

WORLD HISTORY

Crash Course: Luther and Reformation

Name _____

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So before the _____, pretty much all Christians in Europe were _____, yes, there were other types of Christians in Eastern Europe and Asia and Africa, but Roman Catholicism was the dominant form of _____ and had been since, like, the 4th century. The Protestant Reformation broke so-called Western Christendom into two and then three and then four until finally there were uncountable denominations of Christianity, not just _____, but Apostolic Lutherans and Reformed Lutherans and Free Lutherans and Lutherans for Just Going Back to Being Catholic Because This Has Become So Complicated. This was hugely important. It changed peoples' way of looking at themselves and the world. It led to wider European _____, and eventually forced governments to grant religious freedoms while also at the same time maybe being more of a political revolution than a religious one.

So during the European Middle Ages, the _____ Church really _____ European civilization. It's almost impossible to imagine the scope of the church's power in the Middle Ages, but let's try. First off, the Catholic Church was the caretaker of the most important thing the Christians had - their _____, which, unlike our temporal bodies, were _____. And then there was the _____ priest, who played a pivotal role throughout every person's life, baptizing them, marrying them, hearing their confessions, providing last rites. The church also provided all of the _____ services. It distributed _____ to the poor and ran _____ and provided what _____ was available, and most Europeans would, in their lives, meet exactly one person who could read the Bible, which was only available in _____: their parish priest. And the church owned over _____ of all the land in Europe, which helped make it the most powerful economic and political force on the continent, and the _____ claimed authority over all the kings of Europe as the successor to the Roman _____.

So this was a very powerful institution, and it was undone by one chronically constipated monk. Here at Crash Course, we don't like to get too into, like, great man history, but the Reformation really was initiated and shaped by one man, _____, no, Stan, the Martin Luther he was named for, no, Stan, the Martin Luther that he was named for, yes.

Okay, let's go to the Thought Bubble... Luther studied law, and like most law students, he hated it. Then, one day, a sudden _____ blew up, lightning struck him to the ground, and in a panic, he cried, "Help me, Saint Anne, I'll become a _____!" He survived and the next two weeks, he withdrew from University, entered an Augustinian _____, took his vows, and sent a message to inform his family, who I'm sure were delighted to have spent all that money on education, because monking is so lucrative. In 1505, Luther was sent to _____ on a diplomatic mission, and he ignored all the awesome art and focused instead on Rome's _____, with prostitutes openly soliciting on the filthy streets, priests who made light of their duties, hurrying through mass so fast that it seemed to mean nothing, and openly deriding church doctrine. Luther was obsessed with his own _____, and he kept _____ incessantly, and finally, his confessor and teacher sent him to the University of Wittenberg, because, you know, they were a little bit annoyed with him, and they figured he'd be good at teaching scripture. These days, of course, incessant confessors are put on the Real Housewives of New Jersey, but back then, you sent them to the University of Wittenberg. Anyway, Luther finally found his answer in _____ epistles, specifically, in one line that said, "_____." In other words, salvation comes through _____, not _____, not through prayer or fasting or vigils or pilgrimages or relics or giving to the poor, or the sacraments, or any action that a person can take, we can't ever be good enough through our _____ to merit salvation. We can only have _____, in Latin, sola fide, only faith. Thanks, Thought Bubble.

So Martin Luther's new interpretation of sola fide grew into a full scale conflict with the Catholic Church, when a friar named _____ came to Wittenberg selling _____. An indulgence was a donation to the church that came with a promise from the Pope to _____ a sinner's time in _____, like, to quote from an indulgence that Friar Tetzel sold, "I replace thee in the state of innocence and purity in which thou wert at the hour of thy baptism." Luther felt like that wasn't the sort of thing that, you know, should be for sale. The price of this whole-life-complete-forgiveness-of-any-horrible-sins certificate, by the way, was three marks, probably about _____ a year's wages for a laborer. So, Luther didn't like seeing his parishioners handing over money that they didn't have for a scrap of paper that he believed to be meaningless, so in response, he wrote _____ against indulgences and then dramatically nailed them to the church door for all to see on _____, or else he mailed them to the archbishop or possibly both, we don't actually know.

This led to a series of debates with other men of the cloth, during which Luther's positions became increasingly radical, starting from the statement that Christians were saved only through _____ and the _____ of God, for instance, Luther then upped the ante, saying that the church's rituals didn't have the power to save souls, and then he argued that far from being infallible, the _____ and the _____ made errors all the time. That was a pretty bold thing to say, and then it got even more dramatic, when Luther ultimately denied that the church and the officers of it had any spiritual powers. He said that the _____ was a _____ invention and that individual Christians _____ even need priests to receive the grace of God, instead, Luther described a "_____." So, this had gone from a call for reforming indulgences to a _____.

So in 1521, Luther was called to defend his ideas before the Holy Roman Emperor, _____, at the imperial diet of _____, or, in German, "worms" (worms). Also, let me say retroactively now that everyone has commented on my poor German pronunciation, "vittenburg" (Wittenberg). Emperor Charles famously said a single friar who goes counter to all Christianity for a thousand years must be wrong. To which Luther was like, "Stop flapping that hideous Hapsburg jaw of yours". But there was something to what Charles was saying, right, because plenty of radical friars had criticized the church's abuses and hypocrisies over the years, why would Luther prove influential? Well, one reason was the _____. Now, most people in Europe at the time couldn't read, but a lot of people could, including of course a lot of priests, and over two thousand editions of Luther's writings appeared between 1517 and 1526, and his ideas also appeared in pamphlets, and posters, and cartoons that were seen and read aloud, reaching millions of readers and listeners. In short, Luther's ideas were all over like the Tumbler of the day, which was a town crier and broadsides nailed to doors.

And it caused quite a stir, especially the stuff about like the pope being the _____ sent by the devil. Like I said, it got pretty radical. But, maybe the most revolutionary of Luther's publications was his new translation of the Bible into _____. For the first time ever, _____ could read the Bible for themselves because Luther used the German that people actually spoke, instead of _____, and his work quickly caught on among common people. Hundreds of thousands of copies of Luther's Bible were printed. People carried it in their pockets and memorized it. Now, everyone could quote scripture and discuss its meaning.

Now, Luther's theory was that if everyone just returned directly to the scriptures, they would see the one single truth, and the church would be restored to its original simplicity. Yeah, no. I have a message to the restorers of history. There is no original simplicity! The thing is, once you start making _____ accessible to _____ and tell them that their opinions are just as good as those of the clergy, what happens is that people start, you know, having different _____ of what religious truth is. So, Luther's protests started creating spin-offs: the Zwinglians, and the _____, and the Anabaptists. And then the spin-offs had their own spin-offs. It's like how first there was Iron Man, and then there was The Avengers, and then, you know, like an Avengers TV show, pretty soon we're gonna have Ant Man get his own movie. The Protestant Reformation is pretty much just the exact same thing as the comic universe, but no Thor, because he's pagan.

Anyway, many of these new denominations will be familiar to you: the Anglicans, the Puritans, the Quakers, the Presbyterians, the Methodists, the Baptists. Each of these new _____ churches thought that

it knew the _____ true way to worship _____, and that, you know, everyone else was going to Hell, and this led to some fighting. And also some disemboweling.

Oh, it's time for the open letter. But, first, let's see what's in the globe today. Oh, that's nice. I thought it would be disemboweled people but it's Anabaptists, _____ baptizing their _____. Hi there, so you don't believe in infant baptism, you believe that, like, people should come of _____ so that they can make their own _____ about salvation. Other people (Catholics, many Protestants) believe that it's okay to baptize infants, or even that it's good. I don't feel like this disagreement should lead to disembowelment, and yet it did. The fascinating thing to me, Anabaptists, is that you never had a state, you never had, like, widespread political say in any community. And, yet, your brand of evangelical Christianity managed to become incredibly important in world history. In short, the bad news is that many of you are going to be executed. The good news is that your message will prove surprisingly resilient. Stan, who did I even make that open letter for? The Anabaptists are _____ now, they're not watching this. I guess some of them are _____. I made it for you, Mennonites.

Okay, so with all these new denominations there were years of religious mayhem. Clergy preached radical new ideas, and then other people interpreted them in even more radical ways. People, especially young people, smashed up churches because the Bible says 'no graven images'. What started as a _____ dispute turned into a _____ revolt, and in 1525 German _____ took up Luther's ideas to give voice to long standing grievances against landlords and clergymen. In their most famous revolutionary proclamation, the _____, the peasants echoed Luther's language, proclaiming that serfdom was invented by men, with no basis in scripture. The peasants _____, refused to pay taxes, pillaged church lands, and raised an army estimated at 300,000 people. And Luther was like "Yes, free souls sovereign at last!" No, just kidding, he wasn't. Luther chose the elite, and said that Christian liberty was a _____ concept, _____ meant to promote _____ or freedom in, like, the physical world. He then urged the faithful to smite, slay, and stab rebels, and kill them like mad dogs. He also gave up his idea that congregations should elect its own ministers, and argued that _____ and _____ were put in place by God as _____ of the church, and that turned out to be the winning side, for a few hundred years, anyway.

The German Peasants revolt, the _____ revolutionary uprising in Europe before the French Revolution, was suppressed, with crushing _____. An estimated _____ people were killed. So Luther chose the princes in the name of stability and success, but why would princes choose Lutheranism, when the Holy Roman Emperor had forbidden it? Let's look at one example, the first actual ruler who broke with the Pope, the heroic, frequently divorced, founder of Anglicanism, Henry VIII of England. What's that Stan? Apparently it was not King Henry VIII. It was Grand _____ of the Teutonic order of monks, crusaders who'd come to rule parts of what is now Poland. So, many Teutonic knights individually left the order for _____, because they liked the theology. Albert started by reading Lutheran tracts and he became a fan, allowed Lutheran preachers into his cities and even travelling to meet with Luther in person. On Luther's advice Grand Master Albert dissolved the Teutonic state and founded, instead, the Dougie of Prussia (I guess that's where they all danced the Dougie?). Oh, it's the Douchy of Prussia. Stan informs me that it is neither the Dougie nor the Douchy of Prussia but the Duchy of Prussia.

Anyway, Albert established a _____ church there, the _____ Lutheran state church. But it's unlikely that Albert was really motivated by a desire to purge the church of corruption. I mean, at the time of his decision, the Grand Master had been in trouble: he was losing territorial battles against the rest of Poland and he was running out of money. By breaking with the church, Albert was able to _____ the church _____ within his territory, which bolstered his military might, and then allowed him to settle his war favorably. In another major plus, now that he was a Duke instead of a Grand Master Monk he could get _____, and produce _____, which he did, founding the House of _____, destined to unify and rule the German empire a few centuries later. And this points to a huge incentive for princes and kings to _____ with the Pope.

What if, instead of the _____ having all that _____ and _____, I could have it. Those are like, the two favorite things of monarchs, and Protestantism allowed them to confiscate _____ land and other wealth, collect church _____, and used church land for themselves. Why is the Queen the largest land owner in England? Because the Protestant Reformation.

That said, we shouldn't minimize the extent to which the reformation really was about belief. I mean, Catholics truly believed that Protestants were _____, and Protestants truly believed that the Pope and his hierarchy were _____. If it were only about land and influence, how could we explain the case of Saxon elector John Frederick, for instance. When defeated and imprisoned by his Catholic emperor, Frederick was given the choice between his lands and his faith. He chose his faith. And then there were Catholics like Sir Thomas Moore, who would not sanction Henry VIII's break with the Pope, and chose execution over sacrilege.

So, in the end, the Reformation was both a _____ movement and a _____ one. Now many argue that the reformation led to more religious toleration in Europe, because people just had to learn to live with each other once they had a bunch of wars and figured out that they were going to be just Catholic and Protestants moving forward. There were many other effects of the Protestant Reformation. Max Weber famously called it "the foundation of European capitalism". But for me the most crucial aspect of the Protestant reformation is contained inside the words _____ and _____. These have become two of the central political ideas in recent centuries. And while religion has justifiably been blamed for much violence and intolerance, we should also remember that many of the leaders of the American _____ movement, for instance, were _____ clergy. And they saw history of protest that could fuel real and lasting reform that included people like _____ and Thoreau, but also people like _____.