

1  **John Calvin**2  **Calvin's Life**

- John Calvin was born in France in 1509.
- As a student in Paris, Calvin experienced a conversion and became a reformer.
- Because of his support for reform, Calvin was forced to flee to Switzerland.
- In Basel, Switzerland, in 1536, he wrote *The Institutes of the Christian Religion* (commonly called the *Institutes*), an explanation of doctrine.
  - The *Institutes* brought Calvin recognition as an important Protestant leader.
  - He continued expanding the *Institutes* for the rest of his life.

3 

- Later in 1536, Calvin was traveling to Strasbourg when he stopped for the night in the French-speaking Swiss city of Geneva.
  - As it had in many Swiss cities, Zwinglian reform had spread to Geneva.
  - Geneva's leader in reform, William Farel, convinced Calvin to stay and help him.
- Calvin began vigorous reforming efforts in Geneva.
  - He wrote a doctrinal statement which all of Geneva's citizens were required to accept.
  - He worked to teach the people of the city.
  - He enforced high standards of Christian behavior and excommunicated those who did not meet them.

4 

- The Geneva city council was unwilling to accept such high standards, and Calvin and Farel left in 1538.
- After three years in Strasbourg, Calvin returned to Geneva after a change in government, and he was active there until his death in 1564.
  - Calvin picked up where he left off, promoting his teachings and enforcing righteous living.
  - Geneva became a magnet for reformers from all over Europe.

5  **Calvin's Teachings**

- Calvin's central doctrine was the sovereignty of God.
- This led him, like Augustine and Luther, to teach predestination, a doctrine which Calvin elaborated.
  - Total depravity
  - Unconditional election
  - Limited atonement
  - Irresistible grace
  - Perseverance of the saints

6 

- Christians must submit to God's sovereignty by living righteously.

- The church must work to cause all the earth to recognize God's sovereignty.
- Together, Calvin's teachings and the teachings of his followers constitute Reformed theology.

7 

For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?

*Romans 9:15–24*

8 

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

*Ephesians*

*1:3–12*

9 

For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

*Romans 8:29–30*

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

*1 Peter 1:1–2*

**10  Calvin's Influence**

- Calvin's ideas spread throughout Western Europe.
- French Calvinists were called Huguenots.
- In the Netherlands, Calvinism became the dominant form of Protestantism as the Dutch Reformed Church.
- In Scotland, John Knox spread Calvinism as the leader of the Presbyterians.
- Calvinism also remained in Switzerland and spread to parts of Germany.