

Church History
Lesson 7: Luther & The German Reformation

REVIEW (PAGES 1 & 2)

WHAT WAS THE REFORMATION?

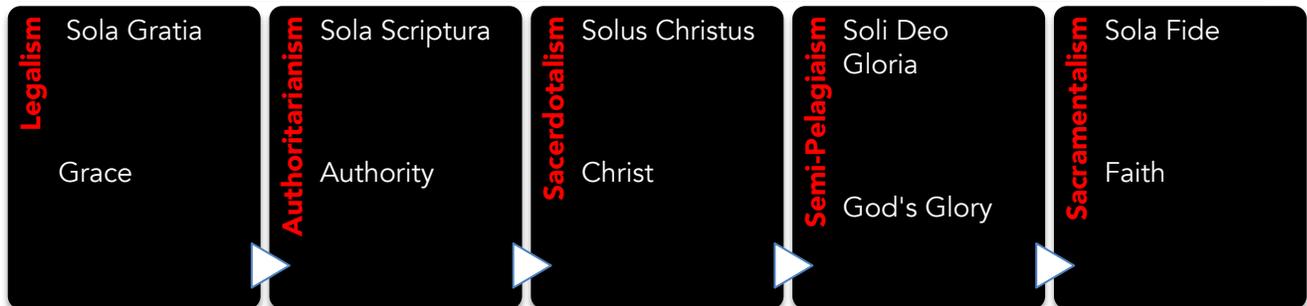
The Reformation was a 16th-century movement to reform the theological corruption and abuses in the Roman Catholic Church ending in the establishment of the Protestant Churches that exist today.

Those who protested the abuses and sought reform were called **Protestants** and/or **Reformers**.

WHAT WERE THEY SEEKING TO REFORM?

The Reformers sought to return the Church to its Biblical roots regarding salvation in contrast to the Roman Catholic Church's man-made system of works-salvation.

5 Great Heresies of the Roman Catholic Church & the Protestant Biblical Response



In sharp contrast to Rome the Reformers pointed Christians back to the Bible as the only unchanging standard for doctrine and practice. After the Reformation the Latin phrase, "**Semper Reformanda**" (Always Reforming) was used to remind Christians that God is always reforming His Church. The phrase "always reforming" is taken from the larger phrase, "the church is reformed and always being reformed according to the Word of God". So, the reformation of the church **is not the invention of new doctrines** but rather **a return to the standard of Scripture in belief and behavior**.

WHEN DID THE REFORMATION BEGIN?

On October 31, 1517 Martin Luther nailed his now famous 95 Theses to the door of the Wittenburg castle church. This act was a "Protest" against the sale of indulgences and a call for "Reform".

HOW WOULD YOU SUMMARIZE THE THEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ROME & THE REFORMERS?

Rome's Errors	Protestant Biblical Response
AUTHORITARIANISM	The Scripture Alone
SACRAMENTALISM	Faith Alone
LEGALISM	Grace Alone
SACERDOTALISM	Christ Alone
PELAGIANISM	The Glory of God Alone

THE FIVE SOLAS OF THE REFORMATION

1. Sola Scriptura: *Scripture Alone* is the final authority for faith and practice. Thus no council, denomination, pastor, elder, board, book, school or ministry has the final say in matters of faith, doctrine, practice or belief. Our conscience is chained to the word of God.
2. Sola Fide: It is by *Faith Alone* apart from all human works, apart from all human merit, apart from any agency. There is no other plan of salvation which is acceptable to God. The righteousness of God imputed to a believing sinner is the only means of justification.
3. Sola Gratia: God's *Grace Alone* can save a person. God's grace is both his stance toward us, (namely his graciousness) and the desire and power to do his will (His enablement). When we affirm that we are saved by grace alone we mean not only that God has given us an unmerited gift or favor (his graciousness) but also and most importantly, he has overcome our depravity and inability to respond by his grace (the desire and power to do his will).
4. Solus Christus: *Christ Alone* is the mediator between God and man and the only priest anyone needs for salvation. He is the only person who can save us and the only way to be saved and justified.
5. Soli Deo Gloria: *The Glory of God Alone* is the purpose for which all things were and are created. Man cannot take any credit for his salvation since we are all depraved and in need of regeneration. God's greatest purpose in all that he does is to bring glory to Himself. In short, the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

By the time of the Reformation the Roman Catholic Church had obscured the simplicity of the gospel through the invention of an elaborate merit system of salvation. That system was built on the twin errors of **Sacerdotalism** (*people cannot approach God on their own, but must come through a priest*) & **Sacramentalism** (*people cannot be saved directly by the grace of God but rather that people receive grace incrementally through the seven sacraments*).

THE SYSTEM AT WORK (CIRCA 1517)

Rome enjoyed a monopoly on salvation. Here's how the game worked:

1. Merit is necessary for salvation.
2. Merit (salvation points) can only be obtained through the Roman Sacramental System. (The Treasury of Merit)
3. No one knows how many points you need so you can never know if you've done enough
4. Certain types of sin negate or remove merit
5. Your level of accrued merit points determines your afterlife destination (Heaven, Hell or Purgatory)
6. Purgatory (purging) is for the Roman Catholic who hasn't done enough to get to heaven but has enough points to avoid hell. Merit points were added to the person based on the number of years they spend in in purgatory.
7. A "get out of purgatory card" could be obtained through an **Indulgence**.
8. An Indulgence supposedly purchased a pardon or remission of sin by the Pope based on merit drawn from the Treasury of Merit (I'm not making this up). The Treasury of Merit was filled by the righteousness of Christ, Mary and the Saints (dead Catholics who had more merit points than they needed to earn their own salvation).
9. Indulgences were sold (yes, for money) at first for years off purgatory than eventually for the *Complete Remission Of All Sins For All Time!* It was this last super sale that led to Martin Luther's 95 Thesis against Indulgences and "selling salvation".

In sharp contrast to Rome the Reformers pointed Christians back to the simplicity of the Biblical Gospel. The Reformers teaching on the Gospel is summarized by the Latin phrase, "**Solum Evangelium**". (The Gospel Alone), which reminds Christians that the Gospel message alone is God's Power for Salvation and Plan of Salvation. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "But the righteous man shall live by faith." Romans 1:16-17

LUTHER & THE GERMAN REFORMATION



LUTHER'S FORMATIVE YEARS (1483-1517)

A. BIRTH & CHILDHOOD

1. Born on November 10, 1483 in Eisleben.
2. Father gained considerable wealth through ownership of shares in local copper mines. Most of this wealth was gained after Martin was grown.
3. Pious but superstitious mother inculcated many of the superstitions of their class into him.
4. Parents administered very strict discipline. (As was the custom of the time)
5. Whipped by his mother until the blood came because of stealing a nut
6. One morning in the Latin School he was whipped 15 times.
7. The early years left Luther with a love of hard work, strong will, practical conservatism and many terrors about his soul and his salvation.

B. EDUCATION

1. Short period in a school of the Brethren of the Common Life in Magdeburg.
2. Sent to school in Eisenach between 1498-1501. He was given food and lodging by kind friends and he received advanced instruction in Latin in preparation for university.
3. In 1501 at the University of Erfurt he began to study the philosophy of Aristotle under the influence of teachers who followed the nominalistic ideas of William of Ockham. William had taught that revelation was the only guide in the realm of faith; reason was the guide to truth in philosophy.
4. He became aware that divine intervention was necessary if man was to know spiritual truth and be saved.
5. In 1502/1503 he received the Bachelor of Arts degree and in 1505 he was granted the degree of Master of Arts.
6. His father wished him to study law.

C. LIFE AS A MONK

1. The thunderstorm & promise to St. Anne (July, 1505)
2. His father's reaction
3. The Augustinian order at Erfurt
4. Ordained in 1507 & the celebration of his first mass.
5. Taught one semester of theology at Wittenberg in 1508.
6. Study of theology and the struggle of his soul.
7. Helped by Staupitz (Trust God and study the Bible)
8. In the winter of 1510/1511 he was sent to Rome on business for the order and was shocked by the corruption and greed of the Roman church and saw the need for reform.

D. LIFE AS A PROFESSOR

1. In 1511 he was transferred to Wittenberg.
2. He became a professor of Bible and received his doctor of theology degree.
3. He was given his office in the tower where he came to the realization of justification by faith.
4. It was from Luther and a loyal band of professors and students that the faith spread over Germany.
5. Luther began to lecture in the vernacular on the books of the Bible.
6. He studied the original languages.
7. He gradually saw that only the Bible had final authority on matters of faith and practice.
8. He lectured on Psalms from 1513-1515, on Romans from 1515-1517 and later on Galatians and Hebrews.
9. Somewhere between 1512 and 1516 he came to saving faith and found the peace he could never find in rites or asceticism.
10. Reading Romans 1:16-17
11. Sola Fide and Sola Scriptura.

E. THE INDULGENCE SYSTEM AND TETZEL

1. Background to the Reformation/Indulgences
2. Tetzel
3. Tetzel's claim: the buyer did not need to repent and the indulgence gave complete forgiveness of all sin.
4. On October 31, 1517 Luther posted his Ninety-Five Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg.

5. He condemned the abuses of the indulgence system and challenged all comers to debate on the matter.
6. Initially he had no intention of separating from Rome but rather was seeking reform from within.
7. The translation of the theses into German and the printing of them spread Luther's ideas rapidly.

THE BREAK WITH ROME (1518-1521)

A. EARLY BACKLASH, DEBATES AND ALLIES

1. Tetzel fights back!
2. Dominicans vs. Augustinians
3. Debate at Heidelberg and the widening circle
 - Martin Bucer (1491-1551)
4. Philipp Melanchthon (1497-1560)
 - Came to Wittenberg as Professor of Greek in 1518
 - Theologian of the German reformation
 - Loyal and reasonable
5. Frederick (The elector of Saxony)
 - Support at the Diet of Augsburg (1518)
6. Debate with Cardinal Cajetan at Augsburg
 - Luther denied the pope as final authority in faith and practice as well as denying the usefulness of the sacraments without faith.
7. Debate with John Eck at Leipzig (July 1519)
 - Admitted the fallibility of a general council
 - Admitted he did not accept the decisions of the pope
 - Admitted the validity of many of John Hus' ideas

B. THE THREE PAMPHLETS (1520)

1. The Address to the German Nobility---- To the Hierarchy
2. Babylonian Captivity-----Challenged the Sacramental System
3. The Freedom of the Christian Man-----Theology

C. NO TURNING BACK

1. In June 1520 Pope Leo X issued the bull Exsurge Domine which eventually led to the excommunication of Luther.
2. Luther burned Leo's bull on December 10, 1520
3. Charles V, the new emperor, issued a summons for an imperial diet at Worms in the spring of 1521 at which Luther was to answer for his views
4. Promised "safe conduct"----remember John Hus?
5. Here I Stand!
6. Kidnapped!
7. Lived at Wartburg Castle (May 1521 to March 1522).
8. Reading of Luther's writings banned and an order was given to seize him and turn him over to the authorities.

REFORMING THE REFORMATION (1522-1530)

A. MELANCHTHON

1. Publishes *Loci Communes*, a short work on the theology of the Wittenberg Reformers. (Latin) Luther called the work "immortal" (1521-1522)
2. Sets up the German school system
3. Writes the Augsburg Confession (1530)

B. LUTHER

1. Completes his German translation of the New Testament during his year at Wartburg Castle (1521-1522). The whole Bible is translated by 1534.
2. Publishes "On Monastic Vows" during the Wartburg stay.

C. CONTROVERSIAL POLICIES

1. The Zwickau Prophets (1522)
 - Special revelations
 - Kingdom to appear soon
2. Break with the Anabaptist movement (1535)
3. Erasmus: (1524)
 - Breaking with Rome
 - Nature of Man
4. The Peasants (1525)
 - 12 Articles
 - Admonition to Peace

- Against the Plundering Murderous Hordes of Peasants
 - Southern German peasant response
5. Repudiating monastic vows and marriage
 - Katherine von Bora (1525)
 6. Ulrich Zwingli (1529)
 - Swiss Reformer
 - The presence of Christ in the communion

D. CHURCH ORGANIZATION

1. Diet of Speier (1526)
2. Ruler of each state was free to follow what he felt was the correct faith
3. Second Diet of Speier (1529)
4. Reversal of first policy
5. Roman Catholic faith the only legal faith
6. Six princely followers of Luther read a Protestation
7. Diet of Augsburg (1530)
8. Augsburg Confession (Melanchthon)
9. Confession became the official creed of the Lutheran church
10. Short Catechism (1529)
11. Ten Commandments
12. The Apostles Creed
13. The Lord's Prayer
14. German Mass and order of service (1526)
15. The Wittenberg faculty began to examine and ordain ministerial candidates (1535)

GERMAN RELIGIOUS WARS AND CHURCH ORGANIZATION (1531-1555)

A. THE SCHMALKALDIC LEAGUE (1531)

1. Protestant Princes---mutual defense
2. Emperor busy with wars against the French and the Turks until 1542
3. War broke out after Luther's death in 1546
4. War fought 1546-1552

B. PEACE OF AUGSBURG 1555

1. Lutheranism on equal legal standing with Roman Catholicism in Germany
2. Prince to determine the religion in his territory
 - Led to "state" churches
3. Dissenters were to be given the right to emigrate
4. If a Catholic leader turned Protestant he must give up his position

LUTHER'S LEGACY

- A. THE NINETY-FIVE THESES

- B. THE BONDAGE OF THE WILL

- C. COMMENTARIES ON ROMANS & GALATIANS

- D. HIS BOLDNESS

- E. CATECHISM

- F. THE GERMAN BIBLE

- G. STRUCTURE OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH

- H. HYMN'S SUCH AS "A MIGHTY FORTRESS"

- I. UNIVERSAL ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (URGED MELANCHTHON TO SET IT UP)

- J. INFLUENCE ON THE PRINCES

- K. SOCIAL REFORMS

- L. THE VALUE OF FAMILY LIFE AND MARRIAGE

- M. RESTORED PREACHING TO IT'S RIGHTFUL PLACE IN THE CHURCH

- N. SOLA SCRIPTURA, SOLA FIDE

- O. PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS