

Journal - Day 19 - 09/10/2003



<http://www.dfamily.com/philosophy/teach/hswtl/journal.html>

Audio:

- None

Journals:

We watched chapter 1 and 2 of Martin Luther. Unlike the DVD player on my laptop, the DVD player didn't show the current chapter. I did have an outline which was very close to the script, but there was still a little fuzziness on when to stop.

I had a lot of supplemental material to add to the book. I read this out loud.

The students were responsive and attentive. I fear there was too much reading and the material was too dry. In short, the students were attentive not because I had such good material today, but because in the past we've had so many very interesting, interactive sessions. They were with me on TRUST.

Next week I need to deliver by reviewing in advance how I am going to present this material and coming up with some questions to ask in advance. If I wait for the youths' questions, I'll be disappointed.

We are getting some adult participation. In retrospect, I need to talk to the adults about holding back on their input until the students have had opportunity to answer. Just like when I give my opinion, the students shut down because the "teacher said, therefore this is the only answer", when a parent speaks up, opinions are also snuffed out.

Questions asked:

1. What was the belt or rope thing on the wall?
2. Why was Martin Luther so upset?
3. What was the essential nature of the questions which plagued Martin, to the point of attempted suicide?

Discussions:

We are reviewing a movie about Martin Luther. We gave it a little introduction, and then started by watching the first 2 chapters.

- Chapter 1 - Opening Credits

<http://www.luther.de/en/>

Legends about Luther

Legends about Luther

<http://www.luther.de/en/legenden.html>

Such a well-known and discussed personality as the Reformer Dr. Martin Luther provides an ideal basis for the imagination to run wild and create stories which tend to distort reality. Anecdotes and legends about Luther are the result.

On top of that, Luther lived in a time during which the belief in witches, the devil, supernatural happenings and the end of the world was wide spread among the common people.

The truth of most of these legends is very minimal, but the entertainment value is high.

- Chapter I
- **Chapter 2 - Attempting to Make Peace**

Legends about Luther: Lightening

Legends about Luther: Lightening

<http://www.luther.de/en/blitz.html>

"St. Anne Help me! I will become a monk."

The event which radically changed the course of Luther's life took place near Stotterheim on July 2, 1505. The happy go lucky law student was altered into a humble monk searching for God's grace.

Luther had recently completed a Master's degree and started his law studies at the University of Erfurt. He was on his way back to Erfurt after having visited his parents when he was caught in a terrible thunder storm a few hours outside of Erfurt. Lightening struck near him and he was thrown to the ground by the air pressure it created. At this moment he called to Saint Anne: "I will become a monk!"

Luther commented on this event later. It is assumed that he had played with the idea of becoming a monk even before the storm hit.

To his fathers disgust and anger, Luther honored his solemn promise; he had one last party with university friends on July 16 and the next day he entered the Black Monestary in Erfurt to become a monk.

The world in 1500

The world in 1500

<http://www.luther.de/en/welt1.html>

Martin Luther was born during a time of great tension and conflict, now recognized as the transitional period between the Middle Ages and the Modern Ages. During this old habits were dying hard while innovations continually pushed into daily life.

This time of upheaval is characterized by new discoveries and the emergence of a new view of the world.

In order to understand the Protestant Reformation and its leaders, Luther and Melancthon, you must first know about the influence of humanism.

The reformation would never have become such an important movement if it

weren't for the political climate of the time

Johann Gutenberg and Printing

Johann Gutenberg and Printing

<http://www.luther.de/en/welt11.html>

Luther's 95 Theses and his other works were distributed throughout Germany very quickly. This was the first time printing was used to spread reformatory or revolutionary ideas that were of interest to all classes of society.

Previously, the printing press had only been used for academic texts, for example those dealing with debates or theses; Luther's 95 Theses were actually conceived of in this light.

In 1450, Johannes Gensfleisch the Younger, also called Gutenberg, revolutionized printing. Gutenberg did not invent the printing press, as is often incorrectly assumed; he invented a new printing process.

With this new printing process it was possible to print works quickly and cost efficiently using individual metal letters (*single, small metal letters could be placed in rows*). These little block letters, which were soon being cast as a series, were reusable.

Further Important Inventions and Discoveries of this Era

- Martin Behaim designed the first globe in 1492.
- Copernicus (1473-1543) developed the heliocentric view of the universe, which was later expanded by Giordano Bruno (1548-1600, *who was burned as a heretic*)
- Since the 14th century, powder has been used in ammunition.
- Peter Henlein invented the pocket watch in 1500.
- Leonardo da Vinci invented, among other things, a pump and a flying machine.
- Acclaimed sea voyages by European sailors made possible by the new inventions in seafaring and navigation also took place during this time.
 - in 1492, Columbus' arrival in the Americas
 - in 1498, Vasco da Gama found a sea route to India and
 - in 1519-21, Ferdinand de Magellan was the first to sail around the world

Piety and the End of the World

Piety and the End of the World

<http://www.luther.de/en/welt12.html>

The upheavals and changes related to the discoveries and inventions which occurred during Luther's lifetime, filled the common folk with incredible fear and anxiety. This period represents the transition between the Middle Ages and the Modern Ages.

Fraternities, brotherhoods and traveling pastors who predicted the end of the world (*for example: Pastor Michael Stifel*) were very popular among the peasant folk.

A larger cult of relic worshippers and a growing number of pilgrimages were also characteristic of the time.

At the same time, other problems plagued society. The large population growth of the 15th century as well as the 'escape' of many from the countryside to the cities ensured a shortage of food and employment. Threats of war and recurring epidemics also contributed to the fears and anxieties.

Luther was born into a time characterized by radical changes and great tension.

The old picture of the world in 1450

- (*geocentric view of the world*)
- the earth is a disk
- the sun, stars and moon are each on wheels
- the earth is the middle point among all stars
- the earth is enclosed within a bell shape

Copernicus' View of the World

- (*heliocentric view of the world*)
 - the earth is a ball
 - the earth is neither surrounded by a bell shape, nor is it the middle of the universe
 - the sun is a fixed star as well as the life-giving center of the universe
 - stars, planets and moons rotate on different tracks around the sun
-
- Land of Central Europe 1505
 - About a decade after Columbus had discovered the new world.
 - Allegiance to both Emperor and Pope.
 - Rich States and Free Cities also in the power structure.
 - Cities, States, Royalty, and armies pledged to support both the Empire and the Church.
 - Pious believe Christ setup the authority over man this way.
 - 0:00:29
 - Emperor was ruler of man's life on earth and Church as intercessory for Man's destiny in the world to come.
 - Church had forgotten the mercies of God.
 - Emphasized God's judgments.
 - Even Jesus Christ was portrayed as relentless avenger.
 - Man's sin were so prevalent that man lived in mortal danger of judgment and hell.

- The art during this time reflected the judgement and damnation for all the masses.
- 0:01:23
 - Superstition and fear.'
 - Christianity was mixed with elements of paganism.
 - Men believed the world was filled with demons and evil spirits.
- 0:01: 42
 - For deliverance from eternal damnation, the church demanded absolute and unquestioned obedience from the people.
- 0:02:08
 - Midsummers day, the story begins.
 - Martin Luther is a young law student.
 - Martin is leaving the law study (*after 4 years*)
 - They claim he is the best law student there.
 - He gives away everything he has, books, extra clothes, and his guitar.
 - Bye to friend Georg Spalatin.
 - Looking for something more.
- 0:04:23
 - Blessed by Bishop while laid out like a cross?
 - Prostrate, face down, complete submission of oneself.
 - Die to self, world, family, friends, mortify body, be obedient to superiors.
 - Looking to make peace with God by his submission to the priesthood.

Assignments:

- None.

Next Week:

Chapter 3, 4 of Martin Luther DVD.

Reaction to Question #1 - What was the belt or rope thing on the wall?



Around the friar's waist was tied a rope known as a Cincture. The Cincture had three knots tied in it to remind the friar of his vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Hanging from the Cincture was a rosary and cross so he could pray and reflect upon the Mysteries of Christ's Life. He also had a pouch to carry a few personal things, such as a prayer book or journal; a large brimmed hat and a walking staff. A friar did not carry or handle money nor did he ride a horse when traveling. Friars traveled most of the time by foot, using a horse or donkey only for long trips or those journeys with time constrictions.

Reaction to Question #2 - Why was Martin Luther so upset?

Martin Luther finally admitted to the victor what his problem was. Martin Luther, a newly ordained priest, did not love God.

How could Martin Luther, a priest in a monastery who has dedicated his life to God, through works, be saved if he did not love God?

In the environment which existed, works, and works only is how you came to God and were saved. God judged you harshly. Once forgiven, there still was a consequence, or punishment which indulgences could counter.

In this environment, Martin could not come up with a suitable answer.

Reaction to Question #3 - What was the essential nature of the questions which plagued Martin, to the point of attempted suicide?

Essentially, Martin's questions were philosophical questions. Their answer was sought through theological avenues, but this did not mean they were "essentially" theological.

- What is the nature of God?
- Who am I?
- What is the essence of being a human being?
- Can I have a relationship with God?
- What is the meaning of life?
- What is true?

These are the same "essential" questions asked by Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, Thomas Aquinas, Immanuel Kant, and just about every other philosopher through history. These are philosophical questions.

Given the boundaries of the philosophy which Martin Luther lived with, the answers were not all answerable. The Reformation is nothing short of a change in the philosophy of that day which could better answer these and other questions.



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