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CHURCH HISTORY MONTHLY

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Timeline of Topics.

- Quote:
- GK Chesterton, 1900s
- Middle Ages
- The Crusades, more than 1
- Reformation
- Martin Luther's "95 Theses"
- Global South
- Korea self-evangelized

In 1517, Martin Luther began the Protestant Reformation by nailing complaints he had about the Roman Catholic Church on the church door in Wittenberg (the same church where he preached). The complaint was specifically about a special indulgence that the pope had recently created. It seems that the pope was spending tremendous amounts of money to rebuild and refurbish St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. For example, Michelangelo had recently painted the Sistine Chapel. The pope needed much more money and so created a special indulgence that promised people more than indulgences in the past. Previous indulgences promised a partial reduction in time spent in Purgatory. But this special indulgence promised that a person could bypass Purgatory or someone's relative could get out of Purgatory. Luther did not like the previous indulgences, but this new "steroid" indulgence (my word) was too much for him. He, therefore, nailed 95 different complaints about the special indulgence on the church door in 1517 on October 31.

Happy Halloween & Happy Reformation Day!



(My paraphrase)

**People used to trust God and doubt themselves.
Now people doubt God and trust themselves.
GK Chesterton**

Wait, there was more than one crusade?

Most people are only familiar with the first Crusade. That would make sense since it was the only successful Crusade (from the perspective of the Crusaders). In fact, at least 8 Crusades occurred between 1095 to 1290, when the Crusaders were finally pushed out of the Holy Land by the Muslims. We will briefly look at the different Crusades.

--1st Crusade: 1095 – 1099. This is the one people know about. This Crusade left Europe, traveled around the Mediterranean Sea, including through Constantinople (current Istanbul), and finally attacked and captured Jerusalem. Unfortunately, the Crusaders were overly violent and killed most of the Muslims and Jews living there. The Crusaders also captured so much territory that they divided it up into four states. The Muslims counter attacked from the north and regained some territory.

--2nd Crusade: set out in 1147: The Crusaders tried to recapture that territory but were unsuccessful. The Muslims continued capturing territory until they recaptured Jerusalem.

--3rd Crusade: set out in 1189, led by Richard the Lionhearted and others. The Crusaders made it to within a dozen miles of Jerusalem. But Richard, in a wise move, realized that he could capture Jerusalem, but he could not hold it. Therefore, he and the Muslim leader, Saladin, agreed that the Crusaders could enter Jerusalem for a visit and then would leave and return to Europe.

--4th Crusade: set out in 1202. This disaster of a crusade did not even make it to the Holy Land. On the way, the Crusaders stopped at Constantinople for supplies and decided to capture the city. They stripped it of many of its treasures and returned to Europe.

--5th – 8th Crusades: The Crusaders tried a different approach. Instead of approaching Jerusalem from the north, most of these Crusades attacked Egypt and then tried to attack Jerusalem from the south or west. Only the 6th Crusade was successful, and that was short-lived and due to political maneuverings: a European king did become king of Jerusalem, but only for 10 years. Eventually, Muslims defeated the Crusaders in 1290 and forced to flee on ships and sail back to Europe.

Questions, comments, or want to join
a free class contact Mark at
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Missionaries did not introduce Christianity to Korea, the Koreans self-evangelized instead

[North and South Korea formed in 1945. Since this history covers the period before that, we will only discuss "Korea."]

In an unusual and surprising development, it turns out that Korea initially self-evangelized instead of Christianity being brought to it by Europeans or even other Asians. That would seem to be counter-intuitive since European Christian missionaries reached India in 1500, Japan in 1549, and China in the late 1500s. This was due to the fierce reputation of Korea against Europeans. For example, a Dutch ship accidentally ran aground in 1656 and the sailors were captured by the Koreans. They were held prisoner for 13 years until some escaped.

So how did Christianity creep into Korea? By Koreans visiting China, learning about this "new" religion of Christianity, and bring Christian books back. In 1603, Yi Gwang-jeong went to China on a diplomatic mission. While there, he learned about a Catholic Jesuit missionary to China named Matteo Ricci. Ricci had written books while in China, which were copied and passed around. Yi was able to get some copies and take them back to Korea. But, no, this was the not event that we are looking for. As Christianity gained popularity in China, the Korean emperor, out of fear of the Chinese outlawed Christianity in 1758.

On another diplomatic trip from Korea to China in 1784, one of the diplomats brought along his son, Yi (or Lee) Seung-Hun. Yi learned about Christianity while in China and was even baptized by a Jesuit priest in a Catholic church. Once back in Korea, Yi began talking about Jesus and even baptizing people. The Christian movement became popular and grew. The result was persecution by the Korean government. That lasted for 140 years until the early 1880s, when Korea decided to cease its isolation and interact with other countries, many of whom were Christian. The first Protestant missionary entered Korea in 1884.

Current free online class (you
can still join):

--Oct 25 - Dec 19:

Overview/Review of the New
Testament

---More info? go here