

The reformation, an attempt (in part) by Martin Luther to reform the Roman Catholic Church, met such opposition that it grew into a much wider movement that eventually formed a schism in the Church resulting in the Protestant Reformation. Events leading up to the reformation were numerous and Luther was by no means the only participant in history to try and reform the Church. Corruption in the Church had reached epidemic levels and by the end of the fifteenth century Rome was attempting to end the “Great Schism” itself and to “reform the morals of the entire church”.¹

Many changes in the world at large were taking place, like the invention of the printing press, which gave those outside the Roman Church access to scripture, “the influx of Byzantine scholars, and the rediscovery of antiquity.”² It became obvious to many Christians that the Church itself was not teaching the scriptures as given by God, but as was pleasing and created by man, or that of the Roman Catholic Church. Feudalism was coming to an end, groundwork for reforming the Church had been laid by people such as Wycliffe and Huss years before, and calls for reform on both moral grounds and doctrinal issues of the Church began to increase. Erasmus, who had joined the humanist reformers, declared the conditions in which the Catholic Church could be reformed was by Christians devoting themselves to an ascetic discipline of Christ and to “abandon” the evil “example set by the popes of the Renaissance.”³ With momentum building, in his second posted theses at Castle, Luther sought to fight the corruption of indulgences sold by the pope, and on October 31, 1517 the Protestant Reformation began.

¹ Justo L. Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity: The Reformation to the Present Day*, Vol. 2, 2 vols. (New York, NY: Harper One, 1985), 7.

² Ibid, 10.

³ Ibid, 11.