

Dr. Roger Green, Reformation to the Present, Session 13, The Great Awakening Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Green, Reformation to the Present, Session 13, The Great Awakening, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture from Dr. Roger Green's church history course, "Reformation to the Present," focuses on **The Great Awakening**, an evangelical resurgence primarily in Germany, England, and America during the mid-18th century. The discussion highlights key figures in the American context, including **Frelinghuysen, Tennant, Whitefield, and Jonathan Edwards**, and their impact on colonial religious life, including a **revival of Calvinism**. The lecture also examines **reactions to the Awakening**, noting divisions within denominations like the Presbyterians and opposition from influential figures and universities such as Harvard and Yale. Finally, it outlines the **theological and social results** of this period, such as an emphasis on personal conversion, the rise of new educational institutions, the elevation of the common person, and its profound connection to the **origins of the American Revolution**. The lecture concludes by introducing **the Wesleyan Revival in England** and its key theological differences from Calvinism through the lens of **Jacob Arminius**, setting the stage for a discussion on John Wesley.

2. 17 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Green, Reformation to the Present, Session 13 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (Church History → Reformation to the Present).



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3. Briefing Document: Green, Reformation to the Present, Session 13, The Great Awakening

Briefing Document: The Great Awakening and the Wesleyan Revival

Overview: This briefing document summarizes the main themes and important ideas presented by Dr. Roger Green in Lecture 13 of his church history course, "Reformation to the Present," focusing on the Great Awakening in America and providing an introduction to the Wesleyan Revival in England. The lecture positions these movements as evangelical resurgences within Christianity, occurring roughly simultaneously in the mid-18th century, and as responses to the preceding criticisms of the church and the rise of deism.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. The Great Awakening in America:

- **Context and Timing:** The Great Awakening is identified as an "evangelical resurgence in the church" in America, taking place in the mid-18th century, with the year 1734, marked by the awakening in Jonathan Edwards' church, often cited as its beginning. This movement occurred alongside Pietism in Germany and the burgeoning evangelical spirit in England. Dr. Green notes that there were potentially two or three Great Awakenings in America, but the lecture focuses primarily on the first.
- **Key Leaders:**
- **Theodorus J. Frelinghuysen:** A figure who brought resurgence to the Dutch Reformed Church, particularly in New Jersey.
- **Gilbert Tennant:** A Presbyterian who learned from Frelinghuysen and was instrumental in the evangelical awakening within Presbyterianism in New Jersey and the Middle Colonies.
- **George Whitefield:** A British itinerant preacher who traveled to America seven times. He was a "revivalist in the truest sense," reaching both churchgoers and those outside the church. Whitefield was known for his magnetic personality and open-air preaching, influencing even John Wesley to adopt this practice. He is described as a "grand itinerant."

- **Jonathan Edwards:** Associated most clearly with the First Great Awakening, his church in Northampton, Massachusetts, experienced a significant revival in 1734. Edwards was a key leader, preacher, and writer of the movement. He played a crucial role in bringing "Calvinism back into the American consciousness," which had waned since the time of the Pilgrims and Puritans. Unlike the charismatic Whitefield, Edwards was a "very quiet preacher" who focused intently on the scriptures, yet his biblical preaching was deeply convicting. Dr. Green highlights his intense study habits.
- **Response to Deism:** The Great Awakening is presented as "an answer to deism as deism was starting to take hold."

2. Reactions to the First Great Awakening:

- **Divisions within Denominations:** Some denominations experienced internal divisions. The Presbyterians, for example, saw the emergence of the "old side party" who opposed revivalism as too emotional and unbiblical, and the "new side party" who supported the revivals as being divinely inspired and akin to the New Testament church. These factions coexisted within the denomination without forming separate ones.
- **Opposition from Influential Figures:** Charles Chauncey, the pastor of the prestigious First Congregational Church in Boston, "disliked the revival that was going on, and he spoke against it." His influential position had the potential to turn people against the movement. Chauncey's eventual drift towards Unitarianism, emphasizing "sobriety, reason, and rationality" in religious life, explains his opposition to the emotionalism of the revival.
- **Opposition from Universities:** Several universities, including Yale and Harvard, initially opposed the revival.
- **Yale:** Despite its Puritan founding, Yale in the mid-18th century became "very kind, almost anti-religious," with professors and students disliking the revival. Dr. Green notes the irony that the Second Great Awakening began at Yale around 1800.
- **Harvard:** Founded by the Puritan John Harvard to train preachers, by the time of the First Great Awakening, Harvard had largely become "Unitarian" and "deistic," having "dropped that second half of the motto, in Christ and in the church." The original motto was "Veritas in Christo et Ecclesia" (Truth in Christ and in the church), later shortened to just "Veritas" (Truth). Harvard faculty and students

criticized the revival for its "too much emotionalism," advocating for reason as the measure of religious life.

3. Results of the First Great Awakening:

- **Theological Results:**
- **Resurgence of Calvinism:** The theology of the key leaders, all of whom were Calvinists, led to a significant "resurgence of Calvinism," with the doctrine of "election" being a central message.
- **Revival of Experiential Piety:** Emphasis shifted towards a "real love, a real commitment to God, and a real love and commitment to your neighbor," going beyond mere intellectual understanding of doctrines. This is likened to the essence of Matthew 22.
- **Emphasis on Personal Conversion:** The "major test for religious life now was personal conversion." It became more important than theological creeds, church affiliation, or moral living.
- **Stimulation of Higher Education:** The awakening spurred the founding of several colleges, primarily aimed at training ministers for various denominations. Examples include Princeton (Presbyterian), Rhode Island College/Brown University (Baptist), Queens College/Rutgers University (Dutch Reformed), and Dartmouth College (Congregational).
- **Social Results:**
- **Elevation of the Common Person:** The focus on a personal religious experience available to all led to the "elevation of the common person," suggesting a lack of hierarchy in how God works. This had significant implications for the democratization of American public life.
- **Stress on Lay Activity:** The awakening encouraged "new roles of leadership" for lay people, both within the church and in the broader society, moving beyond the traditional leadership of ordained ministers.
- **Personal Independence in Religious Life:** The emphasis on individual conversion fostered a sense of "personal independence in religious life," which Dr. Green argues "pointed to independence in political life."
- **Separation of Church and State:** The movement contributed to the idea of a "separation of church and state," primarily to protect the church from state

interference, allowing denominations to be "free and independent...from any kind of state control."

- **New Humanitarian Impulse:** The core message of loving God and neighbor led to a "new humanitarian impulse," with increased care for the poor, widows, and orphans, initially driven by the church but later influencing American public life and charitable work.
- **New Forms of Assembly:** The preaching of figures like George Whitefield in public spaces (Boston Common, parks, town squares) fostered "new forms of assembly" that were voluntary and developed new forms of authority based on perceived godliness rather than state appointment. These religious assemblies provided a model for later political and social gatherings.
- **Sovereignty of the People:** The awakening fostered a sense of the "sovereignty of the people," leading to a greater willingness to be "critical of public office," including the English monarchy, fueled by the "sheer weight of numbers" in public assemblies.
- **Connection to the American Revolution:** Dr. Green quotes a significant statement: "Considered as a social event, the Great Awakening signifies nothing less than the first stage of the American Revolution." He argues that the social changes brought about by the awakening laid the groundwork for the political revolution by fostering ideas of independence, voluntary association, and popular critique of authority.
- **Geographic Reach:** The First Great Awakening affected all the colonies, "from Maine to Georgia," and was primarily an "urban awakening," centered in cities like Boston, Philadelphia, and New York.

4. Introduction to the Wesleyan Revival in England:

- **Simultaneous Movement:** The Wesleyan Revival in England occurred alongside Pietism in Germany and the Great Awakening in America.
- **Focus on John Wesley:** Dr. Green introduces John Wesley as a central figure of this revival, noting his personal interest in Wesley.
- **Theological Context: Jacob Arminius:** To introduce Wesley's theology, Dr. Green discusses Jacob Arminius, a Dutch theologian who was asked to defend Calvinism but found areas of disagreement. Arminius and his followers developed the

"Remonstrance," a detailed argument about Calvinism. Key points of divergence included:

- **Double Election:** Arminius disagreed with Calvin's doctrine, linking predestination to God's foreknowledge.
- **Extent of Atonement:** Arminius believed Christ died for "everybody" ("the whosoever"), not just the elect.
- **Human Inability:** Arminius agreed with Calvin that humans cannot save themselves and salvation is by God's grace.
- **Resistible Grace:** Arminius argued that humans have a residue of free will and can "resist the grace of God."
- **Perseverance of the Saints:** Arminius was uncertain about the absolute certainty of perseverance, suggesting it was "possible for one to lose that salvation once one had gained it."
- **Wesley's Relationship to Arminianism:** Dr. Green states that John Wesley was familiar with Arminian theology, which had become part of British life. While Wesley agreed with Arminius on some points, Dr. Green prefers to describe his theology as "Wesleyan theology" rather than strictly "Wesleyan Arminian theology."
- **Biographical Sketch of John Wesley:**
- **Dates:** 1703-1791.
- **Family:** Father Samuel was an Anglican priest with two churches (Epworth and Wroot). Mother Susanna Wesley is highlighted as a significant figure in religious history, bearing 19 children and being a disciplined biblical and theological teacher to them, including John.
- **Early Life:** Born in the Epworth Rectory, which burned down when he was young. He was saved from the fire, a fact he later referenced by calling himself "a brand plucked from the fire."
- **Education:** Entered Oxford University in 1720, attending Christ Church.
- **Early Career:** Ordained as an Anglican deacon and initially envisioned a teaching career at Lincoln College, Oxford. However, he returned to Epworth to assist his ill father with his ministry, interrupting his teaching.

- **Brother Charles:** John's younger brother, Charles Wesley, was also studying at Christ Church during John's absence in Epworth, and something significant was happening with him and others at Oxford, which will be the focus of the next lecture.

Key Quotes:

- "In terms of where we are, this is the evangelical resurgence in the church."
(Regarding the Great Awakening)
- "He was a revivalist in the truest sense, not just of the churches, but revivalists of people outside the churches, sinners, repenting, coming in, believing in Christ, joining churches, and so forth." (Describing George Whitefield)
- "What Jonathan Edwards did, as well as these other people, was most evident in Jonathan Edwards...Jonathan Edwards brought Calvinism back into the American consciousness."
- "Considered as a social event, the Great Awakening signifies nothing less than the first stage of the American Revolution."
- "Christ died for the whosoever." (Attributed to Arminius)
- "When he got into his adult life, John Wesley referred to himself as a brand plucked from the fire."

Next Steps/Further Discussion: The next lecture will likely delve deeper into the biographical sketch of John Wesley and the events occurring at Oxford with his brother Charles, as well as further explore Wesleyan theology and its similarities and differences with the theology of the First Great Awakening.

4. Study Guide: Green, Reformation to the Present, Session 13, The Great Awakening

The Great Awakening and the Wesleyan Revival: A Study Guide

Quiz:

1. Identify three key leaders of the First Great Awakening in America and briefly describe their contributions or characteristics.
2. Explain why the awakening that occurred in Jonathan Edwards' church in Northampton, Massachusetts, is considered significant in marking the First Great Awakening.
3. Describe the "old side" and "new side" parties within the Presbyterian denomination and their differing views on the First Great Awakening.
4. What were the main criticisms voiced by figures like Charles Chauncey and institutions like Harvard and Yale towards the First Great Awakening?
5. Name two theological results of the First Great Awakening and briefly explain their significance.
6. Identify two social results of the First Great Awakening and explain how they impacted American society.
7. What is "experiential piety" as it relates to the First Great Awakening, and who was one prominent figure who preached against it?
8. Explain the concept of "new forms of assembly" that emerged during the First Great Awakening and how they contributed to later political developments.
9. Briefly describe the role of Jacob Arminius and his followers, the Remonstrants, in the theological landscape leading up to the Wesleyan Revival.
10. Describe Susanna Wesley's influence on the early life and development of John Wesley.

Quiz Answer Key:

1. The key leaders were Theodorus J. Frelinghuysen, who brought resurgence to the Dutch Reformed Church; Gilbert Tennant, who spurred evangelical awakening in Presbyterianism; and George Whitefield, a charismatic itinerant preacher who crossed denominational lines and preached to large crowds.

2. The awakening in Edwards' church in 1734 is significant because it marked a clear instance of revival through his powerful biblical preaching, and Edwards himself became a prominent intellectual and theological leader of the broader movement.
3. The "old side" Presbyterians were against the emotionalism and perceived lack of biblical basis in revivalism, while the "new side" Presbyterians supported the revivals, viewing them as a genuine work of God akin to the New Testament church.
4. Charles Chauncey criticized the emotionalism of the revival, advocating for sobriety and reason in religious life. Harvard and Yale, initially founded with religious aims, opposed the revival due to its perceived irrationality and emotional excesses.
5. Two theological results were the resurgence of Calvinism, with prominent leaders emphasizing doctrines like election and predestination, and a revival of experiential piety, stressing a personal love for God and neighbor beyond mere doctrinal knowledge.
6. Two social results were the elevation of the common person, as the focus on personal religious experience made everyone equally important in God's eyes, and the stress on lay activity, leading to new leadership roles within and outside the church for ordinary people.
7. "Experiential piety" is the emphasis on a genuine, heartfelt love and commitment to God and neighbor, going beyond intellectual understanding of doctrine. Charles Chauncey preached against this, favoring a more rational approach to religion.
8. "New forms of assembly" involved people voluntarily gathering in public spaces, often to hear preachers like Whitefield. This fostered a sense of collective action and independent thought, which later influenced political organizing and the American Revolution.
9. Jacob Arminius, a Dutch theologian, was tasked with defending Calvinism but developed disagreements, leading to the Remonstrance, which presented arguments about Calvinistic doctrines like double election and irresistible grace, influencing later theological discussions.
10. Susanna Wesley, John Wesley's mother, was a highly influential figure who provided her children, including John, with rigorous biblical and theological

education, laying a strong foundation for his spiritual and intellectual development.

Essay Format Questions:

1. Analyze the primary theological characteristics of the First Great Awakening in America. How did these theological emphases both reflect and diverge from earlier religious traditions in the colonies?
2. Evaluate the claim that the First Great Awakening was a crucial precursor to the American Revolution. What specific social and cultural shifts fostered by the Awakening contributed to the revolutionary spirit?
3. Compare and contrast the preaching styles and theological focuses of George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards. How did their different approaches contribute to the overall impact of the First Great Awakening?
4. Discuss the various reactions to the First Great Awakening in America, including divisions within denominations and opposition from established figures and institutions. What underlying concerns or motivations fueled these different responses?
5. Explain the significance of Jacob Arminius' theological contributions to the development of John Wesley's theological framework. In what specific areas did Wesley's theology align with and diverge from Arminianism?

Glossary of Key Terms:

- **Great Awakening:** An 18th-century evangelical revival movement that swept through the American colonies, emphasizing personal religious experience and a renewed commitment to Protestant faith.
- **Evangelical Resurgence:** A period of renewed interest in and spread of evangelical Christian beliefs and practices.
- **Pietism:** A Protestant movement that originated in Germany, emphasizing personal piety, spiritual experience, and active Christian living.
- **Deism:** A religious and philosophical viewpoint that acknowledges a creator God but rejects supernatural intervention and emphasizes reason and natural law.
- **Revivalism:** The belief in and promotion of religious revivals, periods of heightened spiritual interest and conversion.
- **Itinerant Preacher:** A traveling preacher who moves from place to place to deliver sermons and lead religious meetings.
- **Calvinism:** A Protestant theological system based on the teachings of John Calvin, emphasizing God's sovereignty, predestination, and the authority of scripture.
- **Congregational Church:** A Protestant church governed by its congregation, with no higher ecclesiastical authority.
- **Presbyterian:** A Protestant denomination governed by a system of elders (presbyters).
- **Old Side/New Side (Presbyterians):** Two factions within the Presbyterian denomination during the First Great Awakening; the "old side" opposed the revival, while the "new side" supported it.
- **Experiential Piety:** A focus on personal religious experience, emotional engagement with faith, and a practical demonstration of love for God and neighbor.
- **Personal Conversion:** A transformative religious experience in which an individual consciously turns to God and accepts Jesus Christ as their savior.
- **Lay Activity:** The involvement of non-ordained members of a church in various leadership and service roles.

- **Separation of Church and State:** The principle that government and religious institutions should be distinct and independent of each other.
- **Humanitarian Impulse:** A desire to promote human welfare and alleviate suffering.
- **New Forms of Assembly:** The practice of people voluntarily gathering in public spaces, often for religious purposes during the Great Awakening, which fostered a sense of collective action and independent thought.
- **Sovereignty of the People:** The principle that political power ultimately resides in the people.
- **Wesleyan Revival:** An 18th-century religious movement in England led by John and Charles Wesley, emphasizing personal holiness, social reform, and Arminian theology.
- **Arminianism:** A theological system that modifies Calvinistic doctrines, emphasizing free will, conditional election based on God's foreknowledge of faith, and the possibility of resisting God's grace.
- **Remonstrance:** A theological statement presented by followers of Jacob Arminius (known as Remonstrants) that articulated their points of disagreement with strict Calvinism.
- **Double Election:** The Calvinistic doctrine that God has predetermined both those who will be saved (election to salvation) and those who will be condemned (election to reprobation).
- **Foreknowledge:** God's prior knowledge of all things, including those who will freely choose to believe.
- **Irresistible Grace:** The Calvinistic doctrine that God's saving grace cannot be ultimately resisted by those whom he has chosen.
- **Perseverance of the Saints:** The Calvinistic doctrine that those whom God has saved will persevere in faith until the end.

5. FAQs Green, Reformation to the Present, Session 13, The Great Awakening, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions: The First Great Awakening and the Wesleyan Revival

1. What was the First Great Awakening and when did it primarily occur in America?

The First Great Awakening was an evangelical resurgence within the church. In America, it is primarily associated with the mid-18th century, with the date 1734 often cited due to the revival that occurred in Jonathan Edwards' church in Northampton, Massachusetts. While there were subsequent awakenings, this lecture focuses on the initial movement. The First Great Awakening was not limited to America, as simultaneous evangelical resurgences occurred in Germany (Pietism) and England (leading to the Wesleyan Revival).

2. Who were some of the key figures in the American First Great Awakening and what were their contributions? Several individuals played crucial roles in the American First Great Awakening. Theodorus J. Frelinghuysen brought a resurgence to the Dutch Reformed Church in New Jersey. Gilbert Tennant, a Presbyterian, was instrumental in the evangelical awakening of Presbyterianism in the Middle Colonies. George Whitefield, a British itinerant preacher, crossed denominational lines, preaching to both churchgoers and those outside the church, and was known for his magnetic personality and open-air preaching, even influencing John Wesley in this practice. Jonathan Edwards, a Congregational minister in Northampton, Massachusetts, experienced a significant revival in his church through his powerful, biblically-focused (though quiet) preaching and is credited with bringing Calvinism back into the forefront of American religious thought.

3. What were the primary theological characteristics of the First Great Awakening?

Theologically, the First Great Awakening saw a significant resurgence of Calvinism, emphasizing doctrines such as God's election and predestination in salvation. It also fostered a revival of experiential piety, stressing the importance of a personal and heartfelt love for God and neighbor, going beyond mere intellectual assent to doctrine. A major emphasis was placed on personal conversion as the central test of religious life, rather than adherence to creeds, church affiliation, or moral conduct alone.

Furthermore, the Awakening stimulated a concern for higher education, leading to the founding or growth of colleges like Princeton, Brown (originally Rhode Island College), Rutgers (originally Queens College), and Dartmouth, primarily to train ministers for various denominations.

4. What were the various reactions to the First Great Awakening in America? The First Great Awakening sparked diverse reactions. Some denominations, like the Presbyterians, experienced internal division between the "Old Side" party, which opposed the emotionalism and perceived lack of biblical basis in revivalism, and the "New Side" party, which embraced the revivals as a work of God akin to the New Testament church. Influential figures like Charles Chauncey, the pastor of the prestigious First Congregational Church in Boston (who later became Unitarian), strongly disliked the revival, advocating for sobriety, reason, and rationality in religious life. Additionally, some universities, notably Yale and Harvard, initially opposed the revival, viewing it as overly emotional and unreasonable, ironically contrasting with their Puritan origins (in Yale's case) and Harvard's original motto emphasizing "Truth in Christ and in the Church."

5. What were the significant social impacts or results of the First Great Awakening? The First Great Awakening had profound social consequences. It led to an elevation of the common person, as a personal religious experience with Christ was deemed accessible and essential for everyone, diminishing the perceived importance of social hierarchy in spiritual matters. The Awakening also stressed lay activity, empowering non-ordained individuals to take leadership roles both within the church and in broader society. The emphasis on personal independence in religious life contributed to a growing sense of independence in political thought, foreshadowing the American Revolution. It also fostered a climate conducive to the separation of church and state, initially intended to protect religious freedom from state interference. Furthermore, the Awakening sparked a new humanitarian impulse, rooted in the gospel message of loving God and neighbor, leading to increased care for the poor, widows, and orphans, and influencing American public life towards charitable endeavors. Finally, new forms of voluntary public assembly emerged, often centered around itinerant preachers like Whitefield, which instilled a sense of collective action and the recognition of authority based on perceived godliness rather than state appointment, concepts that later transferred into the political sphere.

6. How is the Wesleyan Revival in England connected to the First Great Awakening in America? The Wesleyan Revival in England occurred roughly contemporaneously with the First Great Awakening in America and can be seen as a parallel evangelical resurgence. While distinct in its leadership and specific theological emphases, both movements represented a reaction against the perceived spiritual apathy and rationalism of the era. George Whitefield, a key figure in the American Awakening, also played a role in England, notably influencing John Wesley to adopt open-air preaching.

Understanding both the American Awakening and the Wesleyan Revival provides a broader picture of the evangelical ferment occurring in the Western world during the mid-18th century.

7. Who was Jacob Arminius and why is his theology important in understanding the Wesleyan Revival? Jacob Arminius was a Dutch theologian who was asked to defend Calvinism but developed points of disagreement, which his followers articulated in a document called the Remonstrance. Arminius differed from strict Calvinism on issues such as double election (connecting predestination to God's foreknowledge), the extent of Christ's atonement (believing Christ died for everyone), the resistibility of God's grace, and the possibility of losing salvation. This Arminian theology became influential in England by the 18th century, and John Wesley was familiar with it. While Wesley's theology (often referred to as Wesleyan theology) is not identical to Arminianism, it shares significant points of agreement, particularly regarding free will and the universality of God's grace, providing a theological backdrop to the Wesleyan Revival that differed in some respects from the more strictly Calvinistic First Great Awakening in America.

8. What were some key biographical details of John Wesley's early life and how might they have influenced his later ministry? John Wesley (1703-1791) was the son of Samuel and Susanna Wesley. His father was an Anglican priest, and his mother, Susanna, was a highly influential figure known for her rigorous biblical and theological teaching of her many children. Susanna's disciplined approach to education and her strong faith likely played a significant role in shaping John's intellectual and spiritual development. A notable childhood event was the burning of the Epworth Rectory, from which John was dramatically rescued, a moment he later saw as symbolic, referring to himself as "a brand plucked from the fire." He attended Oxford University, was ordained as an Anglican priest, and initially pursued a teaching career at Lincoln College, Oxford, before briefly returning to assist his ill father in his ministry. This early exposure to Anglicanism, combined with his intellectual pursuits at Oxford and the dramatic event of the fire, laid the groundwork for his later theological explorations and his pivotal role in the Wesleyan Revival. The mention of his brother Charles also hints at the collaborative nature of the movement that was to come.