

## STUDY PACK 4

### THE REFORMATION IN ENGLAND

“He was at first all heart for the Church of Rome; he went barefoot on pilgrimages, wrote against Luther, and flattered the pope. But before long he grew tired of Rome without desiring the Reformation: profoundly selfish, \_\_\_\_\_. If papal domination offended him, evangelical liberty annoyed him. He meant to remain master in his own house, the only master and master of all. Even without the divorce, Henry would possibly have separated from Rome. Rather than endure any contradiction, he put to death friends and enemies, bishops and missionaries, ministers of state and favorites — even his wives.” ~ J.H. Merle d’Aubigne, *The Reformation in England*, Vol. II, p.20 ~

#### I. SETTING THE STAGE

There were three primary influences on the Reformation in England. England had a long tradition of \_\_\_\_\_ and leaders like John Wycliffe and Miles Tyndale. The Scriptures were available in the English language and the English culture was more influenced by the Bible than that of any other country. A second major influence was that of teachers who espoused the writings of Luther and Calvin. These teachers began to call for reform and change within the Catholic Church. At first the government of England resisted these calls for change.

The third major influence was the unstable life of Henry VIII. Henry VIII, King of England, was a man of learning, dynamic leadership and charisma. He was also a man whose private life was controlled by moral impurity and who was capable of wild emotional outbursts. At first, he strongly supported the Roman Catholic Church. He even wrote a book refuting the teachings of Martin Luther. For this the Catholic Church awarded him the “\_\_\_\_\_” award.

Henry was not originally trained to be the King of England. His older brother was trained to be king and a marriage alliance was made between him and Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain. He married their daughter Catherine and this was designed to guarantee peace between England and Spain. After his brother’s death, Henry VIII was married to Catherine and became king.

#### II. THE WIVES OF HENRY VIII

Henry and Catherine had only one child, Mary, and Henry had no legitimate son to succeed him. He began to appeal to the Pope for a specially granted divorce. The Pope stalled this process for years. During this time, Henry became enamored with a young Protestant woman named Anne Boleyn. Anne refused to participate in any romantic entanglement with Henry because he was married. She resisted his attentions for six years.

In one letter, responding to romantic overtures by Henry, Anne replied: “I think, most noble and worthy king, your majesty speaks these words in mirth to prove me ... I will rather \_\_\_\_\_.” Later she wrote: “I understand not, most mighty king, how you should retain any such hope; your wife I cannot be, both in respect of mine own unworthiness, and also because you have a queen already. \_\_\_\_\_.”

Henry despaired of ever being granted his divorce from the Pope. He began to seek political alliances with those who wanted a Reformed church in England. He announced that the English

church was free from Rome and that as king, he was \_\_\_\_\_.  
All Roman Catholic Church property was confiscated. Much of this property was given to the new Church of England, but some was sold and the money filled the coffers of the government of England. When Henry's boyhood friend, Thomas Moore, refused to recognize the authority of the king to lead the church, Henry had him beheaded.

Henry continued to punish independent churches and those who stayed loyal to Roman Catholicism. Henry granted his own divorce and soon married Anne Boleyn. They had one daughter, Elizabeth. Henry soon tired of Anne and had her falsely accused of adultery and beheaded. Her last words were,

“Good Christian people, I am not come here to justify myself; I leave my justification entirely to Christ, in whom I put my trust. I will accuse no man, nor speak anything of that whereof I am accused, as I know full well that aught that I could say in my defense doth not appertain unto you, and that I could draw no hope of life from the same. I come here only to die, according as I have been condemned. I commend my judges to the Lord's mercy. I pray God (and I beg you to do the same) to save the king and send him long to reign over you, for a gentler or more merciful prince there never was. To me he was ever a good, gentle, and sovereign lord. And thus I take my leave of the world and of you, and I heartily desire you all to pray for me. O Lord, have mercy upon me! To God I commit my soul!”

Henry married another Protestant young lady named Jane Seymour. She bore him a son named Edward, but she died shortly after childbirth. During this time two distinct groups developed within the Church of England. One group was called the Anglo-Catholics. They wanted to keep all the doctrines of Catholicism, including salvation by works, but substitute the king for the Pope. The Protestant group wanted to teach salvation by faith and encourage the people to read the Bible. \_\_\_\_\_ made it easier for this group to make progress.

Henry next married Princess Anne of the German state of Cleves. She was a Lutheran. She did not speak English and they got along poorly. They soon divorced and she returned to Germany. Henry then married Catherine Howard. She was soon genuinely caught committing adultery, and paid for her mistake with her head. Henry's frequent adulteries were conveniently ignored.

Henry proposed to Christina of Denmark. She refused him saying, “I have but one head; if I had two, one of them should be at the service of His majesty.”

Henry's representatives then proposed to another European princess. She declined on the grounds that her neck “was far too delicate to serve as Queen of England.” Henry then married Catherine Parr. Catherine was twice a widow. She had been married to one of Henry's generals who died in battle and then to one of his admirals who was lost at sea. She had a reputation as a devout Christian woman.

Henry was by now in poor health, his body wracked by several diseases (including venereal diseases). Catherine provided him with a loving, caring companion who comforted him during his declining years.

Catherine boldly testified to her personal salvation by faith. When the Anglo-Catholic leadership complained about this, Henry ordered them to quietly listen to her. Catherine began to witness to Henry. During the last days of his life, Henry professed his personal faith in Jesus Christ as His Lord and Saviour.

### III. KING EDWARD

Edward succeeded his father as king. He was himself a \_\_\_\_\_. He strengthened the Protestant wing of the English church. He suspended persecution of the independent churches. Unfortunately, he died after only six years as king.

### IV. LADY JANE GREY

Parliament had authorized King Henry VIII to nominate his successor to the throne. He had selected his two daughters, Mary and Elizabeth, to succeed him if his son, Edward, left no heirs. Should these three rule and die without heirs, a remote possibility, Henry directed that the throne would then pass to the family of his younger sister (another Mary).

This younger sister died, leaving behind a daughter, Lady Jane Grey. Jane was an amazingly gifted and highly educated young woman. By the age of eleven, she was corresponding with leaders of the Reformation in continental Europe. (Those letters still exist in Switzerland.)

Jane could become the Queen of England if Edward, Mary and Elizabeth died without children.

During the early part of 1553, King Edward, then only fifteen years old, was dying. Upon his death, the next in line of succession was Mary, a passionate Catholic. The Duke of Northumberland, a devout Protestant, initiated a plan to bypass Mary, the legal heir to the throne and in her place to install Jane as Queen. Part of Northumberland's plan included Jane marrying his son. This marriage took place with the complicity of her parents, but against her own will.

As the plot unfolded, an attempt to capture Mary failed. Being forewarned, she fled to Norfolk, gaining time to appeal for help. Told of her succession, Lady Jane Grey protested. She had little desire to occupy the throne at the Tower of London. Her parents insisted. The circle of leaders surrounding her shamed her should she not rise to save England by becoming Queen.

For nine days, Jane and her husband occupied the state apartment at the Tower. Meanwhile, the scheme to replace Mary was falling apart. A force, led by Northumberland, to capture Mary at Norfolk had failed. The country at large knew very little of Jane Grey. Mary, they knew as the legal successor to the throne. Jane was looked upon \_\_\_\_\_. With all opposing forces in disarray, Mary entered London in early August with popular support.

Betrayed, Jane now found herself deserted by those who had forced her to become Queen. It was now apparent that their chief motive had been \_\_\_\_\_. Her own father, seeing the unfolding of events, did an about face and proclaimed Mary as Queen. He returned to the Tower and found his daughter sitting, bewildered, on the throne, in the council chamber. "Come down from there, my child...that is no place for you." He then explained to her that she was no longer queen. She looked at him and in all the innocence of a sixteen year old girl asked, "Can I go home now?" The young girl was escorted from the chamber to another. Although in comfortable quarters, she was now the prisoner of Mary.

Queen Mary realized that Jane had been used. She was fond of Jane and planned to release her. Being a close relative, Mary had known Jane all of her life. She secretly sent a message to Jane saying that a pardon would be granted at an appropriate time. However, the political stage demanded another course.

Mary desired to re-establish Catholicism in England. Being surrounded by papal advisors and facing strong Protestant revolt, she now found Jane Grey a serious liability. She could not now be set free without her becoming \_\_\_\_\_.

There was a way out for Mary. If she could persuade Jane \_\_\_\_\_ then release would be possible. This act would immediately disqualify Jane in the eyes of the Reformers, as a leader.

Jane, however, would not deny her faith. Everyone around her, Protestant and Catholic, were guilty of religious politics. Jane had watched them use religious symbols to gain personal ends. Jane, however caught up and used in their “web of deceit,” was too pure to deny truth.

Queen Mary’s next step was to involve Jane in a public debate in the Tower. Perhaps the papal advisors could persuade her that she was wrong. Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs* records this event. Lady Jane Grey was no mere uneducated country girl. She defended the Protestant faith with a clarity so profound that her opponents were left speechless.

The debate ended with the young woman standing head and shoulders above the Roman debaters. Queen Mary now saw Jane as a major threat to her throne.

There was only one avenue left to Mary, and that was to remove Jane Grey permanently from the stage...by death.

On February 12<sup>th</sup>, 1554, Lady Jane Grey went to the block in the Tower of London proclaiming the message of Christ. The night before she died, she sent her sister Katherine a copy of the Greek Testament urging her to read it. “It shall teach you to live, \_\_\_\_\_. It shall win you more than you should have gained by the possession of your woeful father’s lands.”

From her window, Jane saw her young husband being led away to execution. From that same window, later she saw his headless body being brought back in a cart. She exclaimed, “Oh Guildford, the pain you have tasted, and I shall soon taste, is nothing to the feast you and I shall partake of this day in Paradise.”

Then Jane herself was led out, a small sandy-haired girl dressed in a gown and a velvet cover on her head. Her last words were:

*“Good people—I am come here to die...I wash my hands in innocence, before God. Bear witness that I die a true Christian woman, and that I look to be saved by none other means,*

\_\_\_\_\_.

*I thank God for His goodness that He hath thus given me a time to repent. While I am alive, assist me with your prayers.”*

Then she quoted a Psalm before handing her gloves and handkerchief to her maid. The brutal executioner was shaken. He was not prepared for this. He was used to victims cursing and resisting but this was a beautiful, young Christian woman, gentle and innocent—and only sixteen years old. She could have been his daughter. “Forgive me,” he begged her. Jane replied, “\_\_\_\_\_”. Do your work quickly.”

She then tied the handkerchief over her eyes. Putting her hands out, she could not feel the block and cried out, “Where is it? What shall I do?” An onlooker helped her to find the block, on which she laid her head, saying, “Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.”

## V. BLOODY MARY

Edward's oldest half-sister, Mary, became the Queen of England. She devoted her life to restoring England to the Roman Catholic Church. She had many leaders of the Church of England burned at the stake. Many of those same leaders had supported burning Baptists and other independents at the stake. They now reaped what they sowed. Queen Mary soon died, and \_\_\_\_\_ he is remembered as "Bloody Mary." Elizabeth, daughter of Henry and Anne Boleyn, now became the Queen of England.

## VI. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ENGLISH REFORMATION

### A. The testimony of the English martyrs

Both Henry VIII and Bloody Mary were responsible for the death of a number of evangelical preachers. Their last messages provided a powerful testimony of faith.

Towards the end, Tyndale (executed by Henry VIII for translating the Scriptures) wrote:

"Oh! What a happy thing it is to suffer for righteousness' sake. If I am afflicted on earth with Christ, I have joy in the hope that I shall be glorified with Him in heaven. Trials are a most wholesome medicine, and I will endure them with patience. My enemies destine me for the stake, but I am as innocent as a new-born child of the crimes of which they accuse me. My God will not forsake me. O Christ, Thy blood saves me, as if it had been mine own that was shed upon the cross. God, as great as He is, is mine with all that He hath. There is none other way into the kingdom of life than through persecution and suffering of pain and of very death, after the example of Christ."

His last words were, "Lord, open the King of England's eyes."

Thomas Bilney, while burning at the stake shouted, "Jesus, I believe."

John Tewksbury, while stretched on a torture rack cried, " \_\_\_\_\_ " several times before death.

John Nicholson cried " \_\_\_\_\_ ," as he was being burned at the stake.

Many testimonies like these made a great impression upon the English people.

- B. The English Reformation broke the power of Roman Catholicism in Europe. Throughout Europe, Protestants turned to England for help.
- C. The English Reformation played a major role in preserving the pure Word of God for the world.
- D. The preaching of the gospel throughout the world was greatly enhanced by the English Reformation.