

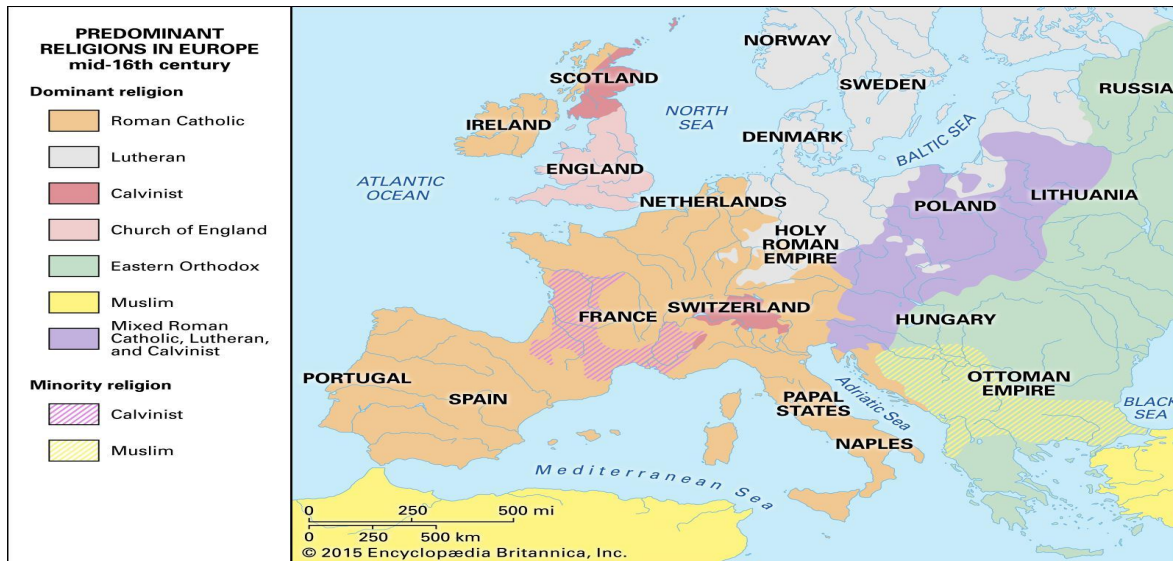
Theological Equipping Class

Major Player: John Calvin

June 6, 2021

Reformers and Reformations

- German Reformation: Lutheran
- Swiss Reformation: Reformed
- English Reformation: Anglican



Early Life, Education, Conversion and Early Career

- Born July 10, 1509 in Noyon, France
- training to be a Catholic priest
 - "I was stubbornly tied to the superstitions of the papacy." (Calvin)
- From theology to law
- Conversion to Protestantism
- Exile from France
- Goal: quiet scholarly pursuits!
- Institutes of the Christian Religion: first edition 1536
 - The Institute of the Christian Religion, Containing almost the Whole Sum of Piety and Whatever It is Necessary to Know in the Doctrine of Salvation. A Work Very Well Worth Reading by All Persons Zealous for Piety, and Lately Published. A Preface to the Most



Christian King of France, in Which this Book is Presented to Him as a Confession of Faith.
Author, John Calvin, of Noyon. Written in Basel, MDXXXVI.

- Clarity and brevity?
- "Nearly all the wisdom we possess, that is to say, true and sound wisdom, consists of two parts: the knowledge of God and of ourselves."

Geneva

- William Farel and a city in need

"May God condemn your repose, and the calm you seek for study, if before such a great need you withdraw, and refuse your assistance and help." (Farel)



WILLIAM FAREL

- Calvin's response: "I felt as if God from heaven had laid his mighty hand upon me to stop me in my course—and I was so terror stricken that I did not continue my journey."

- Attempts to reform the city
- Exile from Geneva

Exile and Return

- 1538, Strausberg: 2nd edition of the Institutes
- The search for a bride

- "I am not one of those insane kind of lovers, who, once smitten by the first glance of a fine figure, cherishes even the faults of his lover. The only beauty that seduces me is of one who is chaste, not too fastidious, modest, thrifty, patient, and hopefully she will be attentive to my health." (Calvin)

- Idelette de Bure: married in 1540

Grief and sorrow

- "The Lord has certainly inflicted a severe and bitter wound in the death of our baby son. But He is Himself a Father and knows best what is good for his children." (Calvin)
- "You know well how tender, or rather soft, my mind is. Had not a powerful self-control been given to me, I could not have borne up so long. And truly, mine is no common source of grief. I have been bereaved of the best companion of my life, of one who, had it been so ordained, would have willingly shared not only my poverty but even my death. During her life she was the faithful



helper of my ministry. From her I never experienced the slightest hindrance. She was never troublesome to me throughout the whole course of her illness, but was more anxious about her children than about herself." (Calvin)

- Cardinal Sadoletto writes to Geneva
- Calvin's response: "Here is a writing which has hands and feet. I rejoice that God raises up such men." (Luther)
- Invitation to Return (1541)
 - "Afterwards the Lord had pity on the city of Geneva and quieted the deadly conflicts there... I was compelled against my own will, to take again my former position. The safety of that church was far too important in my mind for me to refuse to meet even death for its sake." (Calvin)
- Hard Times
 - Sickness
 - Opposition
 - Conflict with the Libertines (1553)
 - "These hands you may crush, these arms you may lop off, my life you may take, my blood is yours, you may shed it; but you shall never force me to give holy things to the profaned, and dishonor the table of my God." (Calvin)



A Brief Overview of Calvinism

1. Calvin both was and wasn't a Calvinist.
2. Calvinism doesn't refer to the entire theology of John Calvin.

Total depravity

Unconditional election

Limited atonement

Irresistible grace

Perseverance of the saints

- Radical depravity, Overcoming grace, Sovereign election, Eternal life, Singular redemption
- Bad people, already elected, completely atoned for, overwhelmingly called, never falling away.

3. Calvinists didn't come up with the five points of Calvinism.

- The University of Geneva
- Jacob Arminius.
- Questions about Predestination and Election



- The question that divides Arminius from the Reformers is not whether God predestines, but on what basis does God predestine? Both Arminians & Calvinists agree that God chooses man & man chooses God, but the question is which is the cause and which is the effect. Does God choose us & THEREFORE we are brought to faith? (Calvinism) or does God simply foresee who will choose him and therefore predestine them? (Arminianism)

- Arminius dies in 1609
- The Remonstrants offer a remonstrance (1610) – 5 articles for debate
- Reformed response: The Synod of Dort - The Canons of Dort

4. Calvinism is probably not the best name.

- "the doctrines of grace"
- Reformed theology
- Calvinists: all the Reformers, John Owen, Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, Charles Spurgeon, BB Warfield, and modern guys like JI Packer, RC Sproul and John Piper.
- Calvinist missionaries: William Carey, David Brainerd, David Livingstone, & Adoniram Judson.

- your theology is the ceiling of your doxology
- Being a biblicist

5. The five points aren't the best summary of Calvin's emphases and theological passions.

Calvin's Theological Passions

1. The glory of God

- "No man ever had a profounder sense of God than he." (BB Warfield)
- "You... touch upon justification by faith, the first and keenest subject of controversy between us... Wherever the knowledge of it is taken away, the glory of Christ is extinguished." (Calvin)
- The thing [O God] at which I chiefly aimed, and for which I most diligently labored, was, that the glory of thy goodness and justice . . . might shine forth conspicuous, that the virtue and blessings of thy Christ . . . might be fully displayed (Calvin)

2. The glory of God's word.

- "Our faith should not be based on what we think, but on what God has promised us. Like Paul said, faith comes forth from hearing, not by listening to all the talk that men are producing, but by hearing from the Word of God alone." (Calvin)
- "Let the pastors boldly dare all things by the word of God. . . . Let them constrain all the power, glory, and excellence of the world to give place to and to obey the divine majesty of this word. Let them enjoin everyone by it, from the highest to the lowest. Let them edify the body of Christ. Let them devastate Satan's reign. Let them pasture the sheep, kill the wolves, instruct and exhort the rebellious. Let them bind and loose thunder and lightning, if necessary, but let them do all according to the word of God." (Calvin)
- "We owe to the Scripture the same reverence which we owe to God, because it has proceeded from Him alone, and has nothing of man mixed with it." (Calvin)

Critiques of Calvin

1. A few theological concerns.
2. Legalism.
3. The Servetus affair.
 - October 27, 1553; Michael Servetus was burned for heresy with Calvin's approval.

Mitigating factors to consider & the danger of anachronism

- Check out the blog: "Calvin Killed a Man for more."



Flaws in our Friends

- Cancel, ignore or acknowledge

A World of Good

1. Theology
2. Education
3. He was instrumental in continuing the idea of the protestant work ethic.
4. He was known as the "savior of the Reformation."
5. Religious reform.