

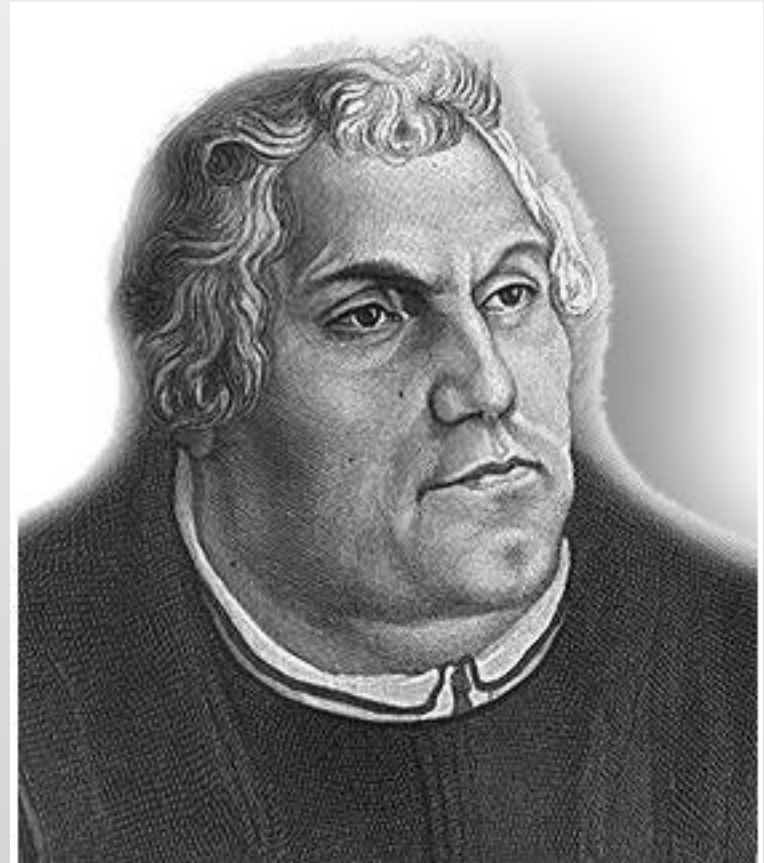
Martin Luther

The Reformation

Martin Luther



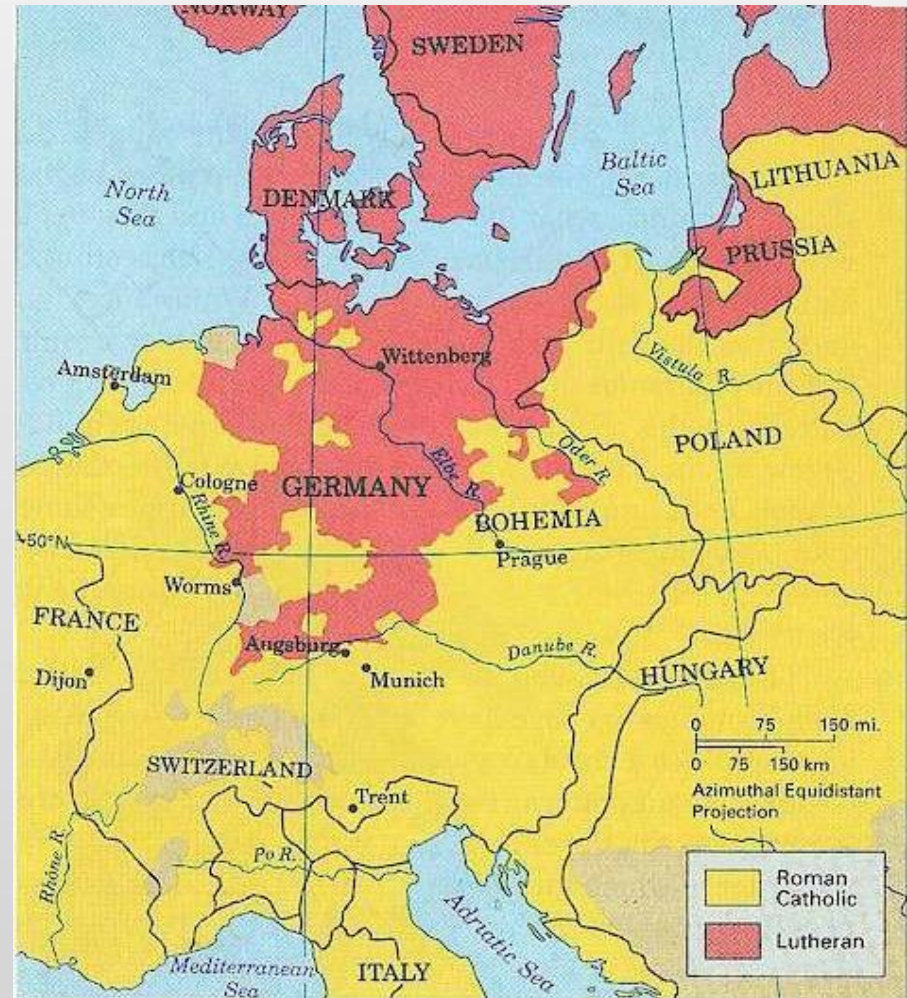
Young Martin Luther



Old Martin Luther

16th Century Europe: The Reformation

- At the beginning of the 16th century, Europe was uniformly Catholic.
- By the middle of the 16th century, large sections of Europe were Protestant.
- The shift was part of the Reformation, spurred by the writings of Martin Luther's 95 *Theses*, drafted in 1517.



Europe in 1560

The Selling of Indulgences

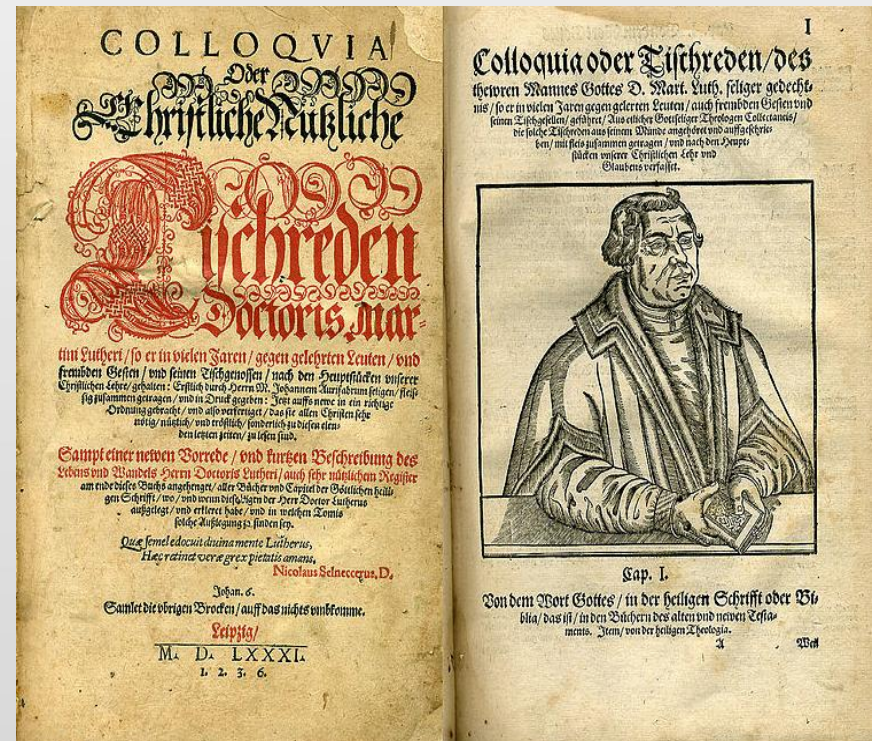
- Prior to 1517, the Catholic Church had been “selling indulgences.”
- Indulgences allowed people to “buy their way into heaven.” Given the right amount of money, the Church would forgive a person’s sins.



Jorge Breu, 1530 "A Question to a Mintmaker"
Depiction of Selling Indulgences

Martin Luther

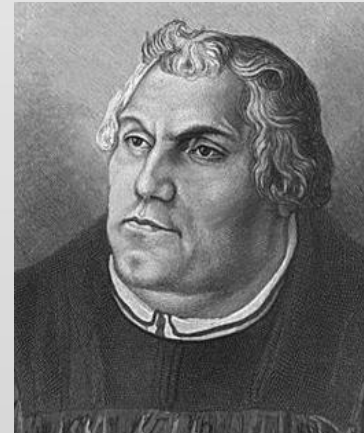
- Martin Luther, a Catholic monk, was troubled by the practice of indulgences and wrote a letter to the Archbishop of Mainz to explain his position.
- The Pope considered Luther's position to be heretical and excommunicated Luther from the Catholic Church.
- Luther gained support from a group of German Princes who protected Luther and helped him spread his ideas.



Collection of Martin Luther's Writings, 1581

Martin Luther

- Luther gave different accounts of his break with the Catholic Church during his life.
- Today, we are going to explore two documents attributed to Luther that illustrate different motivations for separating from the Catholic Church.



Central Historical Question

Why did Martin Luther challenge the Catholic Church?