

The Catechism and Martin Luther



Martin Luther was born in Eisleben, Germany in 1483, about the time that Columbus discovered America.

If he was still alive today, how old would he be? _____

Luther's father worked in a copper mine. His mother worked at home.

What do your parents do?

Mother: _____

Father: _____

Martin Luther originally thought he would become a Lawyer.

What would you like to become? _____

After Luther became very ill and a close friend died, he was caught in a terrible thunderstorm, he prayed during the storm that if God would protect him and spare his life, he would become a monk.

Have you ever been in an accident or came close to dieing? _____

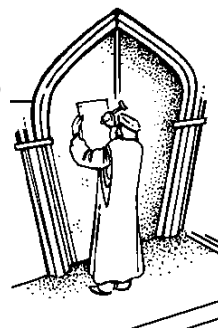
Luther became a monk, Priest and college professor in the Catholic Church, but he constantly feared that God was angry with him and that when he died he would not be allowed into heaven. To try to please God and earn his way into heaven, Luther would say countless prayers, go to holy cities, give money to the church, do kind works, hurt himself when he sinned, but no matter how much he did, he never felt it was enough to please God.

As Luther was studying the Bible, he came upon a truth that changed him forever - God was not an angry judge, but a loving Savior; and we are not saved by how good we are, but by God's grace through faith in Jesus.

Look up two passages that helped Luther understand God's grace - Romans 3:23 - 24 and Ephesians 2:8 - 9

After this revelation, Luther nailed 95 Thesis (Protests) on the door of his church as a way of challenging the Catholic Church to admit that the following church teachings were incorrect:

- If you give a lot of money to the church or did enough good works you could earn forgiveness and entry into heaven.
- There are places called purgatory and limbo, where people who were not good enough to get into heaven, but not bad enough to enter eternal damnation would go until they were there long enough to became good enough for heaven.
- People should pray to Saints instead of God, because God was a cruel judge, waiting for us to make mistakes so He could punish and condemn us.



The Pope, Bishops, Cardinals and other church leaders, not wanting to lose their income and power, and angry that a lowly monk like Luther would question their authority and teachings, responded to Luther's protest by branding him a heretic (false teacher) and excommunicating him (kicking him out of the church). This meant Luther was a criminal who could be arrested or killed.

With the help of a German Prince, Luther went into hiding, took on a new identity and was spared from being arrested or killed.

While in hiding, Luther translated the Bible into German, so ordinary people could read it. He also wrote many other books, asking the church to change it's false teachings, and reform itself into the church that Christ had originally intended. That is why this era is known as the "Reformation".

Many people began to feel that Luther was correct, and started sharing his teachings with others and joined the protest against the false teachings of the church. This was the beginning of the Protestant Lutheran Church.

The slogan for the reformed church was "Word Alone", "Grace Alone", "Faith Alone".

Luther died in his hometown of Eisleben, Germany in 1546. His final words were, "We are all beggars."

What did he mean by these last words? _____

How old was Luther when he died? _____