

**Church History, Lesson 10:
The Reformation Church, Part 3 (1517 – 1648):
Anglican Reformation and Counter-Reformation**

29. Anglican Reformation

a. Political/Ecclesiastical Reformation (16th century): Anglicanism

- i. Henry VIII (1491 – 1547): Under Henry VIII, the church in England broke from Rome so that the “Church *in* England” became the “Church *of* England.”⁵³
1. Henry was married to Catherine of Aragon. Catherine had one surviving child, Mary I (Mary Tudor). Henry had no son from Catherine.
 2. As Catherine grew older, the chance of a son grew slim. So in 1527, Henry asked Pope Clement VII for an annulment. The Pope refused because Catherine was the aunt of the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, who controlled the Pope.
 3. In January 1533, Henry secretly married Anne Boleyn. Anne gave birth to Elizabeth in September 1533.
 4. The Pope responded by excommunicating Henry.
 5. Henry appointed Thomas Cranmer (1489 – 1556) as archbishop of Canterbury, and Henry eventually led the church in England to the Act of Supremacy in 1534 where Henry was declared the head of the Church of England. Thus the church separated from the papacy.
 6. Henry retained, however, all the theology of the Roman Church. He wanted an English Catholic Church not a Roman Catholic Church.
 7. Two changes were made, however:
 - a. Suppression of the monasteries.
 - b. The publication of the Bible in English.

⁵³ Shelley, *Church History In Plain Language*, 276.

- ii. Edward VI (1537 – 1553): Under Edward VI (son of Henry VIII third wife, Jane Seymour), the Church of England further reformed along Protestant lines.
 - 1. Many practices from the Roman church were repealed: clerical celibacy, Mass, confessions to a priest; the cup was restored to the laity, and images were removed from churches.
 - 2. The Latin service of worship was replaced with the *Book of Common Prayer* (1549), drafted by the reformer, Thomas Cranmer. [Note: see Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of Church History*, chart 61, for other English Reformers during the 16th century who helped reform England.]
 - 3. Cranmer also drew up Forty-Two Articles (1553) of religion which were Protestant.
 - iii. Mary I (1516 – 1558): Under Mary I (daughter of Henry VIII first wife, Catherine of Aragon), she returned England to Rome. She had hundreds of Protestants put to death, including Cranmer. Her actions earned her the title “Bloody Mary.”
 - iv. Elizabeth I (1533 – 1603): Under Elizabeth I (daughter of Henry VIII second wife, Anne Boleyn), the Anglican Church became neither Roman nor completely Reformed.
 - 1. She called for the revision of the Forty-Two Articles, which became the Thirty-Nine Articles (1563).
 - 2. The Thirty-Nine Articles were “moderately Reformed” but vague enough to be as inclusive as possible. The attempt was a *Via Media* (Middle Way) between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism.
- b. Theological Reformation (17th century): Puritanism
- i. Reason: Puritans, as they were called after 1560, wanted to “purify” the Anglican Church in accordance with the Bible. Some examples:
 - 1. Removal of clerical vestments and liturgical ritual.
 - 2. Opposed sign of the cross, saint’s days, clerical absolution, and kneeling for Communion.

ii. Causes:

1. Theological: The Bible was printed in English in which the Puritans were able to discover theology from the Bible.⁵⁴
2. Political: 4 stages (1560 – 1689)
 - a. Stage 1 (1560 – 1603): Under Elizabeth I, the Church of England gained ground in becoming more Protestant, especially with the Thirty-Nine Articles. Yet Puritans desired more reform.
 - b. Stage 2 (1603 – 1649): Under James I (1566 – 1625) and Charles I (1600 – 1649), the Church of England retained many of the ceremonies, Prayer Book, and bishops.
 - c. Stage 3 (1649 – 1660): Under Oliver Cromwell (1599 - 1658), with his victory over the English Civil War (1642 – 1648), Parliament abolished the episcopacy and commissioned the Westminster Assembly, which established Presbyterian Orthodoxy.
 - d. Stage 4 (1660 – 1689): Under Charles II (1630 – 1685) and James II (1633 – 1701), episcopacy was restored. Not until the Act of Toleration in 1689, under the reign of William III (1650 – 1702) where Puritans given freedom to worship.

iii. Results:

1. Political: 1689 Act of Toleration granted freedom of worship to non-Anglican Christians.
2. Theology: Presbyterian Orthodoxy
 - a. Over one hundred Protestant leaders at the Westminster Assembly (1643 – 1647).
 - b. Results
 - i. Form of Church Government (1643 – 1645)

⁵⁴ For more on the theology of the Puritans, see: Joel R. Beeke and Mark Jones, *A Puritan Theology: Doctrine for Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books), 2012.

ii. Directory for Public Worship (1643 – 1645)

iii. Confession of Faith (1645 – 1646)

iv. Catechisms (1647 – 1648): Shorter and Longer Catechisms

3. Geography: with no religious toleration before 1689 in England, many Puritans fled to Continental Europe and America.

30. Counter-Reformation (Roman Catholic Reformation)

a. Internal Reform: the Church saw the need to reform itself along moral and practical lines.

i. Papal and cardinal reform:

1. Popes should ordain only qualified bishops.

2. Bishops must live in their diocese.

3. Clergy should be educated.

4. Priests cannot maintain concubines.

ii. New orders: Theatines, Capuchins, Discalced Carmelites.

b. External Reform: Response to Protestantism

i. Society of Jesus (Jesuits)

1. Organized in 1534 by Ignatius Loyola (1491 – 1556); established by the Pope in 1540.

2. The order emphasized absolute obedience to the pope, purity, poverty, and chastity.

3. The main functions of the order were education, fighting heresy with well trained preachers, and foreign missions.

4. Francis Xavier (1506 – 1552) was an outstanding missionary for the Jesuits.

- ii. Inquisition: punishment for heretical beliefs not in accord with the Church.
- iii. Index of Books: a list of books people were not allowed to read.
- iv. Council of Trent (1545 – 1563): Three phases
 - 1. Phase 1 (1545 – 1547):
 - a. The Bible (in the Latin Vulgate including the Apocrypha) and church tradition are the final authority.
 - b. Man is “justified” by faith and works.
 - 2. Phase 2 (1551 – 1552):
 - a. Doctrine of transubstantiation was re-affirmed.
 - b. The doctrine of the Mass was upheld.
 - 3. Phase 3 (1562 – 1563):
 - a. Purgatory was reaffirmed.
 - b. Seven sacraments were reconsidered.
- c. Summarizing the net effect of the Catholic Reformation and Counter-Reformation, Noll says, “the sum total . . . [of reform] left the Catholic Church at the end of the sixteenth century a systematically different body than it had been a century before.”⁵⁵
- d. When did the Roman Catholic Church as the Roman Catholic Church begin? My argument is that the Roman Catholic Church, at least in terms of its doctrine of salvation, began during the Reformation. Reasons:
 - i. The conclusions of the Council of Trent, known as the Tridentine Profession of Faith, were clearly different than the Reformers.
 - ii. The history of doctrine. If we look at the history of doctrine, we see that the doctrine of salvation wasn’t really discussed before the Reformation time. It isn’t until the Reformation, when serious discussion on this doctrine takes place. An analogy from Schaff:

⁵⁵ Noll, *Turning Points*, 202.

The distinction between pre-Reformation Catholicism and post-Reformation Romanism, in their attitudes towards Protestantism, has its historical antecedent and parallel in the distinction between pre-Christian Israel which prepared the way for Christianity, and post-Christian Judaism which is opposed it as an apostasy.⁵⁶

31. Thirty Years War (1618 – 1648)

- a. War broke out due to persecution resulting from the principle of *cuius region eius religio* (“whose realm, his religion”). This was the principle of religious freedom per geographically area that was established at the Peace of Augsburg (1555).
- b. The war fought principally in Germany between Roman Catholics and Protestants.
- c. The total population of the Holy Roman Empire was reduced by two-thirds.
- d. The war ended with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648. This event marks a significant event in the history of the Christianity, because a new attitude of religion predominates. All Protestant groups (Calvinist and Lutheran) and Roman Catholics are given legal status and peaceable toleration, at least on the Continent.

32. Results of the Reformation

- a. Return to Biblical doctrine summarized in the five solas:
 - i. *Sola Fide* (Faith alone): What must I do to be saved?
 - ii. *Solus Christus* (Christ alone): What must I trust?
 - iii. *Sola Scriptura* (Scripture alone): What must I obey?
 - iv. *Sola Gratia* (Grace alone): What must I earn?
 - v. *Soli Deo Gloria* (God’s glory alone): What is the point?
- b. Two branches of Western Christianity: Roman Catholic and Protestant. Protestantism differed from Roman Catholicism in three significant ways.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Schaff, *The History of the Christian Church*, vol. 7, 4.

⁵⁷ The wording for these three differences comes from: *Ibid.*, 16.

- i. The supremacy of the Scripture over tradition (objective difference). [Sometimes this is called the “formal principle” of the Reformation.]
 - ii. The supremacy of faith over works (subjective difference). [Sometimes this is called “material principle” of the Reformation.]
 - iii. The supremacy of the Christian people over an exclusive priesthood (ecclesiastical difference).
 - iv. For more differences between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, see Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of Church History*, chart 70.
- c. Protestant confessions:
- i. The Protestant belief in *sola Scriptura* did not nullify the ancient creeds, nor did it prevent the Reformers from producing their own confessions. The Reformation produced, second to the early creeds of the 4th and 5th centuries, a great period of credal development. (See Walton, *Chronological and Background Charts of Church History*, 67, for some of the major Protestant confessions of the Reformation era.)
 - ii. The reason the Protestant Reformation produced these confessions is because the Reformers saw the Scriptures, as the GCBC statement of faith says the “Bible constitutes the only infallible rule of faith and practice.” The key word is “infallible.” The Reformers saw the creeds and confessions of having authority for faith and practice, but not infallible authority.
 - iii. In insisting on *sola Scriptura*, the Reformers were not insisting on *solo Scriptura*. The latter says, “The Bible constitutes the only rule of faith and practice.” Thus, creeds and confessions are important for the life and health of the church.⁵⁸
 - iv. Yet *sola Scriptura* is not the same thing as Romanism teaches. As a result, Roman Catholics don’t approach doctrine issues the same way as a Protestant.
- d. Religious liberty:

⁵⁸ For a defense of this proposition, see: Carl R. Trueman, *The Creedal Imperative* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012).

- i. By the end of the Reformation the idea of religious liberty and freedom of the conscious was well established.
 - ii. The Westminster Confession of Faith (1647) says that “God alone is Lord of the conscience” (20.2).
 - iii. Religious liberty would eventually come to America in the form of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution (1789): “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”
- e. Denominationalism:
- i. Up until the Reformation you had one universal church in the West.
 - ii. The Reformation brought freedom (as per the above point), which means that Christians had the freedom to differ, first resulting in national churches and then resulting in denominations, which marks Christianity in the West to this day.
 - iii. “Denominationalism, as originally designed, is the opposite of sectarianism. A sect claims the authority of Christ for itself alone. It believes that it is the true body of Christ; all truth belongs to it and to no other religion. So by definition a sect is exclusive. The word *denomination* by contrast was an inclusive term. It implied that the Christian group called or *denominated* by a particular name was but one member of a larger group, the church, to which all denominations belong.”⁵⁹
- He concludes: “In the end, then, the denominational form of the church has marked the recent centuries of Christian history, not because it is ideal, but because it is better than any alternative the years [before] have offered.”⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Shelley, *Church History In Plain Language*, 318.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 320.