Lesson 73

The Scottish Covenanters

I have grown weary of sad lessons about religious persecution. They break my heart. But we have one more significant wave of persecution to study in this book. We're going to look at the Scottish Covenanters and their severe oppression under Charles II. Who was Charles II and why did he oppress the Scottish? To answer those questions, we'll have to go back to the confusing events of the English Civil Wars.

During the English Civil Wars, England was divided between the Cavaliers and the Roundheads. Remember them? The Cavaliers supported the king. The Roundheads supported the Parliament. The Roundheads basically won the civil war and in the process, Charles I was beheaded. Oliver Cromwell then stepped in as the Lord Protectorate of England.

Well, before Charles I was executed, he was helped in battle by his 15-year-old son. His son was Charles II, whom we're studying today. Some folks claimed upon the execution of Charles I, that Charles II was the next rightful king of England and Scotland. But it was hard for Charles II to claim the throne. In fact, it was nearly impossible. For having helped his own father in battle, Charles II was considered an enemy — at least by the Roundheads. After losing a battle to Oliver Cromwell, Charles II was forced into hiding. A price was put on his head, and he became a “wanted” man.

The time that Charles II spent in hiding was to shape his life. Unlike most kings, he ate and slept among commoners while on the run. Though an Anglican, he found refuge among Catholic families who had supported his father. Charles II hid from home to home and barn to barn. He camped out in the woods and among the ruins of Stonehenge. He cut his long hair and disguised himself as a traveling servant and a woodsman. His servant role was convincing to the peasants who sometimes spoke to him face-to-face, not knowing he was Charles II!

On one occasion, to flee enemy soldiers, Charles spent the night hiding in an oak...
This unusual story — of the king hiding in a tree — burned itself deep into the English memory. To remember the perilous escape, it became customary for the English to pin oak leaves on their clothes on Charles’s birthday. This custom lasted nearly 200 years! But back to our story.

After 40 days on the run, Charles II made safe passage to France where he joined his mother in hiding. Louis XIV had mercy on him and gave him money and protection. He eventually moved to Brussels. For nine years Charles laid low, until 1658, when Oliver Cromwell passed away. When Cromwell died, his son tried to be the next Lord Protectorate. But he didn’t do a very good job and offered to resign from the position.

And so, the highest place of leadership in England was vacant. That wasn’t good. Do you want to know what happened as a result? After all those years of turmoil in the Parliament over having a king, and after all those years of civil war, the Parliament voted a king back into the position! You know who that king was, don’t you? It was Charles II.

It must have been an unreal experience for Charles to cross back over the sea from Brussels to England. After years in hiding, he was now being welcomed home like a hero. On May 25, 1660, thousands stood on the banks of England with tears in their eyes, hailing the arrival of the king. Church bells rang in London as Charles made his way there through the fanfare. Banners were hung, flowers were thrown, and toasts were made. It was a huge turn of events in England. The people called it the English Restoration because a king was being “restored” to the throne. It was almost as if the civil war had never happened.

Does this event sound a bit familiar? It does to me. It reminds me of the French welcoming Louis XIV into Paris when he was 14. The English were submitting to an absolute monarch in much the same way the French had submitted to Louis. Like the French, they were tired and worn out from wars and went right back to having a king. Isn’t history a mystery?

Charles II enjoyed playing the role of king. Like Louis XIV, he dressed extravagantly and flirted and flaunted himself regally about his court. But unlike Louis, Charles connected with the common people. He remembered the peasants who had helped him escape England years before. The ordinary English folks delighted in Charles, who seemed kind and down-to-earth. They called him “the good-natured king.” The Parliament liked Charles, too, because he wasn’t very interested in politics, and he allowed them to carry on as they pleased. They did just that.

**Persecution of the Scottish**

If all was well in England, then why is this lesson about persecution? Well, I’m getting to that. You see, though Charles was at first tolerant of the various religions in England, he was not tolerant of the Scottish Presbyterians. For one, it was the Scottish who had captured his father, Charles I, and placed him in the hands of the English for execution. Charles II was brimming with revenge for this act. But secondly, since the Scottish were officially under Charles’s rule, he believed he was the head of their church.¹ He couldn’t have been more wrong.

According to the Presbyterians, Christ alone was the head of their church. As far back as 1581, Presbyterians agreed to sign “covenants” stating their faith in Christ and were then nicknamed the “Covenancers.” In 1638, 60,000 Scots gathered to sign a National Covenant put on display at Greyfriars Church in Edinburgh. By 1640, the Scottish Parliament made the Covenant system official. (Or so they tried.)
Underestimating the faith of the Scottish Covenanters, Charles II revoked the National Covenant in 1661. It led to dreadful persecution and bloodshed.

In seeking control over the Covenanters, Charles II did something in 1661 that would begin a reign of terror in Scotland. He officially established himself as the head of the Church of Scotland and declared it illegal to hold a covenant that stated otherwise. This means he revoked, or undid, the National Covenant that thousands had already signed! (Older Students: In legal terms, Charles was reinstituting the law of prelacy [PRELL uh see] whereby “prelates,” or bishops, were assigned to the churches by discretion of the king. Prelacy grossly violated the individual rights and freedom of churches.)

I don’t know if Charles II realized what he was up against. He was up against the deep, solid, personal faith of the Covenanters. They would rather die than submit to anyone other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are many sad parts to this story. But one sad part to me is the fact that Charles II was unmoved by the faith of the Covenanters. He himself was not a man of faith or one to practice religion, and so it was doubtful that he understood their devotion to Christ. Though the English called Charles “the good-natured king,” he seemed to not be good-natured toward the Covenanters. Similar to Louis XIV’s persecution of the Huguenots, Charles began to persecute the Covenanters for the sake of political power. And as mentioned earlier, Charles was also motivated to avenge the death of his father. He was as willing to kill for his cause as the Covenanters were willing to die for theirs. And so the conflict erupted.

By 1662, the Scottish Covenanters attempted to outsmart the law. Since they were forbidden to congregate in the churches, they met outdoors in open fields. They called these worship gatherings conventicles. By 1670, authorities had caught on to these meetings and declared it illegal for preachers to hold outdoor services. It was, in fact, made a capital crime, which means it was punishable by death. Even this did not stop the Covenanters from gathering or the preachers from preaching.

The Covenanters gathered by the thousands in the hills, the marshes, the moors, and the woods. They armed themselves with lookout guards while mass numbers were secretly baptized or married in Christian ceremonies. Large rocks were their altars and streams their baptismals. They didn’t need steeples or pews or walls to make their church. The church was in their hearts. At one such conventicle in 1670, 6,000 worshipers gathered to hear preaching. Boulders were lined up as tables to distribute communion to 3,000 believers. The large stones still stand today as testimony to this brave gathering.

There were times when the Scottish Covenanters tried to rise up in rebellion against their persecutors. They fought at Rullion Green, Drumclog, Bothwell Bridge, and Ayrmoss. Twice they won and twice they lost. Richard Cameron, one of the Covenanters’ strongest leaders, was killed at Ayrmoss. For being considered a traitor, his head and hands were severed (meaning cut off) and put on public display.

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The Bible comforts us with these words: "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 5:10)

The Killing Times

As bad as these times were, they actually got worse under the next king. Charles II was followed by his brother, James VII. James held fast to the divine right of kings and set out to rid Scotland of all Presbyterians. The reign of James VII was so horrible, and his methods so barbaric, that a few months in 1685 have been nicknamed the “Killing Times.” They were called this because the Covenanters were flushed out and hunted down like animals. Lists of church members were collected, trials were skipped, and God-fearing men and women were tracked down and killed on the spot for their faith in Christ. Some were sold into slavery or shoved into dark dungeons for the rest of their lives. Many inspiring stories have emerged from this dreadful time. They are inspiring because through the lives of the martyrs, we see faith triumph over fear.

(Younger Students and/or those who are sensitive to these things: You may want to end this lesson here and simply remember the few months called the “Killing Times.” Remember that as many as 18,000 Scottish believers died for their devotion to Christ and according to Matthew 5:10, “theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” But if you would like to be familiar with the personal names and stories of a few of these martyrs, please keep reading.)

John, James, and the Two Margarets

Though each life lost during the Killing Times was special, there are four that stand out in Scottish history. The first is the life of John Brown. John Brown was a strong Christian who probably would have been a preacher except that he had a speech problem. It was hard for him to talk without a stutter. So rather than preach, he served the body of Christ by hosting meetings and hiding Covenanters in his home.

As the story goes, on May 1, 1685, soldiers came to John Brown’s home. They pressed him to swear his allegiance to the king of England. John Brown refused. It’s been said that when he spoke out for his faith, his stutter disappeared! Nonetheless, his refusal cost him his life. After saying his prayers, he was shot at his front door in front of his wife and children. The man who ordered the shooting suffered with nightmares for his cruelty.

The second story involves two women. Both were named Margaret. One Margaret was a 67-year-old widow. The other was an 18- or 19-year-old maidservant. Both stood firm in their faith and suffered for it. The two women were found in hiding and arrested in 1685.
for refusing to give up the Covenant. Unlike some, they were given a trial. But it did not help. The judge ordered them to be executed by the manner of drowning.

Stakes were hammered into a sandy beach at low tide and the women strapped down. Both were offered the chance to save their lives by submitting their faith to the rules of the king. Even as the tide came in, neither of them would falter. One sympathetic soldier killed the older Margaret before the rising waters would steal her last breath. The younger Margaret recited Psalm 25 until she was suffocated by the sea.

Last, I will tell you about James Renwick. James Renwick was an ordained preacher who had studied theology in Holland. He knew when he returned to his home in Scotland that he would be persecuted for his faith. He preached anyway and baptized hundreds of children who professed their faith in Christ. For his open preaching apart from the government church, he was identified as a traitor. For at least three years he lived in hiding.

The day came, however, when he could hide no more. He was arrested and condemned to death. The night before he died, he wrote to his loved ones, "He has strengthened me to outbrave man and outface death, and I am now longing for the joyful hour of my dissolution, and there is nothing in the world I am sorry to leave but you."3

As he stood at the gallows, James Renwick quoted Psalm 103 and Revelation 19. He prayed out loud, “Lord, I die in the faith that Thou wilt not leave Scotland, but that Thou wilt make the blood of Thy witnesses the seed of Thy church, and return again and be glorious in our land. And now, Lord, I am ready.”4 James Renwick was 26 years old when he prayed that prayer. What he didn’t know then was that his execution would be the last public killing of that awful time. And he didn’t know then how specifically his prayer would be answered. I’ll get to that in a few lessons when we study the "glorious" reign of William and Mary.

Lesson 74

1662

K’ang-hsi the Manchu and the Ch’ing Dynasty

I don’t think most 13-year-olds are qualified to serve as emperors of nations. But I stand to be corrected with a young man named K’ang-hsi (Kang SHEE).5 K’ang-hsi was the second emperor of the Ch’ing dynasty of China. Strangely enough, though, K’ang-hsi wasn’t Chinese! He was a Manchu (Man CHOO) from the country of Manchuria. Let me explain how a young Manchu became one of China’s greatest emperors.

We first need to review some geography. You need to know that Manchuria is a great plain located in northeast China. Today Manchuria is part of China, but it wasn’t in the 1600s. Manchuria was a large neighbor of China’s and under its own ruler.
From 1368 to 1644, China was ruled by emperors of the Ming dynasty. Like most dynasties, it had its highs and lows. But it was during the early 1600s that the Ming dynasty began to crumble from the inside out. In shame, the last Ming ruler committed suicide along with his wife. He left a note saying, “I am ashamed to meet my ancestors. Therefore I myself take off my crown, and with my hair covering my face await dismemberment at the hands of the rebels. Do not hurt a single one of my people.”

Upon the death of that Ming emperor, the Manchu swept down from their great plain, overcame Chinese rebels, and in the course of a few years set up the Ch'ing dynasty. It would last until the 1900s! That's a long-lasting dynasty — especially since it was composed of foreigners.

The first Ch'ing emperor was Shun-chih. He was only 7 when he obtained the throne, so he relied on his uncle to rule for him. His uncle introduced an unusual custom to the Chinese. He insisted that Chinese men shave the front of their heads and wear a single long pigtail called a queue, just like the Manchu! He also insisted that they dress in Manchu fashion. Women weren't told how to dress or style their hair, but they were forbidden to practice foot-binding, which was an old custom among the upper class.

As you can imagine, the Chinese didn't appreciate being told how to groom their feet, wear their clothes, or cut their hair. The Chinese believed that hair was a gift from their parents and ancestors. So head shaving to them was quite demeaning. It was one of many things that would reflect the humiliation the Chinese felt for a very long time under the Manchu.

Shun-chih grew up and ruled China better than his uncle did. But, in 1661, Shun-chih died suddenly at a young age. After his death, his 8-year-old son inherited the throne. That son was K'ang-hsi, our focus of study today, and that is how he came to rule China in 1662.

The Industrious Emperor

As mentioned earlier, K'ang-hsi was only 13 when he took official control over China. Most would not expect a boy that age to be ready for such a job. But apparently he was. K'ang-hsi was a very hard worker. He rose before sunup every morning to start his day and held meetings as early as five o'clock in the morning. He oftentimes worked until midnight. What was he up to all those hours? A lot!

Like most emperors, K'ang-hsi had to bring local uprisings under control. He did so with success through an eight-year battle with three feuding regions. After that, he invested his time into expanding the borders of his empire in every direction. By 1683, he took Taiwan. A few years later he pushed back the Russians and the borders of Outer Mongolia. From all of this, K'ang-hsi made China larger than it had ever been before. (And it was pretty big to begin with!)
Part of K’ang-hsi’s success was due to his well-organized army. The Manchu before him had organized the army into eight banners, or divisions. Each banner was color coded and ranked in importance. K’ang-hsi expanded the banner system and made it even better. The bannermen, as they were called, were amazingly loyal to the emperor.

Though K’ang-hsi was an absolute monarch through and through, he cared a great deal for the people of China. Yes, he took high control of things, but he did so with care. For one, he respected the Chinese and their customs more than his ancestors had. He gave the native Chinese the lands that had been taken from them, and placed more Chinese in the government. In a unique system, both Manchu and Chinese officials worked side by side, with the Manchu having the most power.

For the common people, K’ang-hsi lowered taxes and improved public services. He knew how things were around his empire because he regularly left his palace to visit the people in the countryside. Now remember, this emperor was a foreigner! It was an amazing show of skill on his part that the Chinese grew to trust him. But in time they did.

When it came to the arts and sciences, few were as interested as K’ang-hsi. Under his rule, painting and porcelain making reached new heights, as did the harvesting of pearls and ginseng (JIN sing), a popular root. Though an emperor, K’ang-hsi attended hours of academic classes and insisted that his officials be well educated, too. He even went so far as to invite Jesuit priests to China. They were well known for their brilliant scholarship, and K’ang-hsi welcomed it.

To further prove his devotion to the Chinese, K’ang-hsi sponsored three massive literary projects that would preserve Chinese tradition. First, he hired scholars to write the history of the Ming dynasty. Second, he compiled a Chinese dictionary holding 50,000 characters. And third, he sponsored the compilation of a 5,000-volume encyclopedia that included the teachings of Confucius and other important Chinese philosophies.

Does K’ang-hsi sound too good to be true? In some ways, he really was. He has gone down in Chinese history as one of the greatest emperors ever born. His fine reputation spread to Europe, and K’ang-hsi was the envy of his contemporaries for having the largest, richest empire in the world. Even Louis XIV was impressed by the Manchu monarch whose reign was long and prosperous.

**Separation**

But of course, as you might suspect, some policies of the Ch’ing dynasty were unfair. Though the Chinese outnumbered
the Manchu by the millions, the Manchu were encouraged to have an attitude of superiority over the Chinese. For one, they shut the doors of Manchuria to all Chinese and would not allow them in. Now that’s interesting, isn’t it? It’s like saying, “We’ll invade your country, but you can’t come into ours.” In fact, Manchu officials were required to regularly vacation back “home” in Manchuria to keep themselves distinct from the Chinese.

In the banner army, too, there was separation between Manchu and Chinese. The Upper Banners were primarily Manchu. The Lower Banners were primarily Chinese and not as well equipped. On top of that, the Manchu kept their language and legal documents separate from the Chinese. And Manchu were forbidden to marry Chinese until the 1900s.

Speaking of forbidden, the famous Forbidden City, which was the capital and home of the emperor, was off-limits to the Chinese but not to the Manchu. When foreign diplomats were allowed to see the emperor, they were expected to show their respect by kowtowing before him. Kowtowing was the gesture of knocking one’s head on the floor in humility before the emperor. It was intended to show how high the emperor was respected above all others.

So the Ch’ing dynasty had its strengths and weaknesses. Some of these weaknesses would in time hurt the vast empire. Separatism would keep China practically behind closed doors and cause them to fall behind the rest of the world in some areas of progress. In fact, the Ch’ing dynasty would be the last dynasty to rule China. But we won’t be studying that story until we’re well into the 1900s, which is a long way off from the Renaissance and Reformation.

The magnificent Forbidden City in the middle of Beijing, China, was the daunting government seat and palace home of emperors for about five centuries.
Lesson 75

Sir Isaac Newton

Though it may be just legend, there is a story about Isaac Newton that will help you remember his most famous contribution. Supposedly, Isaac Newton was sitting in a garden drinking tea when he saw an apple fall to the ground. From that simple observation, which most would not have thought about twice, Newton concluded that gravity is the force that holds the entire universe together! The implications of this were to shape human history.

There is no doubt that Sir Isaac Newton was a genius. But you would never have known it when he was a kid. For one thing he was born so prematurely that he barely survived babyhood. Then, in his youth, Isaac did poorly in school. Rather than study, he spent time tinkering with gadgets and building sundials, water clocks, and windmills.

Isaac Newton quit school for a time to help his widowed mother with the family farm. But he wasn't much help. He spent more time reading than doing his chores. An uncle sent him back to school, hoping to make something good of him. On his second try at school, Isaac performed much better.

But in college, Isaac Newton failed to prove that he was extraordinary. He graduated without any special awards. However, a retiring math professor at Cambridge University recommended that Newton take his place because he saw a glimpse of the genius that was in him. Newton took the position as a math professor but, wouldn't you know, few attended his classes. He apparently spoke so far over the heads of his students that most couldn't understand him. On the days his classroom was vacant, he lectured to the walls.

I imagine that Isaac Newton was the epitome (meaning great example) of an absent-minded professor. He frequently forgot to eat and held a grudge against sleeping for being a waste of his time. He was known to wander around in messy clothes and unkept hair, talking out loud to himself. He didn't make friends very easily.

Though he might have lacked social skills, Isaac Newton possessed thinking skills like few others. By 1666, at just 24 years of age, he formulated some incredible ideas relating to calculus, gravity, and light. Each is so important that we'll spend most of this lesson addressing them.
Though Sir Isaac Newton was brilliant in mathematics, he is probably most famous for his three laws of motion, which help to explain the phenomenon of gravity.

**Newton’s Three Major Ideas**

1. *Calculus.* First, when it comes to calculus, it is Isaac Newton who has been given the most credit for inventing it. I say the “most” credit because another mathematician, named **Gottfried Leibniz** (GOT freet LIPE nitz), claimed to be first to develop calculus. Unfortunately, the two men argued over the matter, and it dampened both their careers. It may be that Leibniz was first to publish his ideas on calculus, but Newton was first to discover them. Newton was notorious for waiting years before publishing most of his great ideas.

   If you don’t know, calculus is one of the highest forms of mathematics. It seemed to come easily to Newton. His advancements in math helped prove the elliptical theories of Tycho Brahe and Johannes Kepler. I hope you remember those guys. (**Older Students:** Newton was particularly known for infinitesimal calculus, the binomial theorem, Newton’s identities, and Newton’s method. He also discovered a new formula for *pi* and used fractional indices to solve Diophantine (Die oh fan TEEN) equations. Don’t ask me to explain!)

2. *Gravity.* As important as calculus is, it was Newton’s ideas on gravity that have made him truly famous. Going back to the example of an apple falling to the ground, Newton was first to realize that the force that causes an apple to fall is the same force that attracts the moon to the earth, the earth to the sun, and the sun to the universe. It’s all gravity!

   The difference between an apple and a planet is, of course, its size, or **mass**. Newton realized that the greater the mass of an object, the stronger its gravitational pull. Look at it this way: A boulder has more mass than a pebble. That’s obvious. So the force of gravity on a boulder is **stronger** than on a pebble. We would say the boulder had more “weight,” but in reality, it has a stronger gravitational pull toward the earth! That’s not so obvious, but it’s an interesting way to view the mass of things.

   (**Middle and Older Students:** Read this paragraph.)

   Besides mass, **distance** also determines how gravity works. The farther away an object is, the less gravitational pull it has. In Newton’s words, “every particle of matter in the universe attracts every other particle with a force varying inversely as the square of the distance between them and directly proportional to the product of their masses.” All of this together helped Newton explain many things, including the bulge of the earth at the equator and the pull of the sun and the moon on the tides of the earth. (Again, it’s all gravity!)

   (**All Students:** Resume reading here.)

   In summary, Newton contributed **three laws of motion** to science with his understanding of universal gravity. They are as follows:
First Law (the law of inertia): This law states that an object in motion stays in motion unless it is acted on. And an object at rest stays at rest unless acted on.

Second Law: The force on an object is equal to mass times acceleration. (A simplified equation form is \( F = ma \), where \( F \) stands for force, \( m \) stands for mass, and \( a \) stands for acceleration.)

Third Law: For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction.

Newton’s first and third laws are the easiest to explain with examples, so I’ll try. Newton’s first law, the law of inertia, is at work when you’re spinning around on a merry-go-round and try to jump off. It’s not that easy to do! When you jump, it’s almost impossible to land in a certain spot and remain on your feet because your body is still in motion from the merry-go-round. Right? Have you ever done that before? Your body is fighting inertia, the force that put you in motion.

As for an object’s staying “in motion unless it is acted on,” it’s hard for us to see that on earth because we have friction to slow things down. If you roll a ball on your lawn, the grass will eventually slow it down. But not in outer space! An object would “float” or stay in motion if there were nothing to stop it.

As for Newton’s third law, imagine that you and a friend are standing face-to-face on ice skates on a frozen pond. If you place your hands on your friend’s shoulders and push away, your friend will move, too. The action of the push causes an equal push in the opposite direction. Try it sometime. It’s much less painful than falling off a merry-go-round.

3. Light. It’s time now to look at Newton’s ideas regarding light. For one thing, he recognized that white light is made up of a spectrum of colors. You can see this phenomenon when light passes through a prism and is divided into red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. This spectrum is best seen in rainbows when we see light passing through raindrops on a sunny day. Newton was the first to clearly explain the beautiful colors of the rainbow.

Beyond that, Newton recognized that the color of an object is not the color we see with our eyes. Instead we see the color the object is reflecting and not absorbing. Consider a green bowl. Our eyes would tell us the bowl is green when in reality, the bowl is absorbing every color in the spectrum of light — except green! The color green is bouncing off the bowl and returning to our eyes. Isn’t that thought amazing? As true as it is, we usually refer to things as the color we see them. It’s much easier to say that a pumpkin is orange than to say, “a pumpkin is absorbing every color except orange and reflecting that back to our eyes”!

Newton used his ideas of light to figure out some incredible things. By studying the color of stars, he could calculate their distance from earth. He also used light to invent the reflecting telescope that used mirrors rather than lenses to study the heavens. This invention greatly advanced astronomy.

From all his brilliant ideas, you would think that Isaac Newton was confident. But confidence was one thing he lacked. For that reason, he waited as long as 20 and 30 years to
write about his breakthrough discoveries. He waited so long because he feared the scrutiny or criticism of others. In fact, it took the persistence and funding of a scientist named Edmond Halley to put Newton’s works into print in 1687. Newton’s masterpiece on gravity is titled *Principia* (Prin SIP ee uh). The ideas in *Principia* would stand unchallenged until Albert Einstein refined them with his famous theory of relativity. But that’s another story in history.

**The Faith of Isaac Newton**

With all Newton did for science, it might surprise you to know that he wrote more about theology than he did about physics or math. It’s true. As magnificent as his contribution to science was, Newton was more fascinated with God and the Bible. Isaac Newton was a member of the Anglican Church in England and influenced by the Puritans. He read the Bible every day and spent his life seeking ways to better understand it. Some would say he was one of the first to try to decipher a code out of all the words in the Bible. He never did find a special code, but he was intrigued by the concept, as are many today who comb the Scriptures for hidden words in mathematical sequences.

Religious folks of Newton’s day were concerned with his profound explanation of gravity in the universe. They feared that in naming the force of gravity, people would think less of God and more of gravity for appearing to hold all things together. The truth is that Isaac Newton was a strong believer in God. He believed it was God who created gravity and everything that held up the heavens. He was in awe of God’s creation and gave Him full credit for it. Newton said, “Gravity explains the motions of the planets, but it cannot explain who set the planets in motion. God governs all things and knows all that is or can be done.”

As a final note on his life, you might wonder why Isaac Newton was given the title “Sir.” The title was given to him by Queen Anne of England in 1705 — but not for science or theology! Queen Anne dubbed Isaac Newton a knight for his excellent work in the mint of England. (A mint is a place that manufactures money.) During Newton’s day, there were many counterfeiters trying to make fake money. Through his knowledge and interest in alchemy, Newton was far slyer than they were and had many counterfeiters arrested. To find criminals, he was known to disguise himself and hang out in taverns. I think it’s an interesting side job in the life of this genius.

Sir Isaac Newton lived to be 85. He never married, but he was generous to the extended family he had. He was fortunate during his lifetime to be recognized for his achievements. He spent numerous years as president
As a sign of great honor, Sir Isaac Newton was buried at Westminster Abbey, which is the final resting place for 17 of England’s monarchs.

It is undeniable that Sir Isaac Newton forever changed the way mankind would view the world in motion. He made sense of the “world machine,” as it was called. Yet he remained a humble man. Near his death, Isaac Newton said this of himself, “I do not know what I may appear to the world, but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.”

of the Royal Society and was buried in the fashion of a king at Westminster Abbey.