

# Luther Revisited

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 19 February 2017

Preacher: Shelagh Westberg

- [ 0 : 0 0 ] Well, this is the year that we're celebrating the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther's schism with the Roman Catholic Church in the 16th century. Now, we are children of the Reformation, right?
- So it is meet and right that we should be celebrating this, even though Luther had only a subversive, I think I would say, influence on the English Revolution and the people that he influenced most finished up badly.
- Well, you know, oh yeah, burning at the stake and stuff like that. Now, I'm making the assumption that Luther is pretty well known in this group, that you all know something about Luther and most of you know quite a lot.
- So my purpose today will be to fill in some of the blanks and to give maybe more attention to his history than his theology. And I hope that you will save your favorite stories for our discussion time.
- There had been significant attempts to reform the Catholic Church before Luther, but these had not had the support or the, well, to sustain them or even grow them.
- [ 1 : 1 0 ] And John Huss would spring readily to mind. He had many of the same ideas as Luther. So today we'll examine why Luther's Reformation succeeded in changing the religious map of Europe.
- I will be referring to a book, referring to a book, whoops, referring to a book. It's on the shelf, I'll get it. Oh, it's behind that chair.
- Now, I'd like you to see this. This is a book for people who hate history, honestly. This is a page-turner. It's called Luther's Fortress by James Reston, Jr., who is a senior historian at the Woodrow Wilson Institute.
- And he has written other books, one of which won a prize. He's written Dogs of God, Warriors of God. Maybe these are somewhere in Regent College or could be at short notice.
- And I'll also be, he actually does a very scholarly trek through the time that Luther was imprisoned at Wartburg Castle for his own protection.
- [ 2 : 1 7 ] And I'll refer also to my own academic studies in this period because I started this as an undergraduate. My outline will include these themes, what Luther's Europe was experiencing, what the Roman Catholic Church was experiencing, the influence of humanism, the flashpoint scandal of the indulgences, the excommunication of Luther and the spread of his ideas.
- This might just be a gallop through history. Luther lived in an age when world-changing events were happening. He shared a century with people that you well recognize.
- Henry VIII of England, Francis I of France, Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, Suleiman the Magnificent, you might not have thought of him, but he had an Ottoman Empire that was expanding into Europe rather more rapidly than anybody wanted to see it come.

But also Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Columbus, Machiavelli, and the list goes on. These were all people who left their mark in history. Well, in 1964, I married a Swedish Lutheran and attended Lutheran churches for the next five years.

It was in the Augustana congregation that I first encountered the liturgy and the prayer book, Martin Luther's prayer book. And it contained some really interesting notes that I didn't actually understand the significance of when I first saw them.

[ 3 : 58 ] You know, our prayer book has notes in the back, has different kinds of creeds and stuff. The Lutheran one does too. It contained these notes referring to the devil and also the Turks. Well, the devil, well, our personification of the spirit of evil in the world was a very real part of Luther's life.

He felt it both physically and spiritually. He felt himself to be in conflict with the devil. The physical conflict was manifested in his bowel. He wrote rather more than most people want to read about that particular problem.

But it actually laid him low for sometimes weeks at a time. And I kept thinking, fiber, Luther, fiber. But, you know, I guess he had a pretty miserable diet.

In his house in Wittenberg, which, has anybody been here to Wittenberg, please? Oh, no. Oh, good. Okay. Yes. One of the high points of a trip that I made.

They will point out the bathroom area and tell you the hours that he spent there struggling with the devil. But the spiritual conflict, he related to anything that impeded his reformation of the church.

[ 5 : 16 ] He was very much aware of struggling against the forces of evil. I actually did wonder how many of us give serious attention to the devil as an ongoing adversary.

Do we ever think about that when we believe we are going in God's direction and suddenly bad things start happening? Well, let's look first.

This, incidentally, is an older picture of him. He was really kind of a skinny, yeah, skinny person until he went back to Wittenberg safely.

Yeah. And started living the good life. This is Luther's Europe. 1500, this map is. Now, some of these places are recognizable.

France, most of Spain. England is there. This purple part. This is the Ottoman Empire. You see, they're coming.

[ 6 : 14 ] If you ever wondered how Muslims got into Yugoslavia, here is the answer. This is where it began. And so they're moving north toward the center. Vienna is what they were hoping for.

The prize. But look, there's no Germany. There's no Germany, even though we sort of say Luther was from Germany. There was instead a collection of over 300 tiny principalities that had language and culture in common, but no political connection with each other.

They all belonged to the Holy Roman Empire. Now, this part is a guess, and we have a geographer here who will correct me if I'm way off base. Just to give you an idea, the largest state might have looked something like the Fraser Valley.

The smallest one might have resembled four football fields. So it was really, really chopped up. They were ruled by dukes, princes, bishops, margraves, the lesser nobility, and knights who owned land.

The source of income was agriculture, and they all paid two kinds of taxes, one to the local ruler, one to the church. The bishops collected the church taxes. The tax burden fell on tenant farmers who were the major source of food production, and that was precarious.

[ 7 : 30 ] The whole of Central Europe belonged to the Holy Roman Empire, which we don't have a line around there. And the emperor was elected by seven of the nobles of those member states.

Luther's duke, Frederick the Wise, a part of Saxony, Saxon-Althalt, was one of these electors, and that was a plum kind of job to have when there were only seven out of this great conglomerate.

A member of the Habsburg family was the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V. There he is as a young man. There's the beginning of the famous Habsburg Chin.

Those of you who've been to the Prada will have seen that getting worse through the generations because of inbreeding him. He was very strongly influenced by the Pope.

He was elected, I can't believe this, when he was 19. You know, what were the electors thinking of? He was only 22 when he went to Worms to hear Luther's trial.

[ 8 : 38 ] But he had the imperial army that would protect the Pope and the Pope's interests any time he wanted, and he could call on member states for money and people when that was needed.

His center was in Vienna, on the edge of that part of Europe that was visibly threatened by the expansion of the Muslim Empire, whose armies laid siege to Vienna twice during Luther's lifetime, and again 150 years later.

They never gave up. But it was a troublesome time for the Church as well. The Church had not had decent leadership for decades, and I'm speaking of the Vatican here.

They had three bad popes during Luther's lifetime, starting with Alexander Borgia. Does that name ring a bell?

Yes. Yes. And he was interested in expanding his power, not in looking after the Church. And two of his children he put into positions that would secure his job.

[ 9 : 40 ] It's beginning to sound like a familiar scenario. And then there were two more popes that were Medicis, that were members of the famous and powerful Florentine banking family, and they wanted to live, particularly Leo X, wanted to live like a Renaissance prince.

And he knew how to do that because his cousin, Lorenzo the Magnificent, was Duke of Florence. He was a Renaissance prince. Yeah. One of the patrons of Michelangelo.

Now, none of these people was providing leadership or giving spiritual care to a whole continent of Roman Catholics. Prior, oh, let's have Leo.

Sorry. Next one. No, that's the Habsburg Chin. Sorry. The other one. Yeah. The other one is out of place. I'm sorry. Here's Leo.

Frequently painted in profile. And he knew how to live it up. The stories of his banquets, it would curl your toes, honestly, to think that, you know, the leader of the Church was doing this with pagan entertainment and so on.

[ 10 : 53 ] He was involved with Luther. We'll hear more about him. Prior to Luther's confrontation with the Church, Leo was in debt to bankers all over Europe and paying 40% interest on loans.

Does that make your mortgage look good? He was selling Church appointments. This was a sin called simony. He was saying, you want to be a bishop?

Oh, well, yes, we can arrange that. It'll cost you so-and-so. An archbishop? A little bit more. A cardinal? Oh, can you afford that? Yes. And he was spending the money partly on his parties, but also partly on the rebuilding of St. Peter's in Rome.

Now, the Archbishop of Mainz, who I think we have a picture of, there he is, Albrecht of Mainz. Note the jewels. He owed Leo over a million dollars for his archbishopric.

He, in other words, had bought it. And he didn't have that kind of money. Whoops. So, Leo suggested to him, actually, can you believe this?

[ 12 : 01 ] The Pope actually suggested to him that the promoting of the sale of indulgences was a solution to both their problems. That if the archbishop promoted the sale of indulgences, that they would split the money, and this would be a solution to both of them.

Now, indulgences had been around for a long time. They were not invented during this period. They had been, I think, used first around the time of the Crusades.

But they were given to people as a reward or as a gift for some special service to the church. Actually, Luther was given an indulgence after he made a pilgrimage to Rome.

But the Pope's point of view, as expressed to the archbishop, was how well we know what a profitable superstition this fable of Jesus Christ has been for us.

That's the spiritual leader of the church. Archbishop Albrecht knew just the man to promote these sales, and Johann Tetzel went into business selling these with the catchy phrase that I know you've heard before.

[ 13 : 09 ] As soon as the gold in the casket rings, the rescued soul to heaven springs. Because indulgences were good in this life and the next. And we'll see more about that later.

The church's problems were not confined to the Vatican hierarchy, however. So looking at something closer to the guy in the pew. It was a time when parish priests were poorly trained and poorly supervised.

Who supervises parish priests? Bishops. Absenteeism and pluralism were rampant, really. Absenteeism meant you didn't visit your parishes.

And pluralism meant you had several different bishoprics and were collecting taxes from all of them. Cardinal Wolsey in England made himself quite wealthy doing this. Now, France and Spain had been able for some time to appoint their own bishops.

But the poor German principalities hardly ever got to have a German bishop. Some of theirs were Italian, people they never saw. The Bible was the Vulgate, a Latin translation.

[ 14 : 20 ] Training of priests was poor, except in monasteries, where some monks were ordained. And Luther was an ordained priest after he got his doctorate in theology. But there would be monks that were not going that route.

But there were many priests who would have known only how to conduct the Mass in a language not even understood by the people in the pews. It was in Latin. It was in Latin until the 1960s.

Many people were anxious, actually, for a closer contact with God. They wanted more from their church, and they were not getting it. The use of the rosary, which did not have a long history, became quite popular during this period.

It meant people had a little something to help them pray any time, any place they wanted. And you could stick it in your pocket, you know. How many people have ever seen a rosary here?

Okay, then you know how it works. Devotion to the saints was widespread, and Mary was a very popular one. Visits to holy sites were still popular.

[ 15 : 26 ] In Northern Europe, something quite different was growing. It was called pietism. We could call it a movement. Especially in Northern Germany and in the Spanish Netherlands.

Among people who did not stop describing themselves as members of the church. But they wanted to worship God in simpler ways. They wanted an emphasis on a more pious life.

Some of these people began to live in communities. But unlike the other communities in the Catholic Church, they didn't take holy orders. So these are clusters of lay people. The Vatican had a tendency to ignore any of the little changes that people made, as long as they didn't affect the sacramental structure of the church.

Quick review of the sacraments, which Becky told us all about when she did her talk on ecclesiastical art. There were seven sacraments, and you will find them described slightly differently, if you Google it, but you will find that they all really are common.

It started with baptism, which gave the church control of you. It didn't get you to heaven, but it did make you a Christian. Confirmation came next when you got to be old enough to know the difference between right and wrong.

[ 16 : 45 ] And then you were given the Eucharist, what we call Holy Communion, or we also call it the Eucharist sometimes. But only after you were reconciled to God. Now this is the crunch where indulgences comes in.

In order to be reconciled to God, you must confess your sins to a priest and rack your brains to think of any sin you have committed, because your absolution will be incomplete if you do not confess them all.

You must demonstrate suitable contrition. You can't just breeze into the confessional and say, this is what I've done since last week. And after that, the priest would say, te absolvo, I absolve you, and you would be given a penance to atone for your sins.

Now we know where atonement really comes from, but these people thought it came from the priest and from following these rules. And it is in the penance part of this that the indulgences were used to make up for certain tasks that you might be given, or if your mother, father, whoever, was in purgatory, the sort of waiting room of heaven.

I don't know what else to call it. I can't find it in the Bible anywhere. So it had a value beyond the grave, is what I'm saying. The other three, anointing the sick, marriage and holy orders, were the same on my list as Becky's.

[ 18 : 14 ] Now here's the crunch. Here's the crunch. Here's the crunch.

You're recognizing when he began searching the New Testament, you know. Where did this come from, that the church was the mediator, launching his attack in that direction?

Well, who was this person who left such a large footprint on our history? Luther came from a middle-class family. His family had started out being poor, but gradually worked their way up.

His father was a copper miner, and he had a smelter, and he had enough money to send his bright little kid to school and then to university. He was very pleased about that.

He wanted him to be a lawyer. And actually, Luther was a couple of years into his study of law when he was trapped one night going home by a vicious storm in which he was nearly struck by lightning, or so he believed.

[ 19 : 34 ] And hoping that God would save him, he prayed, promising to enter a monastery if God answered his prayer. Well, he survived the storm. And he felt bound by this promise to proceed to the monastic life.

He actually made his way to a monastery before telling his father what he had done. It took a long time to heal that breach. But Luther, and we don't have any evidence that he had ever considered a monastic career before this, he knocked on the door of a nearby Augustinian house, which was all you really had to do, and presented himself as a prospective novice.

The point of being a novice was to test out whether you really were going to become a good monk or not. Well, Luther, you know, I have secretly thought that he woke up the next morning and thought, what have I done?

Is this going to be my life for the rest of my life? You know, it must have been just a bit of a jolt. But he put his heart and soul into it, determined to be the best monkey knew how, and his attention to the task he was given was in each case more than was asked.

Well, the abbot finally became aware of what Luther was up to, you know, he was going to go farther, do more, etc. The abbot was a wise person who relieved him of his duties and assigned him to spend two weeks studying St. Augustine's book, *The City of God*.

[ 21 : 02 ] And the impact of this book prompted him to think beyond the rigid teachings of the Church. Interesting, since it was written by a good Catholic. His university studies in humanism would have reinforced this, I think.

He never identified himself as a humanist, but he would have been at the university and taught by people who were. Well, he passed the test, and as a professed monk, he was sent to the Wittenberg University, newly established by our old friend Frederick the Wise, to study theology.

After he completed his doctorate in theology, he was ordained, and he was also taken on the staff of the university, replacing the man who was the abbot.

And he said, this guy knows as much or more than I do, and he would be a good person to have on our staff. Luther also preached at one of the nearby churches, the *Stadtverkirche*, which I think means City Parish Church.

Have I got that right? Later, okay. It's just like a couple of blocks from the church.

[ 22 : 17 ] This is not where the 95 Theses went up. It's a couple of blocks away. While he was at the university, he developed a couple of really important friendships.

One was with Philip Melanchthon, who also lived down the street and was a pal. We have a picture of him, I think. No, we have one later.

Melanchthon was an exceptional Greek scholar, and he was hired by the university when he was only 18, because he just knew Greek very well. He may have had some Greek ancestors, because his father changed the family name to something that sounded more Greek.

So there may be a connection there. The other pal from the university was a man called Nicholas von Amfert, and he will come up later again in Luther's trek through Reformation.

Two of these people were not in holy orders, so there was to-ing and fro-ing between university professors that were monks and others who were not.

[ 23 : 30 ] In his studies at Erfurt, Luther had looked into various writings that were also influencing humanists of his day. Studies in the classics, that's what humanists study, brought him into close contact with biblical writings as well.

They knew the New Testament, written in Greek, during the Roman Empire. Going to be studied by classicists, aren't they? Because of this, the humanists were familiar with the writings of the apostolic church and other of the early church fathers.

And of course, they knew Erasmus. Erasmus had been a mentor of Philip Melanchthon. And he probably was the most famous humanist in Europe at this time.

They all traveled about from one university to another, holding debates in Latin and trading notes and sharing ideas. And that whole level of academe was really very much in contact with each other.

The German humanists were especially fond of St. Paul's writings. And the author of this book that I'm quoting from suggests that this would have been an influence on Luther, who was also very fond of Pauline writings.

[ 24 : 45 ] But the humanists also valued a book by the Roman historian Tacitus. And his book, *Die Germania*, inspired a latent nationalism in this group.

Well, think of this. There were no Germans during the Roman Empire. Right? So here he is, writing a book about the Germans. What can that possibly mean?

It was a reference to those people that were called the barbarian tribes in our textbooks coming into Europe from the east, and they spoke Germanic languages, which would have been noticeable.

They're also the people that prevented the expansion of the Roman Empire east of the Rhine. But, you know, Germans didn't think of themselves as Germans. You were Bavarian, you were Prussian, you were Westphalian, you were Saxon.

That's how they identified themselves, not as Germans. They were beginning to think a little differently, you know? Maybe there is something here. And they looked at the idea of extracting privileges from the Holy Roman Empire by maybe clustering themselves with other German-speaking rulers and so on.

[ 26 : 02 ] Now, when you add these factors up, I think you can see that there were a lot of people on the brink of change and waiting, perhaps, for some kind of leadership.

It's not unreasonable, I think, to state that Europe was ripe for both religious and political reform. Luther had been a prolific writer and publisher before the events that brought about the 95 Theses, where, what are we, 70 years past the invention of the printing press, roughly.

And they had portable presses. Somebody took a portable press to his trial and so on. You could get the news out very quickly. He wrote in the vernacular, in vernacular German.

And so he had a big audience among literate people. His writings were quickly printed and passed on to the larger population, most of which maybe were not literate.

There was a high rate of illiteracy because, you know, schools had to be paid for and were not plentiful. But from 1517 until 1521, his publications increased from 150 to 572.

[ 27 : 13 ] these were not all books and that was a real advantage in getting the word out. Many things that were topical, for instance, what he wrote about, say, the Magnificat or a particular book in the Bible or one particular sacrament or other, would go into a pamphlet and were sent off to the general population quite quickly.

Now, it's very important in terms of subsequent events to realize that many people would have heard about Luther's views second, third, and fourth hand.

They would not actually have read what he had written. So the influence was not always accurate. They would take an idea and run with it, you know. And some of his ideas could be easily used by people who had their own religious and or political agendas.

Luther had launched an attack on the major authority of his day and that gave a kind of legitimacy to people who wanted to attack, for instance, a civil authority.

You know, what would be wrong with taking up arms and making a fuss? While Luther was still in the Wartburg, there were riots against priests, attacks on churches.

[ 28 : 34 ] I mean, some cases of priests being hauled out of the pulpit and beaten up and thrown into the street. This was bad. Statues being broken, stained glass windows being destroyed.

I think it's an indication of how much anger there was just below the surface of many of the people there. They were ready to, you know, take out pitchforks and have a go at someone.

While Luther was still in the Wartburg, yes, sorry, priests were marrying. Luther had said, I can't find celibacy anywhere in the New Testament. And they thought this was a grand idea.

I will find me a wife, you know. Monks were leaving a cloistered life. It was more difficult for nuns to leave because they wouldn't have had a way of, outside of marriage, they would not have had a way of being cared for.

But there, and there were honest reformers who took his ideas and wanted to put them into practice and teach that as well. But there were also demagogues, here we go, who took Luther's doctrine of the priesthood of all believers in directions that he had never intended.

[ 29 : 51 ] Luther could influence but not control the use to which his pamphlets and books were put. We've got public priest authors in this group and you know the minute your words leave the printing press, somebody will get the wrong idea.

Many people will get the right one. They'll haul one phrase out of what you've written and use it for their own ends. This is what happened. The priesthood of all believers is a dangerous principle.

Now, you believe in that, I think. I believe in that. But we do not believe in picking something out of the Bible and saying, hey, this must mean me. We expect and when we study the Bible, we ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

We do not try to use scripture on our own. And this, I think, is what Luther intended. And this is the point that had not gotten across because there were certainly demagogues.

Conflict among opposing religious views began right away and it was very nasty, very nasty. and it signaled the beginnings of greater widespread religious conflict that did not end until 1648, the end of the Thirty Years' War.

[ 31 : 04 ] There was no such thing as religious tolerance anywhere except Holland at a slightly later period than I'm talking about. I could go on and I'm not going to in that direction, but I want you to hear, if I can remember it, a poem that I learned in my first undergraduate course in Renaissance and Reformation.

I have to take a running go at this. There are two reformers mentioned who did not agree with Luther and did not agree with each other and the poem is called How to Start a War and I do not know who wrote it.

Said Zwingli to Munzer, I'll have to be Bluntzer. I don't like your version of total immersion and since God's on my side and I'm on the dry side, you better swing over to me and Jehovah.

Said Munzer, it's schism is infant baptism since I've had a sign, sir, and God's will is mine. Let all men agree with Jehovah and me or go to hell singly, said Munzer to Zwingli and each drew his sword on the side of the Lord.

You get the point. You get the point. Isn't it a wonderful little poem? Well, in his own studies, lectures and sermons, Luther attacked ideas relating to this is not an exhaustive list.

[ 32 : 26 ] You will tell me, I'm sure, all of the things that weren't on it when we get to your favorite story about Luther. These are some of the major ones. He attacked ideas relating to salvation.

This we know. Sole fide was his idea, only faith. The role of the clergy, the Catholic devotion to Mary, the intercession of the saints, mandatory clerical celibacy, monasticism, the authority of the Pope, the relationship between Christianity and good works, infant baptism, transubstantiation, and purgatory.

Quite a list. And he jumped around. You know, he didn't sort of start, okay, where do we start developing a new theology? Philip Melancthon was very important in trying to develop a theology out of the bitsy-piecy stuff that he got from Luther.

If Luther did not find it in the Bible, he believed it was wrong. Sola Scriptura. You've heard this phrase from Harvey, I know. He was a powerful speaker and very persuasive.

And I thought you might like to hear in his own words something that he said in a sermon. This was about so late Lede. Luther's sermon focused on original sin and his principal theological difference with Rome, his notion of justification by faith alone.



[ 33 : 53 ] Quote, None of our works have any power whatever, he bellowed. They are utterly worthless, but the papal dominion treats us altogether differently. It makes rules about fasting, about praying, about butter eating, so that whoever keeps the commandments of the Pope will be saved and whoever does not keep them belongs to the devil.

It seduces people with the delusion that goodness and salvation lie in their own works. But I say, none of the saints, no matter how holy they were, attain salvation by their works.

Salvation does not lie in our own works no matter what they are. It cannot and will not be effected without faith. Now, you know, the nice little touch about the butter.

you know, he could bring it down to something quite prosaic that would make people remember what he had said and when he returns to Wittenberg, he does that kind of thing.

He wanted to draw them in. Well, during Luther's verbal conflict with the church, Leo X, remember him, surprised the whole of Catholic Europe by proclaiming that the Pope was a higher authority than the Bible.

[ 35 : 08 ] Now, that was a direct reaction to what Luther was preaching, that the Bible was the source of truth and prior to that time, Pope and Bible had been kind of equivalent, but he actually said, I'm a higher authority.

Excuse me. The higher clergy all had access to Luther's writings. They knew what he was up to. They were heretical and contrary to the church's teachings and Luther knew at some point he would have to defend them in a trial for heresy.

He was expecting a great debate and he was a good debater. He had lots of practice in that. So, he was summoned to arms to stand trial and he went under safe conduct from the emperor We did, I was, can we go back to the map of Germany or is that to, oh, we haven't had a map of Germany.

Sorry, next one. There it is. Now, Wittenberg is the one that's highest up in northeastern Germany. Erfurt is southwest of that.

Worms is way over closer to Mainz because the Archbishop was going to be chairing this meeting. his abbot, who incidentally was very sympathetic to what Luther was doing, provided him with a cart to make the journey and money for meals and lodgings.

[ 36 : 38 ] Maybe he stayed mostly at monasteries on the way, so maybe that helped. He left with a small collection of folk who wanted to support him on the journey. However, this group grew all along the way because Luther preached and taught everywhere he stopped.

He was famous not just as a teacher and writer but as an orator. So the prospect of a great debate in Worms tempted many to join this swelling crowd. The stage was set, the largest place they could find available, but it wasn't big enough.

People were, you know, plugging the door and the windows and so on. The second day they found a bigger place. Charles V, honor raised dais.

Archbishop of Mainz had arranged for Johann Eck to be the interrogator with the strict instructions Luther is not to be allowed to give a speech. They all knew how dangerous that was going to be.

Luther's books were piled up on a nearby table. So Johann Eck said, answer yes or no, did you write these books? And Luther looked at them and said, yes and more than these.

[ 37 : 45 ] And the second question was, do you retract the views you have expressed in your writings? Answer yes or no. Well, Luther was not prepared to answer yes or no.

He kind of wondered what had happened to his chance for a debate. He fumbled around, broke into a sweat, began mumbling a bit. Some people thought he was ill, others thought he had lost his nerve.

He asked for more time to prepare an answer. And the archbishop said he's had three weeks, you know. The archbishop was, you know, collecting faggots, you know, more or less.

But the emperor said, I promised him a fair trial and we will give him 24 hours. The next day, Luther was well prepared to defend his views in the way he wanted to and yes, he did give a speech.

The emperor did not understand German. Well, he had been raised in Holland and he asked Luther to repeat what he had said. So Luther gave the speech all over again in Latin, which the emperor did understand.

[ 38 : 47 ] To no one's surprise, at the end of all of this, Luther was judged to be a heretic and his books were to be burned. It gets worse than that going into his other writings. The emperor appointed a group of higher clergy to decide on what Luther's fate would be, but the usual fate would be death by burning.

There were about six people in on this. One of them had to travel a distance to get there. So during this period, still under a safe conduct, Luther leaves Worms. It was just a matter of time before he would be denounced or caught and death by fire would be carried out.

He was still under safe conduct and believe me, the archbishop was not going to let anything happen to that as it had done with John Hutz who went back to Prague under safe conduct and the safe conduct was not honored.

This is the story of Luther's escape. He traveled with, actually, sort of a herald kind of person. The archbishop's man who himself indicated, I am with a man who is traveling under safe conduct.

So the herald was in person at an announcement of that. He was, I think, two days into traveling when a little group that included von Amfort, his pal from the monastery, and another, a priest, whose name I can't remember but it's not important, when they were ambushed, this little group of people, eight days into his journey home on a safe road near Altenstein Castle, two masked horsemen burst from behind a large beech tree and fell on the little wagon.

[ 40 : 41 ] Friar, oh, here it is, Petz and Steiner, leapt to the ground and scampered into the woods while Luther hid in the back of the wagon. With bow drawn, one of the horsemen demanded to know if one Martin Luther was present in the wagon.

The monk emerged, appearing fearful like an apprehended criminal. Amid shouts and curses and rough handling, all for the benefit of anybody who might be watching in the bushes, the masked men hustled Luther along to a waiting horse while von Amsdorf watched the farce with secret bemusement.

He knew what was happening. Down the road, Luther was given a false beard to wear. For the next six hours, this little band crisscrossed the back roads of the Turingian forest to confuse any possible pursuers and within a very short order, a few hours, the imposing Wartburg Castle loomed in the distance.

The Wartburg Castle was one belonging to Frederick the Wise, but he did not live there. He lived in a nicer place. Could we have a picture of the castle, do you think?

There we are. You can tell it's been built in sections and Luther had a room there, which I think is the next one. Yes, here's his room. Two rooms, I think, the bedroom.

[ 42 : 03 ] would have been there. Now, that thing that looks funny coming up here is one of those porcelain heaters that you see in Northern Europe, Sweden, and Germany, and other places.

And that may look kind of confining to you, but remember, this man was used to living in a cell, a monk cell, so it wasn't too bad. Pen and ink and a desk and a chair and a bed.

That was it. He had smuggled in, I guess you could say smuggled, a copy of the Old Testament in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek, and those were the only things he had been able to take with him.

And in this room, he spent most of ten months working on several writings until he determined finally to use his time to translate the New Testament into vernacular German.

And this would be at a time roughly similar to when Tyndale was doing a similar thing with the English Bible. He wanted Germans to be able to read with understanding what God's Word conveyed.

[ 43 : 12 ] Because the project must really have excited him, he actually accomplished a mind-boggling amount of work in this little room. He had no distractions. He couldn't even look out the window.

The window was made of that kind of Coke bottle glass, you know, so he couldn't even see the pretty valley below him. And I don't know, and it isn't recorded anywhere, the system of messages going back and forth.

But he was writing at least weekly to Philip and getting mail back again. Clearly this whole plot had been generated by somebody, but not Frederick the Wise. He was wise enough to know that he needed to be able to say, if the Inquisition asked him, I didn't know this was happening, I didn't know how he was rescued.

So he left the planning of it to other people. George Spalatin was one he wrote to regularly. This man was Frederick's chaplain and librarian, and he also was very helpful in the later translation of the Old Testament.

Amsfort was the man who would be conveying the messages to the abbot. So all the really important people in Luther's life at this time were in touch with him.

[ 44 : 27 ] And Melancthon, who was not a strong leader and not a charismatic figure, believed that his contribution was to try and create a comprehensible theology out of these bits and pieces of letters that he was getting.

And over time, Luther did change his point of view about some things. So you couldn't always determine that this was going to finish up being Luther's truth, because there were a number of quite important topics that he changed his mind.

Meanwhile, Andreas Karlstadt, another professor from the university, had taken over Luther's pulpit in the city church. He was a good speaker, and he was a very strong leader, stronger than Philip, and he began taking the direction of Luther's reforms away from their original intent.

When one combines this, you know, the church is going to put that I have tried to shepherd, and the Anabaptists, whom I have not mentioned, but these were people like Munser, who was mentioned in the poem.

He was an Anabaptist. And they were developing widespread followings of their own. They too had charismatic teachers, and sometimes, you know, most of the people in a city would be involved.

[ 45 : 41 ] Vickau springs to mind, where there was quite an Anabaptist movement. So Luther really began to have quite a lot of concern about what was happening to his reformation.

Wittenberg really needed him back, and so he went. His escape from that room is not quite clear, because there was a ladder there during the daytime to deliver his meals and stuff like that, but the ladder was taken away at night, so in all likelihood, my thought is, he escaped during the daytime.

And he escaped wearing a disguise as Junker Jörg, which meant Night George, and he had been growing his hair and his beard, and he had the clothes fit to go with it, so nobody knew he was a monk when he sneaked back.

He spent nearly two weeks in Wittenberg, where he saw how desperate the situation had become. In addition, the Black Plague had re-emerged and was threatening the townsfolk in Wittenberg and beyond.

You can just imagine what kind of fuel for some of the reformers that would have created. Luther vented his anger in such unrestrained fashion that George Spalatin did not send him for printing the ones that he wrote.

[ 47 : 01 ] Later on, they were too vitriolic. He, you know, for a man who deployed, wrong word, he really despaired of people who took up arms.

He was a supporter of authority, but he used words to fight very effectively, and he was an angry man. Reformers are angry.

You have to look at the roots of the anger to find out why they're being like that, and we know what the roots of Luther's anger was. Frederick, Duke Frederick agreed that they might further inflame the conflict, so he agreed, we're not going to print these.

Finally, assessing the immediate future of his mission and not wanting to inflame the situation further, Luther decided that after returning to Wartburg, and he did return, he would devote his time to translating the New Testament into vernacular German, and he would need the help of his university colleagues to translate the Old Testament, because although he was a very competent Greek scholar, he did not feel as secure about Hebrew.

By the time he was able to return to Wittenberg, Pope Leo was dead following a big party, and the emperor was fighting a two-front war, because the French had attacked the Italian lands in the north, the Vatican states in the north of Italy, and Suleiman's army was on the march toward Vienna again.

[ 48 : 28 ] A two-front war, bad news for anybody. However, the unrest and riots caused by various reformer factions and their converts continued, and both the emperor and Duke George of Saxony, Duke George was a cousin, staunch Catholic, ruled the next-door state from Fred.

They were threatening military action, sending in the troops, the imperial troops from the council in Nuremberg. Now that would have been disastrous. So, Junker-Jurg made his final departure from the Wartburg with the full knowledge of Duke Frederick and his colleagues from the university.

It was the beginning of Lent, what could be more appropriate for us, and the day after his arrival home, he donned his black robe again and climbed into his old pulpit in the city church for the first time in nearly a year.

There he preached the first of eight Lenten sermons, collectively called, and I'm not a Latin speaker, I hope I've got this right, the *Invocavit*. Anybody want to correct me on that?

Not till after, I guess. His theme throughout was the opposite of what his country was experiencing. Peace, love, caring for others, kindness, making sure that you were following Christ's teaching.

[ 49 : 54 ] And, you know, in the midst of turmoil, that was a potent message. And he spent eight days exploring that message with them. Throughout his sermons, he used the word *we*, which was very clever of him.

The words were as much for himself as for others, and he emphasized a sense of community that was fast disappearing in the world around them. Lent is a penitential time in the church for us as well as for those people, and Luther succeeded in bringing home, bringing them home to a faith that they could trust and to a God whose forgiveness was there for them.

And after the eighth sermon, calm had been restored and Luther's reformation could proceed in an orderly fashion. He returned to his post at the university where he had the help of his friends consolidating his many notes and I mean, you know, crossings out, arrows going, yeah, they had a grand time with deciphering that.

And then together they would undertake a later translation of the Old Testament. In time, he would marry Katharina von Bora, a former Cistercian nun.

Interesting story there. And together with their six children, they resided in what had been a former dormitory of Luther's monastery because the abbot had given the monks permission to leave if they wanted and they did.

[ 51 : 22 ] Katharina, took in university students to help pay the bills. She was such a good manager that Luther dubbed her Mein Herr Katja, you know, which kind of, this will make the feminist toes curl, it kind of means that she was demonstrating male skills in her management of stuff.

Luther's days were spent in teaching and preaching. His ideas spread quickly in the northern states where he had the support of the rulers of the municipalities there. And I think I could not write a better conclusion for this than the one that's in this book.

So I'd like you to hear that because it will tell you the, yeah, the end of his revolt.

Martin Luther was 37 years old when he crafted his literary masterpiece at the Wartburg. In the 24 years he had yet to live, there would be many more crises and from the Catholic point of view, many more scandals he had yet to foist on the world.

Yet in this culmination of four turbulent years, his 95 theses, his confrontation with Rome, his disputations with leading theologians, his excommunication by Rome and ban at the Diet of Worms, his exile in the Wartburg and the consolidation of his movement with the Lenten sermons.

[ 52 : 47 ] His fame was continental, his doctrine was formulated, his movement was well-rooted. In the crucible of Worms, Wartburg and Wittenberg during this time, his legacy was formed.

Can we have the last two pictures? There's Philip Melanchthon on the right and there's Junker, oh, Junker Jorg, what he looked like when he was traveling.

Not that one. This is Philip on the right, 19 years younger than Luther who did treat him like a son. And there he is in his disguise, I guess we could call it.

Okay, let's have the next one. This is the castle church. This is where the 95 theses went up in that side door where you can see people and we can see that up closer, I think.

There they are. They aren't on a scrap of paper this time nailed to the door. They're actually in metal now and so if you can read what he said, they will be there for all time, I guess.

[ 53 : 50 ] And this church is one that is getting ready for big celebrations because this is where his grave is. It always has flowers and it is still a Lutheran church.

Yes. Well, thank you for your attention. Let's pray and then I can hear what your recollection of Luther is. Heavenly Father, we thank you for this man who was so careful about the words that you left us with and our faithfulness to them.

And we ask that you will protect that fidelity in our lives as well and in our congregations. May we always be faithful to your word, Lord, and anxious for the Spirit to guide us in our studies.

In Jesus' name we pray. Thank you. Thank you. Gosh, I can't believe I finished that on time.

Go ahead. I appreciated your mention in passing of the printing press which was reinforced by the mention of the stack of books on the table when he had to defend.

[ 55 : 08 ] You have given us what in a sense is a great man view of the situation and I'd like to balance it off with a little sidestep into that particular material condition.

If you google the German word Flugblatt you will find in, I think, German Wikipedia that the first instance of this the pamphlet or the leaflet the commonly available piece of printing was 1488.

I think you mentioned three generations. I mentioned a longer period of time than that. That would have been like about 30 years and all I want to do is to contemporize this for us.

Good. There's an archivist. Okay. 1989 is when the internet went public. We're moving a little faster today and that will be 2019 for our 30 years.

We're living in turbulent times. We are. And let's not underestimate these parallel material conditions. Yes. Printing and the digital age.

[ 56 : 35 ] Thank you. Thank you. Because they were important both times. Yes. Yes, John. Pictures of those three guys. Yes. They were in a pub or an inn of some kind.

He was on the left. Oh, and the far right was two students, I think. There were, when he returned to Wittenberg, yes, when he returned to Wittenberg, he linked up with a couple of students who were also going there to study.

And they said, oh, and we're hoping to hear Luther, but we don't know where he is. And we wonder if we'll meet him. And Luther, sitting there as Junker Jörg, said, oh, I think it's quite likely that you will see him in Wittenberg.

Luther's got the red hats? Yes, that's right. Oh, okay. Yes. The thing is, most people know the root of reformation, reformist anger.

I'm not completely sure why was Luther angry, just because of the Roman Catholic Church? He was angry with the teaching of the church and the distortion that was of what he was finding in the Bible.

[ 57 : 40 ] Luther, the church in which he preached, the city church, had a triptych which Becky showed us when she did her presentation, the one that had all seven sacraments illustrated in it.

And so if he wanted to attack the sacraments, he had only to point to what was behind the altar as an illustration of what he was changing their mind about.

But, you know, he was a convinced Catholic when he was a younger man and he entered a monastery to pursue a religious life. And I personally think that he felt really betrayed when he began studying the Bible and thought, where did purgatory come from?

Where does it say that monks and priests have to remain celibate? That's a very difficult thing for us to do, you know. He certainly knew how difficult that was, wrote Reams on that subject too.

But I think the betrayal that he felt from his church would have fueled that anger, John. Anger usually comes from a sense of identifying with some injustice perceived or real that happened to you or even somebody else, reform movements.

[ 58 : 52 ] You know, you have people that identify at a distance. Who's next? Hi. Yeah. You mentioned that Luther was a contemporary of Henry VIII.

Yes. I was just wondering how much of Luther's teaching crossed the channel before Henry VIII said that the Church of Rome has no more authority in this realm of England.

Okay, well, you probably know that all that Henry wanted was to be head of the church. He never changed his views from Catholicism. He never, ever identified himself as a Protestant in any way.

All he wanted was the decision making power of the church. literature that Luther had written was coming surreptitiously across the channel.

There were people who had seen his prayer book, and shortly after Cranmer was writing one, too. You know, I was telling somebody before we started today that Anne Boleyn was known to have seen some of the Reformation writings, and there were people that wanted proof of that when she was going to stand trial for treason.

[ 59 : 59 ] But he was a supporter of the Catholic Church, and he did hope that the person that came after Leo might grant him a divorce.

But, you know, the tricky thing was that the emperor, Charles V, was the uncle of Catherine of Aragon. So he was not going to be in favor of a divorce or anything like that.

Yeah. But Luther was actually attacked verbally in writing by Henry VIII, who what was it called, defensor fide or something like that.

He wanted that title, defender of the faith, and he attacked Luther's writings as a good Catholic, and later on, much later on, wanted Luther's blessing on getting rid of one of his wives.

You can't have it both ways. But he was awarded that title finally by the Pope, defender of the faith. It is still on the English coinage. It hasn't meant defender of the Catholic faith ever since Henry VIII.

[ 61 : 09 ] It has meant defender of the Anglican faith. That was a good question. Yeah. Sheila, you mentioned the Lutheran prayer book.

Yes. I grew up Lutheran, and I don't remember ever seeing the prayer book. Oh. Is it similar to the Anglican? You know, I haven't seen it since I left the Lutheran church.

We went first to Augustana for three years, and then to Redeemer Lutheran, which used to be just down the street from our old venue. So I don't really know about that, but there are notes in the back, like ours has, explaining certain things.

We have, you know, the 39 articles and so on in the back. We've got three different creeds and that sort of thing, and that's where I found the devil and the Turks, not in the actual script.

And since I had never seen our prayer book at that time, I wouldn't have known, but it was used in the services at Augustana, and I don't know why it wouldn't have been used in the church that you went to.

[ 62 : 11 ] Well, I grew up in the States, and there were many different synods, so maybe there were synods. Yeah, interesting point. Might be worth digging one up again.

The only Lutheran book I've seen is Luther's Confessions, the book in the Lutheran Church of Bethlehem, Lutheran at 14th and May. Okay, that has a German Lutheran background, yeah.

Yeah. Was that what you mean by the prayer book, Luther's Confessions? No, the prayer book follows the liturgy like our prayer book does, yeah. And the liturgy is the same in Anglican, Catholic and Lutheran churches.

There is always, you know, a Gloria, there is always a Sanctus. That, I mean, we don't call them Latin names, but they are part of our services too. You're exhausted.

Oh, hi. I'm just curious what happened between when Luther was in his disguise and then he did the several days of preaching. Yeah. How did he manage to switch from that hidden...

[ 63 : 14 ] Well, when he went back to Wittenberg for the last time, he put on his monk's robes again. People would have seen him like that.

And he himself was still friends with his own abbot, you know. But he's got a safe place by that time. Yes. Now, safe by, almost by default. As I said, Leo, the big bad wolf, was dead.

He died very soon after the Diet of Worms. Charles V had to leave and he would have been the person that could have sent in soldiers because he was fighting a two-front war by that time.

And so it was up to the Archbishop of Mainz and Duke George of Saxony were the ones that wanted to bring in the troops. But it didn't happen. Luther had calmed everybody down by then.

Powerful man. Yes? You said... You mentioned that we're doing some celebrating. Yes. Some of the things that the Lutheran Church in particular is worried about when celebrating Luther is that he had some not very nice things to say about people of the Jewish faith, especially later on.

[ 64 : 25 ] That's the understatement of the year. Yes. What do you think... What do you think a Christians in a Reformed tradition? How do we celebrate someone like Luther with that in mind?

Oh, that's a very good question. I think that he was characteristic of his time. That is not an excuse for what he wrote.

But he certainly was very anti-Semitic. And he kept it up for quite a long time and wrote a lot of things about it. And centuries later, and he could not have foreseen this, it was used by Nazis who were anxious to promote the idea of the master race and were using Jews as a scapegoat.

And certainly the Lutheran Church that was not the confessing church of Bonhoeffer, but the state church, would have used his writings along with the state to continue the persecution of Jewish people.

And even the cartoonists and illustrators of the day did things like that. I didn't mention the cartoons that Lucas Kranich did to illustrate some of his books.

[ 65 : 40 ] But, you know, given the literacy rate, there would have been people that would look at a picture and get the point. Like the one, there was one about Revelation that had the whore of Babylon.

And she looks like a floozy on the back of a, should have been a horse, but no, it was a beast with seven heads, all of them a little different. And people looking up at this, and here she is looking very tipsy on the back of the horse.

And you wouldn't know what the reference was until you looked at, she was wearing a crown. It was the papal crown she was wearing. So who is the whore of Babylon? It's the Pope.

And all of that came from the picture. He got it all in. People loved his cartoons. Yeah? Yeah. First of all, I mean, Luther's prejudice was religious, not racial.

That's one thing. That would be hard to distinguish in some of the things that he wrote. Yeah. It was, or I could be wrong, but it seemed that he was trying to put pressure on them to convert, since they didn't want to listen to his message.

[ 66 : 40 ] And I think that that's just true of great people in general. They have contradictions and serious failures and inconsistencies. And even, and the also can be true of wicked people that have, quote, failures and inconsistencies of the very opposite sort.

Yeah. And we have to... And he was not consistent in some of his views. I ran head on to this with my Lutheran husband when we had a baby boy. And I don't know why I had never thought about infant baptism, but I come from a background where you must be able to profess your faith before you are baptized.



baptized. And most of you know more about that part of my past than you knew about my Lutheran past, right? But anyway, he had assumed that we would have his baby baptized, and I was appalled.

Our first fight, four years into the marriage, you know. Yeah. No, I couldn't abide that. I mean, what were they going to do to my child? And I was thinking in terms of a Catholic baptism again.

And so I went and had some talks with a minister who assured me that this was not going to make our child a Christian, that water and the word were a means that God uses to give his blessing.

[ 67 : 56 ] And they picked out some verses of scripture and so on that would support that. Well, that was a comfortable context for me. So he was baptized, and his certificate went into his baby book.

And when he was 14 and well entrenched in the Baptist church, he discovered this. And oh, was he angry? You did this to a poor helpless baby. Well, yes, dear.

Yeah, Harvey. What historians call, I believe, presentism is always present when we look at the past. Yeah. So in that spirit, could I just ask a quite blank question?

Do you like him? Do I like him? Yes, I'm afraid I do. Warts and all, as somebody might have said. I think we are blessed to have a man with those strengths.

And when you see the gifts that he had to actually get a reformation going, you know that God was working in his life. You know his education, his brilliance, his connection with humanists and learning how to speak and debate and so on.

[ 69 : 08 ] Yeah. And Northern Europe did support him. Well, we can talk about that if anybody cares to know why the Northern princes supported him. But we're going to finish, aren't we?

Oh, one last question? I just wondered if you could comment on, I've heard that there are people who try to discredit God speaking to Luther, you know, his sort of experience of evil attacks, you know, throwing the ink bottle against the wall.

Yeah. They've cleaned that up, you know, it's too bad. It was a good story. But for people who argue that he was psychologically unstable, that kind of thing, do you think on that? Well, the consistency of the actions that he took in his life would lead me to think he was not unstable when he realized what his role was going to be in dragging people back to a biblical faith.

He was unswerving in what he did, even though it was kind of patchwork stuff, even though he changed his mind about some things. He was searching out the path. I believe that the Spirit was guiding him.

And I don't think, I'm not sure how you could say he was unstable but people who want to discredit him will find a way to do that, I suppose. And the last question. It's not a question.

[ 70 : 25 ] There's a 2003 film, Martin Luther, which we watched on holiday, which is surprisingly good and surprisingly accurate. Oh, great. Surprisingly accurate for a film. The Wikipedia has got all kinds of minor inaccuracies.

And what did you find that would deviate from what we were talking about today because I'd love to see that? I mean, your talk reminded me of many things in the film, so I do recommend the film.

Where would we see that? Ralph Fiennes. I do not know. Ralph Fiennes. Yes. He plays Mark... Oh, Ralph Fiennes. Mark Martin Luther.

Does he? And it's wonderful. Potential movie. We've got it. Yeah. We've got to get our hands on that. Thank you. Well, I know there's lots of things that we all want to talk about.

We'll have a chance as we wrap up. But I want to take this opportunity to just say thank you, Sheila, for a wonderful, insightful, inspiring. Thank you very much. Thank you.