

Describe the changes
that the reformation
brought about essay



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The Lutheran Reformation brought about many changes in Germany and Rome, probably most significant were the changes that benefited the German Princes due to the huge power shift from Rome to the individual German states.

Perhaps Luther's main reason for attacking the church was because of some of its teachings, so therefore the most significant changes are those directly brought about by his defiance. These changes include the banning of any indulgencies to be sold in any Protestant state and the right for anyone to drink the wine and take the bread at holy communion. Further changes to the teachings of the church included the seven sacraments being reduced to two and the shunning of good works in order to gain salvation, justification by faith alone. By this I mean that pilgrimages and buying and selling relics was seen as a waste of time as God was not interested in these things. A final change to church teachings was that people were also allowed not to fast. All the changes to church teachings made German peoples lives easier as they did not feel it necessary to waste time with going on pilgrimages if they did not please god anyway.

The structure and organisation of the church was also changed in the new Protestant states. Many monks and nuns became free to give up monastic life by leaving monasteries and convents to marry if they wished to. Another change to the organisation of the church was that the pulpit replaced the altar, making the priest the central focus of the service as he was stood higher than the congregation. Further changes to the structure and organisation of the church include the release of the Laity to give tithes to

the papacy. This increased the wealth of the German laity pushing them up the social ladder.

The power of the Holy Roman Emperor, the Pope and the German Princes was also drastically changed by the reformation. The Holy Roman Emperor lost a grip of the German Princes as they no longer needed his military strength as many of them were member of the Schamaldic League. The change here was the new found independence of the Holy Roman Emperor. As the territorial rulers increased their security, they also increased their wealth by splitting from Rome.

They could keep many of the taxes their subjects were paying instead of passing them on to Rome. Perhaps the most significant change to the Princes brought about by the reformation, was the right to decide the religion of their people, 'cujus regio eius religio'. The reformation brought about many changes to Rome, the Holy Roman Emperor, the German Princes and the German people, perhaps most of all the German princes benefited most from these new changes which lead to greater wealth, greater alliances and a better standard of living and well being for their subjects. Rome and the Emperor lost both power, influence and wealth due to the benefits gained by the Germans.