



Martin Luther: A Monk Seeking Light in the Darkness!

Lesson 2

A Story that Shows the Significance of the Five Solas and Summarizes the Reformation Age.

The story of Martin Luther does not give the solas their significance but it does put them in a historical context and shows how the Reformation bridged the gap between biblical learning and radical living through one man's life and ministry.

A Monk with a Mallet Unknowingly Unleashes the Reformation.

The Definition: A pivotal movement (1517–1545) that God used to bring His people **BACK** to the Bible in order to **SHINE** the Light of the Gospel in the Dark Ages.

1. **PROTESTANT Reformers** Roman Catholics that *protested* by seeking to reform the Roman Catholic Church but ended up creating their own “state churches.”

Lutherans – Followers of Luther that spread from Germany.

Reformed / Presbyterians – Followers of Calvin and others that spread from Switzerland, France, Scotland, etc.

Anglicans – Political “reform” by the King Henry VIII in England. **Episcopalians** are Anglicans that settled in America.

2. **RADICAL Reformers** Reformers that were so radical they actually practiced **believer's' baptism** and **free churches of only professing believers** like in the NT. They kept reforming the Reformation!

Anabaptists (1500's) – Reformers and independents who often exalted the subjective “light” of God's Spirit over the objective light of God's Word.

Baptists (1600's) – Reformers and independents who were grounded in Reformation theology of the 5 Solas and returned to the NT form of believer's baptism and free churches that were self-governing (separation of church and state).

The Question: “What must I **DO** to be saved and who has the **AUTHORITY** to tell me?”

The Motivation: The monk Martin Luther (1483-1546) to whom God graciously revealed **HIS ANSWER** to that question.

A Monk Seeking the Light of Salvation at the End of the Dark Ages – 1483-1517

1. A Student Lawyer Encounters **DEATH**. “Where Will God When I Die?”

- Born on November 10, 1483 to peasant parents in the little town of Eisleben (120 miles SW of Berlin).
- Raised in a religious home that was both strict and superstitious—*typical of the Middle Ages*.
- Luther studied law to honor his father's wishes—*earning both his bachelor's and master's degrees in the shortest time possible*.
- Luther almost died at the **age of 19** and **never saw a Bible until he was 20 years old!**

2. A Serious Monk Seeks Light in the **DARKNESS**. “What Must I do to Be Saved?”

What Must I Do to Be Saved?

1. Become a **MONK**? 1505
 - Nearly struck dead by lightning during a thunderstorm and promises *St. Anne* he will become a monk if she saves him from death. Two weeks later he keeps his promise and enters the Augustinian Monastery in Erfurt.
2. Become a **PRIEST** and celebrate Mass? 1507
 - Ordained as a priest and celebrates his first Mass, but became so terrified of the presence of Christ in the bread and the wine that he nearly drops them and tries to run from the altar.

“I was a good monk...if ever a monk got to heaven by his monkery it was I.” – Martin Luther

“Though I lived as a monk without reproach, I felt that I was a sinner before God with an extremely disturbed conscience.” – Martin Luther

3. Do more **PENANCE**? 1508

- Leaves Erfurt to study theology at the new University of Wittenberg and earns a Bachelor of Arts in Bible, but forgiveness of sin and a clear conscience were uppermost in his mind at this time.

"If one were to confess his sins in a timely manner, he would have to carry a confessor in his pocket!" – Martin Luther
"Yet my conscience would never give me assurance, but I was always doubting and said, 'You did not perform that correctly. You were not contrite enough. Your left that out of your confession.'" – Martin Luther
"I was drunk, nay submerged in the doctrines of the pope that I could have happily killed (or cooperated with anyone who killed) whoever took but a syllable of obedience away from him." – Martin Luther

4. Trek to Rome and worship **MORE** relics? 1510-11

- Sent to Rome on business for his monastic order, he becomes an eyewitness to the hypocrisy and corruption of the Roman Catholic Church and its clergy.

5. Become a **BIBLE SCHOLAR**? 1511-12

- Returns to Wittenberg, receives his Doctor of Theology, and becomes a professor of Bible.

Three Growing Convictions Lay a Foundation for "Sola Scriptura" = Scripture Alone

- 1) **SURRENDER** to the Bible as the ultimate standard for truth.
- 2) **STUDY** the Bible in the original languages to know what it says.
- 3) **START** teaching in the language of the common man to spread the truth.



6. Faith alone in Christ alone for salvation is the **ONLY** biblical answer! 1513-1517

- Teaches Psalms (1513-15), Romans (1515-1517), Galatians, and Hebrews (1517-1519).
- But **Romans 1:17** is the verse in the Bible that led to Luther's conversion! (1517 or as late as 1519)

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'But the righteous man shall live by faith.'"
Romans 1:16-17

- From that time on Luther began to see, savor, study, and share the five "**SOLAS**" of Reformation theology.



- Sola Scriptura** - Scripture **alone** instead of Scripture **plus** the traditions of men or church.
- Sola Fide** - Faith **alone** instead of Faith **plus** my own effort and good works.
- Solus Christus** - Christ **alone** instead of Christ **plus** anyone or anything else.
- Sola Gratia** - Grace **alone** instead of grace **plus** my own goodness or ability before God.
- Soli Deo Gloria** - Glory to God **alone** instead of God's glory **plus** my own boasting.

How Does God Bring Light to People in Dark Places?

He uses those who are truly born again and committed to sharing God's Word with all people!

The most dangerous threat in all of history is a common man or woman with a common Bible committed to an uncommon purpose—the Great Commission!

"What I began as a Doctor, I must truly confess to the end of my life. I cannot keep silent or cease to teach." – Martin Luther



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