

The Reformation – Part One

“The men of the Renaissance wrestled with the problem of what could give unity to life and specifically what universal could give meaning to life and to morals...” Page 79

The men of the reformation struggled with the same questions, however, they started from a different place and ended up with completely opposite answers and results.

John Wycliff – English translation of the bible; priesthood of all believers (1 Peter 2:9 ff)

Huss – Bohemia (Czechoslovakia) – returned to the bible as the supreme and final authority and rejected salvation through one’s individual merit or works. He was betrayed and burned at the stake.

Martin Luther – 95 Thesis – October 31, 1517 – challenged the unbiblical teachings of the Catholic Church – sentenced to death, protected by German nobles.

- Salvation by works – No
- Indulgences to pay for sin – No
- Infallibility of the Pope – No
- Worship of Mary – No
- Celibacy of the clergy – No
- Purgatory – No
- Communion in one kind – No
- Worship in Latin only - No

Zwingli – Switzerland – Break with Rome 1523

Henry the VIII – England – Break with Rome 1534

- The 39 Articles
 - Article VI – Sufficiency of Scripture for Salvation
 - Article XII – Good Works
 - Article XX – Authority of the Church
 - Article XXII - Purgatory

Calvin – The Institutes, 1536

Renaissance – Started with the humanistic ideal (man) as being able to give meaning and answers to life from himself. He was autonomous and the center of all things. This crept into the church through Aquinas and his flawed understanding of the “fall”. For him the mind (intellect) was not fallen only “will”. Hence, man and think out the answers to all great questions beginning from himself.

- The church was equal in authority to scripture (see Articles of Religion above)
- Humanity could save themselves through works
- Pagan thought and Christianity were synthesized and co-mingled

The Reformers – took seriously the Bible’s own claim that man needs the answers given by God in the Bible to have adequate answers, not only for how to be in relationship with God, but also for how to know the present meaning of life and how to have final answers in distinguishing between right and wrong. That is, man needs not only a God who exists, but a God who has spoken in a way that can be understood.

- The church was under scripture, not equal to scripture
- Salvation was by grace alone, faith alone and scripture alone (*solo scriptura*)
- Pagan thought (idols, images) was intentionally removed and rejected as part of the gospel
- The Bible gives unity to the universal (moral absolutes) and the individual things
- The Bible tells us true things about God because God has revealed himself
- God has revealed Himself
- The Bible speaks to us concerning meaning, values, and morals.

Note John 14:6-9; John 10:30,38; John 12:44-49

- God has given us in scripture and accurate description of our problem (sin) and the only solution which is the cross of Christ.
- Human dignity is rooted in the fact that we are made in God’s image.
- All vocations in life have dignity as well and all of us are equal before God, not based on status or wealth.
- The fall corrupted us on every level – spiritually we are dead, intellectually we are without revelation knowledge, emotionally we are governed by the flesh.
- All have sinned – even the king and queen need the same salvation in Christ
- Hence, we are “abnormal” – we need to be “born again” (John 3 and Nicodemus)
- Removal of the “rood screen” – no longer separated from God but welcomed into His presence.
- Musical resurgence – Bach, Handel, Luther, John and Charles Wesley
- Rembrandt – self-portrait – Raising of Christ