

CHWNE Module 2 Lesson 1

Jacques Lefevre d' Etaples


(1455-1536)



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Jacques Lefevre d'Etapes was a French philosopher and a **Biblical scholar in Patristic History** and a professor at the Sorbonne.

He is considered as a 'pre-Reformation' thinker who, though influencing the Reformation in France, died as a Catholic, wanting to reform the church from within.



After his ordination as a priest, he pursued higher **education at the Sorbonne, returning later as a professor.**

In **1507**, he moved to a benedictine abbey so he could give himself fully to the study of Scriptures. He started exegeting Scripture and editing translations of the Bible.



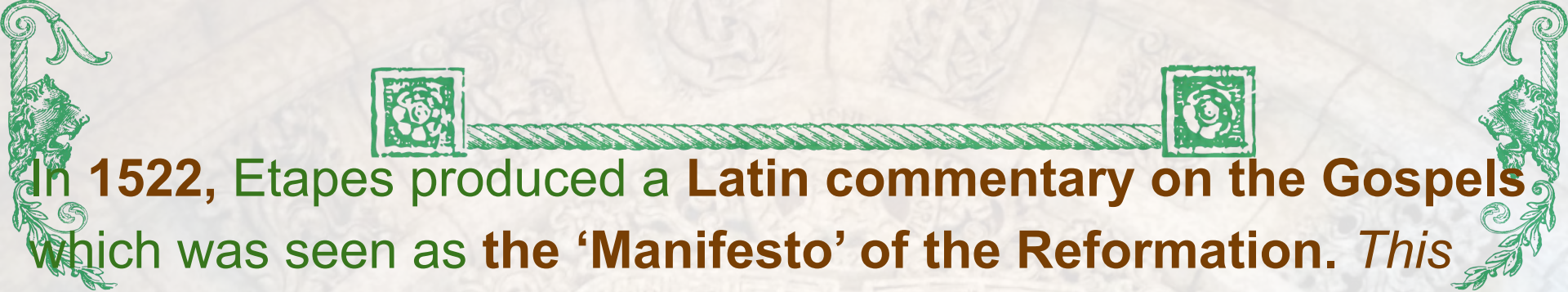
It is thought that his exegetical translation of Scripture and his theology paralleled that of Erasmus, and was the cause of a tense relationship between them.

As a Professor of the Sorbonne, one of his pupils was Guillaume Farel, whose influence brought him closer to Calvinism, but he remained a Catholic wanting to reform the church from within. **Nicholas Cop** was also one of his followers.



In **1512** he produced a **Latin commentary on the Epistles of Paul** and prefaced it by expressing his belief of *Sola Scriptura*.

By **1521** the Parlement and the Sorbonne wanted to take action against d'Etapes and his followers, but **Francis I** intervened.



In **1522**, Etapes produced a **Latin commentary on the Gospels** which was seen as the **‘Manifesto’ of the Reformation**. *This commentary reputedly influenced **William Farel** and **Nicholas Cop**.*

By **1523**, he published the foundational translation of the **French New Testament**, *with separate translations of the **Gospels** and the **Epistles** to help with **preaching** at the diocese of Meaux.* *From 1507 to 1523, he had spent 16 years studying & writing.*



Both **Lefevre and Farel** were at **Meaux**, training preachers for a time before **Farel left for Switzerland to establish the Reformed Church.**

It is said that *they all just wanted to ‘preach the pure gospel’ and reform the church from within.*

Marguerite of Navarre, Francis’ sister protected them from the Sorbonne and advocated for them with Francis I.



Many of his publications were seen as heretical, and the cause of him spending time in exile. In all his publications, **his preface included the statement that the Scripture alone is the only rule of doctrine for life and that justification was by faith alone.**

The Catholic leaders and nobles were very hostile to him, but **he was a protege of Francis I and Marguerite of Navarre.**



In **1525** when Francis was taken captive, d'Etaples work was condemned and suppressed by the parlement of France.

In **1526**, on Francis' return, the charges were dropped and in **1526 Francis appointed him as Royal Librarian at Blois.**

*There he published his version of the **Pentateuch, Le Psautier de David**, and in **1530**, the **complete Bible based on Jerome's Vulgate.***



In 1531, he was given refuge from persecution by **Marguerite of Navarre**.

In 1533, when **Calvin** was on his way out of France, it is said that he visited with d'Etaples.

In 1534, the revised edition of the **Bible using Greek and Hebrew texts**, was printed in **Antwerp**. He continued to live in Nerac in Navarre until his death somewhere between **1536 and 1537**.