

1 **The Reformation Begins**

2 **The pressure of reform that had built throughout the Middle Ages exploded during the 1500s in the Protestant Reformation.**

- According to Ernst Troeltsch, four questions were at the center of the Reformation.
 - How is a person saved?
 - Where does religious authority lie?
 - What is the church?
 - What is the essence of Christian living?
- A *Protestant* may be defined as someone who answers these questions differently than the Roman Catholic Church does.

3 **The Reformation began in 1517 through the actions of a German monk named Martin Luther.**

- Luther was born in 1483.
- He became a monk in fulfillment of a vow he made during a frightening thunderstorm.
- Burdened by overwhelming feelings of guilt for his sins, Luther sought freedom through monastic asceticism.
 - “I kept the rule so strictly that I may say that ever a monk got into heaven by sheer monkey, it was I.”
 - When someone once advised Luther to love God, Luther shouted back, “I do not love God! I hate Him!”

4

- Luther experienced a revelation in 1515 while studying Romans 1:17, “The just shall live by faith.”
 - He realized that freedom from guilt was found through faith in Christ—justification by faith alone.
 - He saw that this was contrary to the church’s teachings.
- Luther’s views brought him into open conflict with the church on October 31, 1517.
- On that date, Luther nailed his 95 theses to the church door in Wittenberg, Germany, where he was a university teacher.

5 **The Controversy Over Indulgences**

- Luther was deeply disturbed by a monk named Tetzel, who was traveling through Germany selling indulgences; the 95 theses were items for debate on this subject.
 - The church claimed that Jesus’ death for us on the cross and the virtues of the saints had built up a “treasury of merits”—a sort of heavenly bank balance.
 - By doing a good work, someone could supposedly draw on this grace to obtain forgiveness for sin.
 - The buyer of an indulgence could supposedly thereby reduce his time spent in purgatory, or free an already dead loved one from purgatory. “As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs.”

6

- As Luther argued against indulgences, he began promoting the concept of *sola Scriptura*—Scripture alone. He said that the Bible, not the church or any of its officials, has the place of highest authority.
- In 1520, Luther was formally declared a heretic by the pope.