

Reformation Church History  
(Part 2: Luther's Life and Ministry)

I. Introduction.

A. Background.

1. The church in Luther's time.

a. It had fallen into superstition.

- (i) It tended to synthesize the ideas of the cultures it evangelized with its own doctrine.
- (ii) It failed to study and understand God's Word, because of sin and the withdrawal of God's Spirit.

b. Problems in the church.

- (i) Celibacy was required for the clergy; as a result, many had fallen into immorality.
- (ii) The Word was withheld from the laity for fear they might misinterpret it; services were held in Latin.
- (iii) Mary and the saints were looked to for mediation between man and Christ.
- (iv) Purgatory was a necessary step to heaven; time there could be reduced through penance and indulgences.
- (v) The elements of the Lord's Supper were believed to be transformed into the true body and blood of the Lord.
- (v) Most dangerous of all, the priesthood and the sacraments were seen as essential to salvation: justification was seen to come not through faith alone, but through faith and the sacraments.

2. Earlier attempts at reform.

a. The Waldeses or Waldensians.

- (i) The Waldenses rejected the teaching of the church and embraced the teaching of the NT, which is precisely what the Protestants did.
- (ii) They taught poverty and obedience, translating the Bible into and preaching in the vernacular, evangelizing two by two; saw the pope as an Antichrist; objected to relics, images of the saints, the Mass (transubstantiation), special rites, burial in holy ground, indulgences; rejected purgatory, absolution, justification by works, regeneration through baptism; objected to immorality and gluttony among the clergy; advocated obedience to the Gospel, especially the Sermon on the Mount; and most importantly, justification by the merits of Christ alone.

b. John Wycliffe (1328-1384).

- (i) Believed the office of pope was manmade and not instituted by God; Scripture contained the whole of God's revelation and everything else must be tested by that; transubstantiation was false, which means the priest could no longer withhold salvation by withholding the body and blood of Christ; also questioned purgatory and other teachings of the church.

- (ii) Believed the Bible should be translated into the language of the people and preached in the common tongue; founded a group of lay preachers called Lollards, who went about preaching and teaching in the language of the people.
- c. John Hus (1372-1415).
  - (i) Disciples of Wycliffe from Prague copied Wycliffe's writings and took them back to Bohemia, where Hus later read them.
  - (ii) He also began to seek reform in the church by preaching in the language of the people instead of Latin, accepted the Bible as the ultimate authority in the church, said Christ was the head of the church and not the pope, said remission of sins comes through repentance alone, Christ alone could forgive sins, rejected the idea that the pope and cardinals were the church, which were the elect of Christ.
- d. Scholasticism and Mysticism.
  - (i) The scholastics, or the schoolmen, were those who took philosophy and tried to use it to better understand what God had revealed through the Scriptures, the fathers, and the canons and creeds of the church. Their teaching dominated the university.
  - (ii) Mysticism was a reaction to scholasticism. It sought a direct experience with God, emphasized the importance of the heart/love in religion, and produced a book called *Theologia Germanica* (*German Theology*), which influenced Luther.

## II. Martin Luther.

### A. His early life.

#### 1. His birth and early education.

- a. He was born in Eisleben on November 10, 1483, the son of a copper miner.
- b. After a short time of schooling with the Brethren of the Common Life in Magdeburg, was sent to school in Eisenach between 1498 and 1501, where he was taught the Latin essential to University study.
- c. In 1501, he went to the University of Erfurt, where he studied Aristotle. Here he was taught that revelation was to be his guide in faith, but reason in philosophy. Here, he also became aware of the need of divine intervention if man was to know spiritual truth and be saved.
- d. In 1502 or 1503, he received the degree of Bachelor of Arts and in 1505, the degree of Master of Arts.

#### 2. His entrance into the monastery, and later, the university.

- a. His father wanted him to study law, but in 1505, after being frightened in a thunderstorm, he promised St. Anne that he would become a monk if spared. This probably reflected the concern that was already there for the state of his soul.
- b. Two weeks later, he entered a monastery of the Augustinian order, and in 1507 was ordained a priest and celebrated his first Mass. It was during this time that he sought for peace through abstinence and penance, but found none.
- c. In 1508, he taught theology one semester at the new university at Wittenberg, founded by Frederick, the elector of Saxony. His studies were mainly theological and intensified his spiritual struggles.

- d. He found some help through the admonitions of the vicar of his order, Staupitz, who urged him to trust in God and to study the Bible.
- e. During the winter of 1510 and 1511, Staupitz sent him to Rome, where he saw the corruption of the Roman church and the need for reform.
- f. In 1511, he was transferred to Wittenberg, where he became professor of Bible and received his Doctor of Theology degree. He held the position of lecturer in biblical theology until his death.
- g. Some believe it was at this time Luther was converted, coming to understand the doctrine of justification by faith. Others see it occurring after the 95 Theses.
- h. He began to lecture on the books of the Bible in the common language and study the original languages. He lectured on the Psalms from 1513-15, Romans from 1515-17, and later on Galatians and Hebrews.
- i. Staupitz, the visit to Rome, *German Theology*, the writings of the fathers and especially those of Augustine were formative influences, but it was his study of the Bible that led him to faith.

#### B. Events leading to the posting of the 95 Theses.

1. In 1517, Tetzel began selling indulgences at Juterbock, near Wittenberg.
  - a. These were special plenary indulgences being sold to raise money to build St. Peter's basilica in Rome.
  - b. Tetzel claimed that repentance wasn't necessary and that the indulgence gave complete forgiveness of sin.
  - c. One could also buy indulgences for those in purgatory, securing their immediate release.
  
2. Luther responded with the *Ninety-Five Theses*.
  - a. He drew up 95 arguments against their abuse and nailed them on the church door in Wittenberg on October 31, 1517, calling for a public debate.
  - b. If you read the *Theses*, you will find that they were against the abuse of indulgences, not the use of them.
    - (i) 27. They preach only human doctrines who say that as soon as the money clinks into the money chest, the soul flies out of purgatory.
    - (ii) 28. It is certain that when money clinks in the money chest, greed and avarice can be increased; but when the church intercedes, the result is in the hands of God alone.
    - (iii) 36. Any truly repentant Christian has a right to full remission of penalty and guilt, even without indulgence letters.
    - (iv) 37. Any true Christian, whether living or dead, participates in all the blessings of Christ and the church; and this is granted him by God, even without indulgence letters.
    - (v) 38. Nevertheless, papal remission and blessing are by no means to be disregarded, for they are, as I have said (Thesis 6: "The pope himself cannot remit guilt, but only declare and confirm that it has been remitted by God; or, at most, he can remit it in cases reserved to his discretion. Except for these cases, the guilt remains untouched), the proclamation of the divine remission.

- (vi) 43. Christians are to be taught that he who gives to the poor or lends to the needy does a better deed than he who buys indulgences.
- (vii) 44. Because love grows by works of love, man thereby becomes better. Man does not, however, become better by means of indulgences but is merely freed from penalties.
- (viii) 45. Christians are to be taught that he who sees a needy man and passes him by, yet gives his money for indulgences, does not buy papal indulgences but God's wrath.
- (ix) 49. Christians are to be taught that papal indulgences are useful only if they do not put their trust in them, but very harmful if they lose their fear of God because of them.
- (x) 52. It is vain to trust in salvation by indulgence letters, even though the indulgence commissary, or even the pope, were to offer his soul as security.
- (xi) 62. The true treasure of the church is the most holy gospel of the glory and grace of God.
- (xii) 94. Christians should be exhorted to be diligent in following Christ, their Head, through penalties, death and hell.
- (xiii) 95. And thus be confident of entering into heaven through many tribulations rather than through the false security of peace. Acts 14:22.

- c. Some believe that Luther was yet unconverted at this time, but the Lord was shaping his life and the Reformation was beginning.

### C. The Debate at Leipzig (July 4, 1519).

#### 1. Events between the posting of the *Theses* and the Debate.

- a. The posting of the *Theses* was not daring, but the common way of calling for a debate. He was surprised when no one accepted his challenge.
  - (i) The next day (All Saints' Day), when the people came to see Frederick's relics (over 5000, which were on display), they also saw the *Theses*.
  - (ii) Some could read them, who told others what they said.
  - (iii) They were also translated and – through the recent invention of the printing press – were printed in several languages and carried to every country of western Europe.
  - (iv) Within two weeks, Luther's *Theses* became known throughout Germany.
  - (v) After four weeks, they were being read all over Western Europe.
  - (vi) Their effect was remarkable, almost stopping the sale of indulgences completely.
- b. Reactions in the church to the *Theses*.
  - (i) The archbishop of Mainz objected, because he was to receive a percentage of the proceeds from Tetzel's sale of indulgences.
  - (ii) He sent a copy of the *Theses* to Pope Leo X in Rome, who at first didn't think they were too serious, but then sent word to Staupitz to keep him quiet.
  - (iii) Tetzel wrote some theses of his own defending the sale of indulgences.
  - (iv) A Dominican monk and inquisitor in Rome, Mazzolini, wrote a book severely criticizing Luther.
  - (v) And John Eck, professor of theology at Ingolstadt, wrote a pamphlet answering Luther's *Theses*.

- (vi) Luther published his answer in another pamphlet. He was disappointed that his friends didn't defend him, believing that he had been too rash in his criticism.
  - (vii) In April of 1518, the Augustinian monasteries held their annual meeting in Heidelberg.
  - (viii) Luther found that the opposition to his *Theses* was stronger than he expected, but the discussion was friendly, as well as frank, which put him at ease.
  - (ix) When he returned to Wittenberg, he wrote the *Resolutions*, addressed to the pope, which contained a general reply to all his critics, carefully defending his *Theses* point by point.
  - (x) What was the real issue?
    - (a) Luther threatened the sale of indulgences that raised money for the church and that the people saw as necessary to salvation.
    - (b) The *Theses* tended to loosen the priests' hold on the people, which alarmed the church.
- c. Further developments.
- (i) After Luther wrote the *Resolutions*, he began to live in a glass house. Everything he said and did was watched, both by friends and foes.
  - (ii) Because he lived in a time when people were more passionate and outspoken about their beliefs, many of the things he said were exaggerated and used against him.
  - (iii) The pope summoned him to Rome in July of 1518 on a charge of heresy, but Frederick was able to have the summons cancelled.
  - (iv) Next Cajetan, a delegate of the pope, came to interview Luther at Augsburg. When Luther failed to recant, Cajetan wrote to the pope, asking him to settle the matter with an official pronouncement, which he did. Luther could no longer claim the church had not dealt with the matter.
  - (v) Later, the pope sent Von Miltitz, to arrest Luther. After their discussion, Luther promised not to speak about indulgences any further if his opponents did not. He also agreed to write a letter of submission to the pope, which the pope liked so well, he sent a very friendly letter in return on March 29, 1519. He called Luther his dear son and invited him to Rome to make his confession and offered to pay his way.
  - (vi) However, Luther's opponents continued to write. One of Luther's fellow professors at Wittenberg, Andreas Carlstadt, wrote a set of theses against Eck.
  - (vii) Eck answered Carlstadt's theses with some of his own in which he advanced an extreme view of papal authority.
  - (viii) Luther then published twelve theses, where in the twelfth he said "that the claim of the Roman Church to supremacy over all other churches rested only on weak papal decrees of the last four hundred years, but that in all the eleven hundred years before no such supremacy had existed" (Kuiper, 172).
  - (ix) An attack on the papacy like this had never been heard before and Eck could not ignore it. So he challenged Luther to a debate.
  - (x) What Luther had held and cherished from his childhood up – the supremacy of the pope, that the church is the pope's house and the pope the father of the house – was now at issue.

(xi) He studied church history and the decrees and decisions of former popes and general councils for nine months, trying to find arguments against what he had until recently believed to be true. “Luther was dismayed to find that many decretals were forgeries” (172). Here was another pillar of the church that was falling in his eyes.

2. The debate (July 4, 1519).

a. The debate began between Carlstadt and Eck on his own theses. But Eck really wanted to debate Luther.

b. When the time came, they began by debating the office of pope.

(i) D’Aubigne writes that Luther was prepared to acknowledge the pope as the head magistrate of the church, freely elected to it by the people, but denied that he was such by divine right. But the steps were taken at this debate for Luther finally to deny submission to the pope in any sense later in his life.

(ii) Eck had no idea that his opponent’s learning was so extensive, and that he would be able to extricate himself from the arguments that were drawn around him. “The reverend doctor,” said he, “has come well armed into the lists. I beg your lordships to excuse me, if I do not exhibit such accuracy of research. I came here to discuss, and not to make a book.” — Eck was surprised but not beaten. As he had no more arguments to adduce, he had a recourse to a wretched and spiteful trick, which, if it did not vanquish his antagonist, must at least embarrass him greatly. If the accusation of being Bohemian, a heretic, a Hussite, can be fixed upon Luther, he is vanquished; for the Bohemians were objects of abhorrence in the Church. The scene of combat was not far from the frontiers of Bohemia; Saxony, after the sentence pronounced on John Huss by the Council of Constance, had been exposed to all the horrors of a long and ruinous war; it was its boast to have resisted the Hussites at that time; the university of Leipzig had been founded in opposition to the tendencies of John Huss; and this discussion was going on in the presence of princes, nobles, and citizens, whose fathers had fallen in that celebrated contest. To insinuate that Luther and Huss are of one mind, will be to inflict a most terrible blow on the former. It is to this stratagem that the Ingolstadt doctor now has recourse: “From the earliest times, all good Christians have acknowledged that the Church of Rome derives its primacy direct from Christ himself, and not from human right. I must confess, however, that the Bohemians, while they obstinately defended their errors, attacked this doctrine. I beg the worthy father’s pardon, if I am an enemy of the Bohemians, because they are enemies of the church, and if the present discussion has called these heretics to my recollection; for, in my humble opinion, the doctor’s conclusions are in every way favorable to these errors. It is even asserted that the Hussites are loudly boasting of it.”

(iii) Luther: “I do not like and I never shall like a schism. Since on their own authority the Bohemians have separated from our unity, they have done wrong, even if the Divine right had pronounced in favor of their doctrines; for the supreme Divine right is charity and oneness of mind.”

(iv) It was during the morning sitting of the 5th July that Luther had made use of this language. The meeting broke up shortly after, as it was the hour of dinner. Luther felt ill at ease. Had he not gone too far in thus condemning the Christians of

Bohemia? Did they not hold the doctrines that Luther is now maintaining? He saw all the difficulties of his position. Shall he rise up against a council that condemned John Huss, or shall he deny that sublime idea of a universal Christian Church which had taken full possession of his mind? The unshaken Luther did not hesitate. He will do his duty, whatever may be the consequences. Accordingly when the assembly met again at two in the afternoon, he was the first to speak. He said with firmness: "Among the articles of faith held by John Huss and the Bohemians, there are some that are most Christian. This is a positive certainty. Here, for instance, is one: 'That there is but one universal Church;' and here is another: 'It is not necessary for salvation to believe the Roman Church superior to all others.' It is of little consequence to me whether these things were said by Wickliffe or by Huss . . . they are truth."

- (v) Luther's declaration produced a great sensation among his hearers. Huss — Wickliffe — those odious names, pronounced with approbation by a monk in the midst of a catholic assembly! An almost general murmur ran round the hall. Duke George himself felt alarmed. He fancied he saw that banner of civil war upraised in Saxony which had for so many years desolated the states of his maternal ancestors. Unable to suppress his emotion, he placed his hands on his hips, shook his head, and exclaimed aloud, so that all the assembly heard him, "He is carried away by rage!" The whole meeting was agitated: they rose up, each man speaking to his neighbor. Those who had given way to drowsiness awoke. Luther's friends were in great perplexity; while his enemies exulted. Many who had thus far listened to him with pleasure began to entertain doubts of his orthodoxy. The impression produced on Duke George's mind by these words was never effaced; from this moment he looked upon the reformer with an evil eye, and became his enemy.
- (vi) The subject of the discussion furnished matter for conversation in every place. In the inns, the university, and the court, each man expressed his opinion. However great might have been Duke George's exasperation, he did not obstinately refuse to be convinced. One day, as Eck and Luther were dining with him, he interrupted their conversation by saying: "Whether the pope be pope by human or by Divine right, nevertheless, he is pope." Luther was much pleased at these words. "The prince," said he, "would never have made use of them, had he not been struck by my arguments."

c. Additional issues debated.

- (i) The discussion on the papal primacy had lasted five days. On the 8th of July, they proceeded to the doctrine of Purgatory. This spread over a little more than two days. Luther still admitted this doctrine; but denied that it was taught in Scripture or in the Fathers in the manner that his opponent and the schoolmen pretended. "Our Doctor Eck," said he, alluding to the superficial character of his adversary's mind, "has this day skimmed over Scripture almost without touching it — as a spider runs upon water."
- (ii) On the 11th of July they came to Indulgences. "It was a mere joke," said Luther; "the dispute was ridiculous. The indulgences fell outright, and Eck was nearly of my opinion." Eck himself said: "If I had not disputed with Doctor Martin on the papal supremacy, I should almost have agreed with him."

- (iii) The discussion next turned on Repentance, Absolution of the Priest, and Satisfaction. Eck, according to his usual practice, quoted the scholastic doctors, the Dominicans, and the pope's canons. Luther closed the disputation with these words: "The reverend doctor flees from the Scriptures, as the devil from before the cross. As for me, with all due respect to the Fathers, I prefer the authority of Holy Writ, and this test I would recommend to our judges."
  - (iv) Here ended the dispute between Eck and Luther. Carlstadt and the Ingolstadt doctor kept up the discussion two days longer on human merits in good works.
- d. "One result of the Leipzig debate was that Luther greatly strengthened his cause among his followers. He made them feel certain that their position was right. Luther also won many new followers, one of whom was Martin Bucer, who became an important leader of the Reformation, and who helped to shape the views of John Calvin."
  - e. "As is usually the case, neither debater was able to change his opponent's views. However, the debate did much to clarify Luther's ideas for himself. This was undoubtedly the most important result."
  - f. "This debate was also an important stage in the Reformation movement. It made it clear to everybody that reconciliation between Luther and the Roman Catholic Church would be impossible" (Kuiper, 173).

#### D. Luther at the Diet of Worms.

- 1. Between Leipzig and the Diet.
  - a. Luther completed his break with Rome by denying the supremacy of the pope and the infallibility of councils.
  - b. Eck went to Rome soon after debate and asked Pope Leo to excommunicate Luther, which he gladly did.
  - c. Luther, however continued to write.
    - (i) First, he published an account of the Leipzig debate.
    - (ii) Then he began to write many pamphlets and letters.
    - (iii) In May, 1520, he wrote a pamphlet entitled *On Good Works*, an application of the principle of salvation by faith alone to everyday life.
  - d. He also read two books that profoundly affected him.
    - (i) One was a work of Hus that had been given to him at the debate by the Hussites, which showed him that Hus taught the same as he believed. Luther responded by declaring himself to be a disciple of the Bohemian.
    - (ii) The other was a book written by the Italian humanist, Lorenzo Valla, in which Valla proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that the document called the "Donation of Constantine" was a forgery.
    - (iii) Luther was so agitated over this discovery that he no longer doubted that the pope was the antichrist.
  - e. Finally, on June 15, 1520, Pope Leo issued the bull that excommunicated Luther.
    - (i) The bull mentioned forty-one propositions with Luther as the author and condemned them as "heretical or scandalous, or false or offensive to pious ears, or

seducing to simple minds, and standing in the way of the Catholic faith” (Kuiper, 174).

- (ii) It called on the faithful to burn Luther’s books.
  - (iii) It forbid him to preach.
  - (iv) He and his followers were ordered to recant publicly within 60 days. If they didn’t, they were to be treated as heretics.
  - (v) It ordered the government to imprison Luther and his followers.
  - (vi) Any town or district that sheltered them would be placed under an interdict.
  - (vii) The bull was entrusted to Eck to publish in Germany, which he had a difficult time doing. Only a few places would comply.
  - (viii) At Erfurt, the students took all the copies they could and threw them in the river.
  - (ix) Luther replied with a tract of his own: *Against the Execrable [abominable] Bull of Antichrist*.
- f. Luther continued to write.
- (i) There were no newspapers in those days, so the people eagerly bought and read his small books and pamphlets.
  - (ii) Luther was gaining a large following, not only in Germany, but far beyond.
  - (iii) To further diffuse the papal bull and to raise the standard against Rome, Luther published three further works in the later part of 1520.
    - (a) First, *To the Christian Nobility of Germany* (Kuiper, 175): This was a call to secular authority to temporarily oversee reform in the church.
    - (b) Second, *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*: exposing the claim of Rome that men could only be saved through the priesthood and the Roman system of sacraments (175).
    - (c) Third, *The Liberty of a Christian Man*: a small work of 30 pages, containing “the whole sum of the Christian life” (175-176), which attacked the theology of the Roman Church by asserting the priesthood of all believers.
- g. But writing was not enough. If the pope ordered Luther’s writings to be burned, he would burn the pope’s bull.
- (i) On December 10, 1520, with a large crowd of students, professors and citizens assembled, Luther first burned the books of canon law (church law) and then a copy of the bull, and said, ‘As thou hast wasted the Holy One of God, so may the eternal flames waste thee’ (Kuiper, 176).
  - (ii) Luther left when the books and bull were consumed, but hundreds of students remained, and as the fire was dying, they sang “We Praise Thee, O God,” then some funeral dirges in honor of the burnt papal decretals and bull.
- h. Luther is summoned by the Emperor.
- (i) Pope Leo had exhausted all the ecclesiastical means at his disposal. All he could do now was turn to the emperor: Charles V of Spain.
  - (ii) Charles was a devout Catholic, so Leo was successful in summoning Luther before the council of German rulers, called a diet, to be held the next year in the city of Worms.

2. The Diet of Worms (April, 1521).
  - a. Even though he had a pledge of safe conduct from the emperor, Luther believed he was going to his death.
  - b. Before he left, he said to Melanchthon, his colleague and friend at the university, “My dear brother, if I do not come back, if my enemies put me to death, you will go on teaching and standing fast in the truth; if you live, my death will matter little” (Kuiper, 177).
  - c. Everywhere he traveled, crowds turned out to see the man who dared to stand up for Germany against the pope. They too thought he was going to his death.
  - d. Luther appeared before the Diet at 4:00 p.m., Wednesday, April 17.
    - (i) He was asked, “Martin Luther! His sacred and invincible imperial majesty has cited you before his throne, in accordance with the advice and counsel of the states of the holy Roman empire, to require you to answer two questions: First, Do you acknowledge these books to have been written by you?” — At the same time the imperial speaker pointed with his finger to about twenty volumes placed on a table in the middle of the hall, directly in front of Luther. “I do not know how they could have procured them,” said Luther, relating this circumstance. It was Aleander who had taken this trouble. “Secondly,” continued the chancellor, “Are you prepared to retract these books, and their contents, or do you persist in the opinions you have advanced in them?”
    - (ii) Luther replied: Most gracious emperor! Gracious princes and lords! His imperial majesty has asked me two questions. As to the first, I acknowledge as mine the books that have just been named: I cannot deny them. As to the second, seeing that it is a question which concerns faith and the salvation of souls, and in which the Word of God, the greatest and most precious treasure either in heaven or earth, is interested, I should act imprudently were I to reply without reflection. I might affirm less than the circumstance demands, or more than truth requires, and so sin against this saying of Christ: — Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. For this reason I entreat your imperial majesty, with all humility, to allow me time, that I may answer without offending against the Word of God.”
    - (iii) After consideration, the Diet gave him another day to think about it, and then to reply vocally and not in writing.
    - (iv) Luther prayed that night and the next morning. When he was readmitted to the Diet, he was asked again, “Martin Luther! Yesterday you begged for a delay that has now expired. Assuredly it ought not to have been conceded, as every man, and especially you, who are so great and learned a doctor in the Holy Scriptures, should always be ready to answer any questions touching his faith.....Now, therefore, reply to the question put by his majesty, who has behaved to you with so much mildness. Will you defend your books as a whole, or are you ready to disavow some of them?”
    - (v) Again Luther tried to defend his works, but when he was asked again to answer only this one question, “Will you, or will you not retract?” he answered, “Since your most serene majesty and your high mightinesses require from me a clear, simple, and precise answer, I will give you one, and it is this: I cannot submit my faith either to the pope or to the councils, because it is clear as the day that they

have frequently erred and contradicted each other. Unless therefore I am convinced by the testimony of Scripture, or by the clearest reasoning, — unless I am persuaded by means of the passages I have quoted, — and unless they thus render my conscience bound by the Word of God, I cannot and I will not retract, for it is unsafe for a Christian to speak against his conscience.” And then, looking round on this assembly before which he stood, and which held his life in its hands, he said: “Here I stand, I can do no other; may God help me! Amen!” (D’Aubigne)

- e. Outcome and aftermath.
  - (i) Luther was ordered to leave the Diet, return to Wittenburg, and was forbidden to preach.
  - (ii) He was declared to be a heretic and was outlawed by the Diet. This meant that anyone finding him anywhere could kill him and take all of his possessions, no questions asked.
  - (iii) On the road back to Wittenburg, he was abducted by Frederick’s men and taken to the Wartburg castle, where he wrote for ten months.
  - (iv) The main work he accomplished here was a translation of the New Testament into the German language, from Erasmus’ Greek New Testament (Carnes, 293).
  - (v) Eventually, he returned to Wittenburg to expel Carlstadt and to preach against his rebellion.

#### E. Later Reforms and Final Events.

- 1. Luther also introduced other reforms.
  - a. The papacy was entirely rejected and the distinction between clergy and laity was discarded.
  - b. He affirmed only two sacraments (baptism and the Lord’s Supper), instead of the seven of Rome, and taught that they were not “indispensable to salvation” (Kuiper, 183). This brought an end to Rome’s tyranny and established Christian liberty.
  - c. Praying to the saints and to Mary was done away with, the worship of images, veneration of relics, pilgrimages, religious processions, holy water, outward asceticism, monasticism, prayers for the dead, and belief in purgatory.
  - d. Practically, he adopted the idea that those things not forbidden in the Bible should be retained, so even though side altars and images were removed, the main altar with candles and a picture of Christ remained.
  - e. He rejected the sacrificial view of the Lord’s Supper – affirming that Christ was offered only once for sin – that the cup should be withheld from the laity – believing that all believers should be given both the bread and wine; and he said there was no place in the church for priests.
  - f. Luther also denied transubstantiation, although he continued to affirm that the body and blood of the Lord are really present in the elements, since His body, like His divinity, is everywhere. This was the point at issue at Marburg.
  - g. Luther adopted a form of church government where the state is above the church, most likely because of his circumstances and the help he had received from Frederick. Reformed theologians believe that the state ought to protect the church, but should not intrude into her ordinances.

- h. Luther also founded many schools, wrote his famous *Shorter Catechism*, so that children might be grounded in evangelical doctrine, and wrote a hymnbook, his most famous being “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God.”
  - i. Luther did not believe that he was founding a new church. He believed there was only one, true, visible church. The Romanists had departed from the truth. He was only reforming the church that had become deformed.
  - j. These beliefs were eventually formulated in an official statement of faith by Philip Melancthon, which were approved by Luther, and given to the Diet of Augsburg in 1530.
    - (i) Charles V gave it to his theologian, John Eck, who wrote a reply to it.
    - (ii) Melancthon’s confession (known as the Augsburg Confession) and his reply to Eck’s rebuttal are still widely used in the Lutheran Church today.
  - k. On June 13, 1525, Luther married Catherine von Bora, a former nun, ending a three hundred year law of the Roman Church that a priest must never marry. Many other monks and nuns followed his example and another step was taken away from Rome.
2. Final events in his life.
- a. Luther lost Erasmus’ support in 1525, when Erasmus saw that Luther’s reforms would lead to a break with Rome. He also disagreed with Luther’s view that the will of man was so bound that God must initiate salvation. Erasmus emphasized the freedom of the will in his book by that title, while Luther wrote against him in his famous book *The Bondage of the Will* (Carnes, 294).
  - b. Luther also lost the support of the peasants in 1525, when he opposed what is called the Peasants’ Revolt. They applied Luther’s denunciation of church authority to their social and economic problems, resulting in an uprising. Luther wrote against them when he saw they were endangering the Reformation.
  - c. In 1529, he met Zwingli at the Marburg Colloquy in an attempt by their friends to get them to agree and join forces. “They agreed on over fourteen out of fifteen propositions but disagreed on how Christ was present in the elements. Zwingli contended that Communion was a memorial Christ’s death, but Luther argued that there was a real physical presence of Christ in the Communion although the substance of bread and wine did not change” (Carnes, 294).
  - d. In 1534, he finished his translation of the whole Bible and it was published (Carnes, 293).
  - e. In 1537, his health began to decline, and he was burdened by what he perceived to be a resurgence of the papacy and what he perceived as an attempt by the Jews, during the time of confusion among Christians, to reopen the question regarding Jesus’ Messiahship. Believing that he was somewhat responsible, he wrote a violent polemic against the Jews, as well as against the papacy.
  - f. Finally, in the winter of 1546, he went to the area of Mansfeld to resolve a conflict between two young counts, but being old and of poor health, he died, February 18, 1546, in Eisleben, at the age of 63.