



## Outline: CHWNE Module 5 Lesson 1: Henry IV of France / The Edict of Nantes

- **Henry of Navarre became Henry IV of France in 1589**, ruled from 1589 to 1610, when he too was assassinated.
- His nine-year-old son **Louis XIII** came to the throne as a minor, with his mother **Marie de Medici** as regent.
- **Henry IV** was baptized as a Catholic, but raised as a Protestant fighting in the **Wars of Religion** before he was 15 years old.
- **In 1572, at the age of 19 years**, he lost his mother, became **King of Navarre**, married Catherine de Medici's daughter (**Marguerite of Valois**), and witnessed the slaughter of many of his best soldiers and noblemen in the **St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre**.
- **For three years (1572-1575)**, he was held hostage in the court of Paris, he escaped, abjured Catholicism in Tours and rejoined his Protestant forces, even leading them in their war against the royal army.
- His **16 year old sister (Catherine de Bourbon)** was regent in his absence for nearly 30 years.
- **In 1584, Francois d'Alencon (presumptive heir)** died, **King Henry III of France** had no heir, **Henry III of Navarre** became presumptive heir.
- **By 1588, Henry III** had killed all the leaders of the Catholic League, and all contenders for the throne; he was in turn assassinated, **Henry of Navarre**, became Henry IV of France.
- **Henry IV** fought civil wars with his subjects, gained military control with help from England and the German Lutheran princes, abjured his Protestant faith in favour of Catholicism, to unify his country.



- **Pope Clement VIII** removed his previous excommunication order in **1595**.
- In **1598**, he passed the **Edict of Nantes** which gave religious freedoms to Protestants & freedom to engage in trade, hold public office & to have direct access to him.
- His marriage to **Marguerite of Valois** was annulled in 1599 so that in 1600, he could marry another **Catholic de Medici - Marie de Medici** to work on producing a legitimate heir.
- He made social and political changes in finance, agriculture, education and efforts at eliminating corruption.
- Then, he turned to the colonization of the 'New World'. This was accomplished by giving trade monopolies to wealthy Protestant noblemen to establish colonies in Acadia and New France.
- After his assassination, he was lauded for being consistently victorious over his enemies as well as his genuine care for the underdogs. He was known as 'Good King Henry'.



## The Edict of Nantes

- The **1598 Edict of Nantes** was said to be **Henry IV's** greatest achievement, because it brought an end to 36 years of religious conflicts in France (**1562 - 1598**). It was eventually rescinded by **Louis XIV**, by **the Edict of Fontainebleau**.
- The original act that set forth the Edict of Nantes has disappeared. All that remains in Paris is the text of a shorter document, which identifies concessions given to the clergy and the Parlement of Paris. These concessions delayed the finalisation of the edict. It was eventually signed with the appropriate seals in 1599.
- Thankfully, a copy of the original edict was sent to Geneva for safekeeping.

For further reading from a Protestant perspective, see this site:

<https://www.museeprotestant.org/en/notice/the-edict-of-nantes-1598/>