
Protestant Reformation

Part 4: God's Timing

As Narrated by Denver C. Snuffer, Jr.

One of the remarkable things throughout history is the timing of who lives at the same time. It seems as if when God chooses to change the course of human history, His most effective means to accomplish that is to send into the world the right people at the right time to facilitate a revolutionary change in the course of human history.

We see that at the time of the American Revolution when there was a gathering of intellectual and moral giants in one generation living in the American colonies: George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, James Monroe, and many others were contemporaries in the British colonies of America.

These men agreed it was necessary to both rebel against a distant and unsympathetic monarch, and also to replace an unresponsive government with a form of government that guaranteed individual freedom. Every one of them were needed for the revolution to succeed.

Likewise at the time of Martin Luther there were other courageous and moral men who likewise believed Catholicism was corrupt to its core. Contemporaneous, that is, living at the same time as Martin Luther, were also such Protestant figures such as John Calvin and John Knox. Martin Luther lived from 1483-1546. At that same time, John Calvin lived from 1509 and to 1564. John Knox was born in 1513 and lived through 1572. All of these men, Bullinger, Zwingli, Simons and others shared the same view and had very similar experiences

They were all agreed that not only was Catholicism itself corrupted, but the local clergy with whom they had the most interaction proved to be not only corrupt but abusive.

In the wisdom of God, the right personalities were present on the European stage at the same overlapping time.

Luther, Calvin and Knox met each other. These men not only lived at the same time, but their paths crossed, and they each had the same moral convictions, each were morally courageous, and each had witnessed local corruption in widely separated parts of Catholic Europe. God supplied the needed opposition for these men in corrupt local clergy who had abused each of them.

If you had to settle on a common theme that produced the Protestant Reformation – it is the pattern of religious abuse, religious intolerance, corruption and wickedness on the one side, confronted by men of extraordinary moral character whose desire was to understand God and obtain salvation, each of whom feared they would not obtain salvation through the existing abusive political and religious establishment. The Protestant leaders concluded Rome was misusing and corrupting the Christian tradition. So, on the same European stage, at the same moment, God provided these different moral giants confronted by moral corruption, all of whom longed to find a relationship with God that would be authentic, real and personal.

When you add it all up together, the Protestant Reformation is not just the product of Martin Luther, though he's the one to whom we give the greatest initial credit. It was the timing and the confluence of so many things – people and circumstances – aligning in the right moment to produce the success of the Protestant Reformation.