

Discipleship:
An
Introduction to
Systematic Theology and
Apologetics

The Doctrines of Redemption: The Reformers

The Heights Church February 11, 2018

The Reformation (Luther's later years 1531-1546)

- In 1537 in response to the thought of collecting all of Luther's works Luther said, "I would rather see them all devoured. "For I acknowledge none of them to be really a book of mine, except perhaps the one *On the Bound Will* and the Catechism."
- From 1535 to 1545 he completed a massive work called *Lectures on Genesis*. Though he insisted on literal interpretation of the Bible he often strayed far beyond the actual text and left few theological problems untouched.
- He also wrote a number of shorter works on a variety of subjects.
 - A Simple Way to Pray*
 - Comfort for Women Who Have Had a Miscarriage*
 - On the Councils of the Church*
 - Appeal for Prayer against the Turks*
 - On the Jews and Their Lies*
 - Against the Papacy at Rome, Founded by the Devil*
- At times Luther seemed proud of his works and other times had misgivings about them. "I'd rather that all my books would disappear and the Holy Scriptures alone would be read."

The Reformation (Luther's later years 1531-1546)

- In 1542 his 13 year old daughter died. He said, "It is strange to know that she is surely at peace and that she is well off there, very well off and yet to grieve so much. I have sent a saint to heaven."
- Upon completing his large commentary on Galatians he said: "I wonder who encourages this mania for writing! Who wants to buy such stout tomes? And if they're bought who will read them? And if they're read, who will be edified by them?"
- Toward the end of his life Luther said, "If my advice were taken, only my books that contain doctrine would be printed..... The rest should be read merely for the history, in order to see how it all began."
- Luther had little hope for the improvement of the world. "God does not think so much of his temporal realm as he does of his spiritual realm.....So I would advise that not any changes be made. We just have to patch and darn as best we can while we live, punish the abuses, and lay bandages and poultices over the sores."
- With regard to human effort Luther's famous quote is, "The world is like a drunken peasant. If you lift him into the saddle on one side, he will fall off on the other side. One can't help him no matter how one tries. He wants to be the devil's."

The Reformation (Luther's later years 1531-1546)

- Luther completed his ten year effort on Genesis November 17, 1545.
- In February 1546 Luther made a third trip to Eisleben to mediate a dispute between two brothers.
- On February 18, 1546 he died about 3:00 AM reciting John 3:16 and surrounded by many people.
- Roman Catholics had hoped for a terrible death to prove he was wrong. It was commonly believed that a sudden death meant the person was evil. As a result his death was carefully documented by those present to refute any possible claims in the future that would reflect badly on his work.
- In his eulogy of Martin Luther Phillip Melanchthon said, "Some by no means evil-minded persons, however, express a suspicion that Luther manifested too much asperity. I will not affirm the reverse, but only quote the language of Erasmus, "God has sent in this latter age a violent physician on account of the magnitude of the existing disorders."

The Reformation - Luther vs Calvin

- In personality Calvin was mostly the opposite of Luther. Johann Eck was surprised when he visited Calvin that Calvin answered the door, lived modestly, and graciously refused his offer of preferment if he would return to the Roman Catholic Church!
- In general Calvin was humble, empathetic, gracious, respectful, gentle and optimistic.
- Calvin got along with other reformers. While he disagreed with Luther and Melanchthon on some aspects of theology he had a friendly relationship with Melanchthon.
- Calvin and Luther never met. In 1545 Calvin sent a letter to Luther with some of his writings. Melanchthon was to deliver the letter to Luther. “TO the very excellent pastor of the Christian Church, Dr. M. Luther, my much respected father, Would that I could fly to you, that I might even for a few hours enjoy the happiness of your society; for I would prefer, and it would be far better, not only upon this question, but also about others, to converse personally with yourself; but seeing that it is not granted to us on earth, I hope that shortly it will come to pass in the kingdom of God. Adieu, most renowned sir, most distinguished minister of Christ, and my ever-honoured father. The Lord himself rule and direct you by his own Spirit, that you may persevere even unto the end, for the common benefit and good of his own Church.—Yours, JOHN CALVIN”

The Reformation - Luther vs Calvin

- Melanchthon didn't deliver the letter for fear of Luther's reaction. Melanchthon wrote to Calvin explaining his decision. "I have not shewn your letter to Dr. Martin, for he takes up many things suspiciously, and does not like his replies to questions of the kind you have proposed to him, to be carried round and handed from one to another."
- With regard to doctrine Calvin and Luther disagreed about the physical presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper. However, with regard to the fallen nature of humans they were both Augustinian. Calvin wrote, "We do not possess holiness inherently. Rather it is the very holiness of God that overcomes us and enables us to follow the Lord."
- Calvin and Luther both agreed with Justification by Faith and *Sola Scriptura*.
- For Calvin conversion to Christ meant not only a transition from condemnation to justification but from ignorance to knowledge and from arrogant rebellion to a humbled heart.
- Calvin saw union with Christ as a central idea. Salvation and all its benefits not only come to us through Christ but are found exclusively in Christ. Union with Christ brings the believer into fellowship with Christ, crucified, resurrected, ascended, reigning, and returning.

The Reformation – What is a Calvinist?

- To be a true Calvinist requires more than agreeing with the so called five points.
 - **Total Depravity**
 - **Unconditional Election**
 - **Limited Atonement**
 - **Irresistible Grace**
 - **Perseverance of the Saints**
- A true Calvinist subscribes to:
 - **Devotion** - the heart's devotion to the biblical God
 - **Doctrine** - the mind's pursuit of the biblical doctrine of God
 - **Doxology** - the entire surrender to praising God
 - **“The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him for ever.”**
 - **Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow;**
 - **Praise Him, all creatures here below;**
 - **Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host;**
 - **Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.**