

TIMELINE



Luther and Cardinal Cajetan

Luther burns the decree of excommunication



Condemning the Errors of Martin Luther ----- Pope Leo X June 15, 1520

"Arise, O Lord, and judge your own cause. Remember your reproaches to those who are filled with foolishness all through the day. Listen to our prayers, for foxes have arisen seeking to destroy the vineyard whose winepress you alone have trod. When you were about to ascend to your Father, you committed the care, rule, and administration of the vineyard, an image of the triumphant church, to Peter, as the head and your vicar and his successors. The wild boar from the forest seeks to destroy it and every wild beast feeds upon it..... As far as Martin himself is concerned, O good God, what have we overlooked or not done? What fatherly charity have we omitted that we might call him back from such errors....We have even offered him safe conduct and the money necessary for the journey urging him to come without fear or any misgivings.But he always refused to listen...It is our hope, so far as in us lies, that he will experience a change of heart by taking the road of mildness we have proposed, return, and turn away from his errors. We will receive him kindly as the prodigal son returning to the embrace of the Church."

October 1517: Luther nails his 95 Theses at Wittenberg.

October 1518: Luther is interviewed in Augsburg by Cardinal Cajetan.

July 1519: Luther engages in a theological debate with Catholic John Eck, a professor at the University of Ingolstadt. The debate addresses matters ranging from purgatory to indulgences to the authority of the Church.

Summer 1520: Luther publishes a series of tracts that are considered his primary works: *The Sermon on Good Works* (May), *The Papacy in Rome* (June), *The Babylonian Captivity* (September), and *The Freedom of the Christian Man* (November). *The Babylonian Captivity* questions all but two of the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church.

June 1520: Pope Leo X, in the papal bull *Exsurge Domine*, warns Luther that he will be excommunicated unless he recants within sixty days.

October 1520: The day after receiving a copy of the pope's bull, Luther writes, "This bull condemns Christ himself." In his letter, he also writes that he is now "certain the pope is the Antichrist."

November 1520: Luther publishes his answer to the papal bull.

December 1520: In Wittenberg, Luther publicly burns the papal bull threatening him with excommunication

January 3, 1521: Pope Leo X excommunicates Luther.

Read [HERE](#)

Martin Luther's Reply to the Papal Bull of Leo X

"You then, Leo X, you cardinals and the rest of you at Rome, I tell you to your faces: "If this bull has come out in your name, then I will use the power which has been given me in baptism whereby I became a son of God and co-heir with Christ, established upon the rock against which the gates of hell cannot prevail. I call upon you to renounce your diabolical blasphemy and audacious impiety, and, if you will not, we shall all hold your seat as possessed and oppressed by Satan, the damned seat of Antichrist; in the name of Jesus Christ, whom you persecute. But my zeal carries me away. I am not yet persuaded that the bull is by the pope but rather by that apostle of impiety, John Eck...."



Read Luther's reply [HERE](#)

By March of 1522 Luther had published his German translation of the New Testament where he added the word "alone" to Romans 3:28:

"For we hold that a man is justified by faith alone apart from works of the law."

The Catholic Church was quick to criticize Luther for adding to the bible and in response Luther wrote:

"If your papist wishes to make a great fuss about the word sola (alone), say this to him: "Dr. Martin Luther will have it so, and he says that a papist and a donkey are the same thing." ...For we are not going to be students and disciples of the papists. Rather, we will become their teachers and judges. For once, we also are going to be proud and brag, with these blockheads; and just as Paul brags against his mad raving saints, I will brag against these donkeys of mine! Are they doctors? So am I. Are they scholars? So am I. Are they preachers? So am I. Are they theologians? So am I. Are they debaters? So am I. Are they philosophers? So am I. Are they logicians? So am I. Do they lecture? So do I. Do they write books? So do I...."Let this be the answer to your first question. Please do not give these donkeys any other answer to their useless braying about that word sola than simply this: "Luther will have it so, and he says that he is a doctor above all the doctors of the pope." Let it rest there. I will from now on hold them in contempt, and have already held them in contempt, as long as they are the kind of people (or rather donkeys) that they are."

Read [HERE](#)

In August of 1521 Luther wrote about his belief in eternal security, that is, no sin could separate a true Christian from God. Here in a letter from Luther to his friend Melanchthon Luther claims that one could kill or commit adultery a thousand times a day and still be saved.

"If you are a preacher of mercy, do not preach an imaginary but the true mercy. If the mercy is true, you must therefore bear the true, not an imaginary sin. God does not save those who are only imaginary sinners. Be a sinner, and let your sins be strong, but let your trust in Christ be stronger, and rejoice in Christ who is the victor over sin, death, and the world. We will commit sins while we are here, for this life is not a place where justice resides. We, however, said Peter are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth where justice will reign. It suffices that through God's glory we have recognized the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. No sin can separate us from Him, even if we were to kill or commit adultery thousands of times each day. Do you think such an exalted Lamb paid merely a small price with a meager sacrifice for our sins? Pray hard for you are quite a sinner."

Read Luther's letter [HERE](#)

Ulrich Zwingli

Others joined with Luther in rejecting Church teaching. In Switzerland Catholic priest Ulrich Zwingli started his own reformation. In 1522 Zwingli taught the principle that the bible, under private interpretation, was the sole authority for doctrine.

"In 1524 indulgences and pilgrimages were abolished, the sacraments of Penance and Extreme Unction rejected, and pictures, statues, relics, altars, and organs destroyed, regardless of their artistic value. Sacred vessels of great value, such as chalices and monstrances, were melted into coin. Church property was seized by the State. Celibacy was rejected as contrary to the bible and monks and nuns were married. Zwingli himself on July 2, 1524, married Anna Reinhard who bore him his first daughter on July 31. In the spring of 1525 the Mass was abolished; in its place was introduced the memorial service of the Last Supper." *Catholic Encyclopedia*



In 1530 Catholic lawyer John Calvin broke from the Church. In 1536 he published his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Like Luther he believed in total depravity of the soul and denied that man has free will to accept or reject God.

Unlike Luther, Calvin believed that God predestines man to heaven or to hell. Calvin also taught that the Eucharist was a symbol while Luther held to the Presence of Christ.

Calvin taught that God did not die for all men but only for some. Those who are predestined have eternal security.

Calvin's teachings became known as the 5 points of Calvinism and some or all of his 5 points are accepted today in some Presbyterian and in some Baptist denominations.

King Henry VIII



The Flood Continues

On October 17, 1521, Pope Leo X declared King Henry VIII the Defender of the Faith. This title was given to honor Henry for his book *Defense of the Seven Sacraments* which attacked the theology of Martin Luther. Fifteen years later, Henry would be excommunicated from the Catholic Church.

Henry sought an annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon so that he could marry Anne Boleyn. In 1533, instead of waiting for the annulment the Archbishop of Canterbury, appointed by King Henry, declared Henry's marriage invalid and Henry married Anne Boleyn who was already pregnant with the future Queen Elizabeth.

The Pope refused to grant Henry the annulment and King Henry declared himself to be the "Supreme Head of the Church of England."

King Henry required that an Oath of Allegiance be signed showing full support of his actions. Bishop John Fisher and the Lord Chancellor of England Thomas Moore refused to sign and they were sent to the Tower of London and later beheaded. Within a few years Henry tired of Anne and had her arrested and falsely charged with adultery and incest. She was found guilty and on orders from Henry was beheaded.

Within a month of Anne's execution, Henry married Jane Seymour who died while giving birth to Henry's only son Edward. Henry then had a "political" marriage with Anne of Cleves but soon divorced her and married Catherine Howard in 1540. Two years later Catherine was condemned and beheaded on charges of adultery. Henry then married his sixth and last wife Catherine Parr. Henry died in 1547 and Catherine remarried and a year and half later she died during childbirth.

Although King Henry named himself Supreme Head of the Church in England, unlike Luther, Zwingli and Calvin, he did not change any teachings of the Church. (Other than the King's right to divorce and remarry)

Upon Henry's death his nine year old son Edward became king and the Archbishop of Canterbury Thomas Cranmer was in charge of the affairs of the Church of England. Cranmer replaced the Catholic Liturgy with his *Book of Common Prayer*, the Eucharist was taught as only a symbol and priests were allowed to marry.

Queen Mary



Edward died at 15 and Henry's daughter Mary from his first marriage became Queen. She was fully Catholic and began restoring the Catholic Faith in England. Bishops were re-instated, the Mass, confession and feast days for saints were restored.

Our modern understanding of diversity and tolerance did not exist in the 16th century. Heresy was equal to treason and Queen Mary had Thomas Cranmer and 277 others burned at the stake. For this she became known to Protestants as "Bloody Mary." Mary died from stomach cancer after only five years on the throne.

Queen Elizabeth



Henry's daughter Elizabeth from his second marriage now became Queen. She fully embraced Protestantism and had Bishop Christopherson arrested after his eulogy at Mary's funeral. At her coronation Mass she walked out when the Catholic Bishop elevated the Host.

Under Elizabeth, through Acts of Parliament, it became an act of treason to be a Catholic priest. The Mass was forbidden and declared illegal. Catholics faced fines of twenty pounds a month or imprisonment for not attending the Church of England. The prisons were full of Catholics. Under her rule of 45 years, 189 Catholics, 128 of them priests were martyred for the faith. For the children born under her reign as Queen, the Protestant Church of England was all they knew. The Catholic faith became a distant memory. England was now Protestant

Now that private interpretation of the Bible had become accepted in Protestant circles, Luther had to admit what he once envisioned as a "reform" of the Catholic Church had turned into chaos with Protestants splintering off into different groups. Luther said:

"There are almost as many sects and beliefs as there are heads; this one will not admit Baptism; that one rejects the Sacrament of the altar; another places another world between the present one and the day of judgment; some teach that Jesus Christ is not God. There is not an individual, however clownish he may be, who does not claim to be inspired by the Holy Ghost, and who does not put forth as prophecies his ravings and dreams." *Letter to the Christians of Antwerp*

For most of those who rejected the Catholic Faith the slogans of Sola Scriptura (Bible Alone) and salvation by Faith alone became their distinguishing mark.

Those Protestants who believe in faith alone use the following scriptures against Catholics to support their claim that we are saved by faith alone and that works (things we do) such as keeping the commandments, works of charity, going to Mass and receiving the sacraments have no bearing on our salvation.

Romans 3:20: "For no human being will be justified in his sight by works of the law."

Romans 3:28: "For we hold that a man is justified by faith apart from works of law."

Romans 4: 3 "For what does the scripture say? Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness."

Romans 4:5 "And to the one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness."

Romans 5:1: "Therefore since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God."

Ephesians 2:8-9 "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast."

Was Luther right? At first glance those verses, all written by Saint Paul, seem to support that we are saved by faith alone. Good works have nothing to do with our salvation.

Next topic: In a few days you will receive an apologetic on what is meant by “The Church.”

Next week’s topic: Understanding Paul and his teaching on Justification

Recommended books on the Protestant Reformation:

The Facts about Luther by Monsignor Patrick O’Hare

How the Reformation Happened by Hilaire Belloc

Books on King Henry VIII:

Supremacy and Survival: How Catholics endured the English Reformation by Stephanie Mann

To read quotes from Luther go [HERE](#)