



# MARTIN LUTHER

August 28, 2013

Dr. Cindy L. Ausec

# OBJECTIVES

- Life of Martin Luther
- Martin Luther's Theology
  - *Ninety-five Theses (Disputation on the Power and Efficiency of Indulgences)*
  - *Disputation Against Scholastic Theology*
  - *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*
  - *Babylonian Captivity of the Church*
  - *Freedom of a Christian*
- Martin Luther's Later Career

# MARTIN LUTHER

- ◉ Lived in Saxony (now Germany) (1483-1546)
- ◉ Born into the middle class of German society
- ◉ Reared in a very religious home but had no aspirations to enter religious life
- ◉ Completed a Master of Arts degree and began to study law and planned become a lawyer



# MARTIN LUTHER

- ◉ July 1505 he was struck down by a bolt of lightning, in terror, he vowed to become a monk
- ◉ Entered an Augustinian monastery and began to search for salvation of his soul
- ◉ Ordained as a priest two years later - still sought salvation through fasting, vigils, confession and self-mortification
- ◉ Sent to the University of Wittenberg - taught preached and obtain his Doctorate of Theology
- ◉ Revelation in the “tower” - religious transformation

# MARTIN LUTHER'S THEOLOGY

*“I would gladly have seen all my books forgotten and destroyed; if only for the reason that I am afraid of the example. For I see what benefit it has brought to the churches, that men have begun to collect many books and great libraries, outside and alongside of the Holy Scriptures; and have begun especially to scramble together, without any distinction, all sorts of "Fathers," "Councils," and "Doctors." Not only has good time been wasted, and the study of the Scriptures neglected; but the pure understanding of the divine Word is lost, until at last the Bible has come to lie forgotten in the dust under the bench.”* Martin Luther Preface to the 1539 edition of his works

# *DISPUTATION AGAINST SCHOLASTIC THEOLOGY 1917*

- ⦿ Ninety-Seven theses which attacked the idea that believers could be justified before god on the basis of their works

*“29. The best and infallible preparation for grace and the sole disposition toward grace is the eternal election and predestination of god”*

# *NINETY-FIVE THESES*

## *DEBATE ON INDULGENCES 1517*

- ◉ Incensed by the sale of indulgences by a monk named Tetzel
- ◉ *Ninety-Five Theses* as a basis for debate on indulgences
- ◉ Nailed them to the door of the castle church in Wittenberg on Oct 31, 1517



# NINETY-FIVE THESES

*“Out of love for the truth and the desire to bring it to light, the following propositions will be discussed at Wittenberg, under the presidency of the Reverend Father Martin Luther, Master of Arts and of Sacred Theology, and Lecturer in Ordinary on the same at that place. Wherefore he requests that those who are unable to be present and debate orally with us, may do so by letter.”*

# INDULGENCES

- ◉ Sacrament of penance the guilt of sin is removed; but there still remains the temporal punishment required by divine justice = Purgatory
- ◉ Church possesses the extra-sacramental power to remit these punishments through indulgences
- ◉ Church wide campaign to raise funds for the completion of Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome

# *NINETY-FIVE THESES*

- ◎ Indulgences lead men astray
  - Fear God's penalties - not sin itself
  - False hopes of salvation
  - Make light of the true condition of forgiveness
  
- ◎ Theses 30-37 and 41-51 are the most vital
  - Discussions on how to be sure one's contrition is Sincere
  - The extent of papal pardon
  - Explanations of what Christians should be taught about the indulgences true nature

# NINETY-FIVE THESES

*“37. Every true Christian, whether living or dead, has part in all the blessings of Christ and the Church; and this is granted him by God, even without letters of pardon.”*

# *TO THE CHRISTIAN NOBILITY OF THE GERMAN NATION*

## *“PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS”*

- Three “walls” - Romanists used to hinder reform:
  - The temporal had no author over the spiritual
  - No one can interpret scripture except the Pope
  - Only the Pope can call a council

# MARTIN'S ANSWER TO THE THREE WALLS

- ⦿ All Christians are priests by virtue of baptism
- ⦿ Priests have the ability to discern right vs wrong according to scripture
- ⦿ Popes and the church hierarchy not superior to the believer
- ⦿ Popes who act contrary to scripture is an offense to Christendom - Christian duty to:
  - Reprove him
  - Constrain him

*TO THE CHRISTIAN NOBILITY OF THE GERMAN  
NATION*

*“PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS”*

- ◉ Clerical marriage should be permitted
- ◉ Reduced the number of holy days
- ◉ Beggary (including monks) should be forbidden

# *BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY OF THE CHURCH*

- ⦿ Addressed the sacraments of the Church
- ⦿ Only Baptism and the Lord's Supper - were instituted by Christ
  - Penance, contrition, confession, absolution - had value to relieve distressed consciences
  - Confirmation, matrimony, clerical orders and extreme unction - have no standing in scripture
- ⦿ Monastic vows and pilgrimages - “Man-made”

# *FREEDOM OF A CHRISTIAN*

*“A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all,  
subject to none; a Christian is a perfectly  
dutiful servant of all, subject to all”*

# *FREEDOM OF A CHRISTIAN*

- ⦿ Laid out his ethical vision
- ⦿ Attempted to show that the doctrine of justification by faith alone (*sola fides*) was not incompatible with Christian love and service
- ⦿ “Faith is enough for the Christian man. He has no need for works to be made just.”
- ⦿ “Good works do not produce a good man but a good man does good work”

# MARTIN LUTHER

- Luther was led into more and more controversy with the papacy
  - Declared that every Christian was a priest who could interpret Scripture
  - Popes and the church hierarchy were not superior to the believer
  - Challenged the doctrine of providing only bread to the laity during the Eucharist
- Luther's writings were widely distributed using a new technology: the printing press

# IMPERIAL DIET AT WORMS

- ◉ Convened by Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire Charles V
  - Luther refused to recant or retract any of their contents
  - Imperial edict banned the printing and sale of his books and forbade anyone to provide hospitality or shelter for him or his friends
  - Expected that he would be burned as a heretic - emperor was too busy with other matters

# LUTHER ESCAPES

- ◉ Kidnapped by friends and taken to Wartburg Castle, where he live for almost a year
- ◉ Wrote nearly a dozen books and translated the New Testament into German
- ◉ Later he translated the Old Testament
- ◉ His translations of Scripture became classics in the German language

# LUTHER AND THE REFORMATION

- ◎ 1522 Luther returned to Wittenberg and took charge of the Reformation
  - Repudiated the acts of radical reformers - wanted to remove everything not specifically mentioned in Scripture
  - His own style was to remove only the things he felt were contrary to Scripture

# LUTHER'S LATER LIFE

- ◉ Luther was busy :
  - Organizing the Reformed Church in Germany
  - Writing hymns “A Mighty Fortress is our God”
  - Encouraging former priest and nuns to marry - he married a nun, Katherine von Bora and became a father
- ◉ In the last years of his life he became more conservative
  - Writings sometimes bitterly anti-Jewish - they would not accept his Christianity
  - Turned against the peasants who were currently in rebellion and encouraged the nobility to slaughter them
- ◉ Martin Luther died peacefully in February 1546

# SUMMARY

- Life of Martin Luther
- Martin Luther's Theology
  - *Ninety-five Theses (Disputation on the Power and Efficiency of Indulgences)*
  - *Disputation Against Scholastic Theology*
  - *To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*
  - *Babylonian Captivity of the Church*
  - *Freedom of a Christian*
- Martin Luther's Later Career