

# [Reformation](https://assignbuster.com/reformation/)

[Religion](https://assignbuster.com/essay-subjects/religion/)

Throughout the history of Europe, people’s lives revolved around the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church taught its beliefs through the clergy and exercised its authority. In 1517, corruption, false teachings, and the challenging of Martin Luther led to a split that created the Protestant Church. During the Reformation, the Protestant belief in “ sola scriptura” and “ sola fides” was a major source of conflict with the Catholic teachings of a Church authority and salvation through good works.

Protestants believed in “ sola scriptura”, which is Latin for “ scripture alone” and says that the scripture is the only source for knowledge on salvation and holiness. A German woodcut from the 16th century portrays the Protestant emphasis on the scripture in one of his works (Doc 3). His work advocates Protestant beliefs by showing a young preacher in the Protestant woodcut and a fat monk in the Catholic woodcut. In the Protestant woodcut, the preacher is holding a Bible, as is everyone else.

This shows the importance of the Bible to Protestants compared to the Catholic woodcut in which there is no importance placed on the scripture. In the Catholic woodcut, is it very ornamental and the monk who is preaching does not have a Bible to read off of. This shows the contrast between Protestant and Catholic beliefs in doctrine. At the Diet of Worms in 1521, Luther responds to Eck saying that he will not recant his teachings unless he is “ convinced by Scripture and plain reason” (Doc 5).

During his speech, Luther advocates his belief in sola scriptura. Then, in 1525, when Zwiglian Protestants publish the Twelve Articles, they give an explanation of the scripture which displays sola scriptura (Doc 6). Catholics believed in salvation through good works. Thomas Kempis, a Catholic, defines the importance of good works in his book The Imitation of Christ (Doc 1). He states that faith alone does not make a person holy, but their “ virtuous life” makes them “ dear to God”.

This reflects the importance that Catholics placed on good works. In contrast, Protestants believed in salvation through faith alone (sola fide). They base this belief off of scriptural evidence in the New Testament which can be found in Ephesians 2: 9 and says that “ you have been saved through faith” and not from good works (Doc 7). In response to this claim of faith being the only source of salvation, Catholics point out that good works are included in scriptures as can be seen in a Morning Offering from a Catholic prayer book (Doc 8).

Catholicism preached the authority of the Church, while Protestantism did not require a Church to practice their beliefs, only a Bible. At the Diet of Worms in 1521, Archbishop of Trier argues that Luther, a Protestant, has no right to question the practices defined by the Church (Doc 4). This demonstrates the Catholic claim to final authority. Any defiance in Church authority would have outraged the Church, which was displayed when Luther spoke out against corrupted Church practices.

One of these practices that Luther spoke out against was the practice of selling indulgences as a way to repent sins. A Catholic historian defended the selling of indulgences saying that Tetzel extended the truth (Doc 2). Although Luther opposed the sale of indulgences and protested their sale, the Church held final authority on the subject. Differed beliefs between the Protestant and Catholic churches during the Reformation, including differed opinions on sola scriptura, good works, and church authority were a source of conflict among these two faiths.