

The Great Controversy Series  
A True Reformer's Weapons of War  
Chapter 8 - Luther Before the Diet  
Bible Sermon Study Notes: Cary Rodgers, Jr, pastor

**Do you believe that we are already in a crisis? Or are you waiting for a crisis?**

**Revelation 14:6-7**

6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,  
7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the **hour of his judgment is come**: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

We are living within the appointed "hour" of judgment. It is here! The judgment hour is here! This hour of judgment was prophesied in Daniel 8:14

**What is the Greek word for "judgment"?**

Krisis (kree'-sis) - By extension a tribunal; by implication justice (specifically divine law): - accusation, condemnation, damnation, judgment. (Strong Greek Definitions)

We are in a crisis as we speak! What will you be doing when your name is called in the courts of heaven? Will you be in Christ or in your own sinful flesh? Would your records say guilty or not guilty?

During this crisis judgment hour Satan is doing all he can to keep us in our sinful flesh so we will not be able to stand as "not guilty" under the blood stained banner of Jesus Christ. This is not a play matter. This is extremely serious.

**We specific warning does God give His faithful who are living at the very end of time?**

**Revelation 12:17**

17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Satan has declared ALL out war against the TRUTH and the REMNANT who are obedient to ALL the ten commandments of God including keeping the seventh-day Sabbath and cleave to the testimony of Jesus Christ.

The last day Remnant people of God are true reformers. They have turned from all forms of sin and the world and daily live in Christ. They are no longer conformed to the things of this world, but totally transformed and reformed through the power of Jesus Christ. They are first revived, spiritually awoken and then transformed by the truth of God's Word. All true reformers have a passion to share God truth to others.

We are in ALL OUT WAR!

Satan and His demons are the main enemies in this war.

**Ephesians 6:12**

12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

This warfare will only intensify as we get closer and closer to the second coming of Jesus Christ. There are two generals in this war, Satan on one side and Jesus Christ on the other. Who is your general?

**You must be aware that the enemy is attacking on two main fronts: 1) The truth of God's Word  
2) Your sinful flesh**

## **What must true reformers do in the last days as Satan attacks the everlasting gospel truth?**

### **Jude 1:3-4**

3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common (corrupted) salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Reformers earnestly contend, struggle or fight against the attacks of the everlasting gospels. True reformers are not asleep nor afraid. They actively hold up the banner of truth even in the midst of apostasy and persecution.

## **Why does Satan attack our sinful flesh? Sinful Flesh = Eternal Death**

### **Romans 7:5, 14, 23 - 25**

5 For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto **death**.

14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.

23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

If you reject God's law, your sinful flesh will overcome you! You **MUST** be IN Christ and reject the law of sin in order to keep God's law. Also remember if you reject the law of God you also reject Christ who is the only One that can save you from the condemnation or punishment of the law.

Satan will attack attack attack your sinful flesh with a variety of temptations so you can yield to sin. Satan wants you to walk in your flesh not in the spirit of Christ.

### **2 Corinthians 10:3-5**

3 For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh:

4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down [destroying] of strong holds;)

5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

### **How?**

### **Romans 13:14**

14 But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not **provision (supply)** for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

### **Philippians 4:8**

8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, **think on these things**.

If it is NOT true, honest, just, pure, love, of good report, virtuous, nor points our minds to Jesus cut it OFF! Period. Disney? Hollywood? NFL? NBA? Worldly amusements? All these things appeal to your flesh. You will NEVER win by trying to overcome the flesh with the things that consistently appeal to the flesh! Never. Satan wants you to deceive yourself into thinking that it is possible to overcome the flesh and still be a fan of the Disney Network and its amusement parks. It will not happen. You will fail. Period

**What must true reformers have in order to contend for the TRUTH and keep their sinful flesh in subjection to the spirit of truth? What weapons of warfare must they use to guarantee victory?**

**Ephesians 6:10-18**

- 10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.  
 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.  
 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.  
 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.  
 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;  
 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;  
 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.  
 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:  
 18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

We don't need tanks, guns, and bombs to win! We must have on the whole armor Jesus Christ to win over the sin and Satan. Our two main offensive weapons in this warfare is the **Word of God and Prayer!** These are the two main weapons that Satan fears the most because they tear down the kingdom of Satan.

**These were the two main weapons of offense that ALL the reformers used during the protestant reformation.** Prayer and God's Word were the common theme that John Wycliffe, John Huss, and Martin Luther shared as they warred for God's Truth in a time of darkness during the Papal Roman Empire. They also had to overcome the sinful flesh and contend for the truth.

Let's continue to learn more about Martin Luther of Germany. Remember John Wycliffe, built the foundation of the protestant reformation, but Martin ignited the it with greater intensity.

**What happened after Martin Luther nailed the 95 theses to the door of the church in Wittenburg Germany on October 31, 1517 that exposed the errors of indulgences of papal Rome and that true forgiveness can only be through faith in Jesus?**

Caused a major stir throughout Wittenburg then spread throughout the worldwide. Copies of the 95 theses were shared with many others.

**What was Luther's main weapons of warfare during raise of the protestant reformation?**

The Word of God and prayer.

**Luther's Pen Made Papal Rome Tremble!**

After Luther wrote and nailed the 95 theses against Papal Rome, he and his pen went to work to educate others about some of the truths from God's word and expose more of the false doctrines of Papal Rome.

After the nailing of the 95 theses Luther wrote a collection of about 25 articles, tracts, and books; titles such as *Resolutions Concerning the 95 Theses, On the Papacy at Rome, Address to the Christian Nobility, The Babylonian Captivity of the Church, and On the Freedom of a Christian.*

**Excommunication**

June 15, 1520 Pope Leo X warned Luther with a papal bull to recant his writings and the 95 theses within 60 days or be excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church.

Fall 1520 papal Rome tried to broker a deal with Luther, instead Luther sent Pope Leo X a copy of his book, "O the Freedom of a Christian."

December 10, 1520 Martin Luther publicly set fire to the papal bull and its decrees at Wittenburg.

Published a book defending his actions entitled: *Why the Pope and his Recent Book are Burned and Assertions Concerning All Articles*

January 3, 1521 Luther was officially excommunicated from the Catholic Church by Pope Leo X

After Luther was excommunicated the papacy main objective was to kill him!

### **How Papal Roman Empire Kings were "elected"**

From the 13<sup>th</sup> century forward the Papal Roman Empire formed an "electoral college" which was a small committee of prince-electors also simply known as "electors" given the responsibility to select kings from various nations within their authority. After a Papal Rome electoral college selected a king, it had to be approved by the pope.

An elector was a very powerful position, highly respected, and admired. An elector was considered to be second to a king or emperor.

### **New Young King of Germany & Elector of Saxony**

Charles V, young new king of Germany, was heavily induced by the papacy and was encouraged to kill Martin Luther.

On the other hand, **Frederick III** an elector of Saxony who was one responsible for Charles V selection encouraged Charles V not to take any actions against Luther until he was given a hearing.

Saxony was the German state in which the city of Wittenburg was the capital.

Remember, Martin Luther was a professor at the University of Wittenburg and priest at the Wittenburg Church. Frederick III did not know Luther personally, but was obviously influenced by Luther and his writings.

Frederick III: "The elector had declared firmly that "neither his imperial majesty nor any other person had shown that Luther's writings had been refuted;" therefore he requested "that Dr. Luther should be furnished with a safe-conduct, so that he might appear before a tribunal of learned, pious, and impartial judges." - GC 145

### **Dignitaries of church and state gather in Worms, Germany**

Charles V agreed with the elector of Saxony and summoned Luther to appear before the Diet in Worms, Germany with a promise safe conduct there and back to Wittenburg

Aleander, the pope's representative, hated the idea of granting Luther a hearing before the Diet especially after Luther was excommunicated by the pope! He only wanted the blood of Luther. Aleander appealed by letter to the elector of Saxony that Luther should stay home in Wittenburg if he does not retract.

Luther was too sick to attend this first meeting in Worms before the Diet.

In Luther's absence, Aleander was granted permission to present his case to the Diet of the princes of Germany and other dignitaries before the Diet of Worms.

With great zeal and passion Aleander denounced Luther as a heretic!

"With all the power of learning and eloquence, Aleander set himself to overthrow the truth. Charge after charge he hurled against Luther as an enemy of the church and the state, the living and the dead, clergy and laity, councils and private Christians. "In Luther's errors there is enough," he declared, to warrant the burning of "a hundred thousand heretics." {GC 148.1}

In conclusion he endeavored to cast contempt upon the adherents of the reformed faith: "What are all these Lutherans? A crew of insolent pedagogues, corrupt priests, dissolute monks, ignorant lawyers, and degraded nobles, with the common people whom they have misled and perverted. How far superior to them is the Catholic party in number, ability, and power! A unanimous decree from this illustrious assembly will enlighten the simple, warn the imprudent, decide the waverers, and give strength to the weak." - GC 148.

### **God's true reformers in the last days will be condemned before church and state dignitaries in the same matter!**

"They are unlearned, few in numbers, and of the poorer class. Yet they claim to have the truth, and to be the chosen people of God. They are ignorant and deceived. How greatly superior in numbers and influence is our church! How many great and learned men are among us! How much more power is on our side!" - GC - 148

True PROTESTANT Reformation does not end with Luther but continues until the end of time!

Aleander appeared to have won the hearts of many of the members of the Diet of Worms, some were ready to get rid of Luther, but many among the diet was hesitant. They saw the contrast between humble Luther who used scriptures to defend his cause and the papacy's pride and arrogance that used no scripture to defend its position.

Even in Luther's absence, God moved on the people within the Diet to defend the TRUTH! In that assembly the Lord moved mightily on Duke George of Saxony

"Duke George of Saxony stood up in that princely assembly and specified with terrible exactness the deceptions and abominations of popery, and their dire results. In closing he said:

"These are some of the abuses that cry out against Rome. All shame has been put aside, and their only object is . . . money, money, money, . . . so that the preachers who should teach the truth, utter nothing but falsehoods, and are not only tolerated, but rewarded, because the greater their lies, the greater their gain. It is from this foul spring that such tainted waters flow. Debauchery stretches out the hand to avarice. . . . Alas, it is the scandal caused by the clergy that hurls so many poor souls into eternal condemnation. A general reform must be effected."

A more able and forcible denunciation of the papal abuses could not have been presented by Luther himself; and the fact that the speaker was a determined enemy of the Reformer's gave greater influence to his words." - GC - 149

### **Committee Formed**

After God and the angels shed beams of light on the Diet of Worms they ignored Aleander request to kill Luther and agreed to appoint a committee to deal with Papal Rome's oppression on the German people! The goal of the committee was to take immediate steps to correction the abuses.

"What a loss of Christian souls," said the petitioners, "what depredations, what extortions, on account of the scandals by which the spiritual head of Christendom is surrounded! It is our duty to prevent the ruin and dishonor of our people. For this reason we most humbly but most urgently entreat you to order a general reformation, and to undertake its accomplishment." - GC - 150

## **Luther travels to speak before the Diet of Worm**

Luther was summoned by the committee in Worms

Aleander and the papacy were furious!

Luther was promised a safe conduct to and from Worms by the committee according to the summons

Luther physically and spiritually strengthened by the Holy Spirit was determined to be God's ambassador of truth before an audience of the king, princes, and other dignitaries of Germany

Luther told his friends who urged him not to go:

"The papists do not desire my coming to Worms, but my condemnation and my death. It matters not. Pray not for me, but for the word of God. . . . Christ will give me His Spirit to overcome these ministers of error. I despise them during my life; I shall triumph over them by my death. They are busy at Worms about compelling me to retract; and this shall be my retraction: I said formerly that the pope was Christ's vicar; now I assert that he is our Lord's adversary, and the devil's apostle." GC – 151

It was about a two week journey (over 315 miles!) from Wittenburg to Worms Germany, but along the way Luther was met with eager crowds to hear words of Truth from God's Word. Luther did not disappoint.

"As the Reformer proceeded on his journey, he was everywhere regarded with great interest. An eager multitude thronged about him, and friendly voices warned him of the purpose of the Romanists. "They will burn you," said some, "and reduce your body to ashes, as they did with John Huss." Luther answered, "Though they should kindle a fire all the way from Worms to Wittenberg, the flames of which reached to heaven, I would walk through it in the name of the Lord; I would appear before them; I would enter the jaws of this behemoth, and break his teeth, confessing the Lord Jesus Christ." - GC – 153

## **Luther Before the Diet of Worms**

Luther arrived in Worms with a large multitude of onlookers meeting him at the gate.

The papal representatives could not believe Luther actually showed up for the show down!

The papist urged king Charles V to kill Luther at once, but the king refused due to the promise of a safe conduct to and from Worms.

Wearied from the long journey and still fighting illness Luther entered the room before the Diet as a soldier for Jesus Christ.

As he was about to enter the presence of his judges, an old general, the hero of many battles, said to him kindly: "Poor monk, poor monk, thou art now going to make a nobler stand than I or any other captains have ever made in the bloodiest of our battles. But if thy cause is just, and thou art sure of it, go forward in God's name, and fear nothing. God will not forsake thee." GC - 154

Luther filled with the Holy Spirit, prayer and the Word of God stood before the vast assembly of dignitaries. Papal Rome only wanted his blood nothing less!

To papacy this was an insulting spit in their face to allow Luther to speak before the Diet after the papacy just excommunicated Luther and condemned him to perpetual silence!

"In the presence of that powerful and titled assembly the lowly born Reformer seemed awed and embarrassed. Several of the princes, observing his emotion, approached him, and one of them whispered: "Fear not them

which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul." Another said: "When ye shall be brought before governors and kings for My sake, it shall be given you, by the Spirit of your Father, what ye shall say." Thus the words of Christ were brought by the world's great men to strengthen His servant in the hour of trial." GC – 155

Now directly in front of the emperor an officer of the court pointed to the writings of Luther asked if these writings were his and if he proposed to retract his opinions.

Luther acknowledged that the writings were his, but to the second question he wisely asked for more time to properly answer the second question.

After a season of prayer and study Luther stood ready to give his final answer. But not without a struggle the night before he prayed:

O almighty and everlasting God," he pleaded, "how terrible is this world! Behold, it openeth its mouth to swallow me up, and I have so little trust in Thee. . . . If it is only in the strength of this world that I must put my trust, all is over. . . . My last hour is come, my condemnation has been pronounced. . . . O God, do Thou help me against all the wisdom of the world. Do this, . . . Thou alone; . . . for this is not my work, but Thine. I have nothing to do here, nothing to contend for with these great ones of the world. . . . But the cause is Thine, . . . and it is a righteous and eternal cause. O Lord, help me! Faithful and unchangeable God, in no man do I place my trust. . . . All that is of man is uncertain; all that cometh of man fails. . . . Thou hast chosen me for this work. . . . Stand at my side, for the sake of Thy well-beloved Jesus Christ, who is my defense, my shield, and my strong tower." GC – 157

The next day Luther stood humbly before the Diet with a very respectful tone, calm and peaceful.

"Then, proceeding to the question, he stated that his published works were not all of the same character. In some he had treated of faith and good works, and even his enemies declared them not only harmless but profitable. To retract these would be to condemn truths which all parties confessed. The second class consisted of writings exposing the corruptions and abuses of the papacy. To revoke these works would strengthen the tyranny of Rome and open a wider door to many and great impieties. In the third class of his books he had attacked individuals who had defended existing evils. Concerning these he freely confessed that he had been more violent than was becoming. He did not claim to be free from fault; but even these books he could not revoke, for such a course would embolden the enemies of truth, and they would then take occasion to crush God's people with still greater cruelty." GC – 158

Luther asked the Diet to prove his errors from the Word of God.

"Yet I am but a mere man, and not God," he continued; "I shall therefore defend myself as Christ did: 'If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil.' . . . By the mercy of God, I conjure you, most serene emperor, and you, most illustrious princes, and all men of every degree, to prove from the writings of the prophets and apostles that I have erred. As soon as I am convinced of this, I will retract every error, and be the first to lay hold of my books and throw them into the fire." GC – 159

Many at the Diet of Worms were moved by the power of Luther's words as he defended his position with the Word of God.

Though tired from his first presentation in German, the Diet ask them to also present his case in Latin. The second presentation added more power and understanding to those who did not quite understand the first time.

Luther's enemies and the papist rejected the light and demanded the Luther retract or be killed!

A spokesman of the Diet said angrily: "You have not answered the question put to you. . . . You are required to give a clear and precise answer. . . . Will you, or will you not, retract?"

Here is Luther's infamous and historic response:

"Since your most serene majesty and your high mightinesses require from me a clear, simple, and precise answer, I will give you one, and it is this: I cannot submit my faith either to the pope or to the councils, because it is clear as the day that they have frequently erred and contradicted each other. Unless therefore I am convinced by the testimony of Scripture or by the clearest reasoning, unless I am persuaded by means of the passages I have quoted, and unless they thus render my conscience bound by the word of God, I cannot and I will not retract, for it is unsafe for a Christian to speak against his conscience. Here I stand, I can do no other; may God help me. Amen." GC – 160

The whole assembly were for a time speechless with amazement!

The emperor, moved to admiration, exclaimed: "This monk speaks with an intrepid heart and unshaken courage." Many of the German princes looked with pride and joy upon this representative of their nation. GC – 161

There was a great crisis among the assembly on what to do with Luther.

They asked Luther to leave the momentarily as they discussed. They decided to give Luther one more chance.

Luther like the three Hebrews boys who were faced with the fiery furnace was given one more chance to bow down or be killed. Luther still refused.

"The Spirit of God had been present in that council, impressing the hearts of the chiefs of the empire. Several of the princes boldly acknowledged the justice of Luther's cause. Many were convinced of the truth; but with some the impressions received were not lasting. There was another class who did not at the time express their convictions, but who, having searched the Scriptures for themselves, at a future time became fearless supporters of the Reformation." GC – 162

The elector of Saxony Fredrick III move by Luther's demeanor and a speech fearlessly defended Luther before the Diet.

Nevertheless the king Charles V was greatly influenced by the papacy, rejected the truth and pronounced Luther a heretic, but for the sake of the honor of his word and his country he allowed Luther to return home to Wittenburg as promised.

Papal Rome was very angry and still insisted that Luther be put to death!

"The Rhine," they said, "should receive his ashes, as it had received those of John Huss a century ago."--Ibid., b. 7, ch. 9. But princes of Germany, though themselves papists and avowed enemies to Luther, protested against such a breach of public faith, as a stain upon the honor of the nation. They pointed to the calamities which had followed the death of Huss, and declared that they dared not call down upon Germany, and upon the head of their youthful emperor, a repetition of those terrible evils. GC - 163

Luther was given another chance to negotiate with the Emperor and the papacy, but he refused. Both friends and foes were at last convinced that further effort for reconciliation would be useless.

Lesson: "Had the Reformer yielded a single point, Satan and his hosts would have gained the victory. But his unwavering firmness was the means of emancipating the church, and beginning a new and better era. The influence of this one man, who dared to think and act for himself in religious matters, was to affect the church and the world, not only in his own time, but in all future generations. His firmness and fidelity would strengthen all, to the close of time, who should pass through a similar experience. The power and majesty of God stood forth above the counsel of men, above the mighty power of Satan." GC - 166

Luther was given permission to return home by the emperor, Charles V

Luther was elated with joy of how Christ defeated Satan!

On his journey from Worms he was met with large assemblies of people who wanted to hear God's Word from Luther

In the meantime the papacy planned for Luther's execution after he safely reached Wittenburg.

"It was commanded that as soon as his safe-conduct should expire, measures be taken to stop his work. All persons were forbidden to harbor him, to give him food or drink, or by word or act, in public or private, to aid or abet him. He was to be seized wherever he might be, and delivered to the authorities. His adherents also were to be imprisoned and their property confiscated. His writings were to be destroyed, and, finally, all who should dare to act contrary to this decree were included in its condemnation." GC - 167

God made a way of escape for Luther on his way home to Wittenburg. He was kidnapped by a friendly group under the planning of Fredrick the elector of Saxony and taken to a forest castle in Wartburg.

Fredrick did not know Luther's exact location but was assured of his safety.

Luther stayed in seclusion for about a year, but his pen was very active!

His enemies thought Luther was silenced but began to see his literature and tracts being circulated throughout Germany and beyond!

While in seclusion Luther was able to translate the New Testament of the Bible to German!

### **Why did God place Luther in seclusion for a year? And what lesson is He teaching his true reformers in the last days?**

Safety was important but it was deeper than that for Luther's

"In the solitude and obscurity of his mountain retreat, Luther was removed from earthly supports and shut out from human praise. He was thus saved from the pride and self-confidence that are so often caused by success. By suffering and humiliation he was prepared again to walk safely upon the dizzy heights to which he had been so suddenly exalted." GC – 169

God must get the praise and not a true reformer of truth, they are only instruments in the hand of God depended on Him.

Remember: "All shooting stars, fall!" As a true reformer for Christ you NEVER want to become a "shooting" star.

#### **Appeal:**

Are you equipped with the armor and weapons of warfare? A true reformer is a soldier of Jesus Christ in the last days.

### **In summary what will a good soldier of Jesus Christ do and not do?**

2 Timothy 2:3-4

3 Thou therefore **endure hardness**, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

4 No man that warreth **entangleth himself with the affairs of this life**; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

What is a true soldier of Christ's offensive weapons of war? God's Word and Prayer!