

Calvin and Calvinism: Timeline

1509	• Birth in Noyon, Northern France, the fourth son of a local lawyer and church official
1521	• Receives a Church Office to finance his education
1523	• Studies theology at the <i>Sorbonne</i> . • Friendship with Humanists such as Olivetan and scholars such as Bude.
1528	• Studies law at <i>Orleans</i> . • Sharpens his mind, gives him great powers of exposition.
1531	• Returns to Paris on the death of his father. • Now concentrates on a religious rather than a legal career.
1532	• Publishes Latin commentary on Seneca's <i>De Clementia</i> – Humanist features revealed.
1533(?)	• Experiences a religious conversion: "By a sudden conversion, God subdued and reduced to docility my soul".
1534	• Calvin leaves France for Basle after his brother is executed as a heretic. • Meets Lefevre and other humanists on his travels.
1535	• Publishes his first edition of the <i>Institutes of the Christian Religion</i> – a clear and powerful statement of his theology. • Returns to France to collect his brother and sister, heads for Strasbourg but finds his route blocked by CV's armies.
1536	• Takes a detour through Geneva, a city of 16,000 inhabitants precariously balanced between Catholic Savoy and Protestant Berne. • Usually under the control of a Bishop, it has recently thrown off this yoke with the help of Berne, and so the City Council is now open to Reformist ideas. • Persuaded to stay by the reformer Guillaume Farel. Presents to the Council a proposal called "Articles concerning the Organisation of the Church and of Worship in Geneva".
1538	• Forced to leave Geneva by an alarmed council after he and Farel not only refuse to accept the moderate Bernese liturgy but excommunicate their critics!
1538-41	• Spends exile in Strasbourg. • Gets married to the widow of a former Anabaptist. • Much influenced by Martin Bucer, who anticipates Calvin's interest in predestination and a reformed ministry of pastors, teachers, elders and deacons.
1541	• Returns to Geneva unwillingly (says that he prefers the idea of death and calls the inhabitants "Perverse and ill-natured people") but convinced that he has been summoned by God. • Great public welcome. • Publishes <i>Ecclesiastical Ordinances</i> , detailed survey of how church and state should be governed.
1544	• <i>Sebastien Castellio</i> is forced to leave Geneva
1547	• <i>Gruet</i> is executed for dancing and casual sex.
1549	• <i>Raoul Monet</i> executed for carrying a book of pornographic illustrations which he calls his "New Testament"
1551	• <i>Bolsec</i> , called by Calvin "A monster vomiting forth poison" is banished for criticising predestination
1553	• <i>Servetus</i> is burned for denying the Trinity
1555	• Calvin's main opponents, the <i>Libertines</i> , are voted off the City Council and their leader, Ami Perrin, fled. • Calvin's influence over the next nine years is unchallenged
1559	• Calvin made a citizen of Geneva
1560	• Scotland adopts Calvinism
1564	• Death of Calvin in Geneva • The Academy opens to train Calvinist priests.
1573	• Francois Hotman publishes <i>Francogallia</i>
1574	• Theodore de Beze publishes <i>The Rights of Magistrates</i>
1579	• Plessis-Mornay publishes <i>The Defence of Liberty Against Tyrants</i>

Tasks:

- What would you say are the 5 most important events outlined in this timeline? Explain your answer carefully.
- Divide this timeline into between 3 and 5 meaningful 'chapters'. Give each one (a) A title and (b) the dates it covers.