

History

Lesson 3 of an enquiry of 4 lessons

Printing, Pamphlets, and Peasants

Enquiry: What was Luther trying to achieve?

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1517-1520

Luther's first challenge to the Catholic Church was the Ninety-five Theses. These were written in order to start a debate among university professors in Wittenberg and the main issue they attacked was the sale of indulgences. Luther was not the first to criticise the Church; there had been many **Protestant** groups in the past. Luther was helped, however, by the printing press, which meant his Ninety-five Theses were able to spread.

By the time of the Leipzig Debate in 1519, Luther's views had become more **heretical**. He was now disagreeing with the Catholic view that the Pope could represent the word of God. For Luther, only the Bible showed God's word. He was eventually **excommunicated** in 1520.



1520-1525

Luther's views were attractive for many German princes, because he suggested that the Pope was too powerful, and that German princes should have control over their own churches. Emperor Charles V held the **Diet of Worms** in order to challenge Luther's ideas, but Luther still did not back down. Luther's kidnap by Frederick the Wise, and his hiding in Wartburg Castle, allowed Luther to continue to write, even though he was now an **outlaw**.

Luther's views became more popular in Germany, and were adopted by the peasants who rebelled in 1524-25. Luther, however, hated his religion being used in this way, and demanded the peasants stopped. He believed that God designed the world for peasants to obey rulers; they were not doing this.



Lutheranism spreads

Due to the translation of the Bible into German, and the creation of many new **catechisms** and pamphlets, Luther's heretical views became its own version of Christianity: Lutheranism. The Augsburg Confession in 1530 was an official statement of Lutheranism, which many German princes agreed to.

Lutheranism is a type of Protestantism, and continued to grow after Luther's death in 1546.

For over a century, there was horrendous warfare across Europe as Catholics and Protestants fought each other, and there have been outbreaks of violence ever since. Western Europe has remained split between Catholic and Protestant; both are Christian religions, but have different views and practices.



Glossary

Catechism: a written set of beliefs designed to be memorised

Diet: a meeting of German princes and other rulers

Excommunicated: to be thrown out of the Church, which was believed to cause you to go to Hell after death

Heretical: to have views that are seriously disagreeing with the Church

Outlaw: a criminal who cannot live a normal life

Protestant: one type of Christian whose beliefs are different to the Catholic Church (named after men like Luther *protesting*)



Match the event to Luther's aims

1) 95 Theses 2) Diet of Worms 3) Peasants' War 4) Lutheran writings

- A) Luther wanted to publicly state that he believed what he wrote, and was not afraid to disagree with the Pope or Emperor.
- B) Luther wanted to have a local debate with other educated men
- C) Luther wanted to outline what a Protestant religion might look like, and encourage others to adopt it
- D) Luther wanted to prevent violent revolutions by those who should be following their rulers.

