

- the Reformation
  - A 16th-century movement in Western Europe that aimed at reforming some doctrines and practices of the Roman Catholic Church and resulted in the establishment of the Protestant churches - American Heritage Dictionary*
  - It is the most important epoch in the history of the world since the events of which we read in the New Testament. – Houghton's Sketches*

### I. WHAT WAS THE BACKDROP OF THE REFORMATION?

#### A. Religious (i.e. Christian)

- two great divisions of Eastern Orthodox and Western Romans Catholic
- not everything taught by RC church was wrong; however there was great darkness, superstition (relics), oppression, abuse, and wickedness (even among the popes); there were those within the church that recognized this, and set about for moral reformation
- morning stars who dared to believe Scripture and were persecuted John Wycliff **SLIDE** John Huss **SLIDE**

#### B. Secular

- **SLIDE** 1454 Printers in Mainz (city of west-central Germany) use moveable metal type for the first time (as opposed to cuttings or wood type); 1456 Gutenberg Bible published at Mainz by Johann Gutenberg
  - Renaissance (rebirth or revival), an essentially humanistic revival of art, literature, and learning of the 14<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century; originated in Italy, and spread through Europe; the transition between “Medieval” to “Modern” times
  - It was good in its emphasis on the importance of literacy, learning, creativity, and dignity of man
  - It was bad in that it was godless, and put human reason in place of God
  - **SLIDE** Erasmus – exposing abuses in the church; editing of the first printed Greek New Testament in 1516
- We can think of all these things like kegs of gun powder...

### II. WHAT WAS THE “SPARK” OF THE REFORMATION?

- what was the human instrument ordained of God to set the powder off?

#### Martin Luther

- **SLIDE** born in November 10<sup>th</sup>, 1483 to Saxon miner(West Germanic tribal group)
- **SLIDE** peasant (A member of the class constituted by small farmers and tenants, sharecroppers, and laborers on the land where they form the main labor force in agriculture.)
- he did very well in his studies, and his father desired to become a lawyer
- **SLIDE** during a thunder storm and vow to St. Anne (mother of Mary mother of Jesus, patron saint of miners) to become a monk; he kept vow and within 2 weeks entered Augustinian monastery at Erfurt
- this upset his father, who was hopeful that he would have a prosperous living in law and help the family
- had a profound sense of the holiness and justice of God, but little of His mercy and love; this (almost?) drove him insane
- his attempt to win the favor of God through obedience were sincere and strict; “I kept the rule so strictly that I may say that if ever a man got to heaven by his sheer monkery, it was I.”
- This included prolonged fastings (2 weeks), sleeping without blanket in extreme cold, physical self-torture, and praying to 21 different saints (3 a morning)
- He eventually went into the priesthood (influence of John von Sataupitz, the head of the Augustinian order) and began to teach theology in the University of Wittenberg
- **SLIDE** it was through the study of Scripture he found peace; 1515 while studying Romans 1:17 “the just shall live by faith”, there was a true revelation to his soul; man is not justified before God by any or all of his works, but merely by the righteousness of Jesus Christ which is acquired by faith alone (contrary to the RC teaching)
- At the time he wanted to influence what he believed to be the true church for good, and reform it
- During this time he made a monumental journey to Rome (headquarters of Catholicism), and was greatly disappointed - things heated up due to another man the Lord would use
- **SLIDE** John Tetzel was a Dominican monk who had been called to raise money for two specific reasons. One was the rebuilding of St. Peter’s basilica (cathedral) and the other to help pay off the debt of a man who had purchased high church positions and had borrowed the money from a financial house; by arrangement the church allowed this
- **SLIDE** The was primarily done by Tetzel travelling around and selling “indulgences”; these supposedly took the extra (supererogatory) merits and works of dead saints and applying them to the account of the deceased loved ones of those who purchased them
- **SLIDE** This infuriated Martin and prompted him to action by writing 95 Thesis in Latin to post on the church door for a challenge to debate (a common practice among scholars) – this was done on October 31, 2006 – this was the “spark” that ignited the reformation
- The document (originally in Latin) was translated into German, and began to be spread to the people

## WHAT WAS THE REFORMATION?

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- One of the main points of that document was that salvation is based on the merit of Jesus Christ ALONE, and that it is appropriated by faith ALONE
  - To Luther faith was not primarily intellectual assent... [but] rather, the grateful whole-hearted response of one's entire being to the love of God in Christ: it was full confidence in God. – Latourette's History*
- **SLIDE** Pope Leo X eventually got news of this, and this challenge was answered by the appointment of theologian John Eck at Leipzig (Tetzel had failed and was humiliated), and in that debate Luther's emerging belief that the Scriptures ALONE are the ultimate source of truth and final court of appeal, not the pope or church councils
- **SLIDE** 1520 Pope Leo X issued a papal bull condemning Luther, giving 60 days to repent
- Luther's response was eventually a bonfire in which copies of the Canon Law and works of some medieval theologians, as well as a copy of the bull
- January 1521 Pope Leo declared Luther a heretic and expelled him from "the one holy, catholic and apostolic Church"
- **SLIDE** Now the great question was what the civil authorities would do with him; Charles V, under oath to defend the church and remove heresy
- **SLIDE** Charles called a Diet (legislative assembly of the princes of a land) at Worms; this assembly included around 260 dignitaries of the lands (displaying the widespread effect of Luther)
- He was asked two primary questions: are these your writing (on display), and do you recant whatever the church condemns; he affirmed the first, then asked to be given the night to pray and give and answer the next day
- It is here that he gives his well known speech ("Here I stand")
- Charles condemned Luther as an outlaw, and was given 21 days to flee to Saxony before the sentence fell
- While traveling, the prince of Saxony, named Duke Frederick the Wise **SLIDE** (whose domain included Wittenberg) captured and taken for sanctuary at Wartburg Castle **SLIDE**; there he was disguised as a minor nobleman **SLIDE**
- He would stay there for about a year, during which time he would work himself incessantly
- **SLIDE** Among his labors was the translation of the New Testament into German as well as several other writings
- During this time there were also active more radical reformers; some would become violent, destroying property
- 1522 Luther returns to Wittenberg to put into effect spiritual reform in the church; he would restructure and redefine key elements of worship, the ministry, etc.; the centrality of worship moved from the mass to the preaching of God's Word; also emphasized singing in worship for the people, and wrote hymns and produced hymnal
- **SLIDE** 1525 Martin would marry a woman who had been a nun and escaped, Katherine von Bora; together they had several children (contrast with priesthood) and **SLIDE/SLIDE** modeled a more pastoral and family related ministry emerged as the pattern; including frequent hospitality
  
- Francis Schaeffer reminds us that "it was no golden age"; and Luther was no spotless hero
- even sympathetic biographers apparently struggle with Luther's words and tones: "an irascible old man, petulant, peevish, unrestrained, and at times positively coarse."
- Three great tragic issues included (1.) his condemnation of the Jews, not because of racial reasons, but due to their ongoing rejection of Christ (calling for the destruction of their synagogues and loss of property) (2.) the peasants revolt of 1525 (100,000 dead, not all from his own doing), and (3.) the support the death penalty for Ana-Baptists
- A reminder that our greatest strengths are at the same time our greatest potential weaknesses
- Luther had his faults, and great fallen men often have great faults, but such a strong character was (humanly speaking) necessary for such an age (think of the OT reformers)

### III. WHAT WERE THE MAJOR THRUSTS OF THE REFORMATION?

- here focusing on Luther's contributions though there were certainly others; yet had these things in common
- summarized in the answers to several questions
- 1.) **How is a person saved?** By faith alone in Christ's work alone (apart from mediation of Mary, saints, priests, etc.)
- 2.) **Where does religious authority lie?** In the Scriptures alone
- 3.) **What is the church?** - Priesthood of believers – giving right to read and interpret Scripture and to approach God; not a separate class of mediatorial priesthood
- 4.) **What is the essence of Christian living?** Good works – defined as whatever one finds in their ordinary calling (whether secular or ecclesiastical); all lawful callings are useful and equally sacred in God's eyes; good works do not make a man good, but a good man does good works

### IV. WHAT WERE THE AFTER-EFFECTS OF THE REFORMATION

- Reformation ideas would spread to Switzerland (Zwingli), France (Calvin), England (Latimer and Cranmer, Tyndale), Scotland (Knox), Netherlands (Arminius and the Synod of Dort); Establishment of major Protestant denominations (Lutheran, Reformed, Church of England, Presbyterian, Netherlands Reformed)
- These were all what were called "magisterial" reformers; for example, Lutheranism eventually became a state religion, thus continuing many of the errors of the Roman Catholic church; this would be a common mistake through other Protestant churches
- the propagation of the belief that someone is baptized as both a citizen of this world and the church, and the two were closely connected, not separate realms of authority

## WHAT WAS THE REFORMATION?

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- Many (both religious and political) would rally with Luther against Rome, but had many other things non in common
- With this mixture of unbiblical ideas were also sewn the great truths of Scripture

### V. IS THE REFORMATION OVER?

- one of the great controversies of our generation is the Ecumenical movement; advanced by way of
  - 1.) Ecumenical movement - the downplay of essential doctrine for the sake of unity
  - 2.) Charismatic movement – the emphasis on the Charismatic gifts
- if there is anything true about this time period of the Reformation, is that people believed deeply and were willing to live and die for them (some worthy, some not)
- we are “Reformed Baptists”, seeking to take those basic truths of the Scripture re-emphasized during the time of the Reformation and moving on to more thorough reformation; we are not finished, but every seeing all of our life transformed by the Grace of God