

**Introduction** If you study the Kings and their reigns in the Old Testament, you will see times where the people followed God closely and times when they did not, 2 Chronicles 28:1-4 c.f. 34:3, 16, 30-31. Sadly, the pattern has continued in the story of the Church, 2 Chron 21:7. The Reformation was a Josiah moment.

### Why study something that happened 500 years ago?

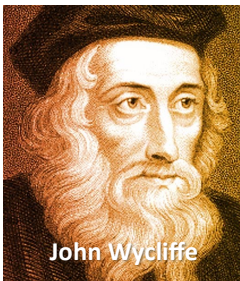
1. It shows that humans constantly drift away from God and need to be brought back.
2. It shows us God will always ensure the truth of his gospel is kept alive as a witness to his grace.
3. It reminds us doctrine matters, when that is wrong, everything is wrong.
4. It reminds us we need our own relationship with God.
5. We can be inspired to see those who went before us.



**The state of Christendom in 1500AD** Things were dire, the church had lost its way and things were corrupt. Although, Church attendance was high, new buildings were being constructed, & the church had wealth. The people believed they were right with God by their rituals, and simply 'going through the motions'. 2 Timothy 3:5 would sum them up. The practice of penance had been commercialised, people could buy indulgences, the 'Get out of Hell/purgatory' card. You could even buy them for dead relatives. Church leaders were more interested in politics and wealth than piety, and many priests were sexually immoral.

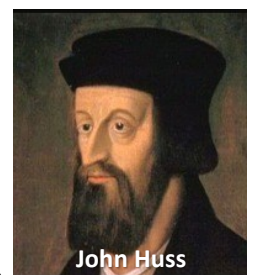
## Questions

How would you describe the state of the Church in the World today?



John Wycliffe

**Before the Reformation** God always leaves a witness to Himself even in dark times, Luke 19:39-40. **John Wycliffe** (1320-1384) challenged the wealth and corruption in the church. He believed the Bible was the final authority not Popes, so he translated it into English. His life inspired **John Huss** (1370-1415). Huss realised the Bible should be our final authority and that Christ is the Head of the Church not the Pope.



John Huss

Before God moves, he often prepares. Before Jesus- John the Baptist opened hearts, while the Roman empire, created the conditions for gospel to spread easily. Before the actual Reformation there was Wycliffe and Hus, and the invention of printing in 1489, that allowed the message to spread.

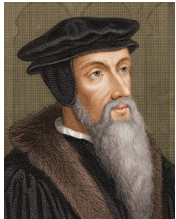
**Martin Luther** (1483-1546) was an intelligent man, he was a lawyer and Priest. However he became obsessed with his own guilt. Until he studied Romans 1:17. He began to realise that many of the beliefs and practices of the Roman Catholic Church were unbiblical. When Tetzel sold indulgences in his area he nailed 95 thesis (objections) to the church door. They were copied and printed, and widely circulated. As time went on he produced more critiques of the church. The Pope excommunicated him, but Luther burnt the Papal bull. His ideas spread, and he was summonsed to appear at a court, called the Diet of



Martin Luther

Worms. He was asked do you recant your writings? He refused, giving his famous 'Here I stand' speech. He was captured for his own protection, at this time he translated the New Testament into German. The movement spread, other groups emerged such as Anabaptists ( who recognised infant baptism was unbiblical). Luther was far from perfect, he could be stubborn, coarse and in later years antisemitic. But, it was his brave stand that sparked a move back to the gospel.

The Reformation in Switzerland became more radical than in Germany, it was led by **Ulrich Zwingli** (1484-1531). He too came to the conclusion the Bible was the sole source of authority in the church. He preached through the NT chapter by chapter. He agreed with Luther on the Bible, Salvation by faith/grace not works, Priests marrying, but disagreed on communion.

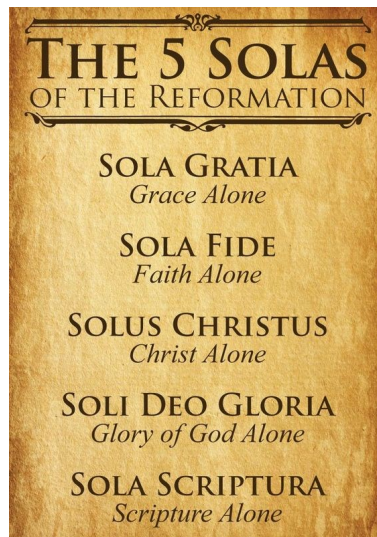


**John Calvin** (1509-1564) Calvin was younger than Luther, and they hardly communicated, but he said that Luther had given back the gospel to the church. By Calvin's time, the Reformation had taken hold in parts of northern Europe, with persecution from some authorities including burnings to death. Calvin was converted, and had to escape France for Basel as this made him an outlaw in France. In Switzerland he wrote 'The Institutes' a book which logically laid out the Biblical faith. His main contribution was his books, which solidified the new beliefs. The movement fragmented, differences developed over issues such as Communion, and baptism. In the 15th century people weren't tolerant of different views, e.g. is a man was executed, under Calvin, for denying the trinity.

**The Five Solars** One legacy of the Reformation, are these vital doctrines which were taught and emphasised. Reformers did not write these in this particular form, but have become a good summary of what Luther, and other Reformers taught.

**Faith Alone** Romans 3:20-22 Heb 11:6  
Faith is all that is required of a believer, no amount of our good works is needed to become righteous before God.

**Glory of God Alone** Revelation 5:13  
God alone is our purpose for living and everything should be done for His glory alone, so no one should glorify themselves or their church.



**Grace Alone** Ephesians 2:8-9  
Our salvation is totally down to the favour and grace of God. We are not responsible for our own salvation.

**Christ Alone** 1 Timothy 2:5-6  
Only Christ stands between us and God, no priests can do that for us.

**Scripture Alone** 2 Timothy 3:16-17  
The scriptures are the sole infallible source of authority in the Church, not Popes, priests or tradition.

## Questions

### What the reformation achieved

1. People found their own personal faith and how to be right with God.
2. It put the Bible into the hands of ordinary people.
3. The Apocrypha (*Hidden*), books written after the OT was complete, were removed from the Bible. They contained teachings that false Catholic teachings were based upon. e.g. Maccabees 12:39-45.
4. Church services became assessable to the ordinary person, conducted in their own language.
5. It made the doctrines of the church, to be based on what the Bible teaches, not councils of the church.
6. It stated leaders had to walk with God, and not be self indulgent.
7. Women gained a bigger role and influence in church life. E.g. Katherine Luther was a big early influence.
8. It encouraged ordinary people to study and learn what the Bible teaches for themselves.
9. The necessity to preach the gospel to those who don't know God became clear.
10. There were many unforeseen consequences, such as literacy among lay people, even the rise of the nation states and some have said the rise of capitalism and democracy are also consequences.



**Final thought** - Today, God's Word through the Spirit, should still be Reforming us every day.

## Questions

Questions & Comments

## Next time - Sacrifice