

## Sardis—Age of Reformation-Webinar 70

Revelations 6:56— When He broke the third seal, I heard the third living creature saying, "Come." I looked, and behold, a black horse; and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard something like a voice in the center of the four living creatures saying, "A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not damage the oil and the wine."

The man— this is the spirit of the reformers. Men and women were anointed with incredible wisdom and natural knowledge to re-establish the foundations of the faith lost during the dark ages. Christians were denied access to the Bible for many centuries. Martin Luther was the first to translate the Bible into the language of the common man and mass produce it. Many others followed in the great reformation leading up to 20<sup>th</sup>-century.

This attribute of the Holy Spirits anointing covered two church ages...Sardis and Philadelphia and extended from roughly 1520-1906. Men of great intellect and theological skill re-affirmed the basic doctrines of the faith but also brought into their age teachings of man mixed with it.

### The Sardis Church Age 1520-1776

Rev 3:15— "To the angel of the church in Sardis write: He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars, says this: "I know your deeds, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. "Wake up, and

strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God.

"So remember what you have received and heard; and keep {it} and repent. Therefore if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what hour I will come to you.

"But you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their garments; and they will walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.

A. Sardis means "precious stone (i.e., the sardius stone), remnant.

This Church typified the beginning of the Reformation Church Age. It is fitting that Sardis would come immediately after Thyatira, the Jezebel Church. Very often the remnant is asked, "How can your beliefs be right when so many great theologians say you are wrong? This is determined and validated by the Spirit of Truth.

B. The Reformation Church had a revelation of justification by faith alone, apart from submitting to a priesthood of men. They had a revelation that one did not need to belong to an earthly organization that men called "the Church" in order to be part of "the Church" in the eyes of God. This was good and the allotment of manna for their day, but it was as far as they went. Their revelation was primarily of the feast of Passover and its meaning. They had little or no revelation of either Pentecost or Tabernacles.

They had the gospel of justification by faith alone, but they did not know how to experience Pentecost or go all the way into Sonship.

### C. What is the Reformation?

The Reformation is the movement in history, beginning in 1517, which broke up the institutional unity of the church in Western Europe and established the third great branch of Christianity, called Protestantism, which was and is centered on the absolute and sufficient authority of the Bible and on justification by faith alone.

The key ideas of the Reformation—a call to purify the church and a belief that the Bible, not tradition, should be the sole source of spiritual authority—were not themselves novel. However, Luther and the other reformers became the first to skillfully use the power of the printing press to give their ideas a wide audience

1. It is normal within evangelical churches to present the Reformation as simply the recovery of the truth of the Bible after hundreds of years of false teaching, which had increased as the medieval period went on. From a religious perspective, there is much to commend this view.
2. Never before were so many people brought to read and study the Bible for themselves. Seldom before had God's grace been so magnified rather than man's ability.
3. The people turned from pilgrimages and indulgences to a simple worship of God and relied on his grace implicitly.

4. And the results of that truth worked in society powerfully to create a new kind of people -- literate, dynamic citizens whose work ethic changed Europe and churches which eventually spread the Gospel across the globe.

## Martin Luther

In 1517, Martin Luther wrote to his bishop, Albert of Mainz, protesting his dislike of buying indulgences. He added something in the letter, which would later become the famous Ninety-Five Thesis. (Disputation on the Power of Indulgences) He strongly disputed the claim that freedom from God's punishment for sin could be purchased with money. Luther would argue that the sale of indulgences was a violation of the original intention of confession, and that Christians were being lied to by their own church.

Luther's positions against what he saw as abusive practices by preachers selling plenary indulgences, which were certificates believed to reduce the temporal punishment for sins committed by the purchasers themselves or their loved ones in purgatory.

An indulgence is the extra-sacramental remission of the temporal punishment due, in God's justice, to sin that has been forgiven, which remission is granted by the Church in the exercise of the power of the keys, through the application of the superabundant merits of Christ and of the saints, and for some just and reasonable motive. From Catholic Encyclopedia.

Conviction-Repentance-Forgiveness-Salvation

Romans 10:9-11

that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. **10** For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. **11** For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame."

In January 1518, Christoph von Scheurl and other friends of Luther translated the Ninety Five Theses into German, since it was originally written in Latin. They then printed and copied it, making it one of the first documents to be done with the help of the printing press.[4] Within two weeks, copies of the Theses had spread throughout Germany. Within six weeks of that, the Theses had been copied across Europe. Luther's writings reached France, England and Italy by 1519.[5] This greatly increased the notoriety of Martin Luther, and it also made many other people across Europe protest the ecclesiastical structure of the Catholic Church.

His "95 Theses," which propounded two central beliefs—that the Bible is the central religious authority and that humans may reach salvation only by their faith and not by their deeds

In His Own Words

1. Selling indulgences to finance the building of St. Peter's is wrong.

"The revenues of all Christendom are being sucked into this insatiable basilica. The Germans laugh at calling this the common treasure of Christendom. Before long, all the churches, palaces, walls and bridges of

Rome will be built out of our money. First of all, we should rear living temples, not local churches, and only last of all St. Peter's, which is not necessary for us. We Germans cannot attend St. Peter's. Better that it should never be built than that our parochial churches should be despoiled.

...

## 2. The pope has no power over Purgatory.

"Papal indulgences do not remove guilt. Beware of those who say that indulgences effect reconciliation with God. ... He who is contrite has plenary remission of guilt and penalty without indulgences. The pope can only remove those penalties which he himself has imposed on earth, for Christ did not say, 'Whatsoever I have bound in heaven you may loose on earth.'

## 3. Buying indulgences gives people a false sense of security and endangers their salvation.

"Indulgences are positively harmful to the recipient because they impede salvation by diverting charity and inducing a false sense of security. Christians should be taught that he who gives to the poor is better than he who receives a pardon. He who spends money on indulgences instead of relieving want receives not the indulgence of the pope but the indignation of God. ...

Luther had published his German translation of the New Testament in 1522, and he and his collaborators completed the translation of the Old

Testament in 1534, when the whole Bible was published. He continued to work on refining the translation until the end of his life

On November 9, 1518 the pope condemned Luther's writings as conflicting with the teachings of the Church. One year later a series of commissions were convened to examine Luther's teachings. The first papal commission found them to be heretical, but the second merely stated that Luther's writings were "scandalous and offensive to pious ears." Finally, in July 1520 Pope Leo X issued a papal bull (public decree) that concluded that Luther's propositions were heretical and gave Luther 120 days to recant in Rome. Luther refused to recant, and on January 3, 1521 Pope Leo excommunicated Martin Luther from the Catholic Church.

#### Diet of Worms 1521

Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. May God help me. Amen.

The Emperor presented the final draft of the Diet of Worms on 25 May 1521, declaring Luther an outlaw, banning his literature, and requiring his arrest: "We want him to be apprehended and punished as a notorious heretic."<sup>[63]</sup> It also made it a crime for anyone in Germany to give Luther food or shelter. It permitted anyone to kill Luther without legal consequence

Luther hid in the town of Eisenach for the next year, where he began work on one of his major life projects, the translation of the New Testament into German, which took him 10 years to complete.

## Reformers

This term refers to the leaders of the revolt against Catholicism. Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Knox, Bucer, Cranmer, and others would merit this title, as would Anabaptists.

## Protestant

Any member of the original group that "protested" against the Catholic Church and actually separated from it, and any member of that group of churches or their modern descendants. The term was first used in 1529 when a group of German noblemen "protested" at the Diet of Speyer.

## Lutheran

A member of the churches that descend from Luther's original followers

## Reformed

A member of the churches that descend from the non-Lutheran Protestants such as Knox, Calvin.

## Magisterial Reformers

The Reformers who believed that the civil magistrate should enforce the correct religion. There was no difference on this point between the magisterial Reformers and the Roman Catholics.

## Anabaptist



A member of the "radical Reformation" - those who went beyond the magisterial reformers and restricted baptism to adult believers. This also implied that not everyone was expected to be a Christian. Therefore the government was out of the picture and should not be used by Christians to impose the true religion on others. Nor should Christians participate in civil government.

The name Anabaptist is derived from the Greek term anabaptista, or "one who baptizes over again." This name was given them by their enemies in reference to the practice of "re-baptizing" converts who "already had been baptized" (or sprinkled) as infants.<sup>[5]</sup> Anabaptists required that baptismal candidates be able to make their own confessions of faith and so rejected baptism of infants. The early members of this movement abhorred the name "Anabaptist", claiming that since infant baptism was unscriptural and null and void, the baptizing of believers was not a "re-baptism" but in fact the first baptism for them.

On a cold winter's morning, 21 January 1525, in the Swiss city of Zurich, Conrad Grebel baptized George Blaurock, who in turn baptized the others present. So was formed the first distinct reformed Protestant congregation of the Reformation era, and the first church of baptized believers in over 1000 years. Within 10 years almost all involved would have been martyred yet the movement they began would prosper.

Johannes Gutenberg

By 1440 Johannes Gutenberg's moveable type press marked the beginning of the Printing Revolution, a colossal moment in the history of

information and learning. With access to printing presses, scientists, philosophers, politicians, and religious officials could replicate their ideas quickly and make them available to large audiences.

## John Knox

A Scottish clergyman and a leader of the Protestant Reformation who is considered the founder of the Presbyterian denomination in Scotland. In Geneva he met John Calvin, from whom he gained experience and knowledge of Reformed theology and Presbyterian polity. He created a new order of service, which was eventually adopted by the reformed church in Scotland. He also was forced to the French Galleys in 1547. They were forced to pay homage to Catholic Church or they would be tortured.

Knox was confronted by the Catholic clergy about his preaching that the “mass is idolatrous.” When called to defend his position, he stated: The Mass is Idolatry. All worshipping, honoring, or service invented by the brain of man in the religion of God, without his own express commandment, is idolatry. The Mass is invented by the brain of man, without any commandment of God; therefore it is idolatry.

In response to Knox’s prayers, Mary Queen of Scots is reputed to have said: “I fear the prayers of John Knox more than all the assembled armies of Europe.”

## The Story of Anne Askew

She is the only woman on record known to have been both tortured in the Tower of London and burned at the stake. In the year of 1546, Anne, at the tender age of 24-26 years old was ruthlessly murdered, burned at the

stake. She was severely persecuted and imprisoned by King Henry VIII simply because of her stand against the heretical teachings of the Catholic Church about the mass.

She protested the Catholics teaching that the “mass” is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ who is really present on the altar; that He is offered to God for the living and the dead by the priest. They teach that upon the words of consecration by the priest, the wafer and the alcoholic wine literally change into the real flesh and blood of Christ (transubstantiation). They teach that the observance of the mass is a part of their salvation whereby the person actually eats the real flesh of Jesus. This practice and teaching has been traced back as far as the 9th century but it didn't become official until it was declared a doctrine by Pope Innocent III in 1215.

The rack was an instrument designed for stretching the body and pulling the body limbs out of socket. It was a large, wooden frame where the victim is laid on his back with his wrists and ankles fastened by cords or rope to two rollers at each end of the frame. These rollers or wheels are moved and turned in opposite directions until the limbs, the body parts are pulled out of their socket. There were other means of torture used in those days: branding parts of the body, severe beating with fists or whips, starvation, pour melted lead in the ears, cut off body parts and limbs (like the tongue), put out the eyes, suspend the body over a slow burning fire.

They turned the handles so hard that Anne was drawn apart, her shoulders and hips were pulled from their sockets and her elbows and knees were dislocated. Askew's cries could be heard in the garden next to

the White Tower where the Lieutenant's wife and daughter were walking. Askew gave no names, and her ordeal ended when the Lieutenant ordered her to be returned to her cell.

Anne Askew was burnt at the stake at Smithfield, London, aged 26, on 16 July 1546, with John Lascelles and two other Protestants. She was carried to execution in a chair wearing just her shift as she could not walk and every movement caused her severe pain.<sup>[16]</sup> She was dragged from the chair to the stake which had a small seat attached to it, which she sat astride. Chains were used to bind her body firmly to the stake at the ankles, knees, waist, chest and neck. Because of her recalcitrance she was burned alive slowly rather than being strangled first or burned quickly. Those who saw her execution were impressed by her bravery, and reported that she did not scream until the flames reached her chest.

## The Reward

Revelations 3:5 — “He who overcomes will thus be clothed in white garments; and I will not erase his name from the book of life, and I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels

C. Fine linen is the wardrobe of priesthood . The Bride of Christ is presented in Rev. 19 as God’s priesthood. The New Testament overcomer is no longer a Levitical priesthood, but in the Order of Melchizedek. Therefore qualification to be a participant in this priesthood is not determined by the genealogy from Levi and Aaron,

but a spiritual genealogy from Jesus Christ. We were in Christ before the foundation of the World.

Rev 19:8— It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.