

# Fundamental problems with the catholic church in 15th century and how martin luth...

[Religion](#), [Catholic](#)



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Question: What was Luther's fundamental religious problem with the Catholic Church? Trace the development of this problem and why Luther solved it.

Among the many problems Luther pointed out in the Catholic Church in his 95 theses, the one he had the most problem with was the issue of salvation and the selling of indulgencies. At the time, the doctrine of the church stated that those who did not receive a baptism would spend time in purgatory for their sins. The Church said that acceptance of Jesus took away the blame of the sin but did not clear the sins completely because of the fact that the people were sinners.

This was significant because the church was selling indulgences. The Catholic Church once sold indulgences to people who would fight in the Holy Wars to be forgiven of their sins. However, this time, the Church sold indulgences to followers at a certain price so that buyers would be forgiven of past and future sins. According to Luther, this was nowhere to be found in the Holy Bible. Luther preached self morals and on the acceptance of Jesus and complete obedience as the true way to reach heaven as stated in the Bible. This influx of indulgence buying and selling by the people around Luther irritated him to no end.

In his sermons he emphasized the true scriptures in the Bible and not doctrine according to the so called " Holy Church". The Catholic Church was selling indulgences in an effort to raisemoneyfor St. Peters Basilica, which was under construction in the Vatican during this period. It would be a very costly project and therefore the Church needed a means to pay for it and their answer was to sell indulgences at a monetary price. This infuriated

Luther because it advocated that people could literally buy their way into heaven without truly accepting Jesus as it states in the Bible.

A man by the name of Johann Tetzel was selling the indulgences in Germany at Luther's time and Luther pleaded to his followers not to buy them but to simply read the scriptures and accept Jesus. The sale of indulgences greatly upset Luther because he felt certain that people were eternally damning themselves by relying on the indulgences instead of the scripture. This drove Luther to write his 95 theses which blasted the Catholic Church from a variety of angles on its policies and the controversies surrounding the Church.

Some of these included the sale of indulgences, the flaws and errors in the Church's doctrine, and in some cases the ignorance by some members of the clergy to even read the scripture. In one case, Luther even inquired as to why the Pope insisted on paying for St. Peter's Basilica through the poor people's money instead of taking money out of his own pocket to pay for the new Church. Luther then nailed this list to a Church door in Germany, as was the tradition, on the day after Halloween.

At first, Pope Leo X did not take Luther seriously calling him "a drunk friar", however when Luther's 95 theses began to spread around Germany like wild fire with the help of Gutenberg's printing press the Church took notice. The 95 theses gained sympathy in Europe because many rulers were sick of the power over the Church over their provinces and used this as an excuse to break away from Catholic Church. Because of this, many new Protestant

religions, such as antibaptism and Calvinism, began popping up as more people began to speak out against the church.

The church's own personal attempt to reform was largely unsuccessful and it simply pushed more converts in to Protestantism. At the Edict of Worms where Luther stood trial for heresy, Luther plead his case to the Church. The Church's verdict however was that one man who has different views than the thousands of clergy men before Luther must be wrong. Luther was to be taken into custody, his books burned, and delivered to the Emperor. Luther, however, was able to escape and hid for brief period before he returned to Wittenberg to build a new Church.

The Catholic Church's unwillingness to reform and it's continuance of its programs set the stage for the rest of the Protestant Reformation in Europe. Although Luther's true intentions can only be speculated, most historians believe that at the Reformation's onset he had not intended to break from the Catholic Church. In this area, he failed. He was not able to simply reform the Church from the inside and clean up its practices. Thus, Luther's solution to this problem was unfortunately to split from the church along with millions of others and to change the Catholic Church forever.