

Author of the 95 Theses which sparked the Reformation



MARTIN LUTHER

Born: Nov. 10, 1483 |
Eisleben, Germany

Died: Feb. 18, 1546 |
Eisleben, Germany

AS AN AUGUSTINIAN MONK, Luther fasted, prayed, attended and led Mass. Despite this holy life, he was in constant doubt of his salvation. Luther began concentrating his studies on the Bible rather than the Church Fathers. In 1514, while studying Paul's letter to the Romans in his tower room in Wittenberg, he finally saw the pure Gospel. He realized that sinners are saved not through good works but by the gift of God through faith. This realization sparked a concern that the church's practice of selling a certificate of forgiveness (called an indulgence) would lead to the loss of true contrition for sins. If people could receive pardon from all sins, then they could spend the rest of their lives not worrying about the status of their souls. Luther felt he must protect his flock from this dangerous practice. On Oct. 31, 1517, Luther posted his 95 Theses on the Castle Church doors, seeking a scholarly debate on the sale of indulgences. This led to a series of written materials and debates on the church practices of the time, the final culmination of which resulted in Luther being called before Emperor Charles V at a meeting in Worms, Germany, where Luther was asked to recant his writings.



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