

More than 125 Key Events and People

John Wycliffe  
1320-1384



John Hus  
1369-1415



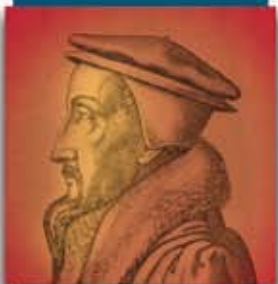
Martin Luther  
1483-1546



Menno Simons  
1496-1561



John Calvin  
1509-1564



# Reformation Time Line

These men endured pain, persecution, loss, death and the rejection of their own church for the sake of change.

- Illustrations of more than 30 events and people
- Origins of Protestant doctrines
- Map showing the spread of the Reformation
- Family tree of Christian denominations
- History of Bible translation into the English language

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# REFORMATION TIME LINE

Five hundred years ago, a monk in Germany made a list of 95 issues that he wanted the theologians of the Roman Catholic Church to discuss. Little did he know that his list, called the Ninety-Five Theses, would spark the Reformation, a movement that would split the church and form a new kind of Christianity: Protestantism.

The story really begins much earlier. Years of power struggles within the Church as well as between religious and civil leaders had weakened the reputation of the clergy. Early sixteenth-century popes sold government and church positions, made their illegitimate children cardinals in the church, authorized murder, and increased their families' fortunes by abusing their power. The Renaissance (1447-1521) brought education, wealth, and revitalization to the common people at the same time that greed, abuse of power, and immorality ran rampant in the Church. All these factors brought desire for reform to a boiling point.

The monk was Martin Luther, and his debate caused the boiling pot of discontent to erupt all over Europe. In Luther's wake, the new shape of Western faith was revealed, leading even later to a new kind of nation.

## The Pre-Reformation Period (1215-1515)

- 1215** • Signing of the Magna Carta, considered the founding document of English (and later American) liberties; English barons force King John to agree to a statement of their rights, including a fair trial decided by a jury
- 1295** • England's first Parliament is called (the parliamentary was the first form of government in which people other than the king could pass laws)
- 1302** • Pope Boniface VIII claims that the pope has supremacy over every human being, in his bull (sealed declaration) *Unam Sanctam* (Latin for "the One Holy," that is, the Church)
- 1312** • 1312-1324 Marsilius of Padua, while in Paris, writes *Defensor Pacis*; he is condemned as heretical
- 1338** • Electors of Holy Roman Empire declare that they can select an emperor without approval from the pope
- 1349** • Death of William of Ockham, English philosopher called "the first Protestant" who argued for the independence of church and state, claiming that the Church had absolute authority in spiritual matters only and denying the right of the pope to interfere in civil affairs
- 1370** • 1370-1371 John Wycliffe, English priest and diplomat, proposes limiting papal taxation and civil powers
- John Ball, outspoken English priest and follower of Wycliffe, preaches equality and freedom of all, "crazy notions" which would form the founding philosophy of two revolutions and a new nation many years later
- 1377** • Pope Gregory XI issues five bulls denouncing Wycliffe; Wycliffe placed under house arrest
- 1382** • Council known as Blackfriars Synod condemns Wycliffe's writings, followed by persecution of Wycliffites at Oxford, England
- 1408** • In England, it becomes illegal to translate or read the Bible in English without permission of a bishop
- 1413** • Jan Hus of Bohemia writes *De Ecclesia*, which supports ideas popularized by Wycliffe
- 1414** • Lollard Rebellion, led by Sir Jon Oldcastle, follower of Wycliffe and friend of the king, suppressed
- 1415** • Council of Constance, Germany, condemns Wycliffe on 267 counts of heresy and demands that John Hus recant; Hus refuses and is burned at the stake
- 1417** • Sir Jon Oldcastle is burned at the stake
- 1428** • At papal command, the remains of Wycliffe are dug up, burned, and scattered on the river
- 1431** • Trial of Joan of Arc
- 1450** • c. 1450 Beginning of the Renaissance

A "bull" is a sealed declaration by a pope. The bull "*Unam Sanctam*" declares

1. There is only one true Church, outside of which there is no salvation; the church has one head, not two.
2. That head is Christ and His representative, the Roman pope.
3. There are two swords (forms of power), the spiritual and the temporal (earthly or civic). Spiritual power is borne by the Church, temporal power is borne for the Church under the direction of the clergy.
4. The spiritual authority (the pope) is above the temporal and has the right to direct and judge all civil authority; whoever resists the highest power ordained by God resists God Himself.
5. All people need be ruled by the pope in order to be saved.

*Defensor Pacis* proposes that:

1. All the Church's power comes from the community and from the emperor.
2. The Church has no temporal head—Peter had no more authority than the other Apostles did.
3. The pope's only power is in calling an ecumenical council whose decisions are higher than his.
4. The Church is subject to the state in everything.
5. The pope has no power except through permission of the emperor; instead, the emperor has power over the pope and the council.
6. All the Church's possessions belong by right to the emperor.

Later called "the morning star of the Reformation,"

John Wycliffe challenges some church doctrines, including transubstantiation. He believes Scripture should be available to the people in their own language. People inspired by Wycliffe (derisively called "Lollards," meaning mumblers), translate the entire Bible into English (1382) from Latin, and call it the Wycliffe Bible; this is the first translation of the Bible into English.

Joan, a French peasant girl during the Hundred Years' War, sees visions and hears voices telling her to save France. She leads a successful military expedition at Orleans. At about age 19, she is taken prisoner, tried for witchcraft, and burned. Twenty-five years later the verdict is reversed.

The popes of the Renaissance (1447-1521) are notable more for their intrigues and quest for power than for their pastoral care or desire for reform.



The Magna Carta



John Wycliffe



John Hus



Joan of Arc



Painting by Raffaello Santi



Johann Gutenberg



The Spanish Inquisition



John Knox



Luther posts his 95 theses



Luther burns the document

- 1456 • Johann Gutenberg prints the Bible (Latin Vulgate), the first book printed in Europe using movable metal type .....
- 1478 • Spanish Inquisition persecutes Jews, Muslims, and heretics
- 1483 • Martin Luther, founder of the Reformation in Germany, is born in Eisleben, Germany
- 1484 • Ulrich Zwingli, founder of the Reformation in Switzerland, is born in Wildhaus in Switzerland
- 1494 • c. 1494 William Tyndale is born in Gloucestershire, England
- 1496 • Menno Simons, future Anabaptist leader, is born in Witmarsum, Friesland, today's Netherlands
- 1497 • 1497-1498 Dominican friar Savonarola preaches reform .....
- 1502 • Erasmus, leader of German humanism, future priest, philosopher, writer, and Greek scholar, writes *Enchiridion* ("The Handbook of the Christian Soldier"), promoting a Christianity based on the Sermon of the Mount
  - Papal bull orders the burning of any books questioning Church's authority
- 1505 • John Knox, the leader of the Scottish Reformation, is born in Haddington, Scotland
- 1506 • William Tyndale enters Magdalen College at Oxford, England; "singularly addicted to the scriptures," he reads the Bible in English to his fellow students
- 1507 • Martin Luther is ordained as priest and celebrates his first Mass
- 1509 • John Calvin—Swiss reformer, greatest of Protestant theologians, and perhaps, after St. Augustine, the most widely followed Western theologian—is born in France
- 1512 • 1512-1517 Fifth Lateran Council is held in Lyons, France, to address a variety of concerns, including church reform
- 1515 • William Tyndale is ordained as priest but refuses to enter monastic orders

The invention of a printing press with movable metal type in Mainz, Germany, makes the Bible accessible to more people who previously could not afford handmade copies, which cost a year's wage.

Savonarola encourages the people of Florence, Italy, to turn from lives of luxury and entertainment and toward serving Christ and following His example. He sells church property and gives the proceeds to the poor. Despite his initial popularity with the common people, he is caught in a political conflict with Pope Alexander VI and is excommunicated. His popularity wanes and later he is executed for heresy.

Later editions of his Greek text form the basis of the textus receptus and are used by Martin Luther, William Tyndale, and the King James Bible (Authorized Version) translators.

Luther challenges the Church to a discussion on the subjects of penance, the pope's authority, and abuses in the selling of indulgences.

Recant: To take back or say one no longer has an opinion or belief, especially applied to matters of heresy.

Indulgences are certificates that free their owners from performing the acts of penance that the church requires to show sorrow for certain sins. Indulgences are not intended to let people "buy forgiveness," but instead are supposed to express people's inner desire to turn from their sins. However, many medieval priests and popes distort the original intent of indulgences.

The Edict of Worms bans the reading or possession of Luther's writings. It condemns Luther as a heretic and an outlaw, permitting anyone to kill Luther without legal consequence. (The edict was not enforced.)

In politics, a Diet is a formal assembly for purposes of debating issues and making decisions. The term comes from the Latin dies, "day." The word diet refers to the fact that these assemblies met on a daily basis.

### The Reformation Period 1516-1563

- 1516 • Erasmus publishes a Greek translation of the New Testament .....
- 1517 • Martin Luther posts his 95 theses on the door of the church in Wittenberg, Germany; the Protestant Reformation begins .....
- 1518 • At a meeting in Heidelberg, Germany, Luther defends his theology; later he appears before Cardinal Cajetan at Augsburg, Germany, but refuses to recant; Frederick the Wise protects Luther from being handed over to Rome .....
- 1519 • Martin Luther questions papal infallibility (belief that the pope is preserved from error in matters of faith and morals) and begins New Testament sermon series, starting new era of preaching
  - Ulrich Zwingli begins New Testament sermons, thus ushering in Swiss reformation
- 1520 • The pope publishes a bull giving Martin Luther 60 days to recant or be excommunicated; Luther burns the document
- 1521 • Martin Luther is excommunicated by the pope; at the Diet of Worms (city in Germany pronounced "vornps") Luther refuses to recant writings; the diet publishes an edict condemning him; Luther begins translating the Bible into German .....
- Pope names King Henry VIII "Defender of the Faith" for attacking Luther's views of the sacraments
- Lutheran books appear in England
- First Protestant communion at Wittenberg, Germany
- 1521-1523 William Tyndale begins teaching and is arraigned on charges of heresy; translates Erasmus's *Enchiridion* into English



William Tyndale



Katherine von Bora



Erasmus



Thomas More



Ulrich Zwingli



King Henry VIII

- 1522** • Luther introduces German-language worship services at Wittenberg
- 1524** • Erasmus publishes *On Freedom of the Will*, his famous attack on Luther's denial of free will
- 1525** • William Tyndale plans to print the New Testament in English but is discovered and escapes with only a few printed sections
  - The Anabaptist movement, predecessor to Brethren and Mennonite churches, teaches believers' baptism only, democratic decision making, and separation of church and state
  - Martin Luther marries former nun Katherine von Bora; writes *Bondage of the Will* (a response to Erasmus)
- 1526** • William Tyndale completes printing of the New Testament in Worms, Germany
  - Cardinal Wolsey, Archbishop of York, attends public burning of "Lutheran" books
  - Reformation reaches Sweden and Denmark where Protestant churches begin to appear
- 1527** • The city of Basel, Switzerland, orders corporeal punishment and confiscation of property for Christians who are baptized as adults and who shelter Anabaptists
  - Martin Luther pens "A Mighty Fortress"; writes against Zwingli's views on the Lord's Supper
  - Protestant university in Marburg, Germany, is founded
  - 1527-1530 English seek to capture Tyndale; he keeps moving from place to place, continuing to translate the Bible
- 1528** • Erasmus publishes his English translations of the works of St. Augustine
  - Thomas Bilney, Cambridge preacher and "Lutheran sympathizer," is dragged from his pulpit and imprisoned
- 1529** • Sir Thomas More begins writing *Dialogue* against William Tyndale and Martin Luther
  - King Henry VIII of England summons the "Reformation Parliament" and begins to cut ties with the Church of Rome
  - At the Diet of Speyer (Germany) Luther's followers are first called Protestants (the term Protestantism becomes associated with Lutheranism, Zwinglianism, and Calvinism)
  - Tyrolean Anabaptists flee to Moravia, region of the Czech Republic
- 1530** • Tyndale's translation of the first five books of the Old Testament into English appears in England
  - Diet of Augsburg, Germany
- 1531** • William Tyndale refuses Henry the VIII's invitation to return to England
  - Ulrich Zwingli urges civil war in Switzerland to force remaining Catholic districts to accept Protestantism; Zwingli is killed in battle of Kappel
- 1532** • English clergy submits to Henry VIII, beginning process of declaring the king, rather than the pope, supreme authority over spiritual matters
  - John Calvin starts Protestant movement in France; publishes his commentary on Seneca's *De Clementia*
- 1533** • Tyndale's translation of Erasmus's *Enchiridion* is printed
  - John Frith, friend of Tyndale, burned at the stake
  - Thomas Cranmer becomes Archbishop of Canterbury, ending debate on clerical celibacy (whether priests can marry) among Anglicans, as Cranmer is married
  - The Church of England declared the officially established Christian church in England
  - John Calvin labeled a heretic by Catholic officials, flees Paris, France
  - Jacob Hutter joins Moravian group who become known as Hutterites
- 1534** • William Tyndale's revised New Testament is printed
  - Luther completes a translation of the Bible into German, 13 years after he began

Luther's work describes the absolute inability of humankind in our fallen state to act morally, a clear opposite to Erasmus' humanistic ideal.

This is the first printing of the New Testament in English and the first English translation of the scriptures from the biblical Greek. The smuggled copies of his New Testaments soon spread throughout England.

The Diet of Speyer declares that the previously unenforced Edict of Worms is now to be enforced. The Protestant princes profess their faith here for the first time in opposition to the edict.

**Protestant Characteristics**

- Acceptance of the Bible as the only source of revealed truth
- Doctrine of justification by faith alone
- Priesthood of all believers

The Diet of Augsburg attempts to calm rising tension between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. Luther, being an outlaw, cannot attend; Philipp Melancthon—Luther's friend and collaborator on German Bible translation—presents the Augsburg Confession, a statement of Lutheran beliefs.

Frith is first arrested for assisting Tyndale in the translation of the New Testament. He is released, arrested again, and tried for heresy. While imprisoned in the Tower of London, Frith writes the first Protestant views on the sacraments.