

## Martin Luther and Lutheranism

**\*After Charles V was elected emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, Luther resumed his attack on the Church. He clearly identified his beliefs and offered ideas on how to remedy the situation. Luther's actions alienated both the Catholic Church and the Holy Roman Emperor. He was eventually excommunicated by the pope and declared an outlaw by Charles V at the Diet of Worms.**

1. 1519:

- Luther enters a debate in Leipzig with the Ingolstadt professor John Eck
- in this debate Luther challenges the infallibility of the Pope
- Luther also, for the first time, appeals to the sovereign authority of the scripture (the Bible, as interpreted by the individual, is the ultimate religious authority)

2. 1520:

- Luther publishes three pamphlets (now famous). These pamphlets summarize his beliefs and signal a new direction for the Protestant Movement. No longer is he simply trying to reform the Church.

1) *Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation*

- Luther urges the German princes to force reforms on the Roman Church, especially to curtail its political and economic power
- these reforms include confiscating church property, taxing the church, and abolishing immunity of place and person

2) *Babylonian Captivity*

- Luther attacks five of the traditional seven sacraments (solemn religious ceremonies of the Catholic Church)
- Luther argues that Confirmation, Penance, Extreme Unction, Holy Orders, and Marriage have no basis in the Bible
- only **Baptism** and the **Eucharist** are truly biblical
- Luther also exalts the authority of Scripture and secular princes over that of the pope

3) *Freedom of a Christian*

- Luther summarizes the new teaching of salvation by faith alone

**\*For your information, here are the basic differences between Lutheranism and Catholicism (at the time of Martin Luther).**

1. How is a person saved?

- Catholicism: by faith and good works
- Lutheranism: by faith alone

2. Where does religious authority reside?

Catholicism: Bible (as interpreted by the Pope) and Church tradition  
Lutheranism: Bible alone (as interpreted by the individual)

3. What is the church?

Catholicism: the Clergy  
Lutheranism: the entire community of believers

4. What is the highest form of Christian Life?

Catholicism: religious vocations  
Lutheranism: all vocations (whatever your individual calling may be)

**\*Finally, it is important to note why Luther's ideas appealed to different political and social classes.**

1. The German Nobles and Princes

- Luther supported current rulers by denouncing rebellion (e.g. Luther supported the rulers against the peasants)
- Luther did not want to alter the current political and social structure
- Luther said that rulers should seize church property

2. The Peasants

- misinterpreted Luther's idea of freedom ("A Christian man is the most free lord of all and subject to none.")
- the Peasants thought this meant that they were free from obeying lords on earth and free from paying taxes
- Luther actually meant that all people were free to obey the word of God and free from the Catholic Church

3. Middle Class (people in cities)

- saved them money since Luther said that the church should also pay taxes and denounced indulgences
- appealed to their intelligence (everyone should be educated and permitted to read and interpret the Bible)

4. Women

- all vocations are good (especially that of the mother who nurtures the children, teaches the children Christian values, and maintains the household)
- no longer had to confess their sexual sins to priests (asking God for forgiveness was a private matter)
- Luther believed women should be educated (so they too could read the Bible)