

REFORMATION TODAY

95 Theses

Western Europe's 16th Century was an era when people unashamedly enjoyed their sin. The adversary of righteousness was capturing the culture without firing a shot because the righteous were disengaged from the battle. On October 31st, 1517, a young German Augustinian monk posted 95 theses on the door of the Castle Church at Wittenberg, Germany. The theses were an invitation to debate the sale of indulgences by the church.

Martin Luther's passionate defense of Scripture resulted in his excommunication from the church by Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. In 1520 at the Diet of Worms he was declared an outlaw and stripped of his professional status. Luther was a willing sacrificer.

The church of our era has so surrendered to, identified with and mimicked the culture that inspired absolute truth no longer serves as the standard.¹ Our decadent society is bent upon Deicide, the death of God. It has adopted the philosophy that if man can involve himself in a given activity, then society must tolerate and endorse the activity regardless of its amorality. We have forfeited the public square; our city fathers have left their watch.²

Humanism, hedonism, consumerism, materialism, radical individualism, fallen pragmatism, multiculturalism and sensualism are societally approved lifestyles. Nevertheless, they are not God-approved. Another reformation is needed.

American culture is at war with righteousness: infanticide, euthanasia, abortion, homosexuality, pedophilia, etc.... Are these political issues or spiritual issues? Yes! The cultural forces have made absolute truth its enemy, and they intend to challenge every absolute until absolute truth is perceived to be no longer absolute.

We must take the action necessary to give people permission to exercise morality.

Perhaps God is allowing our famine of righteousness to occur in order to force another cultural and spiritual reformation. Could this season be God's time for one of Christianity's most momentous pervasive advances since the 16th Century? If so, we are commanded to "be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might."³

Before any adversary can be defeated there must be a call to arms. Society cannot be reformed until the challenger is defined, the battle lines drawn and the foe engaged. At that moment the folks in the reformers' camp are charged with the responsibility of being willing assaulters deployed in the cosmic struggle.

What 95 theses would God gift to us for our call to action? What 95 theses would our holy God place as a plumb line in the midst of His people?⁴ What 95 theses would serve as "the weapons of our warfare... divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses?"⁵

PERHAPS:

1. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.' And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."⁶
2. "Sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it."⁷
3. "God said to Moses, 'I am who I am.'"⁸
4. "You shall have no other gods before Me."⁹
5. "You shall not make for yourself an idol."¹⁰
6. "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain."¹¹
7. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy."¹²
8. "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you."¹³
9. "You shall not murder."¹⁴
10. "You shall not commit adultery."¹⁵
11. "You shall not steal."¹⁶
12. "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."¹⁷
13. "You shall not covet."¹⁸
14. "Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."¹⁹
15. "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success."²⁰
16. "If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."²¹
17. "In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes."²²
18. "David said to the Philistine, 'You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted.'"²³
19. "How long will you hesitate between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him."²⁴
20. "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them."²⁵
21. "It shall be when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then you shall go out to battle, for God will have gone out before you to strike the army of the Philistines."²⁶

22. “[If] My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”²⁷
23. “For the eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His.”²⁸
24. “For Ezra set his heart to study the law of the Lord, and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel.”²⁹
25. “O Lord, I beseech Thee, may Thine ear be attentive to the prayer of Thy servant and the prayer of Thy servants who delight to revere Thy name, and make Thy servant successful today, and grant him compassion before this man.”³⁰
26. “If I perish, I perish.”³¹
27. “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked I shall return there. The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.”³²
28. “As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth.”³³
29. “I know that Thou canst do all things, and that no purpose of Thine can be thwarted.”³⁴
30. “How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night.”³⁵
31. “There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.”³⁶
32. “Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people.”³⁷
33. “For by wise guidance you will wage war, and in abundance of counselors there is victory.”³⁸
34. “There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven.”³⁹
35. “Fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person. For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden. Whether it is good or evil.”⁴⁰
36. “Cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, reprove the ruthless; defend the orphan, plead for the widow.”⁴¹
37. “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever. For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways.”⁴²
38. “Has a nation changed gods, when they were not gods? But My people have changed their glory for that which does not profit.”⁴³
39. “Stand by the ways and see and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; and you shall find rest for your souls.”⁴⁴
40. “Do not learn the way of the nations... for the customs of the peoples are delusion.”⁴⁵
41. “Seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf; for in its welfare you will have welfare. For I know the plans that I have for you... plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope.”⁴⁶
42. “Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me?”⁴⁷
43. “Let us examine and probe our ways, and let us return to the Lord.”⁴⁸

44. "When I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die;' and you do not warn him or speak out to warn the wicked from his wicked way that he may live, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand."⁴⁹
45. "I searched for a man among them who should build up the wall and stand in the gap before Me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one."⁵⁰
46. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Though I wrote for him ten thousand precepts of My law, they are regarded as a strange thing. For they sow the wind, and they reap the whirlwind."⁵¹
47. "Hate evil, love good, and establish justice in the gate! Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."⁵²
48. "What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"⁵³
49. "The Lord is slow to anger and great in power, and the Lord will by no means leave the guilty unpunished."⁵⁴
50. "The righteous will live by his faith."⁵⁵
51. "Consider your ways! You have sown much, but harvest little."⁵⁶
52. "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit."⁵⁷
53. "I, the Lord, do not change."⁵⁸
54. "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."⁵⁹
55. "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven."⁶⁰
56. "I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; therefore be shrewd as serpents, and innocent as doves."⁶¹
57. "Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men. For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."⁶²
58. "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind, and with all your strength.... You shall love your neighbor as yourself."⁶³
59. "Keep watching and praying that you may not come into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."⁶⁴
60. "Woe to you when all men speak well of you, for in the same way their fathers used to treat the false prophets."⁶⁵
61. "No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."⁶⁶
62. "He who is not with Me is against Me."⁶⁷
63. "Remember Lot's wife."⁶⁸
64. "Everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed."⁶⁹
65. "The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy; I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly."⁷⁰
66. "They loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God."⁷¹

67. "If the world hates you, you know that it has hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world; therefore the world hates you."⁷²
68. "What is truth?"⁷³
69. "We must obey God rather than men."⁷⁴
70. "I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God."⁷⁵
71. "As he was discussing righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix became frightened."⁷⁶
72. "Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever."⁷⁷
73. "How shall we who died to sin still live in it? For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."⁷⁸
74. "I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect."⁷⁹
75. "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts."⁸⁰
76. "It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or to do anything by which your brother stumbles. Whatever is not from faith is sin."⁸¹
77. "For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."⁸²
78. "Do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God. Flee immorality. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body."⁸³
79. "Bad company corrupts good morals."⁸⁴
80. "The god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."⁸⁵
81. "Though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh... we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ."⁸⁶
82. "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me. May it never be that I should boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."⁸⁷
83. "My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus."⁸⁸

84. "See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ."⁸⁹
85. "Examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil."⁹⁰
86. "God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline."⁹¹
87. "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires."⁹²
88. "I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith."⁹³
89. "My righteous one shall live by faith; and if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul."⁹⁴
90. "Prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves."⁹⁵
91. "You shall be holy, for I am holy."⁹⁶
92. "Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul."⁹⁷
93. "Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abide forever."⁹⁸
94. "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and he will reign forever and ever. And on His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords."⁹⁹
95. "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done."¹⁰⁰

PERHAPS:

The 46th Psalm could serve as our "Battle Hymn of the Reformation:"

"A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing; Our helper He amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing. For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe, his craft and pow'r are great, and armed with cruel hate, on earth is not his equal.

"Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing, were not the right man on our side, the man of God's own choosing. Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He, Lord Sabaoth His name, from age to age the same, and He must win the battle.

"And tho' this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us, we will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph thro' us. The prince of darkness grim, we tremble

not for him, his rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure: one little word shall fell him.

“That word above all earthly pow’rs, no thanks to them, abideth; the Spirit and the gifts are ours thro’ Him with us sideth. Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also, the body they may kill; God’s truth abideth still: His kingdom is forever.”
(Martin Luther, “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God”).

That first Reformation was epochal and incendiary. It identified the cultural gulf and spanned the abyss. Five hundred years have elapsed subsequent to the Reformation. Perhaps the question we must answer is, “How Then Shall We Live?”¹⁰¹

God answers that challenge saying, “To one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin.”¹⁰² We must be meditative, reflective and aggressively Spirit-led for the world’s vanity tutors us in what is not eternal. We must commit ourselves to “starve all the gods of the earth.”¹⁰³

Time is short. We must cease negotiating with those having nothing to offer. We claim to be emancipated yet from heaven’s perspective our freedom is nothing more than a Laodicean surrender.

We have God’s guarantee that He “always leads us in His triumph in Christ.”¹⁰⁴ Let us now enter the fray knowing that “in all these things we overwhelming conquer through Him who loved us.”¹⁰⁵

“I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. The Lord bless you, and keep you; the Lord make His face shine on you, and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up His countenance on you, and give you peace.”¹⁰⁶

SOLI DEO GLORIA!

¹ II Ti. 3:16

² Lam. 5:14

³ Eph. 6:10

⁴ Am. 7:8

⁵ II Cor. 10:4

⁶ Gen. 1:1,26,27

⁷ Gen. 4:7

⁸ Ex. 3:14

⁹ Ex. 20:3

¹⁰ Ex. 20:4

¹¹ Ex. 20:7

¹² Ex. 20:8

¹³ Ex. 20:12

¹⁴ Ex. 20:13

¹⁵ Ex. 20:14

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¹⁷ Ex. 20:16
¹⁸ Ex. 20:17
¹⁹ Dt. 6:4-9
²⁰ Josh. 1:8
²¹ Josh. 24:15
²² Judg. 17:6; 21:25
²³ I Sam. 17:45
²⁴ I Ki. 18:21
²⁵ II Ki. 6:16
²⁶ I Chron. 14:15
²⁷ II Chron. 7:14
²⁸ II Chron. 16:9
²⁹ Ezra 7:10
³⁰ Neh. 1:11
³¹ Esther 4:16
³² Job 1:21
³³ Job 19:25
³⁴ Job 42:2
³⁵ Ps. 1:1f.
³⁶ Prov. 14:12
³⁷ Prov. 14:34
³⁸ Prov. 24:6
³⁹ Ecc. 3:1
⁴⁰ Ecc. 12:13f.
⁴¹ Isa. 1:16,17
⁴² Isa. 40:8; 55:8
⁴³ Jer. 2:11
⁴⁴ Jer. 6:16
⁴⁵ Jer. 10:2,3
⁴⁶ Jer. 29:7,11
⁴⁷ Jer. 32:27
⁴⁸ Lam. 3:40
⁴⁹ Eze. 3:18
⁵⁰ Eze. 22:30
⁵¹ Hos. 4:6; 8:12,7, respectively.
⁵² Am. 5:15,24
⁵³ Mic. 6:8
⁵⁴ Nah. 1:3
⁵⁵ Hab. 2:4
⁵⁶ Hag. 1:5,6
⁵⁷ Zech. 4:6
⁵⁸ Mal. 3:6
⁵⁹ Mt. 6:24
⁶⁰ Mt. 7:21
⁶¹ Mt. 10:16
⁶² Mk. 7:8; 8:38
⁶³ Mk. 12:17,30,31
⁶⁴ Mk. 14:38
⁶⁵ Lk. 6:26
⁶⁶ Lk. 9:62
⁶⁷ Lk. 11:23
⁶⁸ Lk. 17:32
⁶⁹ Jn. 3:20
⁷⁰ Jn. 10:10

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⁷² Jn. 15:18f.
⁷³ Jn. 18:38
⁷⁴ Acts 5:29
⁷⁵ Acts 20:27
⁷⁶ Acts 24:25
⁷⁷ Ro. 1:22f.,25
⁷⁸ Ro. 6:2,23
⁷⁹ Ro. 12:1f.
⁸⁰ Ro. 13:14
⁸¹ Ro. 14:21,23
⁸² I Cor. 1:18
⁸³ I Cor. 6:9f.,18,19f.
⁸⁴ I Cor. 15:33
⁸⁵ II Cor. 4:4
⁸⁶ II Cor. 10:3,5
⁸⁷ Gal. 2:20; 6:14
⁸⁸ Phil. 4:19
⁸⁹ Col. 2:8
⁹⁰ I Thess. 5:21f.
⁹¹ II Ti. 1:7
⁹² II Ti. 4:3
⁹³ II Ti. 4:6f.
⁹⁴ Heb. 10:38f.
⁹⁵ Js. 1:22
⁹⁶ I Pe. 1:16
⁹⁷ I Pe. 2:11
⁹⁸ I Jn. 2:15-17
⁹⁹ Rev. 11:15; 19:16
¹⁰⁰ Rev. 22:12
¹⁰¹ Eze. 33:10, translation mine.
¹⁰² Js. 4:17
¹⁰³ Zeph. 2:11
¹⁰⁴ II Cor. 2:14
¹⁰⁵ Ro. 8:37
¹⁰⁶ Eph. 1:18f.; Nu. 6:24-26