RS Notes: The Protestant Reformation

Erasmus and Christian Humanism

* Italian humanism spread to Northern Europe
	+ Created **Christian Humanism**
		- Believed in the ability of human beings to reason and improve themselves
			* Goal: reform the Catholic Church through inner piety (religious feeling)
* The best known Christian Humanist=**Desiderius Erasmus**
	+ Developed what he called “the philosophy of Christ”
		- Showed people how to live good lives daily rather than how to achieve salvation
		- Stressed inward piety, not external observance of rules and rituals
		- Wrote *The Praise of Folly*- criticized the monks
		- “Erasmus laid the egg that Luther hatched.”

Corruption in the Church

* Many people were calling for reform of the Church
	+ Uneducated priests didn’t understand the mass or how to achieve **salvation** (acceptance into Heaven)
		- **Absenteeism**- Many priests neglected their parish because they didn’t live there.
	+ Wealthy bishops were more interested in making money
		- **Simony**- Accepting bribes for Church offices
	+ **Immoral Popes**
		- Alexander VI had a mistress and 7 children
			* Cesare Borgia (son) inspiration for *The Prince*
		- Sixtus planned to assassinate Lorenzo de Medici
	+ **Nepotism**- give important jobs in the Church to relatives
	+ **Selling indulgences**
		- A release from all or part of punishment for sins
		- Using money to build St. Peter’s Basilica, fund wars, etc.

Martin Luther

* **Martin Luther** was a monk and professor at the University of Wittenberg
	+ Through his study of the Bible, he came to believe that faith alone was needed for salvation (Catholics believe in faith and good works)
		- God is merciful, so he forgives sins
		- Believed selling indulgences harmed people’s chance at salvation
	+ Wrote the **95 Theses**
		- Nailed it to the door of the Wittenberg Chapel on **October 31, 1517**
		- Thousands of copies were printed
			* Exposed the corruption of the Church
* Ideas of Luther
	+ Purgatory was a false doctrine
	+ Salvation was through faith alone
	+ The Bible alone should be the final authority for truth
	+ Baptism and Eucharist are only valid sacraments
		- Only ones with scriptural support
	+ Eucharist is not a transformation of bread and wine into body and blood of Christ
		- Christ is just present through it
* 1520- Luther wanted the German princes to overthrow the papacy, to make a reformed German church, using his ideas
* 1521- Luther was excommunicated
	+ Summoned to appear before the imperial diet
		- Charles V tried to get him to change his ideas
		- Luther refused (it went against his better conscience)
* **Edict of Worms**
	+ Luther was an outlaw in the empire
		- All books to be burned and he was to be delivered to Emperor
		- Luther went into hiding (protected by Frederick the Wise)
	+ Caused many more princes to support him
		- Took control of Catholic churches and made them into state churches
		- Luther set up new services to replace mass
			* Features Bible readings, preaching the Word of God, and song
	+ His doctrine came to be known as **Lutheranism** (1st Protestant Faith)

Politics in the German Reformation

* From the beginning Luther’s revolution was tied to politics
	+ Charles V (Holy Roman Emperor) ruled Spain, most of Central Europe and the New World
		- He wanted to keep it all Catholic and under Hapsburg dynasty
	+ Charles was fighting a war with France and the Pope
		- Many German rulers were supporting Luther, so he had to make peace
* **Peace of Augsburg**
	+ Accepted the division of Christianity in Germany
	+ Princes could choose Catholic or Lutheran
		- All states would have same legal rights
		- Does NOT recognize religious tolerance of individuals