

# **Luther and the German Reformation**

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# **Birth and Education**

- **Martin Luther was born of free peasant stock in Eisleben, Germany, November 10, 1483.**
- **Briefly went to a school of the Brethren of the Common Life in Magdeburg**
- **He went to school in Eisenach (1498-1501).**
- **Took philosophy @ University of Erfurt (1501)**
  - **William of Ockham taught revelation was the only guide in the realm of faith, while reason was the guide to truth in philosophy**
  - **BA (1502) and MA (1505)**

# **Becoming a Monk**

- **Luther's father wanted him to study law.**
- **During a severe thunderstorm (July, 1505) near Sotternheim, he promised Saint Ann he would become a monk if spared.**
  - **He entered a monastery of the Augustinian order at Erfurt.**
  - **Luther was ordained and celebrated his first mass (1507).**
- **His soul struggle had been made more intense through his studies in theology at Erfurt.**
  - **Johann Von Staupitz, the vicar-general of his**

# **Wittenburg and Rome**

- **During winter 1508, Luther taught theology at the new university founded (1502) by Frederick, elector of Saxony, in Wittenberg.**
- **In the winter of 1510-11, he was sent to Rome on business for his order.**
  - **He saw the corruption and luxury of the Roman church.**
  - **He was shocked by the levity of the Italian priests who could say several masses while he said just one**

# **Transferred to Wittenburg**

- **Luther was transferred to Wittenberg (1511) where he became a professor of Bible.**
  - **He received his doctor of theology.**
  - **He was a lecturer in Biblical theology until his death.**
  - **To lecture on the books of the Bible, he began to study in the original languages of the Bible.**
  - **He developed the idea that true authority could only be found in the Bible**

# **Growth Through Study**

- **Luther lectured on Psalms from 1513-15.**
- **He lectured on Romans from 1515-17.**
- **Later, he lectured on Galatians and Hebrews.**
- **A reading of Romans 1:17 convinced him that only faith in Christ could make one just before God.**
  - **Sola fide – justification by faith**
  - **Sola scriptura – Scriptures were the only authority for sinful people seeking salvation**
  - **Sola sacerdos – the priesthood of the believers**

# **Prince Albert, Archbishop of Mainz (Mattox 241)**

- **Prince Albert of Brandenburg, at twenty-three, paid Leo X about \$25,000 for the dispensation to hold a second bishopric.**
- **When the Archbishopric of Mainz came open, he contacted the pope about acquiring that office as well.**
- **Papal legates arranged for Albert to pay \$250,000 as the regular fee for the office and another \$250,000 for the privilege of holding a third office.**
- **The legate suggested borrowing from the Fugger banking house at Augsburg using a papal bull authorizing the sale of indulgences to secure the loan**

# **Indulgences (Mattox 241)**

- **God could forgive sin, but the church needed to require temporal punishment, the terms of which were stated by the priest**
- **An individual could not fully atone for his sin on earth, but would have to suffer in purgatory**
- **An indulgence was an act of mercy, on the part of the hierarchy of the church through God's power given to Peter, granting a relaxation of the amount of satisfaction required for forgiveness**
- **This applied to the living and those in purgatory**



# **Johann Tetzel (1469-1524)**

- **Tetzel, an agent of Archbishop Albert, began selling indulgences at Juterbock, just outside Saxony**
- **1/2 went to Albert for the Fugger bankers and 1/2 to Pope Leo X to help pay for construction of St. Peter's Cathedral**
- **Tetzel sold certificates for release from purgatory throughout Germany**
- **Instructions stated, "in order to obtain these two most important graces, it is not necessary to make confession, or to visit the churches and altars, but merely to procure the confessional letter**
- **Mattox 244**

# **Luther in Tetzel's Time (Mattox 244)**

- **Luther was teaching in the University at Wittenberg, giving very popular lectures on the writings of Paul and the Psalms**
- **He had been commissioned to serve as the parish priest in the church at Wittenberg**
- **He was also an official in the Augustinian Order, being an inspector of monasteries**
- **Though Frederick would not allow the sale of indulgences in Saxony, many of Luther's parishioners were purchasing them at Juterbock**

# **Ninety-five Theses (Mattox 245)**

- **On October 31, 1517, Luther posted his Ninety-five Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg**
- **He condemned the abuses of the indulgence system and challenged all comers to a debate**
- **The translation into German and printing of the Theses caused his ideas to spread rapidly**
- **Johann Maier of Eck, professor of Theology at Ingolstadt, made a review of the Ninety-five Theses and a pamphlet warfare was begun**

# **Debate at Heidelberg (1518)**

- **“Tetzel attempted to use all the power of the Dominican order to silence Luther**
- **Luther was ordered to debate the problem before the members of his order at Heidelberg (1518)**
- **The only result seems to have been a widening circle who accepted Luther’s idea, including Martin Bucer**

# Allies

- **Philip Melanchthon came to Wittenberg to teach Greek in 1518**
- **He was well trained in the classical languages and Hebrew**
- **Frederick, who helped select the Holy Roman Emperor, lent his powerful support when Luther was summoned to appear before the imperial Diet of Augsburg in 1518**

# **Diet of Augsburg (1518)**

- **Luther met Cardinal Cajetan, who demanded he retract his views**
- **He refused until he should be convinced of their falsity by Scripture**
- **He also denied the pope as the final authority in faith and morals**
- **Luther further denied the usefulness of the sacraments without faith**

# **Debate at Leipzig (1519)**

- **Luther appealed for a general council to deal with the problem**
- **In July, 1519, he debated John Maier of Eck at Leipzig, taking over for Carlstadt**
- **Luther admitted the fallibility of a general council**
- **He also admitted his unwillingness to accept the decisions of the pope**
- **He likewise admitted the validity of many of Hus' ideas**

# **Taking the Issue to the People**

- **Luther published three pamphlets taking the issue to the German people in 1520**
- **The *Address to the German Nobility* was aimed at the hierarchy**
- **He said the princes should reform the church when necessary**
- **He said the pope should not interfere in civil affairs**
- **He expressed the idea that all believers were spiritual priests of God who could interpret Scripture and had the right to choose their own ministers**



# ***Babylonian Captivity***

- **Published in October, 1520**
- **He challenged the sacramental system of Rome**
- **It must be remembered this was viewed as the means of grace when dispensed by the priesthood**
- **He emphasized the sure validity of only the Lord's supper and baptism**

# ***The Freedom of the Christian Man***

- **In this work, Luther attacked the theology of the Roman church**
- **He asserted the priesthood of all believers as a result of personal faith in Christ**
- **Luther was appealing for national reform through these attacks on the hierarchy, sacraments and theology of the Roman church**

# ***Exsurge Domine***

- **Issued by Leo X on June 15, 1520, this papal bull gave Luther 60 days to recant**
- **It led to his excommunication by the pope in 1521**
- **Luther's books were burned at Cologne**
- **He burned the bull along with the works of some of his enemies and the book of church law in December, 1520**

# **Imperial Diet of Worms**

- **Hoping to weaken the Pope's political influence in his empire, Frederick III the Wise, Elector of Saxony offered protection to Luther, though he also ended up wanting Luther to recant**
- **Luther and the princes who supported him were given safe escort to the Imperial Diet of Worms, setting out in April of 1521**
- **As they journeyed, he was welcomed and cheered by the German people**

# **At the Diet of Worms**

- **Luther again refused to recant to the Emperor**
  - **“Unless I am convinced by Scripture and plain reason - I do not accept the authority of the Popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other - my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. God help me. Amen.”**
- **Luther stated “*I am finished*” and set out on his journey home**

# **Wartburg Castle**

- **Luther was labeled an outlaw through the Wormser Edikt, which was an imperial act**
- **Anyone was licensed to kill him without penalty**
- **Reading Luther's writings was also outlawed**
- **Fredrich the Wise carried out a mock kidnapping and took him to Wartburg Castle in Eisenach (May, 1521 to March, 1522)**
- **Luther called himself "Knight George" while he was in hiding**

# While in Wartburg Castle

- Luther used Erasmus' edition of the Greek Testament to translate the New Testament into German
- This helped develop a standardized German and resulted in the Bible being in the hands of commoners
- The whole Bible, including the Apocrypha, was translated into German by 1534
- He wrote *On Monastic Vows* in which he urged monks and nuns to repudiate their wrongful vows, leave the cloister and marry

# Melanchthon

- His *Loci Communes*, a work on the theology of the Reformers of Wittenberg, came out in 1521
- He rejected the authority of the Roman church, the Fathers, the canon law and the Scholastics
- Melanchthon put the Bible above these as the final authority for Christians
- He set up the German school system from village schools to universities
- He was responsible for the Augsburg Confession



# Weakening Support

- Luther opposed the Anabaptist movement with 8 fiery sermons stressing the authority of the Bible and need for gradual change in the church
- He lost the support of the humanists when he opposed Erasmus' book, *The Freedom of the Will* (1524)
- Luther denied the freedom of will in his book, *The bondage of the Will*
- The peasants, particularly in southern Germany, became hostile to Luther when he opposed the Peasant's Revolt

# **Luther and Zwingli**

- **Luther and Zwingli met at Marburg Castle in the fall of 1529 (the Marburg Colloquy)**
- **They agreed on fourteen out of fifteen propositions**
- **They disagreed on Christ's presence in the Lord's supper, with Zwingli contending it was a memorial of Christ's death**
- **Luther said the substance of the bread and wine did not change, but there was a real physical presence of Christ in the Communion**
- **Just as iron remains iron but becomes cherry hot when heated, the substance of the bread and wine do not change but around and under the symbols is a real physical presence of Christ**