

JOHN KNOX
AND THE
ORIGINS OF THE KIRK OF SCOTLAND

Political Timeline
Timeline

John Knox

1542

James V of Scotland dies, succeeded by his 6-day-old-daughter, Mary Stuart, who spends her youth at the French Catholic court with her mother, Mary of Guise. Cardinal-Archbishop David Beaton of St. Andrew's begins to act as Regent.

Began as a Catholic priest and canon [Church] lawyer.
Around this time, fanatically converts to Protestantism,
a follower of the leading protestant preacher, George Wishart.

1543

Earl of Arran [Protestant] presumptively claims Scottish Throne, brings in vernacular Bible and dissolves some Monastaries. Makes friends with Henry VIII and allows an English army to invade.

1546

Beaton leads backlash against Protestants, tortures and burns Wish hart as a heretic.

Takes over Scottish Protestant leadership.
Assists Arran faction to assassinate Beaton
and take St. Andrew's Castle.

1547

Preaches first publicly noted sermon to Protestant
nobles at St. Andrew's.

*French army invades Scotland on Mary Stuart's behalf,
captures St. Andrew's castle...*

...and Knox, who spends the next 2 years rowing a
French penal galley; on release, he goes to England, where he
subsequently objected loudly to Cranmer's 1552 *Book of
Common Prayer*, refusing to become a bishop.

1553

*Mary Tudor ascends to the English throne,
restores Catholicism.*

Goes into exile in Calvin's Geneva.

Knox would adopt Calvinism as the vehicle for his Protestant revolt in Scotland, becoming convinced that Calvin's Geneva theocracy represented "the most perfect school of Christ that ever was on earth since the days of the Apostles." Knox would supervise the Kirk in Scotland with a Calvin-like iron fist, believing that he too was directly guided by divine command.

Knox found, a Calvin did, in the Old Testament more solace than was available to him in the New, and it was the angry, vengeful God of the Books of Moses [first 5 of the OT] whom Knox preached. He drew his strength from this wrathful God, as he turned his full attention toward the condemnation of the Catholics: Since they were the children of Satan, not God, Jesus' command to love one's enemies did not apply to Catholics! Both Luther and Calvin had attacked the Catholic system and its hierarchy, but Knox damned all lay and clerical Catholic believers, reveling in the "perfect hatred" for Catholics which he understood the Holy Spirit to have planted in the heart of every true Protestant.

1554

Mary Tudor weds Philip II of Spain...

...writes an inflammatory pamphlet in response to the Catholic English/Spanish marriage.

1555

Mary of Guise leaves Scottish Protestant nobles be, in order to gain support for Mary Stuart's planned marriage to Prince Francis II.

Returns to England to wed, preaches to influential Scottish Protestants.

1556

Returns to Geneva; Scottish bishops condemn him a heretic and burn him in effigy.

1558

Mary Stuart weds Prince Francis II.

Hatred of Catholics plus mistrust of women combine in pamphlet *First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*

Knox calls Mary Tudor "Jezabel", so contrary to nature is a woman ruler, and a violation of God's law. "Woman, in her greatest perfection, was made to serve and obey man, not to rule and command him.

Mary Tudor dies; Protestant Elizabeth succeeds her.

John Knox 3

Cannot go back to England – Elizabeth furious
over *First Blast*; returns to Scotland.

1559

Henry II of France dies; Francis II becomes king...

...and Knox begins to preach for and encourage Protestant rebellion against Francis/Mary Stuart reign.

Knox's toleration of freedom of conscience extended only to those who accepted his particular interpretation of Holy Writ. All others: heretics who merited burning at the stake. He condemned any and all who protested his view as pagan rationalists, determined to pervert the true Word of God by logical argument. Reason and faith were completely incompatible: "For what imprudence is it, to prefer corrupt nature and blind reason to God's Scripture?"

1560

Incursions by English armies assist Scottish Protestant nobles to use "Reform Parliament" to establish a Calvinist Kirk of Scotland in August. Not approved by Queen Mary, and thus illegal; but her absence allows the nobles a critical period of consolidation.

Knox writes his First Book of Discipline, calling for state regulation and supervision of the Kirk, so as to completely unite church and state. Yearly, the superintendents and deacons would gather to elect new deacons and elders. The proposal never gained the full support of the Scottish nobles.

The Confession of Faith, also formulated in this year by Knox and his associates, became, upon approval of the Scottish Parliament, the official Scottish Creed, acknowledging: the Trinity, Original Sin [by which humans "utterly defiled" the image of God in which they were created], predestination, 2 sacraments [and only 2, ala Calvin], and the notion that the state should donate land to the Church, in order to achieve their ultimate God-ordained union. The last item was rejected by the nobility.

1561

Mary Stuart returns to Scotland in August; she and her court remain Catholic, but she is forced by circumstance to accept the new Protestant order.

1567

Mary Stuart abdicates in favor of her son, James VI; becomes Elizabeth's long-term GUEST.

1572

John Knox dies.

***Private Papers*, Timothy E. Duncan, 2006, 2009.**

Based in large part upon:

Gilles, Anthony E., *The People of Anguish*, 1987.

Gregory, Brad S., PhD, “John Knox and the Scottish Reformation” [Lecture 21],

***The History of Christianity in the Reformation Era*. © 2001, The Teaching Company Limited Partnership.**