

After Darkness-Light, A Call for Reformation. John 1:4-5: 2 Cor. 4:3-6

John 1:4–5 (NKJV)

⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

⁵ And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

2 Corinthians 4:3–6 (NKJV)

³ But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴ whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. ⁵ For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Introduction:

Four Hundred and sixty six years ago in Geneva Switzerland, John Calvin was preaching twice on

Sundays, and twice every day on alternate weeks. For 25 years, he gave himself over to the study and exposition of the Word of God.

189 sermons in Acts

65 on the harmony of the gospels

174 in Ezekiel

159 in Job

200 in Deuteronomy

342 on Isaiah

123 on Genesis

a short set on Judges

107 on 1 Samuel

87 in 2 Samuel and a set on 1 Kings

between 1559 and 1564. Weekdays also saw series on Jeremiah and Lamentations , on the minor prophets and Daniel.

He was born in 1509 into time of extreme poverty that was harsh and brutal. Immorality was rampant and in some cases lawful, Medical needs were primitive at best and disease flourished. There was no running water, no plumbing, and in many ways no hope.

It was a dark time.

But through the preaching of Martin Luther and the world of many of the precursors to the Reformation

like John Wycliff and others, the Glorious Gospel of Grace alone was being reclaimed out of the darkness.

It is in this context John Calvin came up the phrase, that really became the motto of the Reformation

Post Tenebras Lux (after darkness, light)

After 1000 years of darkness, the Light was bursting forth thru the preaching and exposition of the Word.

In order for us to understand the brilliance of the light and the significance of the event of the Reformation you need to understand just how dark it was.

When many think of the Dark Ages 500AD -1500AD. Most think of the Fall of Rome and its devastating effects for centuries on the Economic, Cultural, Literary advancements
But the “the Middle Ages” also describes a very long period of history that saw a number of major transformations, as well as the invention of such things as “the mechanical clock, eyeglasses, effective gunpowder weapons, and the printing press.” *That said*, there are still many aspects of the period that would make a contemporary person cringe, It was dark in many ways and in many places very dark...

Torture was used in the medieval period as a way to extract confessions and punish criminals (sometimes prior to execution). People in this period were quite, er, *creative* about torture, coming up with relatively simple ways to cause pain, like the thumbscrew (which worked by slowly crushing victims' thumbs and toes), as well as more complicated ones, like the choke pear (pictured above), which was inserted into victims' orifices and expanded. I'll leave you to imagine the rest.

Extreme executions

The ingenuity that people brought toward torture in the medieval period was also extended to execution methods. While some criminals and traitors were killed in relatively quick, painless ways (with machines that resemble the guillotine, for example), others were subject to methods designed to create as much pain as possible and prolong the dying process. Hanging, drawing, and quartering, for instance, was a punishment reserved for those who had committed high treason. In this process, the victim was dragged by horse to the site of execution; he would then be hanged nearly (but not quite) to death, and then disemboweled while still alive. The victim would then be cut or pulled into four pieces, or “quartered.”

The Black Death,

one of the most destructive pandemics in human history, came to Europe in the mid-1340s. It is thought that the disease – a bacterial infection often referred to as the “bubonic plague” – came to Europe via merchant ships travelling from Asia. The disease was carried by fleas who rode on the rats that commonly infested ships.

The stomachs of the fleas were infected with bacteria known as *Y. Pestis*. The bacteria would block the "throat" of an infected flea so that no blood could reach its stomach, and it grew ravenous since it was starving to death. It would attempt to suck up blood from its victim, only to disgorge it back into its prey's bloodstreams. The blood it injected back, however, was now mixed with *Y. Pestis*. Infected fleas infected rats in this fashion, and the other fleas infesting those rats were soon infected by their host's blood. They then spread the disease to other rats, from which other fleas were infected, and so on. As their rodent hosts died out, the fleas migrated to the bodies of humans and infected them in the same fashion as they had the rats, and so the plague spread

The disease appeared in three forms:

bubonic [infection of the lymph system -- 60% fatal]
pneumonic [respiratory infection -- about 100% fatal], and

septicaemic [infection of the blood and probably 100% fatal]

The plague lasted in each area only about a year, but a third of the population (20 million) would die during that period. People tried to protect themselves by carrying little bags filled with crushed herbs and flowers over their noses, but to little effect. Those individuals infected with bubonic would experience great swellings ("bubos" in the Latin of the times) of their lymph glands and take to their beds. Those with septicaemic would die quickly, before any obvious symptoms had appeared. Those with respiratory also died quickly, but not before developing evident symptoms: a sudden fever that turned the face a dark rose color, a sudden attack of sneezing, followed by coughing, coughing up blood, and death.

People of the time had no idea what caused the disease or how it was transmitted; many saw it as proof of God's disapproval for the sins of man. Thousands of Jews were murdered in this period in an effort to rid towns and cities of heretics, and some Christians took to extreme acts of piety, like self-flagellation, to cleanse their souls and avoid the disease. http://www.vlib.us/medieval/lectures/black_death.html

Some upper-class men joined processions of flagellants that traveled from town to town and engaged in public displays of penance and punishment: They would beat themselves and one another with heavy leather straps studded with sharp pieces of metal while the townspeople looked on. For 33 1/2 days, the flagellants repeated this ritual three times a day. Then they would move on to the next town and begin the process over again. <https://www.history.com/topics/middle-ages/black-death>

This leads us to the most important darkness of the dark ages. The absence of Gospel light. Obscured by the religious practices of the Roman Catholic Church and the intentional desire to keep the people ignorant of the word of God, everything was conducted in Latin. That was the language of the scholar and the priest. The common person did not have that kind of education, and was illiterate when it came to the ability to read the Latin. So what little the people could gather was from the pictures of the Stainglass windows, and the statues in the cathedrals.

The practices of the doctrine installed in the Roman Catholic Church, kept the people in

perpetual doubt of their salvation. They never knew whether or not they had ever gained enough merit to enter into heaven. And coming out of the darkness of the black plague over a century and a half ago death was on every corner, and in every house, the sale of indulgences increased exponentially. But even with this, hope of eternal life within a sea of darkness and despair, was hard to believe. People lived in a constant fear in terror of the God that they could never appease. This was one of the very reason why Martin Luther would say before his conversion that he hated this God, even has a priest.

Advance with me now 500 years into the Present and it is very dark again... We are in great need again for light. The evil of this age is being propelled at an unbelievable rate. We are sliding into utter and complete darkness at break neck speed, that is greased with the denial of God and His Word.

For instance with Abortion,

We make the Black plague and the dark ages look like a cake walk.

We torture, dismember and disembowel millions of children every year. As of January, in America alone there have been

63,459,781 Babies Have Been Killed in Abortions Since Roe v. Wade in 1973

That is 3 times the deaths of the black plague in Europe. And this is not the result of an unknown, uncontrollable disease due to the ignorance of a people. This is intentional, surgical, torture of innocent life of a helpless child.

Corruption

Our country government, along with the rest of the world, is totally corrupt, filled with immorality, lies and greed. You literally can't believe anything that is said by most of the leadership of this country. As, one pastor said, if the government told the truth it would immediately collapse.

Immorality.

Right is wrong and wrong is right. $2+2=5$ and Fox news takes authoritative Commentary from a man who thinks he's a woman and dresses the part. We have drag queens going to public libraries to have story time with children, and hospitals that believe that gender reassignment surgery is normal. We are

the Corinthian Culture of Paul's day with the saturation of digital Porn. The literal fleshing out of the reprobate mind of Romans 1 is on full display before our very eyes. The insanity of this culture is astounding.

But honestly, a culture of a country that has forsaken God will be just like we are and worse. John MacArthur recently said, that we are living in a Pre Christian culture, like the Paganism of Molech or Baal. We are so thoroughly pagan, it is as if Christianity has never been here.

Mounting Hostility and hatred of Christians

Just yesterday, it was reported,

Leftist protesters were spotted outside a speaking event by a conservative commentator surrounding and shouting down a man reading [Bible passages](#) before they snatched the Bible, ripped it up, and one protester ate the page [https://](https://www.foxnews.com/us/left-wing-activists-harass-conservative-reading-bible-steal-book-and-rip-up-protester-eats-pages)

www.foxnews.com/us/left-wing-activists-harass-conservative-reading-bible-steal-book-and-rip-up-protester-eats-pages

The Church.

The visible church, in America is a mess. Doctrinally deficient with no discernment. Acting like the world and worshiping in such a way to attract the world.

Accommodating to the culture in every way. Daily we are witness to departures from the faith both of churches and individuals. The great truths of the Reformation are a distant flicker only recognizable by the ones who are in churches that teach them. The vast majority of the church could not explain justification by faith alone and don't believe in Christ alone.

According to the Ligoniers 2022 State of Theology survey

The majority of evangelicals believe that

God learns new things and is not immutable

Man is born innocent and not affected by original sin.

God accepts the worship of all religions

Nearly half the population of evangelical believe

Jesus was a great teacher but not God

37% Believe gender Identity is a matter of choice.

28 % believe Homosexuality is OK

The 2022 State of Theology survey reveals that Americans increasingly reject the divine origin and complete accuracy of the Bible. With no enduring

plumb line of absolute truth to conform to, U.S. adults are also increasingly holding to unbiblical worldviews related to human sexuality. In the evangelical sphere, doctrines including the deity and exclusivity of Jesus Christ, as well as the inspiration and authority of the Bible, are increasingly being rejected. While positive trends are present, including evangelicals' views on abortion and sex outside of marriage, an inconsistent biblical ethic is also evident, with more evangelicals embracing a secular worldview in the areas of homosexuality and gender identity. <https://thestateoftheology.com>

There is only one way out of this..... only one.....A New Reformation. And in order for the church to see an other Reformation of the Caliber of Luthers and Calvins time we are are going to need to see an unwavering and unambiguous commitment to the Solas of the Reformation

Sola Scriptura

Solas Gratia

Sola Fide

Sola Christus

Sola deo Gloria

Lesson

1. The Problem of Darkness- Oh how Dark the Darkness is.

When people often think of the reformation, what comes to the mind, most of the time is the doctrine of justification by faith alone. And the great battle with the Roman Catholic Church on the doctrine of justification was that the Roman Catholic Church would teach that justification comes through faith plus works in the church and merit and partaking of the sacraments. So it was not justification by faith alone, but justification by faith plus works. And the reformation was for the reclaiming of this vital doctrine of salvation.

“Some historians have seen the key to Reformation, and to Protestant theology in general, as being justification by faith. This was indeed spoken of by the Reformers in glowing terms, most famously when Luther himself declared that if the article of justification stands, the church stands but that if it falls, the church falls, while John Calvin called justification ‘the main hinge on which religion turns’.”

<https://docslib.org/doc/845742/the-manifesto-of-the-reformation-luther-vs-erasmus-on-free-will>

But it might come as a surprise to you that Martin Luther did not consider sola Fide, or justification by faith alone to be the primary and most important doctrine affirmed in the Reformation. His view was, and I agree with him, was that grace alone was the foundational doctrine out of which all the other doctrines came. That there never would be faith alone or Christ alone, or the glory of God alone, unless there was first grace alone.

What Martin Luther meant by grace alone was much more than just that you were saved apart from any human works or merit. And that it is undeserved as a salvation and unearned, and is a gift. All of that is true, but what he meant by grace alone in salvation, is that all of salvation including our own response to the offer of the gospel is of the unmerited favor of God and is not and could not be a human work. This is what led him to write what he consider to be his most important work of all the 50+ books that he wrote, and that is the “Bondage of the Will”. He believe that the bondage of the will as opposed to the freedom of the will was the crux of the issue. To Luther, this was the heart of the issue. This was the foundational doctrine that determine whether not you fully understood grace alone or not.

What exactly. does God do in salvation and what is it that you do in salvation.

Luther saw the Pelagianism of Augustine's day as heresy, and he also saw the semi Pelagianism of his day as an assault on the doctrine of grace alone.

This came to the forefront in the epic and most amazing debate between the Catholic humanist scholar Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam.

Erasmus had published his work on the Freedom of the will in response to the teachings of Martin Luther. Luther had not written his book on the Bondage of the Will and wouldn't have if it wasn't for his wife encouraging him to do it.

“B. B. Warfield wrote The Bondage of the Will is ‘the embodiment of Luther’s reformation conceptions, the nearest to a systematic statement of them he ever made. It is the first exposition of the fundamental ideas of the Reformation in a comprehensive presentation; it is therefore in a true sense the manifesto of the Reformation’.”

<https://docslib.org/doc/845742/the-manifesto-of-the-reformation-luther-vs-erasmus-on-free-will>

Regarding the escalation of the debate between Luther and Erasmus,

It is said that, “despite their common stance against such things as relics, pilgrimages, indulgences, fasting, monastic vows, and the invocation of saints there remained deep theological differences between them.

It was commonly said that with his early calls for reform and his ground-breaking linguistic work on the Greek New Testament, Erasmus laid the egg which Luther hatched.

Erasmus himself complained against this saying, ‘I laid a hen’s egg: Luther hatched a bird of quite different breed.’

The essence of the difference between Erasmus and Luther is very obvious whenever you read what Erasmus believed.

“... Erasmus begins by defining free will as ‘a power of the human will by which a man can apply himself to the things which lead to eternal salvation, or turn away from them’.

This power of free choice was certainly damaged but not destroyed by the fall.

In the body of the book, as he works his way through biblical texts, he asks time and time again, ‘What is the point of so many admonitions, so many precepts, so many threats, so many

exhortations, so many expostulations, if of ourselves we do nothing, but God in accordance with his immutable will does everything in us, both to will and to perform the same?’

The will cannot be powerless, though it is of course ‘puny’ and requires the assistance of divine grace.

The contribution of free choice is, therefore, ‘extremely small’

or ‘exceedingly trivial’ but nevertheless real”

<https://docslib.org/doc/845742/the-manifesto-of-the-reformation-luther-vs-erasmus-on-free-will>

Erasmus clearly had the view that is commonly held today in the evangelical church. That men ultimately have the free will to choose to be saved or to reject the gospel. God has done everything that he possibly can do for you to be saved and now you have to do the rest. You will never make you do something you don't want to do because he wants you to love him freely and not be made to love him. If we don't have free will then we are just robots.

Free will in some circles is tantamount to the God of the evangelical church. You can talk about anything else, but don't touch my free will.

But Luther saw this is a denial of grace alone. More than just a denial, but an attack on the very doctrine of salvation itself and a reflection of a corrupt view of the doctrine of original sin. To Luther this was no small issue, but in fact, was the issue.

“Erasmus was firmly anchored in semi-Pelagian patterns of thought and religious practice, but Luther would not recognize the legitimacy of a middle way between Augustine and Pelagius, since to give an inch to free will was to take everything from God’s glory

The question of the freedom or bondage of the will, therefore, ‘was in no way irreverent, inquisitive, or superfluous; instead, it had to do with the central issue of the Christian faith: what does God do in salvation, and what does man do?’

Luther’s answer was straightforward: we are by nature children of wrath, slaves to sin and to Satan, so that if we are to be saved it must be by grace alone. It is possible to please God only once he has freed us.

In that sense, the ‘answering echo to The Bondage of the Will is The Freedom of the Christian’.”

<https://docslib.org/doc/845742/the-manifesto-of-the-reformation-luther-vs-erasmus-on-free-will>

He believed that the scripture is abundantly clear on the subject, and that it cannot be refuted because of the perspicuity of the scriptures

How are what is often brought up in falsely accused to get someone who believes is Martin Luther did is that he did not believe that the will can make any choices. But the fact that it's not true. Martin Luther did believe in the ability of man to make choices the differences whether he was free to make every choice.

It should be recognized, however, that Luther does leave room for a certain kind of human freedom. 'Free choice,' he admits, 'is allowed to man only with respect to what is beneath him and not what is above him...On the other hand in relation to God, or in matters pertaining to salvation or damnation, a man has no free choice, but is a captive, subject and slave either of the will of God or the will of Satan.' This is an often repeated distinction in his Table Talk: 'we are not able to do anything that is good in divine matters;' 'he that will maintain that man's free-will is able to do or work anything in spiritual cases, be they never so small, denies Christ...[yet] I confess that mankind has a free-

will, but it is to milk kine, to build houses, &c., and no further.’

<https://docslib.org/doc/845742/the-manifesto-of-the-reformation-luther-vs-erasmus-on-free-will>

John Calvin said, “If you mean by free will that man has the ability to choose what he wants, then of course fallen man has freewill. But if we mean that fallen state has the power and moral ability to choose righteousness, then free will has gone to far and free will is to grandiose a term to apply to fallen man.”

To sum up what Jonathan Edwards would say

You are free to choose but your choice isn't free.

Every choice is determined by the strongest set of inclinations or desires at that given moment

He also made the distinction between

Natural Ability

and

Moral ability

Natural ability would mean that a man can make a choice. He can think, he can reason, get up and walk or he can sit down, but he cannot fly like a bird or swim in the sea and breath water like a fish.

He has certain set of natural abilities but they have limits. He is not free to do anything.

Moral ability is the ability to make choice regard moral issues. He can make a choice to lie or not lie, or murders or not murder, or help someone or not help someone. But the sinner cannot make a choice never to sin. Why because that is against is nature. And his moral ability has limits too. He cannot do good. He cannot be holy. He cannot keep the 10 commandments. He cannot seek God. He cannot bring himself to spiritual life. And His moral ability has a great moral inability. He will not come to Christ because He loves his sin and hates God. His bondage in his will is directly related to the love he has for sin.

So says Martin Luther, John Calvin and Jonathan Edwards, Some of the greatest theological heavy weights in the history of the church.

But they are not the authority are they?

Another important Sola of the Reformation was Sola Scriptura. The Scripture alone is the sole authority. Not men, not popes, not the church.

John 1:4–5 (NKJV)

4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not **comprehend** it. (overtake)

καταλαμβάνω

④ to process information, *understand, grasp*

ⓐ learn about someth. through process of inquiry, mid. *grasp, find, understand* (Dionys. Hal. 2, 66, 6; Sext. Emp., Math. 7, 288; Vett. Val. 225, 8; TestJob 37:6 τὰ βάθη τοῦ κυρίου al.; Philo, Mos. 1, 278; Jos., Ant. 8, 167; Tat. 4:2 [on **Ro 1:20**]; Ath. 5, 2; 24, 2) w. acc. and inf. **Ac 25:25**. W. ὅτι foll. **4:13; 10:34**. W. indirect discourse foll. **Eph 3:18**.

ⓑ on **J 1:5** s. 1 and 2 above.—

Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000). In [A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature](#) (3rd ed., p. 520). University of Chicago Press.

John 1:9–11 (NKJV)

9 That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. 11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.

John 3:19–20 (NKJV)

19 **And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.**

John 12:35–40 (NKJV)

³⁵ Then Jesus said to them, “A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. ³⁶ While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.” These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them.

³⁷ But although He had done so many signs before them, they did not believe in Him, ³⁸ that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke:

*“Lord, who has believed our report?
And to whom has the arm of the Lord been
revealed?”*

³⁹ Therefore they could not believe, because Isaiah said again:

⁴⁰ *“He has blinded their eyes and hardened their
hearts,
Lest they should see with their eyes,
Lest they should understand with their hearts and
turn,
So that I should heal them.”*

1 Corinthians 2:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

John 8:42–47 (NKJV)

⁴² Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. ⁴³ Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. ⁴⁴ You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and *does not* stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it. ⁴⁵ But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. ⁴⁶ Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? ⁴⁷ He who is of God hears God’s words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.”

Romans 8:7–8 (NKJV)

⁷ Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

⁸ So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Some might say that this is only in reference to the 10 Commandments. If that cannot be true. God gave me more laws than just the 10 Commandments. And also many times in the New Testament it is very clear that God commands everyone to repent and also commands people to believe. But according to this text, it is impossible for men to do this, so no matter how free their wheel maybe they are not free to obey.

Ephesians 2:1–3 (NKJV)

2 And you *He made alive*, who were dead in trespasses and sins, ² in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, ³ among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

Romans 6:17–18 (NKJV)

¹⁷ But God be thanked that *though* you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine

to which you were delivered. ¹⁸ And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

John 6:36–37 (NKJV)

³⁶ But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. ³⁷ All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.

John 6:38–40 (NKJV)

³⁸ For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. ³⁹ This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. ⁴⁰ And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.”

John 6:44 (NKJV)

⁴⁴ No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.

The darkness that Martin Luther saw in his day that he realized was the foundational problem that stood in the way of salvation was the inability of man to do what is right. So it didn't matter how much the Roman Catholic Church attempted to correct this,

man's will was found in sin. He could not find his way out, unless some miraculous act of God moved on him. He needed God to make the sinner alive and to free the will to believe, repent and come. God would have to act solely of his old grace to do so, man could not move God to act. God was not responding to his faith. God was not saving him because he came. He can't come, and Martin Luther knew this. Apart from the sovereign, act of God's unmerited favor for the sinner, he would be left in his sin. In the center for fully and completely love being left it is darkness.

John 3:19–20 (NKJV)

¹⁹ And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. ²⁰ For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed

1. The Problem of Darkness- Oh how Dark the Darkness is.

2. The Power of Light- Oh how Bright the Light is

The dark ages were indeed dark, but the darkness of the human heart was even darker.

There was a need for a bright, bright light to break through the darkness would overcome it. This would indeed happen to the reformation. When God by his grace would move upon men, he would study the Scriptures and find the glorious gospel that saves and heralded forth to the nations.

What so might ask, Where was God in the dark ages?

In the midst of such devastating darkness was there no mercy, was there no Grace.

In the midst of the perpetual practices of the Roman Catholic Church and their intentional hiding of the truth, was there anyone who had the truth, were all who lived during the thousand year Destined for death?

By gods grace, there were others. 100 years before Martin Luther we have a man by the name of John Wycliffe, who is called the morning star of the reformation. Who translated the Bible into the language of the people. But most people believe that that's just about it, that before John Wycliffe, there really wasn't too many more. But that's not true.

More than three hundred years before Martin Luther was born, an unlikely reformer suddenly appeared in

the city of Lyon in southeast France. His protests against doctrines and practices of the Roman Catholic Church were strong tremors foretelling the coming spiritual earthquake called the Reformation. And the movement he launched survived to join the great Reformation. He is known to history as Peter Waldo.

Many details about Waldo are not known, including his name. We don't know if *Peter* was his real first name, since it doesn't appear in any document until 150 years after his death. His last name was most likely something like *Valdès* or *Vaudès* — *Valdo* (Waldo) was the Italian adaptation. We also don't know the year Peter was born or the precise year he died — historians disagree over whether he died between 1205 and 1207 or between 1215 and 1218. But we do know a few earthshaking things.

In 1170, Waldo was a very wealthy, well-known merchant in the city of Lyon. He had a wife, two daughters, and lots of property. But something happened — some say he witnessed the sudden death of a friend, others say he heard a spiritual song of a traveling minstrel — and Waldo became deeply troubled over the spiritual state of his soul and desperate to know how he could be saved.

The first thing he resolved was to read the Bible. But since it only existed in the Latin Vulgate, and his Latin was poor, he hired two scholars to translate it into the vernacular so he could study it.

Next, he sought spiritual counsel from a priest, who pointed him to the rich young ruler in the Gospels and quoted Jesus: “One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me” (Luke 18:22). Jesus’s words pierced Waldo’s heart. Like the rich young ruler, Waldo suddenly realized he had been serving Mammon, not God. But unlike the rich young ruler who walked away from Jesus, Waldo repented and did exactly what Jesus said: he gave away all he had to the poor (after making adequate provision for his wife and daughters). From that point on, he determined to live in complete dependence on God for his provision.

Waldo immediately began to preach from his Bible in the streets of Lyon, especially to the poor. Many were converted, and by 1175 a sizable group of men and women had become Waldo’s disciples. They too gave away their possessions and were preaching (women as well as men). The people started calling them the “Poor of Lyons.” Later, as the group grew into a movement and spread

throughout France and other parts of Europe, they became known as “The Waldensians.”

The more Waldo studied Scripture, the more troubled he became over certain doctrines, practices, and governing structures of the Catholic Church — not to mention its wealth. And he boldly spoke out against these things. But since the Church officially prohibited lay preaching, Waldo and his ragtag band drew opposition from church leaders.

The Archbishop of Lyons was particularly irked by this uneducated, self-appointed reform movement and moved to squash it. But in 1179, Waldo appealed directly to Pope Alexander III and received his approval. However, only five years later the new pope, Lucius III, sided with the archbishop and excommunicated Waldo and his followers.

In the earlier years, the Waldensian movement was a reform movement. Waldo never intended to leave the church, and he held to numerous traditional Catholic doctrines. But after the excommunication, and continuing beyond Waldo’s death, the Waldensian’s Protestant-like convictions increased and solidified.

- They rejected all claims to authority besides Scripture.

- They rejected all mediators between God and man, except the man Christ Jesus (though Mary was venerated for quite a while).
- They rejected the doctrine that only a priest could hear confession, and argued that all believers were qualified.
- They rejected purgatory, and thus rejected indulgences and prayers for the dead.
- They believed the only Scripture-sanctioned sacraments were baptism and communion.
- They rejected the Church's emphasis on fast and feast days and eating restrictions.
- They rejected the priestly and monastic caste system.
- They rejected the veneration of relics, pilgrimages, and the use of holy water.
- They rejected the pope's claim to authority over earthly rulers.
- They eventually rejected the apostolic succession of the pope.

Despite the excommunication and Waldo's death, the Waldensian movement continued to grow for quite a while. It spread into northern Italy and regions of Spain, Austria, Germany, Hungary, and Poland.

But the Roman Catholic persecution also continued and grew in severity, till by the fifteenth century, the Waldensian ranks had shrunk into small, obscure communities in the alpine valleys of France and

Italy. But when the Protestant Reformation burst on the scene in the sixteenth century, most Waldensians became Protestants.

<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/the-first-tremor>

There was one last attempt to exterminate them from the planet

in 1655, Catholic forces under the Duke of Savoy carried out a notorious massacre of Waldensians* in the Piedmont.(Northwest Italy)

On April 17, appeared an overwhelming force of mixed Piedmontese, French, and Irish** troops. They conducted a few skirmishes, then made nice with the Waldensian civic leaders and induced them to quartering their troops temporarily further to some expedient pretext. Alas! alas! these poor people were undone. They had received under their roof the executioners of themselves and their families. The first two days, the 22d and 23d of April, passed in peace, the soldiers sitting at the same table, sleeping under the same roof, and conversing freely with their destined victims ...

At last the blow fell like a thunderbolt. At four of the clock on the morning of the 24th April the signal was given from the Castle of La

Torre. But who shall describe the scenes that followed? On the instant a thousand assassins began the work of death ...

Little children were torn from the arms of their mothers, and dashed against the rocks; or, more horrible still, they were held betwixt two soldiers, who, unmoved by their piteous cries and the sight of their quivering limbs, tore them up into two halves. Their bodies were then thrown on the highways and the fields. Sick persons and old people, men and women, were burned alive in their own houses; some were hacked in pieces; some were bound up in the form of a ball, and precipitated over the rocks or rolled down the mountains ... Some were slowly dismembered, and fire applied to the wounds to staunch the bleeding and prolong their sufferings; some were flayed alive; some roasted alive; others were disembowelled; some were horribly and shamefully mutilated, and of others the flesh and brains were boiled and actually eaten by these cannibals.

<https://www.executedtoday.com/2011/04/24/1655-massacre-of-waldensians/>

But the light could not and would not be extinguished. God was shining forth out of the darkness the gospel of grace alone.....

By the time the slaughter of the Waldensians had taken place in 1655, the Puritans had been in America 35 years!!!

God continues to awaken hearts to the Glorious even though there is much darkness...

2 Corinthians 4:3–6 (NKJV)

³ But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴ whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. ⁵ For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. ⁶ For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Redemption is as much a sovereign work of God as creation; in fact, Paul used the analogy of creation to describe salvation when he wrote, "If

anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come” (2 Cor. 5:17). Here he also uses an analogy for salvation drawn from the creation of the physical world, noting that the same **God, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness”** (cf. Gen. 1:3) **is the One who has shone in our hearts.** The same God who turned on the light physically turns on the light spiritually—and does both without using any evolutionary process.

Spiritual darkness envelopes the unredeemed until God shines the light of the gospel in their hearts; He alone can dispel the darkness of sin and ignorance. But at salvation God “qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son” (Col. 1:12–13). Jesus declared in John 8:12, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life” (cf. John 9:5; 12:46). At salvation sinners receive **the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.** When God sovereignly shines that **Light** into sin-darkened hearts through the preaching of the gospel (Rom. 10:13–15), it brings true knowledge of who Christ is; that He is God incarnate, and that the **glory of God** shines perfectly in His face.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2003). [2 Corinthians](#) (p. 134). Moody Publishers.

Charles Wesley's Hymn captures this great truth so perfectly.....

Long my imprisoned spirit lay
 Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
 Thine eye diffused a quickening ray,
 I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
 My chains fell off, my heart was free,
 I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.
 My chains fell off, my heart was free,
 I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

If modern evangelicals have lost Luther's clarity and faithfulness to Scripture on this issue of free will, we will have lost something very precious and foundational indeed

despite their common stance against such things as relics, pilgrimages, indulgences, fasting, monastic vows, and the invocation of saints there remained deep theological differences between them.

8

It was commonly said that with his early calls for reform and his ground-breaking linguistic work on the Greek New Testament, Erasmus laid the egg which Luther hatched.

9

Erasmus himself complained against this saying, 'I laid a hen's egg: Luther hatched a bird of quite different breed.'

Luther first became cognizant of Erasmus's theological animosity towards him in May 1522 after reading some of the humanist's published letters.

11

They held an uneasy truce for some time until a combination of factors drove Erasmus to declare hostilities officially open. Luther wrote to him privately in April 1524 thanking him for all he had done in the fields of literature and textual research but counselled him to leave theology to the experts: 'we have chosen to put up with your weakness and thank God for the gifts he has given you...[But] You have neither the aptitude nor the courage to be a Reformer, so please stand aside

Examining his argument in more detail, Erasmus begins by defining free will as 'a power of the human will by which a man can apply himself to the things which lead to eternal salvation, or turn away from them'.

23

This power of free choice was certainly damaged but not destroyed by the fall.

24

In the body of the book, as he works his way through biblical texts, he asks time and time again, 'What is the point of so many admonitions, so many precepts, so many threats, so many exhortations, so many exhortations, if of ourselves we do nothing, but God in accordance with his immutable will does everything in us, both to will and to perform the same?'

25

The will cannot be powerless, though it is of course 'puny' and requires the assistance of divine grace.

The contribution of free choice is, therefore, 'extremely small'

28

or 'exceedingly trivial'

29

but nevertheless real

Grace alone was the issue for Luther. If a man can choose freely in any way apart from the grace of God then it is no longer grace but works.

Luther, Erasmus said, immeasurably exaggerates original sin and ends up saying that even a man who is justified by faith cannot of himself do anything but sin.

...by re-asserting free will even in this apparently small way, Erasmus had attacked what Luther called 'the highest and most important issue of our cause'.

34

Nothing less than the Reformation doctrine of salvation by grace alone was at stake.

he had begun to wrestle with the issues presented by Erasmus,
36
and he had at least read *On the Freedom of the Will* (rather than using it as toilet paper as he often did with his opponent's attacks!)

The *Bondage of the Will* his best work, because it so effectively addresses these issues. Writing in July 1537 to Wolfgang Capito he confesses, 'Regarding [the plan] to collect my writings in volumes, I am quite cool and not at all eager about it because...I acknowledge none of them to be really a book of mine, except perhaps the one *On the Bound Will and the Catechism*'

The book was called not *The Clarity of Scripture*, after all, but *The Bondage of the Will*. The Latin title *De Servo Arbitrio* was taken (not coincidentally) from a saying of St. Augustine in a classic anti-Pelagian treatise.

84
So it was clearly Luther's intention to defend the Augustinian doctrine of sin, nicely summed up by a phrase Luther used previously at Heidelberg: 'Free will without grace has the power to do nothing but sin.'

85
This one sentence summary is oft quoted in *The Bondage of the Will*

86
and was the essential starting point for the affirmation that salvation must, therefore, be entirely the work of God's grace alone, and the source of Luther's confidence that 'Augustine...is entirely with me'.

89
Yet this exalted language of central importance can also be heard in *The Bondage of the Will* concerning free will, sin, and grace. 'What I am after in this dispute,' he stated boldly, 'is to me something serious, necessary, and indeed eternal, something of such a kind and such importance that it ought to be asserted and defended to the death, even if the whole world had not only to be thrown into strife and confusion, but actually to return to total chaos and reduced to nothingness.'

90
Near the end of the book, Luther praises Erasmus not only for his 'eloquence bordering on the miraculous' but most of all for his insight—

I praise and commend you highly for this also, that unlike all the rest you alone have attacked the real issue, the essence of the matter in dispute, and have not wearied me with irrelevancies about the papacy, purgatory, indulgences, and such like trifles (for trifles they are rather than basic issues), with which almost everyone hitherto has gone hunting for me without success. You and you alone have seen the question on which everything hinges, and have aimed at the vital spot.

91

Such was the vital and absolutely fundamental significance of teaching the

enslaved will. Luther had been formulating and defending his thoughts on it since at least his Disputation on Scholastic Theology in 1517.

92

It was a critical defining issue, distinguishing him and his reformation movement from the humanism of Erasmus, the Catholicism of Rome, and the radical reformation of the Anabaptists. Concerning the latter, German/Moravian Anabaptist leader Balthasar Hubmaier wrote two pamphlets against Luther's theological anthropology in 1527 precisely because, explains Steinmetz, he saw very clearly 'that the doctrine of the bondage of the will undercut the Anabaptist understanding of conversion, baptism, the nature of the Church, and Christian morality'.

93

More importantly, this Augustinian doctrine of sin and grace was likewise held with equal fervency by Zwingli, Bucer, Calvin and others. Warfield rightly states—the material principle of the Reformation...was not at first known by the name of justification by faith alone, but it was from the first passionately embraced as renunciation of all human works and dependence on the grace of God alone for salvation...There are two foci around which this gospel revolves: the absolute helplessness of man in sin; the sole efficiency of grace in salvation...All else that Protestantism stood for, in comparison with this, must be relegated to the second rank.

9

Erasmus, on the other hand, recoiled from such a pessimistic anthropology and the insistence on grace alone as capable of saving and transforming human beings. As we have seen, he insisted that the warnings, exhortations, and commands of Scripture must imply an ability in human beings, however puny and feeble, to comply. Since Erasmus banged this drum so many times, Luther (whose book is essentially a point by point refutation of what Erasmus had written) comes back with tedious frequency to the same counter-argument: such passages of Scripture 'show not what men can do but what they ought to do'.

9

5

Indeed, 'it is Satan's work to prevent men from recognizing their plight and to keep them presuming that they can do everything they are told'.

96

Luther makes his case from the Scriptures, refuting Erasmus's exegesis point by point and showing that he often makes the text prove too much; where he wanted to prove only such free choice as can do nothing good without grace, he ends up 'proving' by his inferences a freedom and ability to keep everything God commands.

97

Logically, Luther also insists that if God is omnipotent and has unerring foreknowledge then there cannot be such a thing as free will.

98

This is the first point in his summary conclusion— if we believe it to be true that God foreknows and predestines all things, that he can neither be mistaken in his foreknowledge nor hindered in his predestination, and that nothing takes place but as he wills it (as reason itself is forced to admit), then on the testimony of reason itself there cannot be any free choice in man or angel or any creature.

99

It should be recognised, however, that Luther does leave room for a certain kind of human freedom. 'Free choice,' he admits, 'is allowed to man only with respect to what is beneath him and not what is above him...On the other hand in relation to God, or in matters pertaining to salvation or damnation, a man has no free choice, but is a captive, subject and slave either of the will of God or the will of Satan.'

100

This is an often repeated distinction in his Table Talk:

'we are not able to do anything that is good in divine matters;'

101

'he that will

maintain that man's free-will is able to do or work anything in spiritual cases, be they never so small, denies Christ...[yet] I confess that mankind has a free-will, but it is to milk kine, to build houses, &c., and no further.'

102

Marius is

sarcastically critical at this point and considers the idea of 'freedom in what is beneath us' to be ultimately nonsensical because seemingly mundane choices can lead to much greater effects: 'we may assume we have free choice in

spreading jam or marmalade on our toast in the morning....We may also choose freely whether to be a lawyer or a monk, since our vocations seem to be a part of the freedom Luther grants to things below. Yet if we become a monk who rebels against monasticism and becomes a great prophet of God, our free choice in the beginning might seem to be part of God's providence.'

103

Ultimately, Luther would recognise, even this free agency must submit to the over-arching providential rule which ensures that not even a sparrow falls to the ground without the Father's say so (Matt. 10:29).

The main thrust of Luther's rebuttal of Erasmus, however, is simple. As R. C. Sproul has it, 'Luther is driving Erasmus where Erasmus does not want to go, straight into the arms of Pelagius'.

104

Marius, again taking a controversial and provocative line, says, 'I suspect that Erasmus would have found himself in substantial agreement with Pelagius had the two been able to transcend time and the demands of orthodoxy to sit down over a good cask of wine to have a long talk about God, humankind, and morals.'

105

Erasmus was firmly anchored

in semi-Pelagian patterns of thought and religious practice, but Luther would not recognise the legitimacy of a middle way between Augustine and Pelagius, since to give an inch to free will was to take everything from God's glory and to lose the best of both systems (if indeed there can be anything good about Pelagius). The question of the freedom or bondage of the will, therefore, 'was in no way irreverent, inquisitive, or superfluous; instead, it had to do with the central issue of the Christian faith: what does God do in salvation, and what does man do?'

106

Luther's answer was straightforward: we are by nature children of wrath, slaves to sin and to Satan, so that if we are to be saved it must be by grace alone. It is possible to please God only once he has freed us. In that sense, the 'answering echo to The Bondage of the Will is The Freedom of the Christian'.

<https://docslib.org/doc/845742/the-manifesto-of-the-reformation-luther-vs-erasmus-on-free-will>

On this date in 1655, Catholic forces under the **Duke of Savoy** carried out a notorious **massacre** of Waldensians* in the **Piedmont**.

This interesting, excommunicate sect had persisted for centuries in those **hard-to-reach places** in Alpine foothills, intermittently ignored and hunted. After Martin Luther, many Protestants inclined to see them as a proto-Reformation movement, or even a **counter-papal apostolic succession** reaching back to ancient Christianity.

At any rate, they sure weren't Catholic.

And our friend the Duke decided — **perhaps piqued** by the murder of a missionary Catholic priest, or for whatever other reason — to mount one of those heresy-extirpating sorties and make them Catholic in 1655.

On April 17, the Marquis of **Pianezza** appeared with an overwhelming force of mixed Piedmontese, French, and Irish** troops. They conducted a few skirmishes, then made nice with the Waldensian civic leaders and induced them to quartering their troops temporarily further to some expedient pretext. Alas! alas! these poor people were undone. They had received under their roof the executioners of themselves and their families. The first two days, the 22d and 23d of April, passed in peace, the soldiers sitting at the same table, sleeping under the same roof, and conversing freely with their destined victims ...

At last the blow fell like a thunderbolt. At four of the clock on the morning of the 24th April the signal was given from the Castle of La Torre. But who shall describe the scenes that followed? On the instant a thousand assassins began the work of death ...

Little children were torn from the arms of their mothers, and dashed against the rocks; or, more horrible still, they were held betwixt two soldiers, who, unmoved by their piteous cries and the sight of their quivering limbs, tore them up into two halves. Their bodies were then thrown on the highways and the fields. Sick persons and old people, men and women, were burned alive in their own houses; some were hacked in pieces; some were bound up in the form of a ball, and precipitated over the rocks or rolled down the mountains ... Some were slowly dismembered, and fire applied to the wounds to staunch the bleeding and prolong their sufferings; some were flayed alive; some roasted alive; others were disembowelled; some were horribly and shamefully mutilated, and of others the flesh and brains were boiled and actually eaten by these cannibals.

<https://www.executedtoday.com/2011/04/24/1655-massacre-of-waldensians/>

Saturday, April 24, 1655, at 4:00 a.m., the signal was given for a general massacre.

The horrors of this massacre are indescribable. Not content to simply kill their victims, the soldiers and monks who accompanied them invented barbaric tortures: Babies and children had their limbs ripped off their bodies by sheer strength. Parents were forced to watch their children tortured to death before they themselves were tortured and killed. Fathers were forced to wear the decapitated heads of their children as the fathers were marched to their death. Some of these Christians were literally plowed into their own fields. Some were flayed or burned alive. Many endured worse. Unburied bodies—dead and alive—covered the ground.

Several years later, Sébastien Castellion (l. 1515–1564), who ministered alongside Calvin for a time in Geneva, wrote in the preface to his *Traité des hérétiques*, “Who would want to become a Christian when they see that those who confess the name of Christ are bruised at the hands of Christians, by fire, by water, by the sword, and treated more cruelly than robbers and murderers?”

<https://www.worldhistory.org/article/2057/the-sixteenth-century-massacre-of-the-waldensians/>

IX. That man by his transgression lost that righteousness and holiness which he had received, and thus incurring the wrath of God, became subject to death and bondage, under the dominion of him who has the power of death, that is, the devil; insomuch that our free will has become a servant and a slave to sin: and thus all men, both Jews and Gentiles, are, are by nature children of wrath, being all dead in their trespasses and sins, and consequently incapable of the least good motion to any thing which concerns their salvation: yea, incapable of one good thought without God’s grace, all their imaginations being wholly evil, and that continually.

Though the most infamous spread of the plague, known as the Black Death, ravaged the world in the 1300s, there were other bouts of the disease that took place prior to that. In 542, the Plague of Justinian (also an outbreak of bubonic plague) was estimated to have killed as much as a third of the population of the fallen empire (per Washington City Paper). While the collapse of the Roman civilization didn't start the outbreak of disease, it did contribute to it, due to the lack of structure and gradual failure of public works.

Read More: https://www.grunge.com/811980/why-was-it-called-the-dark-ages/?utm_campaign=clip

When many think of the Dark Ages 500AD -1500AD. Most think of the Fall of Rome and its devastating effects for centuries on the Economic, Cultural, Literary advancements. And many remind of us of the Plague that killed half the population in some cases. So bad was the black plague that men would come down the streets every morning picking up the dead who died that night before.

“the Middle Ages” describes a very long period of history that saw a number of major transformations, as well as the invention of such things as “the mechanical clock, eyeglasses, effective gunpowder weapons, and the printing press.” *That said*, there are still many aspects of the period that would make a contemporary person cringe, including devastating famines, disease, and a fondness for disturbingly creative torture devices.

Torture

was used in the medieval period as a way to extract confessions and punish criminals (sometimes prior to execution). People in this period were quite, er, *creative* about torture, coming up with relatively simple ways to cause pain, like the thumbscrew (which worked by slowly crushing victims' thumbs and toes), as well as more complicated ones, like the choke pear (pictured above), which was inserted into victims' orifices and expanded. I'll leave you to imagine the rest.

Extreme executions

The ingenuity that people brought toward torture in the medieval period was also extended to execution methods. While some criminals and traitors were killed in relatively quick, painless ways (with machines that resemble the guillotine, for example), others were subject to methods designed to create as much pain as possible and prolong the dying process. Hanging, drawing, and quartering, for instance, was a punishment reserved for

those who had committed high treason. In this process, the victim was dragged by horse to the site of execution; he would then be hanged nearly (but not quite) to death, and then disemboweled while still alive. The victim would then be cut or pulled into four pieces, or “quartered.”

The Black Death,

one of the most destructive pandemics in human history, came to Europe in the mid-1340s. It is thought that the disease – a bacterial infection often referred to as the “bubonic plague” – came to Europe via merchant ships travelling from Asia. The disease was carried by fleas who rode on the rats that commonly infested ships. In the space of a few years, the Black Death killed more than 20 million people in Europe – nearly one third of the continent’s total population.

The plague was extremely contagious and fast-acting. Victims would develop blood and pus-filled boils, as well as fever, vomiting, and other symptoms, and would usually die within a few days. People of the time had no idea what caused the disease or how it was transmitted; many saw it as proof of God’s disapproval for the sins of man. Thousands of Jews were murdered in this period in an effort to rid towns and cities of heretics, and some Christians took to extreme acts of piety, like self-flagellation, to cleanse their souls and avoid the disease.

The disease was transmitted primarily by fleas and rats. The stomachs of the fleas were infected with bacteria known as *Y. Pestis*. The bacteria would block the "throat" of an infected flea so that no blood could reach its stomach, and it grew ravenous since it was starving to death. It would attempt to suck up blood from its victim, only to disgorge it back into its prey's bloodstreams. The blood it injected back, however, was now mixed with *Y. Pestis*. Infected fleas infected rats in this fashion, and the other fleas infesting those rats were soon infected by their host's blood. They then spread the disease to other rats, from which other fleas were infected, and so on. As their rodent hosts died out, the fleas migrated to the bodies of humans and infected them in the same fashion as they had the rats, and so the plague spread

The disease appeared in three forms:

bubonic [infection of the lymph system -- 60% fatal]

pneumonic [respiratory infection -- about 100% fatal], and

septicaemic [infection of the blood and probably 100% fatal]

The plague lasted in each area only about a year, but a third of a district's population would die during that period. People tried to protect themselves by carrying little bags filled with crushed herbs and flowers over their noses, but to little effect. Those individuals infected with bubonic would experience great swellings ("bubos" in the Latin of the times) of their lymph glands and take to their beds. Those with septicaemic would die quickly, before any obvious symptoms had appeared. Those with respiratory also died quickly, but not before developing evident symptoms: a sudden fever that turned the face a dark rose color, a sudden attack of sneezing, followed by coughing, coughing up blood, and death.

The Black Death seems to have arisen somewhere in Asia and was brought to Europe from the Genoese trading station of Kaffa in the Crimea (in the Black Sea). The story goes that the Mongols were besieging Kaffa when a sickness broke out among their forces and

compelled them to abandon the siege. As a parting shot, the Mongol commander loaded a few of the plague victims onto his catapults and hurled them into the town. Some of the merchants left Kaffa for Constantinople as soon as the Mongols had departed, and they carried the plague with them. It spread from Constantinople along the trade routes, causing tremendous mortality along the way.

http://www.vlib.us/medieval/lectures/black_death.html

Over the next five years, the Black Death would kill more than 20 million people in Europe—almost one-third of the continent's population.

By this logic, the only way to overcome the plague was to win God's forgiveness. Some people believed that the way to do this was to purge their communities of heretics and other troublemakers—so, for example, many thousands of Jews were massacred in 1348 and 1349. (Thousands more fled to the sparsely populated regions of Eastern Europe, where they could be relatively safe from the rampaging mobs in the cities.)

Some upper-class men joined processions of flagellants that traveled from town to town and engaged in public displays of penance and punishment: They would beat themselves and one another with heavy leather straps studded with sharp pieces of metal while the townspeople

looked on. For 33 1/2 days, the flagellants repeated this ritual three times a day. Then they would move on to the next town and begin the process over again.

<https://www.history.com/topics/middle-ages/black-death>