

2 – Protestant Reformation, Catholic- and Counter-Reformations, Wars of Religion (1517-1648)

Key Terms

Reformation	indulgences	Cardinal Richelieu
Ignatius of Loyola	The Thirty Years' War	John Calvin
Sir Thomas More	Martin Luther	Charles V of Spain and Austria
Jesuits	War of Three Henrys	Ursulines
Peace of Augsburg	The Diet of Worms	Philip II of Spain
Index of Prohibited Books	Edict of Nantes	Council of Trent
	Spanish Inquisition	

OVERVIEW

This chapter fits 100 percent within the first time period for the course. Historians generally agree that the Protestant Reformation is one of the markers of the beginning of modern Europe and a crucial part in the transformation of Western civilization. What began as an attempt to reform the Roman Catholic Church was co-opted by political forces and resulted in the destruction of the religious unity of Western Europe and the outbreak of bitter wars of religion.

Protestantism was adopted by the growing nation-states of the north as they were about to replace Italy and Spain as leaders of modern Europe; the Inquisition enforced orthodoxy. The Inquisition in Spain was designed to encourage a sense of national unity based on Catholicism. The Moslem Moors and the Jews who had been the educated groups in Spanish society were either driven into exile or forcibly converted. The Inquisition was later adapted in Spain and in Spanish territories to combat Protestantism, and it was imported to Italy for the same purpose. Protestantism, though, dominated most of northern Europe, and the continent suffered devastating disruptions during the wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Causes of the Reformation

1. Corruption of the Roman Catholic Church during the Renaissance; sale of church offices (simony); sale of indulgences; nepotism, absenteeism, decline of morality among the clergy
2. Impact of Renaissance **humanism**, which questioned Church traditions; Humanist “glorification of humanity”
 - Contradicted the Church’s emphasis on salvation
3. Prosperity brought the “virtue of poverty” into disrepute and the Church lost the “spirit” of Christ’s message and was out of touch with the mass of believers
4. Declining prestige of the papacy:
 - **Babylonian Captivity** of the Church in the fourteenth century when popes, subservient to the French king, took up residence in Avignon and lost prestige in the rest of Christendom.
 - The **Great Schism** beginning in 1378, when French and anti-French cardinals elected two popes, one of whom lived in Rome, the other in Avignon, and lasting over forty years.
 - **Moral decline** of the Renaissance popes bred cynicism. Papal involvement in secular · politics fostered contempt.
5. Influence of religious reformers, such as Wycliffe (c. 1330-1384) and John Huss (c. 1372-1415) stressed personal communion with God, which had two effects:
 - Diminished the importance of the sacraments
 - Weakened the influence of the clergy
6. Resentment of secular rulers over the power of the popes and clergy:
 - Monarchs of growing nation-states resisted papal supremacy over national churches.
 - Secular rulers also resented vast landholdings of the Church within national boundaries.
7. Resistance to the power of the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V:
 - The princes of the Germanic lands resented the new Holy Roman Emperor
 - Charles V (r. 1519-1558), who at age nineteen took the throne along with his vast Habsburg holdings and proclaimed at his coronation, “the empire from of old has had not many masters, but one, and it is our

intention to be that master.”

- The Holy Roman Emperor had been a symbolic title, and his desire to make it more actual caused resistance to the power of Charles V.
- Protestantism helped the princes do just that.

8. Invention of the printing press allowed dissenters to spread their ideas throughout Europe and made the Bible available to the common people.

Chronological Overview of Events, Personalities, and Ideas

1517

Johann Tetzel (c. 1465-1519), a wandering friar, was authorized by Pope Leo X to sell indulgences (which guaranteed the remission of sins), the proceeds of which would be used to rebuild St. Peter’s Church in Rome and to provide funds to local dioceses.

Martin Luther (1483-1546), a Roman Catholic priest, Augustinian monk, and theologian at the University of Wittenburg in Germany, condemned these sales as impious expedencies. Tormented by obsessions of his own damnation despite a life dedicated to holy service, he came to believe that the traditional means of attaining salvation (Good works, such as the sacraments, prayer, and fasting) were inadequate. He supposedly nailed his **95 Theses** to the

door of the Wittenburg church (his day’s equivalent of calling a press conference), listing the points of his opposition to the indulgences and inviting debate.

1519-1520

When an appeal to Pope Leo X (r. 1513-1521) for reform of this abuse went unanswered, Luther began to formulate the tenets of his beliefs, ideas that he had been mulling over for nearly a decade.

Tenets of Lutheranism as published in a series of tracts:

- **Salvation by faith alone:** Good works (the sacraments) cannot guarantee salvation but rather are an outward manifestation of the faith that a loving God will grant that salvation. This concept was inspired by Luther’s reading, many years earlier, of a passage from Romans 1:17, in which St. Paul says “the just shall live by faith.”
- **The Bible is the ultimate authority:** Neither the Pope nor church

councils can define Christian doctrine; every believer should read and interpret the Bible, and the faithful will be divinely guided.

- **The grace of God brings absolution:** Neither indulgences nor confession can bring forgiveness of sins; the individual is freed of sin only by the grace of God; pilgrimages, veneration of saints, fasts, and worship of relics are useless.
- **Baptism and communion are the only valid sacraments:** The Roman Catholic Church regarded seven sacraments (baptism; confirmation; Eucharist or communion; matrimony; penance; extreme unction, last rites, or anointing of the sick; holy orders) as outward signs of inner grace. Luther rejected all but baptism and communion. Luther also rejected the Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation (the belief that while the bread and wine of the Mass maintain their appearance, they are transformed into the body and blood of Christ). In its place he offered the doctrine of consubstantiation (the doctrine that the transformation of the bread and wine was not literal but that God was actually present in more than a symbolic way).
- **The clergy is not superior to the laity:** Marriage is permitted; Christianity is a “priesthood of all believers”; monasticism should be abolished.
- **The church should be subordinate to the state:** In the appointment of church officials, the matter of taxing church lands, the organization of the church, and all matters other than the theological, the state is supreme. This appealed to the monarchs and to the German princes who resented papal authority and who coveted the vast landholdings and wealth of the Roman Catholic Church. It would have ramifications for Lutheranism in Germany well into the twentieth century.

1520

Luther publicly burned a **papal bull**, an official proclamation that demanded his recantation, and he was excommunicated by **Pope Leo X**. Holy Roman Emperor **Charles V**; instead of arresting Luther and suppressing Lutheranism, which had a growing appeal in Germany and Scandinavia, honored a political debt to Frederick the Wise, Elector of Saxony, by refusing to outlaw Luther without a hearing.

1521

Luther was called to the Rhineland in Germany to appear before **The Diet of Worms**, a tribunal of the Holy Roman Empire with the power to outlaw, i.e., to condemn to be burned at the stake. Confronted by the sharpest theological debaters of the Roman Catholic Church, Luther contended that only the Bible or reason would convince him. "I neither can nor will I recant anything, since it is neither right nor safe to act against conscience." The Diet outlawed him. "Kidnapped" to safety in Wittenberg by Frederick the Wise, he organized his reformed church and translated the Bible into the vernacular, profoundly influencing the development of the modern German language.

1520s

Lutheranism spread. Preoccupied with wars against the Ottoman Turks and the French, **Charles V**; Holy Roman Emperor, was unable to suppress the growth of Protestantism in northern Europe. In addition to northern Germany, Denmark and its province of Norway, Sweden and its holdings in Finland, and the Eastern Baltic all embraced Lutheranism.

1521

A group of **Anabaptists**, who preached adult baptism and the equality of all Christians, began to spread their ideas in Germanic states and their religious movement began to gain ground.

1522

A league of knights, under the leadership of **Franz von Sickingen**, converted to Lutheranism and attacked the Catholic princes of the Rhineland. They were suppressed, but this clash encouraged most of the German princes to convert. One motive for von Sickingen's followers and the later conversions was the financial gain brought by confiscating Roman Catholic lands.

1524-1526

Luther's theological dissent inspired a variety of radical religious sects to form and to demand social reform based on the early Christian model. Demanding abolition of **manorialism**, the economic and social order of medieval feudalism, German peasants rebelled against the landowners, and Germany was wracked by the **Peasants' War**. Luther supported the princes by publishing ***Against the Murderous, Thieving Hordes of Peasants***.

The Anabaptists supported the revolt, and Luther targeted them in some of his most specific criticisms. He was appalled by these extremists and others who, he believed, took his ideas too far. The Anabaptists who preached adult total-immersion baptism, and the Millenarians, who expected the imminent

return of Christ. He condemned the rebels as “filthy swine” and encouraged the princes to exterminate them.

The radical revolt influenced Luther to demand that his followers obey constituted authority and that, while they read the Bible themselves, they leave its interpretation to knowledgeable ministers. His social and economic conservatism helped check the spread of Lutheranism in southern Germany and elsewhere in Europe.

1529

The Diet of Speyer refused to recognize the right of the German princes to determine the religion of their subjects.

1531

The **League of Schmalkalden** was formed by newly Protestant princes to defend themselves against the emperor. Charles V appealed to the Pope to call a church council that could compromise with the Lutherans and regain their allegiance to the Roman Catholic Church. The Pope, fearing the papacy’s loss of power, refused and lost a potential opportunity to reunite Western Christendom.

1530s

The Reformation spread beyond Germany.

1531

In Switzerland, **Huldrych Zwingli** (1484-1531), who established Protestantism in Switzerland, was killed in a nationwide religious civil war. Although his followers accepted most of Luther’s reforms, they argued that God’s presence during communion is only symbolic. The **Peace of Cappel** allowed each Swiss canton to determine its own religion.

1534

Pope Paul III (r. 1534-1549) assumed office as the first of the “reform popes.”

1534

In England, Parliament passed the **Act of Supremacy**, which made **Henry VIII** (r. 1509-1547) and his successors the head of the Anglican Church and its clergy.

- In 1521, when Luther was outlawed by the Holy Roman Empire, Henry VIII had been awarded the title “Defender of the Faith” by Pope Leo X for Henry’s tract “Defense of the Seven Sacraments.”

- By 1529, Parliament, partly because of Henry's influence, declared the English Church independent of Rome.
 - Cut off revenues to the papacy
 - Henry, eager to divorce **Catherine of Aragon** in order to marry **Anne Boleyn**, had been denied an annulment for political reasons.
- Catherine was the aunt of Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor.
 - Henry appointed **Thomas Cranmer** as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1533, was granted a divorce by him, and was excommunicated by the Pope.

1534-1539

The English Parliament abolished Roman Catholic monasteries and nunneries, confiscated their lands, and redistributed them to nobles and gentry who supported the newly formed Anglican Church.

1536

In Switzerland, **John Calvin** (1509-1564) published his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* in the Swiss city of Basel. Like Zwingli, he accepted most of Luther's ideas but differed on the role of the state in church affairs.

- **Predestination:** Calvin argued (from an idea of St. Augustine [354-430]) that since God knows even before birth whether a person is saved or damned, there is nothing anyone can do to win salvation. **The Elect** or **Saints** are a select few saved only by God's love from corrupt humanity and given indications of their status by **conversion** (a mystical encounter with God) or by material prosperity. The latter gave rise to the **Puritan** or **Protestant Ethic**, an incentive to avoid poverty as a sign of damnation, and served to justify the rise of capitalism.
- **Church government:** Calvin replaced the Catholic hierarchy with a democratic system whereby each individual congregation elected its minister and governed its policies. He disagreed with Luther's claim that the church should be subordinate to the state, and argued that it should actually be a moral force in the affairs of secular government. This stand encouraged **theocracy**, whereby Calvinism became the official religion and intolerant of dissent not only in parts of Switzerland but later in England and the Massachusetts Bay Colony in North America.

1539

In England, Parliament approved the **Statute of the Six Articles**.

- The seven sacraments were upheld.
- Catholic theology was maintained against the tenets of both Lutheranism and Calvinism.
- The authority of the monarch replaced the authority of the pope.

Despite attempts by **Mary I of England** (1516-1558, Henry VIII's daughter by Catherine of Aragon) to reinstitute Catholicism, and the **Puritan Revolution** of the following century, the *Six Articles* helped define the Anglican Church through modern times.

1540s

Calvinism spread: in Scotland the **Presbyterian Church** and in France the **Huguenots** were emerging based upon the ideas of Calvin as his religion spread through the wealthy merchant elite throughout northern Europe. The Counter-Reformation began.

1540

Ignatius Loyola (1491-1556) established the **Jesuits** (Society of Jesus), a holy order that was organized in a military fashion, requiring of its members blind obedience and absolute faith. The Jesuits swore to suppress Protestantism:

- They served as advisors to Catholic kings.
- They suppressed heresy through the Inquisition (clerical courts that tried and convicted religious dissenters who were subject to deportation, torture, or death).
- They established schools in Catholic nations to indoctrinate the young.
- They sent missionaries to far corners of the earth to convert “the heathen.”
- The Society of Jesus became the militant arm of the Counter-Reformation.

1541

- Calvin set up a model theocracy in the Swiss city of Geneva.
- The Scottish Calvinists (**Presbyterians**) established a national church.
- The French Calvinists (**Huguenots**) made dramatic gains but were brutally suppressed by the Catholic majority.
- The English Calvinists (Puritans and Pilgrims – a separatist minority) failed in their revolution in the 1600s but established a colony in New England.

1542

The Jesuits were given control of the Spanish and Italian **Inquisitions**.

- Perhaps tens of thousands were executed on even the suspicion of heresy.
- The ***Index of Prohibited Books*** was instituted in Catholic countries to keep heretical reading material out of the hands of the faithful.

1545-1563

The **Council of Trent** responded to the challenge of Protestantism by defining Catholic dogma. Its main pronouncements:

- Salvation is by both **good works** (such as the veneration of saints and fasts) and **grace**.
- The seven sacraments are valid, and transubstantiation is reaffirmed.
- The sources of religious authority are the Bible, the traditions of the Church, and the writings of the Church Fathers. Individuals cannot interpret the Bible without the guidance of the Church, and the only valid version of the Bible is the Vulgate, St. Jerome's Latin translation.
- Monasticism, with celibacy of the clergy, and the existence of purgatory are reaffirmed.
- Attempts were made to reform abuses: the principle of indulgences is upheld while its abuses are corrected; bishops are given greater power over clergy in their dioceses; and seminaries are established in each diocese for the training of priests.

1555

The **Peace of Augsburg**, after over two decades of religious strife, allowed the German princes to choose the religion of their subjects, although the choice was limited to either Lutheranism or Catholicism. *Cuius regio, eius religio*: "whose the region, his the religion."

Results of the Protestant Reformation

- Northern Europe (Scandinavia, England, much of Germany, parts of France, Switzerland, Scotland) adopted Protestantism.
- The unity of Western Christianity was shattered.
- Religious wars broke out in Europe for well over a century.
- The Protestant spirit of individualism encouraged democracy, science, and capitalism.
- Protestantism, specifically Lutheranism, justified nationalism by making the church subordinate to the state in all but theological matters.

The War of the Three Henrys (1587-1589)

This was partially a religious war and partially a dynastic war. The weak king, Henry III of France, was counseled to root out the Protestant, Huguenot nobility by Henry of Guise.

- The Huguenots in France had gained power among about 10 percent of the nobility.
- When Henry of Navarre married Margaret of Valois; the king's sister, a massacre of Huguenot friends of Henry of Navarre by Roman Catholics known as the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre erupted initiating this war.
- Henry of Navarre won the war but converted back to Catholicism to rule as Henry IV of France.
 - Issued the Edict of Nantes, allowing Huguenots religious freedom in strongholds.
 - He is reported to have said, "Paris is well worth a mass," before converting back to Catholicism.

The Thirty Years' War (1618-1648)

- The first continent-wide war in modern history, fought mostly in Germany, it involved the major European powers.
- It was the culmination of the religious wars of the sixteenth century between Catholics and Protestants.
- Politically, German princes sought autonomy from the Holy Roman Empire; France sought to limit the power of the Habsburgs who sought to extend power in Germany; Sweden and Denmark hoped to strengthen their hold over the Baltic region.

The Four Phases of the War

- **The Bohemian Phase** (1618-1625):
 - The Czechs, also called Bohemians, who, together with the Slovaks, formed the modern nation of Czechoslovakia after World War I, were largely Calvinist.
 - Fearful that their Catholic king, **Matthias**, would deny their religious preferences, they **defenestrated** (used the old custom of registering dissent by throwing officials out a window) his representatives and briefly installed, as king, a Calvinist, **Frederick V of the Palatinate**, or Elector Palatine.

- After Matthias's death, **Ferdinand II** became Holy Roman Emperor and King of Bohemia.
 - Supported by troops of the Spanish Habsburgs, he defeated the Bohemians at the **Battle of White Mountain** in 1620.
 - Gave away the lands of the Protestant nobles
 - Enabled the Spanish to consolidate power along the Rhine River
- **The Danish Phase** (1625-1630)
 - **Christian IV of Denmark** (r. 1588-1648), a Lutheran, entered the war to bolster the weakened Protestant position in Germany and to annex German lands for his son.
 - Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II (r. 1619-1637) countered by commissioning Albert of Wallenstein to raise a mercenary army, which pillaged and plundered Germany and defeated the Danes in 1626.
 - In 1629, the emperor issued **The Edict of Restitution**, which restored all the land to the Roman Catholic Church in states in Germany that had left The Church before the Peace of Augsburg in 1555.
 - When Wallenstein disapproved, Ferdinand dismissed him.
- **The Swedish Phase** (1625-1630)
 - **Cardinal Richelieu**, Roman Catholic regent of France, was concerned with the gains made by the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II in Germany.
 - France decided to pursue nationalist interests rather than religious ones as a matter of state policy under Cardinal Richelieu.
 - It was good policy to keep the Germanic states divided as France's neighbor.
 - France wanted to weaken the Habsburgs, the ruling house of the Holy Roman Empire.
 - France gained prestige.
 - He offered subsidies to encourage the capable Swedish king **Gustavus Adolphus** (r. 1611-1632) to enter the war.
 - Adolphus, a Lutheran, was eager to help the Protestant cause.
 - After decisive victories over the Habsburg forces, Adolphus was

killed.

- Wallenstein was assassinated for contemplating disloyalty to the emperor.
- The Protestant states of Germany made a separate peace with the emperor.
- **The Peace of Prague** revoked the Edict of Restitution.
- The Swedes were defeated, but Richelieu was determined to undermine Habsburg power in Germany.
- **The French-International Phase** (1635-1648)
 - France, Holland, and Savoy entered the war in 1635 on the Swedish side.
 - Spain continued to support the Austrian Habsburgs.
 - After a series of victories and reversals on both sides, **Henri Turenne**, a French general, decisively defeated the Spanish at Rocroi.
 - In 1644 peace talks began in Westphalia, Germany.

The Peace of Westphalia, 1648

- The Peace of Augsburg was reinstated, but Calvinism was added as acceptable for Germany.
- The Edict of Restitution was revoked, guaranteeing the possession of former Church states to their Protestant holders.
- Switzerland and Holland were made independent states, freed from the Habsburg dominions.
- France, Sweden, and Brandenburg (the future Prussia) received various territories.
- The German princes were made sovereign rulers, severely limiting the power of the Holy Roman Emperor and the influence of the Austrian and Spanish Habsburgs. With over three hundred separate rulers in Germany, national unification was ignored until well into the nineteenth century.

Effects of the Thirty Years' War

- Germanic states were devastated, the population reduced in some parts by well over a third. Once a cultural and political leader in Europe, it stagnated, helping to prevent its establishment as a sovereign, united

nation for more than two centuries and complicating its relations with the rest of the world into the twentieth century.

- The age of religious wars ended; the modern age of sovereign states began in Europe, and **Balance of Power** politics prevailed in Europe, whereby nation-states and dynasties went to war to prevent anyone power from dominating the continent.
- The Habsburgs were weakened. The Austrian monarchy lost most of its influence over Germany, ending the possibility of a Europe united under the family. Habsburg Spain was left a second-rate power.
- The Counter-Reformation was slowed; Protestantism was firmly established in its European strongholds.
- The Holy Roman Empire ceased to be a viable political structure and the Germanic states would not be unified again until 1871.
- Calvinism gained acceptance throughout Protestant Europe.
- Anabaptists were persecuted and disappeared as a religion.

Gender and Ethnicity During the Reformation

- Women received mixed blessings from this era.
 - Women did rise in status.
 - Luther and the Protestants preached that there was merit in all work in the eyes of the Eternal including the household work of women.
 - Ministers were allowed to marry, which raised the status of the women who had been their lovers but who now married them considerably, from their previous positions as adulteresses.
 - Women could have more official roles in Protestant religious life than in that of the Roman Catholic Church.
 - Some women became preachers.
 - Women were encouraged to read the Bible themselves, increasing female literacy and intellectual roles in general.
 - On the other hand, there was still considerable misogyny evident in this society.
 - Witch trials were also prevalent at this time.
 - Mostly women were accused of practicing witchcraft and many

- were burned at the stake after confessions were extracted through torture, or simply without evidence.
- Nunneries closed in Protestant areas, leaving few options other than marriage or prostitution open to women.
- Many former nuns were forced into marriage.
- Women were still denied access to university education.
- This was an age in which minority religion was finding its power.
 - Also an era of zealotry
- Practitioners of many religions were intolerant of those who practiced other faiths.
 - This resulted in the many religious wars of the era. -Extermination of the Anabaptists.
- Europeans enslaved and mistreated people of African descent in larger numbers both in Europe and in the colonies.
 - In the colonies, European migrants mistreated, abused, and forced conversion onto native peoples.
 - The European conquistadors and settlers killed tens of millions of Native Americans.
 - Spain and other European powers became rich from the natural bounty of those lands.
 - Slavery and genocide of Africans and indigenous Americans is part of the legacy of this age.

The Baroque Period of Art

The visual arts began to flourish and become more awe-inspiring; thus, Baroque art was born. The general intent of the **Baroque** period was to create a unity where all forms of art in a single expressive purpose could converge toward a single aim: to engage the viewer physically and emotionally. This art was meant to overpower the viewer and make the viewer feel small in comparison to the art and its subject matter. The term “Baroque” derives from a Portuguese word jewelers used to denote an irregularity in a misshapen or irregular pearl. Baroque therefore literally meant imperfect, grotesque, or absurd. The Baroque era began in the late sixteenth century in Italy and ended in some areas around the early nineteenth century.

- The term also refers to the seventeenth century as a whole and is sometimes used as a general term indicating eccentric or fanciful modes

of paintings, architecture, sculpture, dress, or behavior in any period.

- Baroque art spread throughout Western Europe and into Russia and other places in Europe influenced by the court of Louis XIV.
- Also found in Latin America, the English colonies, and northern Europe.
 - Never had the Western world known such active international exchange in the intellectual field.
 - The internationalism was not checked by differences in religious belief.
 - For example, Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640), a Flemish painter, worked in Italy, France, Spain, and England.
 - Rubens was considered a “European” painter, whereas Jacques-Louis David (1748-1825), a Neoclassical French painter, worked only in France for most of his life.
- Baroque art was an instrument of the **Counter-Reformation**, which took place from 1545 until the end of the Thirty Years’ War in 1648.
 - The Catholic Church was losing its followers in rapid numbers due to the rise of Protestantism.
 - Created the **Council of Trent** to set about renovating the Catholic Church.
 - The society at this time was generally illiterate.
 - Knowing this, the Catholic Church decided to bring back the wayward Catholics through art.
 - Baroque artists frequently capitalized on the immediacy of these emotional reactions, and spiritual art became an art of sensation.
 - Its effect was not to elevate the spirit but to stagger and overpower the senses.
- Baroque art was larger than life, escaping boundaries and overpowering the viewer.
- It is important to contrast the Baroque style with that of the Calvinist painters of the Dutch Golden Age who concentrated on realistic details in portraits and the interiors of buildings in the works of such artists as Vermeer, Rembrandt, and Hals. Their works were much smaller and more detailed, and attempted to shed insights into slices of life and individual personalities.
 - **Rembrandt Van Rijn’s** (1606-1669) innovative portraits and use

of light

- **Johannes Vermeer's** (1632-1675) clear domestic scenes
- **Franz Hals's** (c.1582-1666) portraits of wealthy citizens of Antwerp and Amsterdam

Some examples of Baroque painters and their defining characteristics include:

- **Peter Paul Rubens's** (1577-1640) fleshy nudes and overwhelming biblical scenes
- Michelangelo Merisi da **Caravaggio's** (1571-1610) contrast of light and dark
- **Artemisia Gentileschi's** (1593-1652) paintings of dramatic tension and suffering
 - Beyond the realm of the two-dimensional
- **Gian Lorenzo Bernini** (1598-1650) was the greatest sculptor of the era.

In the musical world:

- **Johann Sebastian Bach** (1685-1750) was the ultimate Baroque composer
- **Claudio Monteverdi** (1547-1643) who wrote the oldest opera still performed, *Orfeo*
- **Antonio Vivaldi** (1678-1741) who composed *The Four Seasons*
- **George F. Handel** (1685-1759) whose *Messiah* has become a classic.

Eventually, the Baroque style led to the **Rococo Style** of art, characterized by elegance, pleasantness, and frivolity. It greatly contrasted the emotional grandeur of the Baroque.