

I. **Introduction.** – In today’s lesson, we study the greatest and best known leaders of the Reformation: Martin Luther.



II. **Martin Luther** was born at Eisleben, a town in Upper Saxony, Germany in 1483.

- A. Martin Luther’s father was a poor man who worked in an iron mine.
- B. When Luther was fourteen years old, he was sent to school in Magdeburg and after at the University at Erfurt. While at the university, Martin spent a great deal of time reading the Bible he found in the school library.
- C. When Luther was twenty-one years old, he determined to enter a monastery, a religious ministry, to become a monk. At this time, Luther was a strict adherent to the Catholic faith.
  1. After Luther had been in the monastery for two years, he was ordained a priest and went to preach at Wittenburg.
  2. After a year, Luther was sent to Rome on business for the monastery.



III. **Martin Luther’s first trip to Rome.**


- A. As a young priest, Luther looked with anticipation to his visit to Rome, which he had accepted as the “Holy City.”
- B. Instead of being delighted with what he found in Rome, Luther was filled with indignation. He rebelled at the worldliness, the scandal, the sale of indulgences, etc., that he saw in Rome.
- C. While climbing the stairs of “The Church of the Holy Stairs” on his knees, God burned the scripture verse “The just shall live by faith” into his soul. [Habakkuk 2:4 (KJV) *4 Behold, his soul which is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.* Also referred to in Hebrews 10:38 <sup>38</sup> *Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.*

IV. **The Ninety-Five Theses.**

- A. Upon returning to Wittenburg, he recognized the same evil existed in the Catholic church there in Wittenburg.
  1. On October 31, 1517, Luther wrote a paper bitterly denouncing these Church errors and nailed it on the local church house door for all to see.
  2. There were ninety-five separate points made in Luther’s paper, and these are known as “The Ninety-Five Theses.”
- B. Astounded at this rebellion of Luther, the chief of the Dominican Order [[24 Orders presently exist in the Catholic Church](#)], publicly burned all of Luther’s writings.
- C. The Pope ordered Luther to Rome for a trial, but he refused to go. Attempts to arrest Luther failed and thus began the lifelong struggle between Luther and Rome.

V. **The Pope ordered Luther excommunicated and all his writings burned.** In response to this, Luther **publicly** burned the Pope's excommunication order!

VI. **The Imperial Diet at Worms in April 1521.**

- A. Pope Leo the X was now thoroughly incensed and ordered the emperor (Charles V) to put a ban on Luther. [Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor, was a devout Catholic. He was a strong advocate for Catholicism during his reign in the 16th century. Charles V was a member of the Habsburg dynasty and inherited many titles, including King of Spain and Holy Roman Emperor. He was a strong supporter of Catholicism, and he also recognized the power of the Pope. At the Diet of Worms, Charles V condemned Martin Luther as an outlaw of the empire. However, he also allowed Luther to leave safely, which saved him from execution. Charles V tried to avoid religious conflict when he suspended the Edict of Worms in 1532. He wanted to raise an army from all the German states to fight the Ottomans.]
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- B. Emperor Charles V summoned Luther to the town of Worms and promised him safe conduct.
1. Luther's friends urged Luther not to go but he insisted.
  2. Crowds lined the streets and Luther received tremendous ovations all the way to Worms.
- C. A "Diet" was the semiannual meeting of the estates of the German Empire. This "Diet" which Luther attended was at a town named "Worms," hence the "Diet of Worms."
1. Luther was asked to recant and retract his teaching to which he gave his famous response: "I can and will retract nothing, for it is neither safe nor expedient to act against conscience. Here I stand; I can do nothing else. God help me. Amen."
  2. Luther was allowed to leave unmolested, but Emperor issued an edict condemning him as an outlaw and ordering his arrest.
- D. On his way back to Wittenburg from Worms, Luther was forced by friends to go into hiding at Wartburg where he stayed ten months. While at Wartburg, Luther translated the New Testament into German.

VII. **Martin Luther's return to Wittenburg.**

- A. Because of an outbreak of violence, Luther returned to Wittenburg to restore order.
- B. Luther remained at Wittenburg until 1546 at the age of sixty-three.

VIII. **Martin Luther's great success.**

- A. During his life, he saw all the things he taught, received, and upheld by all of Germany.
- B. The sovereigns of Sweden and Denmark strongly backed Martin Luther.
- C. Martin Luther accomplished more than any other man, bringing about a reformation.