



SAVED TO SERVE

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G.C. PT.8: LUTHER BEFORE THE DIET

1. Let us study the eighth chapter in *The Great Controversy*, entitled "Luther Before The Diet."

2. Consider this quotation from this chapter.

The Reformation did not, as many suppose, end with Luther. It is to be continued to the close of this world's history. Luther had a great work to do in reflecting to others the light which God had permitted to shine upon him; yet he did not receive all the light which was to be given to the world. From that time to this, new light has been continually shining upon the Scriptures, and new truths have been constantly unfolding. {GC 148.4}

3. Note: As Luther was summoned to stand before the Diet to answer for his religious beliefs and his relationship with the church and the state, Jesus was likewise brought before the union of church and state. As Jesus and Luther, were brought before church and state to answer for their faith, God's people will be brought before church and state in these last days. Read Matthew 10:16-18.

4. Note: As Luther stood before the Diet, what prophecy was being fulfilled? What prophecy will be repeated in these last days? Luke 21:12-19 _____

It does not seem possible to us now that any should have to stand alone, but if God has ever spoken by me, the time will come when we shall be brought before councils and before thousands for His name's sake, and each one will have to give the reason of his faith. **Then will come the severest criticism upon every position that has been taken for the truth. We need, then, to study the Word of God, that we may know why we believe the doctrines we advocate.**--{RH, December 18, 1888 par. 12}

5. Note: We must study the experiences of Jesus and Luther and learn from them in order to endure the crises that we will encounter in these last days.

6. What were Luther's words before he appeared before the Diet and during? _____

It is not for me to decide whether my life or my death will contribute most to the salvation of all. . . . You may expect everything from me. . . except flight and recantation. Fly I cannot, and still less retract." {GC 146.1}

"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 153.1}

"The gospel of Christ cannot be preached without offense. . . . Why then should the fear or apprehension of danger separate me from the Lord, and from that divine word which alone is truth? No; I would rather give up my body, my blood, and my life." {GC 165.2}

7. Similar to Luther's words, what should be our sentiments? Romans 8:34-39. _____

8. What was published against Luther before he stood before the Diet? _____

About this time the bull declaring Luther's excommunication was published; and this, coupled with the representations of the legate, induced the emperor to yield. He wrote to the elector that if Luther would not retract, he must remain at Wittenberg. {GC 146.2}

9. What was pronounced against Jesus, before he stood before church and state? John 11:47-53 _____

10. How did the Papist champion, Aleander, style Luther and his followers? How will it be repeated? _____

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!...{GC 148.2}

With such weapons the advocates of truth in every age have been attacked. The same arguments are still urged against all who dare to present, in opposition to established errors, the plain and direct teachings of God's word. "Who are these preachers of new doctrines?" exclaim those who desire a popular religion. "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!" These are the arguments that have a telling influence upon the world; but they are no more conclusive now than in the days of the Reformer. {GC 148.3}

11. What was said of Jesus and the apostles? John 7:14-17; Acts 4:13 _____

12. What accusations were brought against Luther? _____

Not content with this victory, Aleander labored with all the power and cunning at his command to secure Luther's condemnation. With a persistence worthy of a better cause, he urged the matter upon the attention of princes, prelates, and other members of the assembly, **accusing the Reformer of "sedition, rebellion, impiety, and blasphemy."** {GC 147.1}

13. What accusations were brought against Jesus and Paul? Luke 23:1,2; Matthew 26:65,66; Acts 24:5 _____

14. What charge was brought against Luther? _____

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}

15. What charge will be brought against the saints in these last days? _____

"Those who honor the Bible Sabbath will be denounced as enemies of law and order, as breaking down the moral restraints of society, causing anarchy and corruption, and calling down the judgments of God upon the earth. Their conscientious scruples will be pronounced obstinacy, stubbornness, and contempt of authority. **They will be accused of disaffection toward the government.** {GC 592}

16. What did Duke George of Saxony say regarding the Papacy in that meeting, as he was moved by the Lord? _____

"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." {GC 149.3}

17. What two questions were asked of Luther as he stood before the Diet? _____

Then an imperial officer arose and, **pointing to a collection of Luther's writings**, demanded that the Reformer **answer two questions--whether he acknowledged them as his, and whether he proposed to retract the opinions which he had therein advanced.** {GC 155.3}

18. Note: As Jesus stood before that council, a collection of words were presented falsely to accomplish His death. See Matthew 26:59-63. Likewise in these last days, God's saints will be pressured to recant their sermons and writings. Additionally, they will be forced to give up their beliefs in the Bible and the writings of Ellen White.

19. How did Luther feel, what did he do, before he returned the next day to stand before the Diet? _____

The next day he was to appear to render his final answer. **For a time his heart sank within him as he contemplated the forces that were combined against the truth. His faith faltered; fearfulness and trembling came upon him, and horror overwhelmed him. Dangers multiplied before him;** his enemies seemed about to triumph, and the powers of darkness to prevail. **Clouds gathered about him and seemed to separate him from God. He longed for the assurance that the Lord of hosts would be with him.** In anguish of spirit he threw himself with his face upon the earth and poured out those broken, heart-rending cries, which none but God can fully understand. {GC 156.2}

"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."--Ibid., b. 7, ch. 8. {GC 156.3}

20. What did Jesus do before He was brought before the union of church and state? What did Jesus tell His disciples to do also? Matthew 26:31-46 _____

21. Whose experience was being repeated in the account of Luther just before he faced the Diet? _____

An all-wise Providence had permitted Luther to realize his peril, that he might not trust to his own strength and rush presumptuously into danger. Yet it was not the fear of personal suffering, a dread of torture or death, which seemed immediately impending, that overwhelmed him with its terror. He had come to the crisis, and he felt his insufficiency to meet it. Through his weakness the cause of truth might suffer loss. **Not for his own safety, but for the triumph of the gospel did he wrestle with God. Like Israel's, in that night struggle beside the lonely stream, was the anguish and conflict of his soul. Like Israel, he prevailed with God.** In his utter helplessness his faith fastened upon Christ, the mighty Deliverer. **He was strengthened with the assurance that he would not appear alone before the council. Peace returned to his soul,** and he rejoiced that he was permitted to uplift the word of God before the rulers of the nations. {GC 157.1}

22. Note: Luther represents those saints who will stand before church and state, and also who will go through the great time of trouble, which is also called Jacob's Time of Trouble.

23. What did Jesus receive in Gethsemane before He stood before church and state? What will we also receive if we have a similar experience? Luke 22:39-47 _____

24. What words were brought to Luther's ear to strengthen him for that hour of trial? Matthew 10:28,16-21 _____

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 155.2}

25. What did Luther say regarding the two questions that were asked of him? _____

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 158.3}

26. What was the effect of Luther's words and stance? _____

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 161.4}

27. The following accounts were being repeated. See Acts 24:24-26 and Acts 26:24-28.

28. What happened to Luther's liberties? What was finally pronounced upon him by church and state leaders? _____

He had not been long absent from Worms, when the papists prevailed upon the emperor to issue an edict against him. In this decree Luther was denounced as **"Satan himself under the form of a man and dressed in a monk's frock."** **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.** The elector of Saxony and the princes most friendly to Luther had left Worms soon after his departure, and the emperor's decree received the sanction of the Diet. Now the Romanists were jubilant. **They considered the fate of the Reformation sealed.** {GC 167.3}

29a. What did Frederick of Saxony do? _____

God gave wisdom to Frederick of Saxony to devise a plan for the Reformer's preservation. With the co-operation of true friends the elector's purpose was carried out, and Luther was effectually hidden from friends and foes. **Upon his homeward journey he was seized, separated from his attendants, and hurriedly conveyed through the forest to the castle of Wartburg, an isolated mountain fortress.** Both his seizure and his concealment were so involved in mystery that even Frederick himself for a long time knew not whither he had been conducted. This ignorance was not without design; so long as the elector knew nothing of Luther's whereabouts, he could reveal nothing. He satisfied himself that the Reformer was safe, and with this knowledge he was content. {GC 168.1}

29b. Satan is a diligent Bible student. He knows that his time is short, and he seeks at every point to counterwork the work of the Lord upon this earth. **It is impossible to give any idea of the experience of the people of God who shall be alive upon the earth when celestial glory and a repetition of the persecutions of the past are blended. They will walk in the light proceeding from the throne of God. By means of the angels there will be constant communication between heaven and earth.** And Satan, surrounded by evil angels, and claiming to be God, will work miracles of all kinds, to deceive, if possible, the very elect. {9T 16.1}

30. What did Luther do while in seclusion? _____

Yet at the same time he was daily accomplishing more than it seemed possible for one man to do. His pen was never idle. While his enemies flattered themselves that he was silenced, they were astonished and confused by tangible proof that he was still active. **A host of tracts, issuing from his pen, circulated throughout Germany. He also performed a most important service for his countrymen by translating the New Testament into the German tongue. From his rocky Patmos he continued for nearly a whole year to proclaim the gospel and rebuke the sins and errors of the times.** {GC 168.3}

But it was not merely to preserve Luther from the wrath of his enemies, nor even to afford him a season of quiet for these important labors, that God had withdrawn His servant from the stage of public life. There were results more precious than these to be secured. 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 169.1}

31. What must we do to prepare to stand before church and state? 1 Peter 3:15 _____

32. I have been shown that many who profess to have a knowledge of present truth know not what they believe. They do not understand the evidences of their faith. They have no just appreciation of the work for the present time. When the time of trial shall come, there are men now preaching to others who will find, upon examining the positions they hold, that there are many things for which they can give no satisfactory reason. Until thus tested they knew not their great ignorance. And there are many in the church who take it for granted that they understand what they believe; but, until controversy arises, they do not know their own weakness. When separated from those of like faith and compelled to stand singly and alone to explain their belief, they will be surprised to see how confused are their ideas of what they had accepted as truth. Certain it is that there has been among us a departure from the living God and a turning to men, putting human in place of divine wisdom. {5T 707.2}

33. The world is to be warned, and no soul should rest satisfied with a superficial knowledge of truth. You know not to what responsibility you may be called. **You know not where you may be called upon to give your witness of truth. Many will have to stand in the legislative courts; some will have to stand before kings and before the learned of the earth, to answer for their faith.** Those who have only a superficial understanding of truth will not be able clearly to expound the Scriptures, and give definite reasons for their faith. They will become confused, and will not be workmen that need not to be ashamed. **Let no one imagine that he has no need to study because he is not to preach in the sacred desk. You know not what God may require of you.** {MYP 186.2}

34. The time will come when many will be deprived of the written Word. But if this Word is printed in the memory, no one can take it from us.--20MR 64 (1906). {LDE 67.5}

Study the Word of God. Commit its precious promises to memory so that, when we shall be deprived of our Bibles, we may still be in possession of the Word of God.--10MR 298 (1909). {LDE 67.6}

None but those who have fortified the mind with the truths of the Bible will stand through the last great conflict.--GC 593, 594 (1911). {LDE 66.3}

Keep a pocket Bible with you as you work, and improve every opportunity to commit to memory its precious promises.--RH April 27, 1905. {LDE 67.4}

Several times each day precious, golden moments should be consecrated to prayer and the study of the Scriptures, if it is only to commit a text to memory, that spiritual life may exist in the soul.--4T 459 (1880). {LDE 66.6}

God's precious Word is the standard for youth who would be loyal to the King of heaven. Let them study the Scriptures. Let them commit text after text to memory and acquire a knowledge of what the Lord has said.--ML 315 (1887). {LDE 67.1}

Build a wall of scriptures around you, and you will see that the world cannot break it down. Commit the Scriptures to memory, and then throw right back upon Satan when he comes with his temptations, "It is written." This is the way that our Lord met the temptations of Satan, and resisted them.--RH April 10, 1888. {LDE 67.2}

35. **"Our people have been regarded as too insignificant to be worthy of notice, but a change will come. The Christian world is now making movements which will necessarily bring commandment-keeping people into prominence. There is a constant supplanting of God's truth by the theories and false doctrines of human origin. Movements are being set on foot to enslave the consciences of those who would be loyal to God. The lawmaking powers will be against God's people. Every soul will be tested. Oh, that we would, as a people, be wise for ourselves, and by precept and example impart that wisdom to our children! Every position of our faith will be searched into; and if we are not thorough Bible students, established, strengthened, and settled, the wisdom of the world's great men will lead us astray."** {5T 546.2}

"I love Iowa. And, look, I don't have to say it, I'm Presbyterian," said Trump. "Can you believe it? Nobody believes I'm Presbyterian. I'm Presbyterian. I'm Presbyterian. I'm Presbyterian. Boy, that's down the middle of the road folks, in all fairness. I mean, Seventh-day Adventist, I don't know about. I just don't know about." https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-politics/wp/2015/10/24/donald-trump-seeks-a-sharp-a-contrast-with-ben-carsons-seventh-day-adventist-faith/?utm_term=.0e03ea980269

"It is a religiously based ban, which is something that our -- our Constitution says Congress shall make no law establishing a religion or abridge the free exercise thereof. This is a violation of equal protection. It's a religiously based ban. If they can ban Muslims, why can't they ban Mormons, why can't they ban Seventh-day Adventists, why can't move into ethnic groups?" Ellison asked. <http://www.cnsnews.com/news/article/melanie-hunter/rep-keith-ellison-if-they-can-ban-muslims-why-cant-they-ban-mormons>