Martin Luther



Martin Luther became a student at the University of Efurt in 1501 where he studied philosophy, law and theology. However, he was unsatisfied with just reason. Therefore, he decided to become a monk and devote his life to God.

In 1517, Martin Luther first protested to the Catholic church about the sale of indulgences - the full or partial remission of temporal punishment due for sins which have already been forgiven. Martin Luther argued that is was faith alone that could provide the remission of sin and not money payments.

On 31 October 1517, Luther posted 95 theses, criticising practises of the church, on the door of the Castle Church of Wittenberg. The 95 theses were critical of many practises relating to baptism and the sale of indulgences for the remittance of sin. He also indirectly challenged the Pope’s legitimacy, #86 included:

Why does the pope, whose wealth today is greater than the wealth of the richest Crassus, build the basilica of Saint Peter with the money of poor believers rather than with his own money?” ([95 Theses](http://www.reformed.org/documents/index.html?mainframe=http://www.reformed.org/documents/95_theses.html))

Within a few weeks, Martin Luther’s theses had spread throughout Germany becoming widely known.

The significance of this written challenge caused the church to respond.

However, by that time, the criticisms of Martin Luther were widely in circulation; and with the help of the new printing presses, the Reformation movement gained in strength and popularity. The Catholic Church would never maintain the same unchallenged authority in Europe again.

April 1521, the enforcement of banning Luther’s writings fell to the secular authorities. Luther acknowledged he was the author of the writings but again failed to recant them. Saying he would stand by them. Luther was condemned as an outlaw and thereafter he feared for his life. However, he managed to remain hidden for several months, before returning to Wittenberg to preach more of his anti-clerical speeches and doctrines. In this period he also translated the Bible from Greek to German

Martin Luther married an ex-nun thereby giving the seal of approval for clerical marriages in the Protestant tradition. With his wife, Katharina von Bora they were to have five children.

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