

Welcome to Calvary Church, Brighton

"The importance of the Reformation for us
today"

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www.calvary-brighton.org.uk

*Sermons and talks - [calvary-
brighton.sermon.net](http://calvary-brighton.sermon.net)*



*The background is the
painting "Luther's 95
Theses." Ferdinand
Pauwels, via Wikimedia
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Reformation - today!



- On October 31st 1517 Martin Luther (age - monk and theology teacher) posted 95 discussion points on Facebook-the door of the chapel in Wittenberg
- This can be identified as the trigger point for a cultural, political, economic and spiritual revolution for Europe
 - and then America, Africa etc.
 - we still reap the benefits today.
- Challenge the Catholic Church 1.5K old?
- Call it corrupt?
- Disagree with the Pope and the Establishment?
- Say he found / rediscovered a better way?
- How dare he!!!

N.B. he wasn't alone! - reformation map

- Conflict within and against 16th century Catholicism
- Luther - Germany
- Calvin, Zwingli - Switzerland
- Huguenots in France
- John Knox in Scotland
- Henry VIII (d.1547) ... Elisabeth I in England - prayer book: Thomas Cranmer
- Poland
- Martyrs in Lewes (1555-7), one from Black Lion St, Brighton!



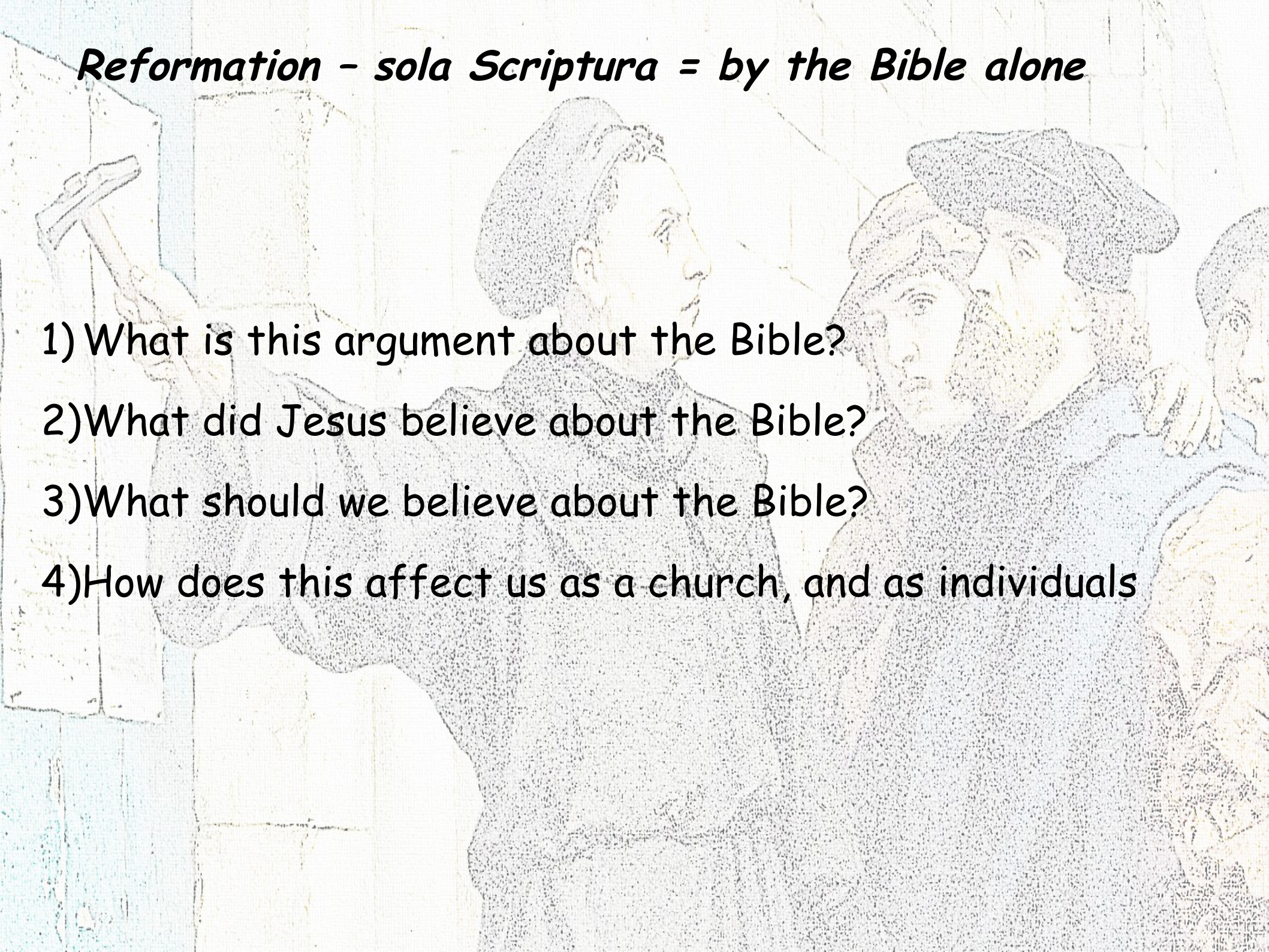
How dare he??!

What is at stake is:

- (a) the way of salvation ... via
- (b) the basis of authority
 - Tradition(s)?
 - Church elite - priests as gatekeepers?
 - People's experience - individual, mystical?
 - Or
 - What God has said in Scripture
- Luther stood on Scripture alone, was he right? Would Jesus say he was right?
- ==> P.S. where do we stand in a confusing world?
- ==>P.S. where do we find the way of salvation?



Reformation - sola Scriptura = by the Bible alone

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- 1) What is this argument about the Bible?
 - 2) What did Jesus believe about the Bible?
 - 3) What should we believe about the Bible?
 - 4) How does this affect us as a church, and as individuals

Reformation - sola Scriptura = by Scripture alone

1. What exactly was the argument about the Bible?

Martin Luther was debating whether the church was right to do XYZ to declare salvation from & to God

e.g. "indulgences" = pay money to be let off time in purgatory

e.g. "trying harder" to be accepted with God

- pilgrimages

- His opponents said

- "the pope says so"

- "the church councils have agreed this"

- Luther said:

- Unless you can show me from the Bible ... I will not back down!

2. What does Jesus think?

Matthew's gospel

- Jesus defeated the Devil by quoting Bible=Scripture
 - *"it is written" 4:4,7,10*
- Jesus believed that "life" is not possible without God's words, from his mouth
 - 4:4 "... [does] live on every word that comes from the mouth of God"
- He came not to abolish the Law and the Prophets (i.e. OT) but to fulfil the Bible
 - 5:17-19
- He claimed eternal significance for his own words (~ N.T.)
 - 7:24,26 - *to be believed and obeyed*
- His own words had Divine power
 - 8:26 ... *the winds and waves obey him*
- He was clear that God's word overtrumps human tradition
 - 15:3-6
- He believed that the words of the Bible are the words of the Creator (i.e. not just the quotes)
 - 19:3-6 *"Creator ... said" e.g. regarding human marriage*

2b. What does Jesus think?

Matthew's gospel ...

- He submitted his own life to the Scriptures, to the point of death
 - *26:52-56 - guidance, direction*
- His authorised biographer (i.e. Matthew) says x18 "that it might be fulfilled what was written ..."
 - 27:9 - indicating that Jesus is only to be understood as fulfilment of God's revealed-in-written-words plan
- ***==> He knew his Bible extremely well***
- ***==> his approval covers the Old Testament, and [completed] Apostolic New Testament record of Jesus and his words***
- ***==> "What the Bible says, God says" - inerrant, infallible***
- ***==> Jesus was guided by and submitted to Scripture***
- ***==> revering, believing, submitting to Scripture is an act of devotion to Jesus***

3. What should we believe about the Bible?

"God has revealed himself in the Bible, which consists of the Old and New Testaments alone. Every word was inspired by God through human authors, so that the Bible as originally given is in its entirety the Word of God, without error and fully reliable in fact and doctrine. The Bible alone speaks with final authority and is always sufficient for all matters of belief and practice."

- (Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches statement of belief)

3b. What should we believe about the Bible?

The Bible IS God speaking in power and authority

- i.e. his words are not mistaken, old, dead, irrelevant
- ARE: true, living, active, indispensable
- Hebrews 4:12
- **God is able to speak - to oppose us, to win us and woo us**
 - it's the idols that have mouths but cannot speak (Psalm 115)
 - i.e. certainty is not impossible, or a bad telephone line
- **People are able to understand ... if they are humbly and spiritually willing to listen**
 - Psalm 19:7 "the law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making **wise the simple**"
 - N.B. people who act as guides are helpful.
- **God uses people to tell people the way of salvation - this is part of his plan**
- **The Scriptures are the source of the good news/gospel of Jesus Christ**
 - The Scriptures testify about HIM (John 1:45 etc)
 - Without the Scriptures we have no access to the real Jesus ... who spoke.

4. What does this mean to us?

- ==> We should read and know our Bibles
 - Believe and obey
 - = this will make us countercultural (e.g. in matters of sexual ethics)!
- **We should use and appreciate guides (e.g. teachers from the past, preachers and teachers of the present)**
 - God speaks his perfect words to us through imperfect people
 - Don't belong to a church which is not fed and formed by God's word!
 - "If there is a book that will show me the way to heaven ... Give me that book!" - John Wesley (Gideons, "tracts")
- **We should insist on and fully support the authentic ministry of the word**
 - Through the Spirit and prayer - Trinitarian
 - Through people who believe it, understand it reliably and obey it themselves
 - Who are gifted by the Holy Spirit and able to teach
- **We should not be ashamed to speak the word of God to others!**
 - e.g. To our children "the things our fathers told us ..." Psalm 78:4
 - To anyone where we have the opportunity ("the disciples went everywhere speaking the word", gossiping the gospel Acts 8:4)
- **Luther shows us that it is the people that are grasped by his word are the ones who know God and do great exploits for him**

Luther and God's word

"I opposed indulgences and all the papists, but never with force. I simply taught, preached and wrote God's word; otherwise I did nothing.

And while I slept or drank Wittenberg beer with Philip [his friend] the word so greatly weakened the papacy that no prince or emperor ever inflicted such losses upon it. I did nothing; the word did everything"

