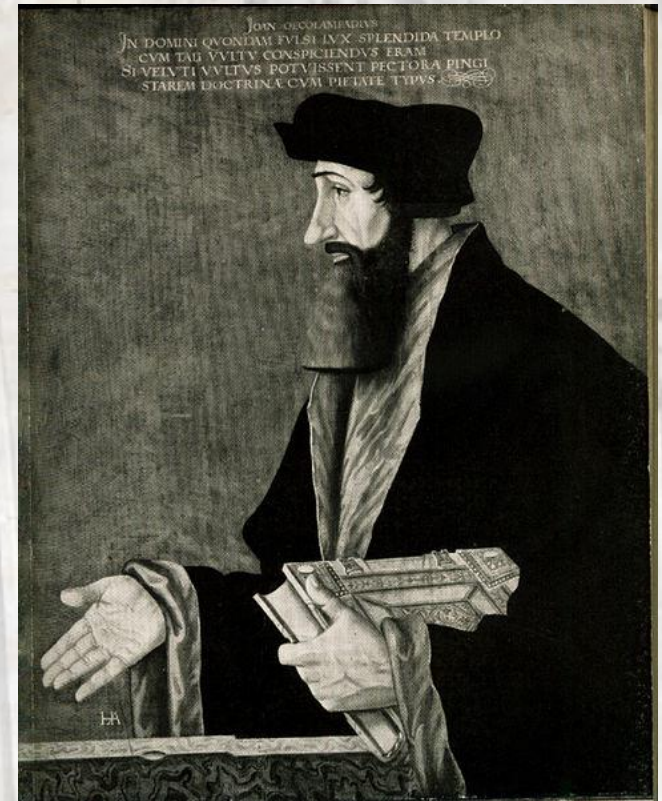
MARTIN BUCER (1491-1551)



- Was the Reformation leader in Strasbourg.
- Met Luther in 1518 and was influenced to Reform.
- Influenced John Calvin & Thomas Cranmer (England), and worked for unity among the various Reform movements.

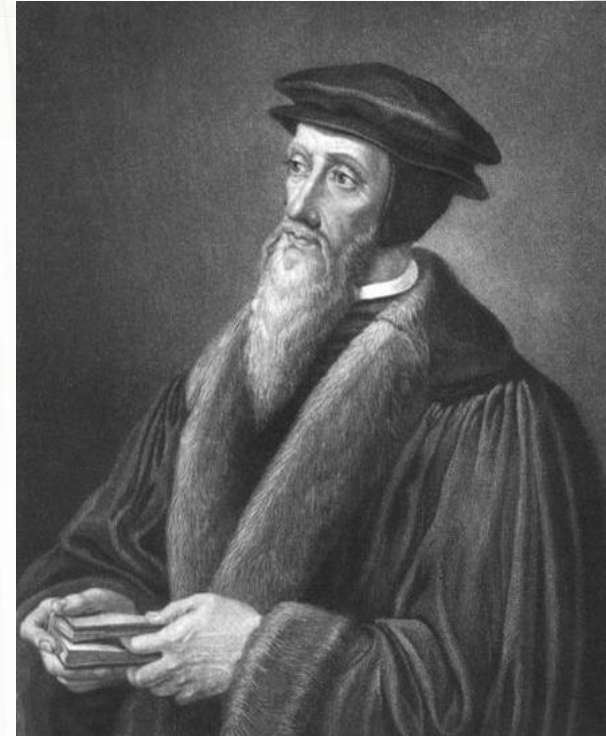
JOHANNES OECOLAMPADIUS (1482-1531)

- Was influenced by Luther's teachings when he was preacher at Augsburg.
- Eventually became the Reformation leader in Basel.
- Was known as a brilliant theologian.
- Was similar to Zwingli on the Lord's Supper, but (like Zwingli?) still venerated Mary.



JOHN CALVIN (1509-1564)

- Is really a second-generation reformer, but lived while Luther was still alive.
- Came to faith in France, & was influenced by Reformation ideas while studying law.
- Had to flee for his life, & came to Strasbourg where he was influenced by Martin Bucer.
- He published the first edition of ***Institutes of the Christian Religion*** (in hopes that his home country would be more sympathetic to the Reformation), in 1536 (only 1/4 the size of the massive work this eventually became).
- Intended to settle in Strasbourg but passed through Geneva on his way there. William Farel asked him to stay & help the church there.
- He stayed there, except for a brief exile, until his death. Was an **influential pastor**, and exerted much influence on governmental affairs – trying to live out a **biblical vision for all of life**.



CALVIN'S DISTINCTIVES

- Calvin also emphasized the **sovereignty of God** and His election in salvation.
- Held a spiritual presence of Christ in Communion.
- Became highly influential through his social policies and reform of life in Geneva. Although he did battle against the political leaders, and didn't have his way in every area.
- He envisioned a "Presbyterian" form of church-government – and a republican style of secular government.
- Founded an **influential academy**, and fostered learning. Took in numerous refugees from all of Europe, but notably England/Scotland, and sent them back to their countries as Reformation missionaries.
- His works were translated into English more often than others, and years after his death his influence grew. In his day, he was one of many Reformers in Switzerland.

CALVIN & SERVETUS

- Calvin was involved in the execution of Michael Servetus, a Spanish Unitarian, who was considered a heretic by Catholic and Protestant alike.
- Calvin's image has sustained a big blow through his involvement in this high profile execution.
- This is the only execution Calvin was involved in, and he argued for a more humane method of execution (beheading vs. burning at the stake).
- It was actually against Geneva's code to execute anyone for their faith. But the city leaders were moved to do this as he was so universally condemned.
- Calvin was a man of his age, and the state-church idea was still in place where crimes against the church would be treasonous as they are akin to crimes against the state.
- The atrocities committed in France and England over religion, should give us pause in condemning Calvin's actions in this one isolated case.

CALVIN'S LEGACY

- No Reformation author is as prominent today as Calvin, nor are any so readable.
- He has given us **commentaries** on all the books of the Bible except Song of Solomon & Revelation.
- His ***Institutes of the Christian Religion*** are a true classic.
- For all his scholarship and governmental influence in Geneva, he was first and foremost a pastor. He preached an average of five times a week nearly his entire life, and he also visited the sick and cared for people. His life and lasting impact is a true testimony to God's grace.
- John Piper's book *The Legacy of Sovereign Joy*, highlights both Luther and Calvin's life stories, and that of Augustine. A great introduction to the lives of these heroes of the Church.

“The whole thing may be summed up like this. Christ, given to us by God's kindness, is understood and taken hold of by faith, which enables us to gain two benefits. First, reconciled to us by Christ's righteousness, God becomes, instead of a judge, an indulgent Father. Second, sanctified by his Spirit, we aspire to integrity and purity of life.”

The background of the slide features a faded image of four large, standing statues of Reformation figures, likely Martin Luther, John Calvin, Ulrich Zwingli, and Huldreich Zechlin, dressed in traditional clerical robes. Below the statues, a stone wall is visible with a carved inscription in the IHS monogram, flanked by decorative flourishes.

CONFLICT & DEVELOPMENT

LUTHERANISM VS. "CALVINISM"

CONFLICT & SPREAD

- As hinted at already, Luther and his followers would not give full communion to the Swiss due to their differences over Communion.
- The highly charged political state of the day led to political maneuvering and wars when it came to implementing Protestant faiths in various locales.
- And between Lutheran theologians as well as amongst Swiss leaders, there were differences in emphases and various views.
- Ultimately the Lutheran Church came into being and held sway in Germany/Scandinavia, and the Reformed Church in Netherlands/Switzerland (with the Presbyterian Church an offshoot of that in Scotland and England).



EUROPE DURING THE REFORMATION

c. A.D. 1550

~ adapted from *Exploring Church History* by Howard F. Vos (Thomas Nelson, 1994), pg. 101

DEVELOPMENT

- As the idea of having churches separate from Rome held on, these churches went on to develop their own confessions and creeds.
- **Augsburg Confession** (1530) – Lutheran
- **Belgic Confession** (1566) – Reformed
- **Second Helvetic Confession** (1566) – Reformed
- **Formula of Concord** (1577) – Lutheran
- **Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion** (1563) – Anglican
- **Westminster Confession of Faith** (1646) – Presbyterian
- **Savoy Declaration** (1658) – Congregationalist
- **London Baptist Confession** (1689) – Baptist

FOR NEXT TIME

- Finish the “Reformation” slides:
 - Anabaptists & the Radical Reformation
 - The English & Scottish Reformations
- Cover the Puritans & the Legacy of the Reformers