

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Something Greater Than Halloween Happened on October 31st

JOSH BUICE, DMIN

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Every year during the fall, the air becomes crisp, the days shorter, and the end of October is marked by a celebration known to us as [Halloween](#). However, on October 31st—something greater than Halloween should be recognized—especially by the Protestant church. In the year 1517, on October 31st, a man named Martin Luther nailed a document to the Castle door in Wittenberg. That single document, known to us as [The 95 Theses](#), literally sparked the great Reformation and led to the intense hatred of Martin Luther by the Pope and all of Rome.

The Catholic Church was guilty of perverting the message of grace by offering the forgiveness of sins through the sale of indulgences. Martin Luther had seen enough. After being saved by the grace of God, he was moved by the Holy Spirit to take a stand against the teachings of Rome. That passion was based upon his love for Holy Scripture, but most importantly—his love for the Christ of Scripture.

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Luther's love prompted the sacrifice of himself

In order for us to understand the magnitude of Luther's stand in 1517, we must understand the religious climate and rule under which Luther lived. He was involved in the Catholic religious system. All persons within the Catholic Church were forced to submit to the Pope and his rule or face excommunication—or even death! Luther's love for the Word of God (which he called the external Word) prompted him to reject the indulgences and false sense of forgiveness provided by the Catholic Church. When Luther said, "Here I stand..." it was a pure stand of opposition—not one of selfish ambition. Luther never intended to receive fame, spark a reformation or get his name "tagged" on thousands of blog sites in the years to come! Luther was motivated by a love for the Word which drove him to stand up in the face of a powerful giant—even if it cost him everything. Even if it cost him his life.

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Luther's love prompted the sacrifice of his time and energy

Luther's deep love produced rigorous labor in the Word. Martin Luther was not a lazy man. No man can lead a reformation while approaching ministry casually. Luther's love for the Word of God produced labor that shaped the German language and enriched it with his translation of God's Word. Luther did not have the ability to utilize *Logos* or any other computer program in his translation work. Intense and unwavering labor was the product of Luther's love for God's Word.

"Sunday 5:00 a.m. worship with a sermon on the Epistle, 10:00 a.m. with a sermon on the Gospel, an afternoon message on the Old Testament or catechism. Monday and Tuesday sermons were on the Catechism; Wednesdays on Matthew; Thursdays and Fridays on the Apostolic letters; and Saturday on John."¹ Although times have changed since the 1500s, it should be noted that Luther was passionate about preaching the Word. It drove and powered his desires. Luther called the Word of God "The external Word," and that External Word dominated Luther's passions.

"In 1522 he preached 117 sermons in Wittenberg and 137 sermons the next year. In 1528 he preached almost 200 times, and from 1529 we have 121 sermons. So the average in those four years was one sermon every two-and-a-half days."² It should also be noted that Luther's preaching was not the same message warmed up each week. His preaching was the byproduct of his intense study, which took place each day. Martin Luther

¹ Piper, John – Martin Luther: Lessons from His Life and Labor:

[http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Biographies/1470 Martin Luther Lessons from His Life and Labor/](http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Biographies/1470_Martin_Luther_Lessons_from_His_Life_and_Labor/).

² Meuser, Fred W., *Luther the Preacher*, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1983), p. 37-38.

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translated, wrote and preached without modern “helps” that are available through computers, the Internet, and the thousands of commentaries that we have available to us at the click of a button. When it comes down to it, [Martin Luther](#) was a “work horse” who lived to preach the Word—and as a result, we are still talking about him today. Luther’s life has left a mark on the world and it has also provided writings that are still worth reading. John MacArthur once said in a sermon, “You cannot just roll out of bed and lead a reformation.”³ I believe he’s correct. Luther didn’t casually lead a reformation. The Reformation was the byproduct of relentless study and passionate preaching straight from the Word of God.

Luther’s love prompted the proclamation of God’s Word

Luther called the Word of God the “external Word” because it was outside of man and his ability to mold it into something of his own thinking. God’s Word was not the product of man—it was the divine revelation of God. Therefore, Luther would often refer to it as the external Word in order to make that point. Luther was not a secluded theologian who only came out of his office for personal pleasure. Luther spent years faithfully preaching and teaching the Word to people. It was not enough to study, translate and write for Luther! He had a burning desire to preach the Word of God. “Luther was one of the greatest preachers in the history of Christendom... Between 1510 and 1546 Luther preached approximately 3,000 sermons. Frequently he preached several times a week, often two or more times a day.”⁴ Luther put emphasis on the Book! He loved it and he preached it! “Luther had one weapon with which to rescue the incarnate Word from being sold in the markets of Wittenberg. He drove out the money changers—the indulgence sellers—with the whip of the “external Word,” the Book.”⁵

Luther’s love prompted the Reformation

The goal of Martin Luther was not the Reformation. However, God used a man who had an intense and unwavering love for Him to spark it. How did Luther come to know God and His love? It was through the Word of God—the divine revelation—the external Word—that God revealed Himself to Luther. It changed Luther from a religious Catholic scholar to a man who loved God and became saturated with His Word. This spark turned into a flame that roared through Wittenberg and through the world liberating our

³ MacArthur, John, *Deliverance: The Neglected Doctrine*, No. 5.

⁴ Walther von Loewenich, *Luther: the Man and His Work*, trans. by Lawrence W. Denef, (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1986, orig. 1982), p. 353.

⁵ Piper, John, *Martin Luther: Lessons from his Life and Labor* –

[http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Biographies/1470 Martin Luther Lessons from His Life and Labor/](http://www.desiringgod.org/ResourceLibrary/Biographies/1470_Martin_Luther_Lessons_from_His_Life_and_Labor/).

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worship from the rule of the Catholic system and spreading the Word to the common person. It was not a superficial love or a selfish love. It was a genuine love for God that was rooted in a Book—the Word of God! October 31st 1517 should always be remembered. It changed Luther and it changed the world—for the glory of God.

We should be forever grateful that God raised up a man who would risk everything to stand up against the perverted teachings of Rome. Today, we experience ultimate religious freedom. It wasn't the case in 1517! Although Pope Leo X called Luther "a wild boar (pig)"—he should be remembered as a faithful soldier of the cross who sparked something greater than Halloween known to us as the Reformation!

Luther wrote, *It is vain to rely on salvation by letters of indulgence, even if the commissary, or indeed the pope himself, were to pledge his own soul for their validity* (#52 of 95).⁶



[Dr. Josh Buice](#)

<http://www.deliveredbygrace.com>

Dr. Josh Buice serves as the pastor of Pray's Mill Baptist Church in Douglasville, Georgia — just west of Atlanta. He is the founding director of the G3 Conference, the author of a theology blog (DeliveredByGrace.com) and is passionate about expository preaching, biblical theology, and the local church. Josh studied at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary where he earned his M.Div. and D.Min. in expository preaching. With a passion for sound biblical theology and ecclesiology, Pastor Buice spends much of his time preaching, writing, and talking about these important issues. He is married to his wife Kari and together they have four children (Karis, John Mark, Kalli, and Judson). When away from the office, Josh enjoys spending his time with his family, hunting, running, and a good cup of coffee.

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<https://churchleaders.com/outreach-missions/outreach-missions-articles/311372-something-greater-halloween-happened-october-31st-josh-buice.html/2>

⁶ Luther, Martin, *The Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences – Commonly Known as the 95 Theses* – <https://www.gotquestions.org/95-theses.html>