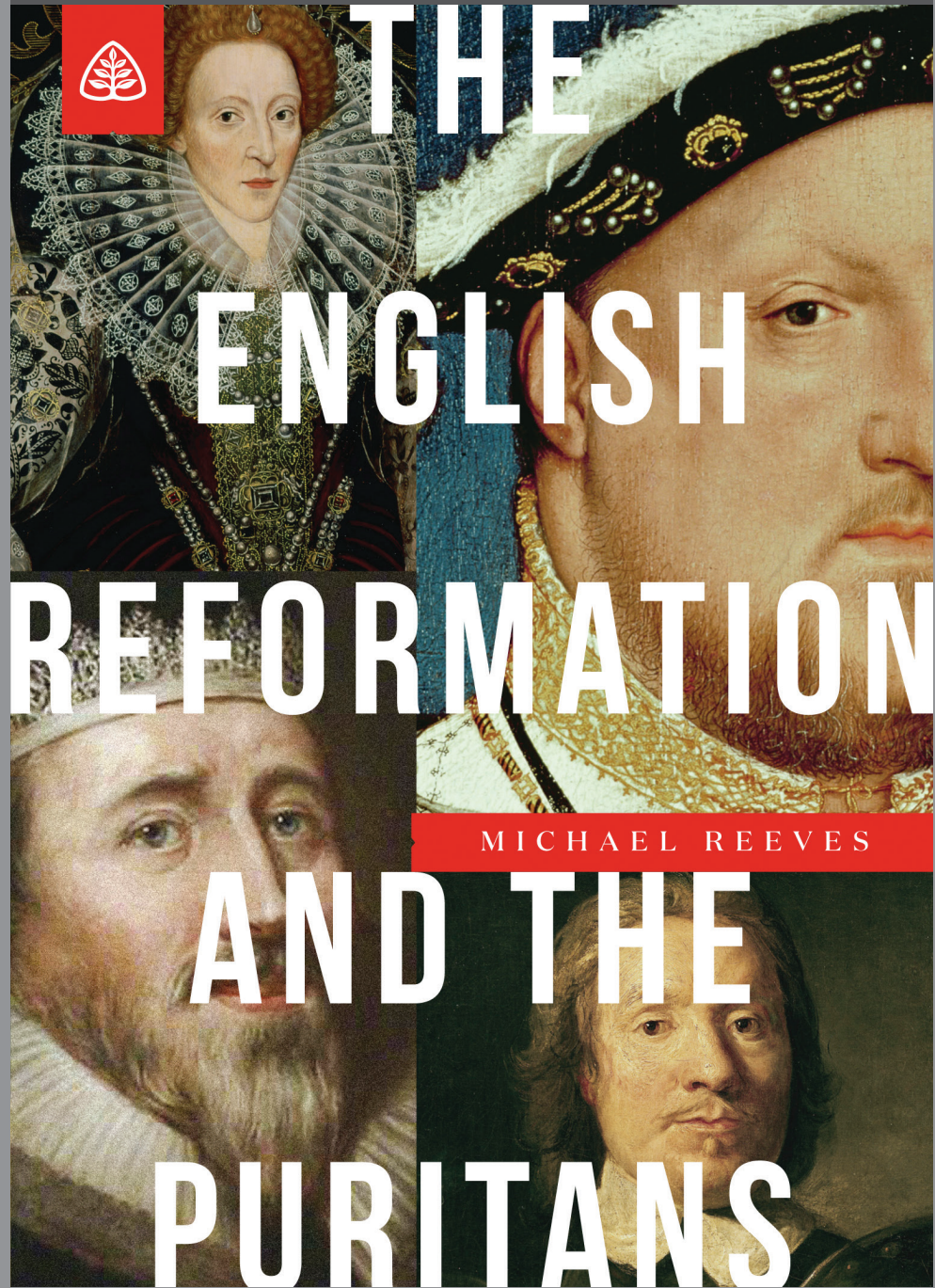


S T U D Y G U I D E



THE

ENGLISH

REFORMATION

MICHAEL REEVES

AND THE

PURITANS

S T U D Y G U I D E

The English Reformation and the Puritans

Michael Reeves



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Tyndale & the Early Reformers

MESSAGE INTRODUCTION

The Reformation in England is a thrilling story of the recapturing of God's grace. In this first lesson, Dr. Reeves relates the emergence of the English Reformation in connection to influences outside the country, especially Erasmus and Luther. We then learn of the foundational role played by Thomas Bilney and the White Horse Inn within England. The lesson culminates with a focus on the English Reformer William Tyndale, particularly in connection to his translation of the Bible into English. Such forbidden labors and the product that resulted not only led to his martyrdom but also catalyzed the Reformation cause in England.

SCRIPTURE READING

Romans 1:14–32

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. To see the connection of the sixteenth-century English Reformation to Reformation developments outside England in Continental Europe
2. To understand the foundation in England of the Reformation there both before and during the sixteenth century
3. To understand the significance of William Tyndale's life and work to the progress of the English Reformation

QUOTATION

Evangelion (which we call the gospel) is a Greek word and signifies good, merry, glad and joyful tidings, that makes a man's heart glad, and makes him sing, dance, and leap for joy. . . . Christ before His death commanded and appointed that such Evangelion, gospel, or tidings should be declared throughout all the world, and with such to give unto all that repent, and believe, all his goods: that is to say, His life, by which he swallowed

and devoured up death; His righteousness, by which He banished sin; His salvation, by which He overcame eternal damnation. Now can the wretched man (that knows himself to be wrapped in sin, and in danger to death and hell) hear no more joyous a thing, than such glad and comfortable tidings of Christ so that he cannot but be glad, and laugh from the very bottom of his heart, if he believe that these tidings are true.

—William Tyndale

LECTURE OUTLINE

A. The Continental background of the English Reformation

1. Erasmus and his Greek New Testament
 - a. He was one of the greatest scholars of the 1500s.
 - b. His Greek New Testament (1516) was an excellent work of scholarship.
 - c. His accompanying Latin translation differed from the Vulgate at points and created controversy.
 - d. He essentially called the authority of Rome into question by differing at certain points (for example, Matt. 4:17 “be penitent” rather than “do penance”).
2. Martin Luther and the doctrine of justification by faith alone
 - a. He found himself challenged by the message of Erasmus’ New Testament.
 - b. He did not find this message in agreement with Rome.
 - c. He concluded that the authority of the New Testament was above the pope.
 - d. He saw that justification was not a process of being made righteous, but a divine declaration of our acceptance in Christ.

B. The beginnings of the English Reformation

1. Thomas Bilney
 - a. He read Erasmus’ New Testament.
 - b. He was overwhelmed with the idea that Jesus “came into the world to save sinners” (1 Tim. 1:15) as He alone could save.
 - c. He preached this message and pointed others toward the Reformation until his death (1531).
2. The White Horse Inn
 - a. At the time of Bilney’s preaching, Luther’s books were coming into England.
 - b. Luther’s writings were well received especially among those affected by the thinking of Wycliffe’s Lollards from more than a century earlier.
 - c. Men met to discuss the writings of Luther at the White Horse Inn, a tavern nicknamed “Little Germany.”

C. The impact of William Tyndale on the English Reformation

1. His linguistic skill

- a. He tutored the children of Sir John Welch.
- b. He read Erasmus' New Testament and understood the gospel.
- c. His opinions got him into trouble.
2. His conviction of justification by faith alone
 - a. The gospel, the *euangelion*, came as "glad tidings" to sinners.
 - b. Sinners can take comfort in being justified freely by Christ.
3. His burden to translate the Bible into English
 - a. He had to do so outside England; thus, he went to Germany.
 - b. He did not translate from Latin, as Wycliffe did, but from Greek and Hebrew.
 - c. His work surpassed Wycliffe's in quality and quantity as thousands of his New Testaments were smuggled into England.
 - d. His excellent translation departed from Rome's teachings (for example, "repent" instead of "do penance").
 - e. His "dangerous" book was burned along with anyone in possession of it.
 - f. He too would be burned (October 1536) but not before uttering, "Lord, open the king of England's eyes!"

STUDY QUESTIONS

1. The English Reformation cannot be understood apart from influences both inside and outside the country.
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. Theologians, rather than kings and queens, played an instrumental role in the English Reformation.
 - a. True
 - b. False
3. Regarding Erasmus and his Greek New Testament, _____.
 - a. For such an excellent translator, he was not much of a scholar
 - b. His publication was a monumental work
 - c. When he published it, he set the Latin Vulgate alongside it
 - d. Both a and b
 - e. Both b and c

4. Regarding Martin Luther and his doctrine of justification, _____.
 - a. He reached his conclusions independent of the work of Erasmus
 - b. He did not find the Scripture to be in agreement with Rome
 - c. He saw that justification was not a process of being made righteous, but a divine declaration of our acceptance in Christ
 - d. Both a and b
 - e. Both b and c

5. Regarding Thomas Bilney's role in the English Reformation, _____.
 - a. He read Erasmus' Greek New Testament
 - b. He was overwhelmed with the idea that Jesus "came into the world to save sinners"
 - c. He preached this message and pointed others toward the Reformation until his death
 - d. Both a and b
 - e. All of the above

6. Regarding the White Horse Inn, _____.
 - a. At the time of Bilney's preaching, Luther's books were not yet known
 - b. Bilney's writings were well received especially among those impacted by the thinking of Wycliffe's Lollards from over a century earlier
 - c. Men met to discuss the writings of Luther at a tavern nicknamed "Little Germany"
 - d. Both b and c
 - e. All of the above

7. Regarding William Tyndale, _____.
 - a. He was a skilled linguist who tutored the children of Sir John Welch
 - b. He read Erasmus' New Testament and understood the gospel
 - c. His opinions brought trouble upon himself
 - d. Both a and b
 - e. All of the above

8. Regarding William Tyndale's Bible translation, _____.
 - a. It relied on the Latin Vulgate, since he did not study the original languages
 - b. It surpassed Wycliffe's in quality and quantity
 - c. It departed from Rome's teachings
 - d. Both b and c
 - e. All of the above

BIBLE STUDY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

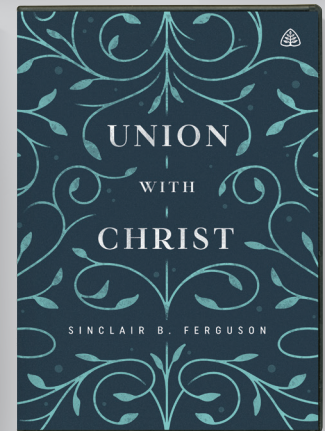
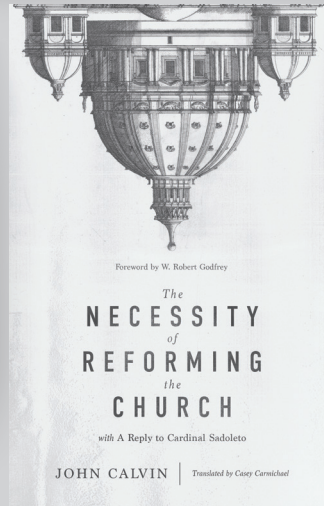
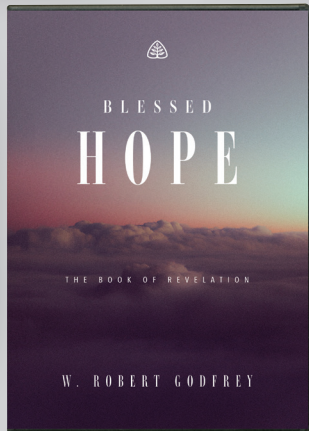
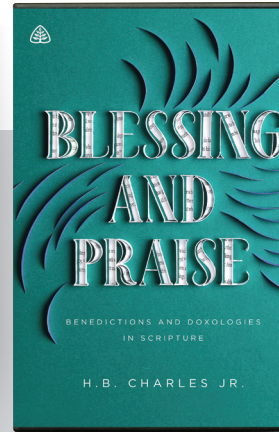
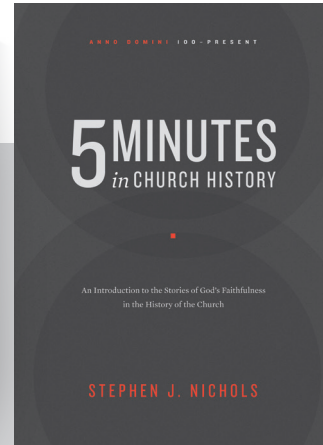
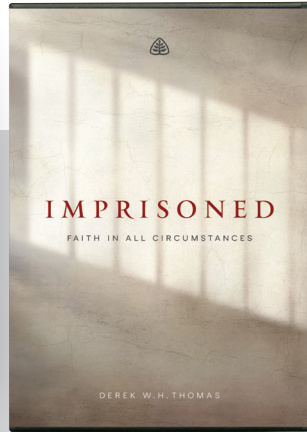
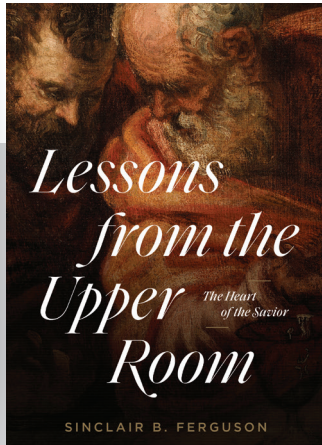
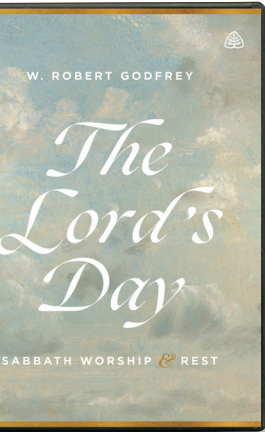
1. Though Erasmus saw that Rome had departed from the simple truth of the Bible, he never took action as Luther did. It's important for Christians to stand up for biblical truth. How can we do that appropriately today?
2. When we consider the connection of the English Reformation to the grassroots Lollard movement from the previous century, what encouragement can we take if we see little to no success when God's Word is proclaimed? (See 1 Cor. 3:6–8.)
3. Dr. Reeves agrees with the concern that Tyndale's New Testament translation was "dangerous" in relation to the teachings of Rome. How is the Bible "dangerous" for Christians today? That is, how does the Bible challenge our assumptions even after we come to faith in Christ?
4. While Tyndale performed his translation work, he hid from those who pursued him. Given that he was eventually betrayed anyway, was he cowardly in the face of persecution? Please support your answer from Scripture. How does your response relate to missions today (for example, in communist and Islamic nations)?

FOR FURTHER STUDY

Steven J. Lawson, *Pillars of Grace: A Long Line of Godly Men*, Vol. 2

Michael Reeves, *The Unquenchable Flame: Discovering the Heart of the Reformation*

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