

# John Knox and the Scottish Reformation

## I. Career of John Knox

### A. Descriptions

1. “The Thundering Scot”: A Prophet
2. “Here lies a man who neither flattered nor feared any flesh.” (Earl of Morton)

### B. Chronology

1. 1514?: Knox born
2. 1542: James V of Scotland dies; Mary Guise rules as regent until 1561
3. 1543?: Knox converted
4. 1545: Serves as bodyguard to martyr George Wishart
5. 1547: Knox as chaplain to the assassins of Cardinal Beaton at St. Andrews Castle
6. 1547-48: 17 months as a French galley slave
7. 1549-53: Ministry in England under Edward VI
8. 1553-58: Marian exile in Zurich, Geneva, Frankfurt
9. 1559: Knox returns to Scotland: Sermon against idolatry (May 10) traditional date of the beginning of the Scottish Reformation
10. 1560: Scottish parliament adopts “First Scots Confession”
11. 1561: Mary, Queen of Scots, returns from France
12. 1566: Murder of Queen’s secretary, Rizzio
13. 1567: Murder of Queen’s husband
14. 1568: Abdication and flight of Mary to England; James VI (I) made king
15. 1572: Death of Knox

## II. Contribution of John Knox

### A. Theological contribution

1. Opposition to Catholicism
  - a. Steadfast opposition to the Mass
  - b. Sought to purge all elements of “popery” from the church: “Others snipped at the branches of popery; but he strikes at the roots, to destroy the whole.”
  - c. Saw Catholic “idolatry” as a key sin of a covenanted people
2. Laid basis for the Presbyterian Church of Scotland
  - a. Reformed in theology
  - b. More austere than Church of England
  - c. Instituted tighter discipline
3. Key: OT emphasis to see Scotland like Israel

### B. On Government

1. Conflicts with Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots
  - a. Five stormy interviews
  - b. Both a *prophet* and a *citizen*: Insisted on right to defend the faith and speak his opinion
2. Knox’s “Social Contract”
  - a. *Not* between rulers & subjects
  - b. Between God & rulers: Rule a trust given by God
3. *First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1558)
  - a. Title refers to “unnatural rule” by women
  - b. Originally directed against Mary Tudor (w/ probably some ref. to Mary Guise)
  - c. Part of reason Knox labeled a misogynist

4. Right of rebellion
  - a. Anabaptists: passive resistance, refusing to obey unrighteous laws
  - b. Calvin eventually, hesitantly, advocated the doctrine of “lower magistrates” who may resist tyrants
  - c. Knox taught an active resistance and duty to overthrow tyrants, even down to the peasantry
- C. On Reforming the Nation
  1. Saw Geneva as “the most perfect school of Christ that ever was in the earth since the days of the Apostles. In other places I confess Christ to be truly preached; but manners and religion to be so seriously reformed, I have not yet seen in any other place besides” and his model for Scotland
  2. Sought a thoroughgoing reformation of education, government, the church, and “morals” (whole moral tone of society)
  3. “Scotland is his monument”: In the Reformation, Scotland moved from the Middle Ages to the modern world