

LUTHER

Movie Review by Paula Leanues

I'd like to recommend a movie which I rented recently called *Luther*. It was released in 2003. Normally Hollywood doesn't impress me when trying to bring Christian history or Bible stories to the screen (when more opinion than truth is brought into the screenplay). This movie is an exception.

For anyone interested in learning about the life of Martin Luther, who, even as the movie stated, "turned the world upside down" in coming against the Catholic Church for its unbalanced and ungodly practices, such as the selling of indulgences... do rent this one. It takes place during the time known as the Reformation, during the mid-1500's.

It is rated PG. There is one scene in which people are lying dead with blood on them, and this is to portray the historical fact that there was no change toward light being shed on the truth of biblical Christianity during the Reformation without fight and bloodshed.

Overall, I believe it depicts this time period honestly. For members of the Lutheran Church, you might like to know the film was endorsed by Lutherans.

John Hus, who 100 years before Martin Luther was born, was burned at the stake for daring to combat the evil practices of the Catholic Church at that time, foretold, *as he was burning*, that there was one who would come in 100 years that the church system of that day could not kill. This prophecy was of Martin Luther.

Joseph Fiennes portrays Luther at various stages in his life – from his days before becoming a monk, when death terrified him, and his view of God, because of the Catholic Church's teachings, was warped. He believed God was against mankind and no one would ever be good enough in God's eyes to stand. This was until he began to read the Bible, which in those days was forbidden for the common man. Even priests didn't read the Bible – the word of the Pope was law, and not the Word of God. But Martin Luther met Jesus.

Once realizing that devils, not God, were the enemy of mankind, and Jesus came to redeem mankind from sin, and that we have a loving God, he passionately fought the system of those days, watched men die for believing the Truth as he did, and was constantly being tried by the Catholic Church as

he stood one step away from execution. God strategically put allies in place so that Martin Luther would make it and fulfill his call. His strength to fight the system came from the Word of God.

The movie *Luther* constantly moves. It takes Luther from Rome, which he refers to as a “circus” where they are “selling sex and salvation,” to his days in Wittenberg, where he begins to preach. It takes him from logical, inquisitive student, who when told that “outside the holy Roman church, there is no salvation,” he replies, “What about the Greek Christians?,” to preacher and teacher, who exposes every lie of the Catholic Church of the day with insight and even humor.

In one of his early classes, he is teaching on the fallacy of indulgences (common man was to buy an “indulgence” from the Church which supposedly freed a loved one from purgatory, which is an unbiblical practice). He tells his students that he once bought an indulgence to free his grandfather, but he didn’t have enough money left over to “spring Grandma” too.

The saying was this: “As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs.”

(Note to ponder: What kinds of practices do we notice not only in the Catholic Church today, but in other Christian sectors, which echo the abusive practice of “buying” salvation and “buying” the desires of our heart with money?)

Luther became fed up with those within the Church living in excess, even secretly paying for mistresses, while the common people gave their money into the establishment and lived very poorly. This propelled his famous “95 Theses” which he nailed to the door of the church building. This is when the world at that time “turned upside down”!

The Reformation is a very momentous time in history. Christ came to turn the sinful world upside down and bring the Kingdom of God 1500 years earlier. So 1500 years later, when the Truth brought by Jesus had been viciously diluted to heresy and hedonism, completely unrecognizable, God once more raised up certain men to bring about change and order.

We are at a point in *current* history where we need a few good men (and women, if called) to bring the heresies of *today* to light once again and fight for Truth!

Watch *Luther*. It will inspire you.