

## Wars of Religion: 1559-1648

### I. Hapsburg-Valois Wars (c. 1519-1559)

#### A. Treaty of Cateau-Cambrèsis, 1559

1. Ended the Habsburg-Valois Wars (last purely dynastic wars of the 16<sup>th</sup> century)
2. These wars had been political in nature (and thus not religious) since both France and the Holy Roman Empire were Catholic.

#### B. France had kept the Holy Roman Empire from controlling all of Germany, while inadvertently helping Lutheranism to spread

1. France chose the political issue of a possible strong German state on its eastern border as being more important than the religious unity of Europe.
2. This was a major reason for Germany's inability to move towards unification early on.

#### C. Spain defeated France for control of Sicily, Naples, and Milan while Spanish influence was also strong in the Papal States and Tuscany.

- Politics of Europe shifted toward Spain during its "Golden Age" in the late-16<sup>th</sup> century.

### II. From 1560 to 1648 wars would be fought largely over religious issues

- A. Spain sought to squash Protestantism in Western Europe and the spread of Islam in the Mediterranean.
- B. French Catholics sought to squash the Huguenots
- C. The Holy Roman Empire sought to re-impose Catholicism in Germany
- D. The Calvinist Netherlands sought break away from Spanish rule
- E. A civil war occurred in England between Puritans and Anglicans

### III. Spain's Catholic Crusade

#### A. **Philip II** (1556-98): Like his father, Charles V, fanatically sought to re-impose Catholicism in Europe

1. Under Philip, Spain became the dominant country in Europe: "Golden Age" of Spain
2. **Escorial**: new royal palace (and monastery and mausoleum) was built in the shape of a grill to

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- commemorate the martyrdom of St. Lawrence
  - Symbolized the power of Philip as well as his commitment to his Catholic crusade
- B. Spain waged a war against the Turks in the Mediterranean to secure the region for Christian merchants.
  1. **Battle of Lepanto (1571): Spain defeated the Turkish navy off the coast of Greece**
  2. **Spain's religious fervor in its battle with the Turks was reminiscent of the earlier Christian Crusades.**
  3. Ended the Ottoman threat in the Mediterranean
- C. **The Dutch Revolt (1568-1648)**
  1. **William I (William of Orange) (1533-1584)**, led 17 provinces against the Spanish Inquisition
    - Philip sought to crush the rise of Calvinism in the Netherlands
  2. **United Provinces of the Netherlands** formed in 1581 (Dutch Republic)
    - a. Received aid from England under Elizabeth I
    - b. **Major blow to Philip's goal of maintaining Catholicism throughout his empire.**
    - c. **Spanish Netherlands** (modern-day Belgium): the 10 southern provinces remained under Spain's control
    - d. The Dutch closing of the Scheldt River resulted in the demise of Antwerp as Europe's commercial center and the rise of Amsterdam
- D. **Spain vs. England**
  1. **Queen Mary Tudor** (Philip's wife) had tried to re-impose Catholicism in England
    - a. She married Philip II of Spain before he became king of Spain.
    - b. When she died, **Queen Elizabeth I** reversed Mary's course via the "Elizabethan Settlement"
    - c. Elizabeth later refused Philip's request for marriage.
  2. Elizabeth helped the Protestant Netherlands in their revolt for independence from Spain
    - 1587, beheaded Catholic Mary, Queen of Scots
  3. **Philip sought revenge for England's support for the Dutch; he also sought to make England Catholic again.**
    - He thus planned a monumental invasion of England in 1588

The Escorial  
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4. **Spanish Armada, 1588**

- a. Spain's attempt to invade England ended in disaster
- b. Much of Spain's navy lay in ruins due to a raging storm in the English Channel as well as the effectiveness of England's smaller but better-armed navy.
- c. Signaled the rise of England as a world naval power
- d. Although this event is often viewed erroneously as the decline of Spain's "Golden Age," Spain still remained powerful until the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century

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IV. **French Civil Wars** (at least 9 wars between 1562-1598)

A. After the death of Henry II in 1559 a power struggle between three noble families for the Crown ensued

1. The throne remained in the fragile control of the Catholic Valois family.
  - Three French kings from 1559 to 1589 were dominated by their mother, Catherine de Médicis, who as regent fought hard to maintain Catholic control in France
2. Between 40-50% of nobles became Calvinists (Huguenots)—many were Bourbons
  - a. Many nobles ostensibly converted for religious reasons but sought independence from the crown.
  - b. Resulted in resurgence of feudal disorder in France
  - c. The Bourbons were next in line to inherit the throne if the Valois did not produce a male heir.
3. The ultra-Catholic Guise family also competed for the throne; strongly anti-Bourbon
4. Fighting began in 1562 between Catholics & Calvinists
  - Atrocities against rival congregations occurred

B. **St. Bartholomew Day Massacre** (August 24, 1572)

1. Marriage of Margaret of Valois to Protestant Huguenot Henry of Navarre on this day was intended to reconcile Catholics and Huguenots.
2. Rioting occurred when the leader of Catholic aristocracy, Henry of Guise, had a leader of the Huguenot party murdered the night before the wedding.
3. Catherine de Médicis ordered the massacre of Calvinists in response
  - 20,000 Huguenots killed by early October
4. The massacre initiated the **War of the Three Henrys**: civil wars between Valois, Guise, and Bourbons

C. **Henry IV (Henry of Navarre)** (r. 1589-1610): became the first Bourbon king

1. One of the most important kings in French history
2. His rise to power ended the French Civil Wars and placed France on a gradual course towards absolutism
3. Henry was a *politique* (like Elizabeth I in England)
  - a. Sought practical political solutions (rather than ideological ones like Philip II): somewhat Machiavellian in nature
  - b. He converted to Catholicism to gain the loyalty of Paris (He allegedly stated: "Paris is worth a mass")
  - c. Privately he remained a Calvinist
4. **Edict of Nantes**, 1598: Henry IV granted a degree of religious toleration to Huguenots
  - a. Permitted Huguenots the right to worship privately
    - Public worship, however, was not allowed
    - Huguenots not allowed to worship at all in Paris and other staunchly Catholic cities.
  - b. Gave Huguenots access to universities, to public office, and the right to maintain some 200 fortified towns in west and southwestern France for self-protection.
  - c. In reality, the Edict was more like a truce in the religious wars rather than recognition of religious tolerance.
    - Nevertheless, the Edict gave Huguenots more religious protection than perhaps any other religious minority in Europe.

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V. **Thirty Years' War** (1618-1648) – most important war of the 17<sup>th</sup> century

A. Failure of the Peace of Augsburg, 1555

1. The 1555 agreement had given German princes the right to choose either Catholicism or Lutheranism as the official religion of their states within the HRE.
2. The truce in Germany lasted for 60 years until factionalism in the Holy Roman Empire precipitated a cataclysmic war

B. Four phases of the war:

1. Bohemian Phase
  - a. **Defenestration of Prague** (1618): triggered war in Bohemia
    - The Holy Roman Emperor placed severe restrictions on Protestantism
    - Two HRE officials were thrown out a window and fell 70 feet (did not die because they were allegedly saved by a large pile of manure)
    - The emperor then sought to annihilate the Calvinist nobility in Bohemia
  - b. Protestant forces were eventually defeated and Protestantism was eliminated in Bohemia
2. Danish Phase: represented the height of Catholic power during the war
  - a. **Albrecht von Wallenstein** (1583-1634): Mercenary general who was paid by the emperor to fight for the HRE
    - Invaded northern Germany and won a number of important battles against Protestant armies
  - b. **Edict of Restitution** (1629): The Emperor declared all church territories that had been secularized since 1552 to be automatically restored to Catholic Church
3. Swedish Phase (1629-1635): Protestants liberated territory lost in previous (Danish) phase
  - a. **Gustavus Adolphus** (r. 1611-1632) King of Sweden: led an army that pushed Catholic forces back to Bohemia
    - Battle of Breitenfeld, 1631: victory for Gustav's forces that ended Hapsburg hopes of reuniting Germany under Catholicism
    - Gustav was killed in another battle in 1632
  - b. In response, the Holy Roman Emperor reluctantly annulled the Edict of Restitution
  - c. The Swedish army was defeated in 1634; France now feared a resurgence of Catholicism in the HRE.
4. French Phase, "International Phase" (1635-1648)
  - a. **Cardinal Richelieu** (1585-1642) of France allied with the Protestant forces to defeat the HRE (as had occurred in the earlier Hapsburg-Valois Wars).
    - Allied with Holland, Sweden, Finland, German mercenaries
  - b. Richelieu's policies reflected Catholic France's paramount diplomatic concerns as political, not religious; thus he can be seen as a *politique*.
    - Had the Habsburgs won in Germany, France

would have been confronted with a more powerful German state on its eastern border.

**C. Treaty of Westphalia (1648)**

1. Renewal of Peace of Augsburg but added Calvinism as a politically accepted faith
  - a. In effect, it ended the Catholic Reformation in Germany
  - b. Guaranteed that Germany would remain divided politically and religiously for centuries
2. Dissolution of Holy Roman Empire confirmed
  - a. The Netherlands and Switzerland gained their independence from Spanish rule
  - b. 300+ German states became sovereign
  - c. The pope was denied the right to intervene in HRE affairs.
3. France, Sweden, and Brandenburg (future Prussia) received various territories and gained international stature.
4. The two Hapsburg branches were weakened:
  - a. Spanish Hapsburgs saw their empire decline dramatically thereafter
  - b. Austrian Hapsburgs lost much influence in Germany

**D. Results of 30 Years' War**

1. Germany physically devastated (about 1/3 of the population perished; as high as 50% in certain areas)
2. Germany was further divided by the decline of the Holy Roman Empire
3. Ended the wars of religion
4. Beginning of the rise of France as the dominant European power; also accelerated the continued rise of England, the Netherlands, and Prussia
  - Balance of power diplomacy emerged in Europe

Memory Device for Treaty of Westphalia: **EF-CHIP**

**E**nd of Wars of Religion

**F**rance emerges as Europe's most powerful country

**C**alvinism added to the Peace of Augsburg

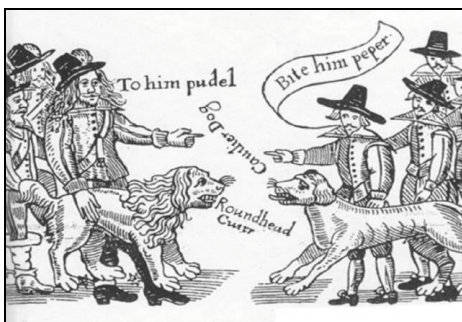
**H**oly Roman Empire effectively destroyed

**I**ndependence for the Netherlands and Switzerland

**P**russia emerges as a great power

VI. **English Civil War** (Puritan Revolution) –(see also Unit 3.2)

- A. Since the reign of the **Stuart** king, **James I** (1603-1625), there had been a struggle between the king and Parliament regarding taxation and civil liberties
1. Both James I and his successor, Charles I, believed in **"divine right"** of kings and absolutism
  2. The monarchy strongly defended the Anglican Church
- B. Parliament was composed of many Puritans (English Calvinists) and Presbyterians (English Calvinists who favored the Scottish Presbyterian organization of John Knox)
- C. **Charles I** (r. 1625-1649) twice dissolved Parliament
1. In effect, Charles ruled as an absolute monarch between 1629 and 1640.
  2. He raised money using Medieval forms of forced taxation (those with a certain amount of wealth were obligated to pay)
  3. **"Ship money"**: all counties now required to pay to outfit ships where before only coastal communities had paid.
  4. Religious persecution of Puritans by Charles I became the biggest reason for the English Civil War.
- D. Civil War broke out in 1642: **Cavaliers** supported the king; **Roundheads** (Calvinists) opposed the king



An English political cartoon in the 1640s

- E. **Oliver Cromwell**, a fiercely Puritan **Independent** and military leader of the Roundheads, eventually led his **New Model Army** to victory in 1649
1. A division between Puritans and Presbyterians (and non-Puritans) developed late in the war.
  2. **Pride's Purge** (1648): Elements of the New Model Army (without Cromwell's knowledge) removed all non-Puritans and Presbyterians from Parliament leaving a **"Rump Parliament"** with only 1/5 of its

members remaining.

F. Charles I was beheaded in 1649

- First king in European history to be executed by his own subjects

G. New sects emerged

1. **Levellers:** Radical religious revolutionaries; sought social & political reforms—a more egalitarian society
2. **Diggers:** denied Parliament's authority and rejected private ownership of land
3. **Quakers:** descendants of the Anabaptists
  - a. believed in an "inner light," a divine spark that existed in each person
  - b. Rejected church authority
  - c. As pacifists, they were opposed to war
  - d. Allowed women to play a role in preaching

H. The **Interregnum** (1649-1660): rule without a king

1. The Commonwealth (1649-1653): a republic was created after the war that abolished the monarchy and the House of Lords
  - a. The new republic failed to govern effectively
  - b. Cromwell dissolved the "Rump Parliament" in 1653
2. **The Protectorate** (1653-1659), Oliver Cromwell became Lord Protector (Dictatorship)
  - a. Denied religious freedom to Anglicans and Catholics
  - b. Allowed Jews to return to England in 1655 (Jews had not been allowed since 1290)
3. 1649, Cromwell invaded Ireland to put down an Irish uprising that had favored royalist forces in England.
  - a. Act of Settlement (1652): The land from 2/3 of Catholic property owners was given to Protestant English colonists.
  - b. Cromwell's control of Ireland (through the New Model Army) was particularly brutal
  - c. Perhaps 15-20% of the Irish population perished under Cromwell's policies.
4. Cromwell conquered Scotland in 1651-52
  - a. The Scots had continued strong support of the Presbyterians in England that had been removed by Cromwell
  - b. England's rule over Scotland was far more peaceful than in Ireland
5. The Puritan dictatorship sought to regulate the moral life of England by commanding that people follow



- strict moral codes that were enforced by the army.
- a. Dancing, gambling, drinking alcohol, and prostitution were against the law
  - b. This seriously alienated many English people from Cromwell's rule
6. Cromwell died in 1658 and was succeeded by his son, Richard, who was ineffective as his successor.
7. The Stuarts under **Charles II** (r. 1660-1685) were restored to the throne in 1660.

Memory Device for the Religious Wars: "**30 FEDS**"

**30** Years' War  
**F**rench Civil Wars  
**E**nglish Civil War  
**D**utch Revolt  
**S**panish Armada

## Terms to Know

Habsburg-Valois Wars  
Treaty of Cateau-Cambrèsis, 1559  
Philip II  
Escorial  
Battle of Lepanto  
Dutch Revolt  
William of Orange  
United Provinces of the Netherlands  
Spanish Netherlands  
Mary Tudor ("Bloody Mary")  
Elizabeth I  
Spanish Armada  
French Civil Wars  
Catherine de Medicis  
St. Bartholomew Day Massacre  
War of the Three Henry's  
Henry IV  
*politique*  
Edict of Nantes  
Thirty Years' War  
Bohemian phase  
Defenestration of Prague  
Danish Phase  
Albrecht von Wallenstein

Edict of Restitution  
Swedish Phase  
Gustavus Adolphus  
French Phase  
Cardinal Richelieu  
Treaty of Westphalia  
English Civil War  
Stuart dynasty  
James I  
Charles I  
"divine right" of kings  
Cavaliers  
Roundheads  
Oliver Cromwell  
New Model Army  
Pride's Purge  
"Rump Parliament"  
Levellers  
Diggers  
Quakers  
Interregnum  
The Protectorate  
Charles II

## **Essay Questions**

*Note: This sub-unit is a high probability area for the AP exam. In the past 10 years, 4 questions have come wholly or in part from the material in this chapter. Below are questions that will help you study the topics that have appeared on previous exams.*

1. Analyze the impact that religion played in the Dutch Revolt, the French Civil Wars, the Thirty Years' War, and the English Civil War
2. Analyze the extent to which the religious policies of the following rulers were successful:
  - Philip II
  - Elizabeth I
  - Henry IV
  - James I & Charles I
  - Oliver Cromwell
3. To what degree did religion and politics play in the Thirty Years' War?
4. Analyze the impact of the Thirty Years' War on European politics
5. To what extent did the wars of religion result in the decline of the Spanish Empire?
6. Analyze the causes of the English Civil War and the impact of Puritan rule on English politics and society

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