



# Martin Luther: A Monk in Search of Salvation

Lesson Two

## A Story that Shines the Light on the Five Solas

The story of Martin Luther highlights the significance of the five solas. The story does not give the solas their significance but it does put them in a historical context and shows how they bridge the gap between biblical learning and radical living.

### A Monk with a Mallet Unknowingly Unleashes the Reformation

**The Definition:** A pivotal movement (1517–1545) that God used to bring His people **BACK** to the Bible in order to **SHINE** the Light of the Gospel in the Dark Ages.

1) **Protestant Reformers** Roman Catholics that protested by seeking to reform the Roman Catholic Church but ended up creating their own “state church.”

**Lutherans** – Followers of Luther that spread from Germany.

**Reformed / Presbyterians** – Followers of Calvin, Zwingli, and others that spread from Switzerland, France, Scotland, etc.

**Anglicans** – Political “reform” by the King Henry VIII in England. **Episcopalians** are Anglicans that settled in America.

2) **RADICAL Reformers** Reformers that were so radical they actually practiced *believer’s’ baptism* and planted *free churches* of *only professing believers* just like in the NT.

**Anabaptists** – (1500’s) Reformers and independents who often exalted the leading of God’s Spirit over God’s Word.

**Baptists** – (1600’s) Reformers and independents who were grounded in Reformation theology of the 5 Solas and returned to the NT form of water baptism and free-churches that were self-governing.

**The Question:** “What must I **DO** to be saved and who has the **AUTHORITY** to tell me?”

**The Motivation:** A monk by the name of Martin Luther (1483-1546) to whom God graciously revealed **HIS ANSWER** to that question.

## A Monk in Search of Salvation at the End of the Dark Ages ~ 1483-1517

### A Successful Law Student Encounters Death: “Where will I go when I die?”

- Born on November 10, 1483 to peasant parents in the little town of Eisleben, Germany.
- Raised in a religious home that was both strict and superstitious—typical of the Middle Ages.
- Luther studied law in obedience to his father’s wishes and earned both his bachelor’s and master’s degrees in the shortest time possible.
- Luther almost died at the **age of 19** and **never saw a Bible until he was 20 years old!**

### A Guilt-ridden Monk Searches for Salvation: “What must I do to be saved?”

#### What Must I Do to Be Saved?

1) Become a **MONK**? 1505

- Nearly struck dead by lightning during a thunderstorm and promises St. Anne he will become a monk if she saves him from death. Two weeks later he keeps his promise and enters the Augustinian Monastery in Erfurt.

2) Become a **PRIEST** and celebrate Mass? 1507

- Ordained as a priest and celebrates his first Mass, but became so terrified of the presence of Christ in the bread and the wine that he nearly drops them and tries to run from the altar.

“If ever a monk got to heaven by his monkery, it was I.” - Martin Luther

“Though I lived as a monk without reproach, I felt that I was a sinner before God with an extremely disturbed conscience.” ~ Martin Luther

3) Do more **PENANCE**? 1508

- Leaves Erfurt to study theology at the new University of Wittenberg and earns a Bachelor of Arts in Bible, but forgiveness of sin and a clear conscience were uppermost in his mind at this time.

*"If one were to confess his sins in a timely manner, he would have to carry a confessor in his pocket!"*  
- Martin Luther

*"Yet my conscience would never give me assurance, but I was always doubting and said, 'You did not perform that correctly. You were not contrite enough. Your left that out of your confession.'" ~ Martin Luther*

*"I was drunk, nay submerged in the doctrines of the pope that I could have happily killed (or cooperated with anyone who killed) whoever took but a syllable of obedience away from him." ~ Martin Luther*

4) Travel to Rome and worship **MORE** relics? 1510-11

- Sent to Rome on business for his monastic order, he becomes an eyewitness to the hypocrisy and corruption of the Roman Catholic Church and its clergy.

5) Become a **BIBLE SCHOLAR**? 1511-12

- Returns to Wittenberg and earns his Doctor of Theology to become a professor of Bible.

In Luther's Heart Three Convictions Began to Grow that Laid a Foundation for "Sola Scriptura"

**SURRENDER** to the Bible as the ultimate standard for truth.

**STUDY** the Bible in the original languages in order to know what it says.

**START** teaching in the language of the common man to spread the truth.



6) Faith alone in Christ alone for salvation is the **ONLY** biblical answer! 1513-1517

- Teaches Psalms (1513-15), Romans (1515-1517), Galatians, and Hebrews (1517-1519).
- But **Romans 1:17** is the verse in the Bible that led to Luther's conversion! (1517 or as late as 1519)

**16** For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. **17** For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "But the righteous man shall live by faith."  
**Romans 1:16-17**

- From that time on Luther begins to see, savor, study, and share the five "**SOLAS**" of Reformation theology.



**Sola Scriptura** - Scripture alone *instead of...*Scripture **plus** the Traditions of Men and the church.

**Sola Fide** - Faith alone *instead of...*Faith **plus** My Own Effort and Good Works.

**Solus Christus**- Christ alone *instead of...*Christ **plus** Anyone or Anything Else.

**Sola Gratia** - Grace alone *instead of...*Grace **plus** My Own Goodness and Ability before God.

**Soli Deo Gloria** -Glory to God alone *instead of...*God's Glory **plus** My Own Boasting.

### How Does God Bring Light to People in Dark Places?

*He uses those who are truly born again and committed to sharing God's Word with all people!*

**The most dangerous threat in all of history is a common man with a common Bible committed to an uncommon cause—the Great Commission!**

*"What I began as a Doctor, I must truly confess to the end of my life. I cannot keep silent or cease to teach." ~ Martin Luther*

