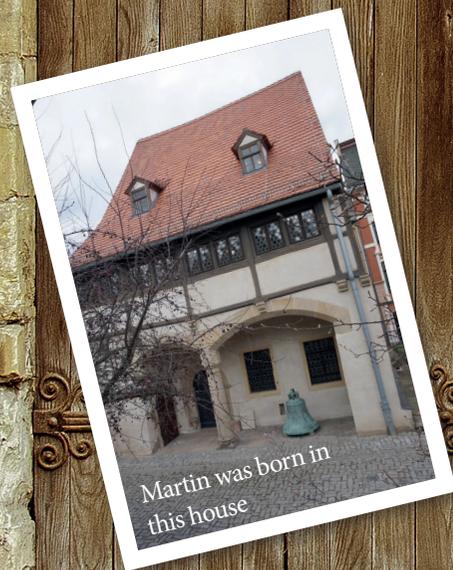


On the track of Martin



1. Martin is a good student

Martin's childhood and studies in Erfurt



On a cold autumn day in 1483 a boy is born in Eisleben, a small town in Germany. The following day it is the special day of St. Martin. So the new-born is named Martin. He is probably the eldest of the married couple Luther. Hans, Martin's father, works as a hut master in a mine and earns quite a lot of money. This benefits the growing family, as Martin gets nine siblings in the following years.

student, so his parents send him to a higher school. Soon he can read and write Latin fluently.

Martin's father wants his son to study law, so he can later work as a lawyer – a well-respected and well-paid profession. Perhaps he even finds a job as an official in a princely court. Martin is studying this subject at the University of Erfurt. But it should come quite differently.

At the age of seven Martin comes to school. There he learns reading, writing and Latin. Martin is a good

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On the track
of Martin



2. Martin discovers righteousness

Life in the Augustinian monastery



Martin reading the Bible

Martin is afraid of God. The Catholic Church to which he belongs teaches that God is a strict judge who sees and hears everything. When a person has done something wrong, then God remembers. When a man ends his life, God adds all the wrong thoughts and deeds of this person. And his soul must then burn in a purgatory fire, until everything is compensated. One day Martin visits his parents. On the way back to the university to Erfurt, he is surprised by a severe thunderstorm. Suddenly a lightning strikes close by. In fear of dying, Martin calls God and promises, „If I survive this thunderstorm, I will become a monk

and go to a monastery!“

Two weeks after the terrible storm, Martin enters the Augustinian monastery in Erfurt. There monks live who have consecrated their lives to God. They already get up at three in the morning to pray and study. Martin becomes a Catholic priest and theologian. Nevertheless, he is still afraid of God. One day, Martin thinks about the Bible verse Romans 1:17, „The righteous shall live by faith.“ Suddenly he realizes that he can not earn heaven by obedience. Eternal life is a gift of a loving God that is given to everyone who believes in Jesus and his sacrifice.

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On the track
of Martin



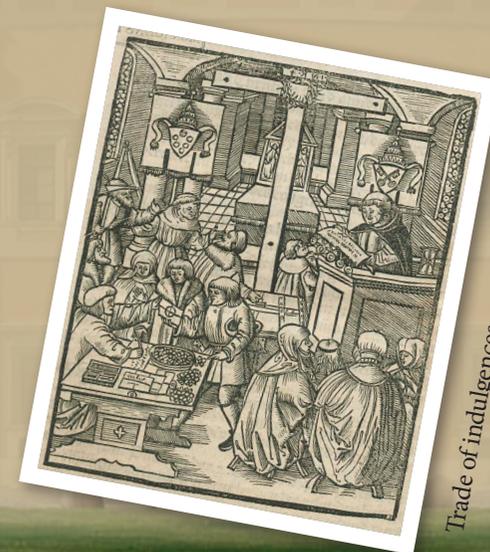
3. Martin visits Rome

Sale of indulgences

While Martin lives in the Augustinian monastery, he visits Rome, the city of the Pope. On his knees, he climbs a „sacred staircase“ to gain forgiveness for himself and also to free his dead relatives from purgatory. At that time, Martin still believed that one can earn eternity through good works.

Catholic preachers, like Johann Tetzel, move from one place to another, offering people forgiveness of their sins for money. He preaches to his hearers, „If you give me your money, your dead relatives will no longer stay in hell but will go to heaven. As soon

as a coin in the box rings the soul from purgatory springs.“ Everyone who pays a certain amount of money, receives a letter of indulgence confirming that his sins are forgiven.



Trade of indulgences

On the track of Martin



4. Martin protests

95 Theses on the door of the church

Martin realizes that money cannot earn forgiveness. It is received only as the free gift of God's grace through the believer's faith in Jesus as redeemer from sin. So Martin preaches against the trade of indulgences. He writes to his ecclesiastical superiors and hopes that they stop the indulgences. He also adds 95 Theses to his letters. These are 95 sentences in Latin, which show why it is wrong, to trade with forgiveness. Martin also writes his 95 Theses on a large piece of paper and nails it to the door of the Castle-church in Wittenberg on 31 October 1517, exactly 500 years ago. So he publicly protests

against the buying of indulgences. In no time the 95 Theses spread throughout the country. Everywhere people talk about the Theses and about the courageous monk who dares to publicly defend the church. This should not be without consequences.



FRIDERICVS CVLLIVS IV REX PORTA
OCTOBR D XXXI INDVIGENTIS ROMAN
FORMATIONIS SACROVM PRAESENTIA
ANAS EX ARBITRARIOVE ILLAS THES

Gate of the Castle-church of Wittenberg

Reformation 500th Anniversary



95 Theses



On the track of Martin

5. Martin stays firm

Speech at the Diet of Worms

Catholic dignitary Martin sue Martin and inform the Pope in Rome. Martin is accused that he spreads false doctrines. Such persons are threatened with imprisonment, death and exclusion from the church. At the Diet in Augsburg, Martin is asked to revoke his teachings. But Martin refuses. He is to be arrested. So in the night he flees from Augsburg and can escape.

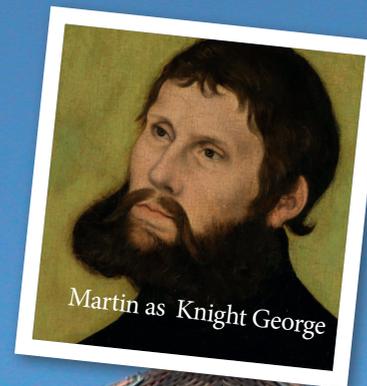
Martin writes some books in which he explains his ideas. Through the newly invented book printing, his writings spread throughout the entire empire. In other countries, people are

also encouraged to protest against the non-biblical teachings of the Catholic Church.

Kurfürst Frederick the Wise, a friend of Martin, makes it possible for Martin to explain his teachings at the next Reichstag. So in 1521 Martin stands before the assembled princes, councilors, the representatives of the Catholic Church and the Emperor himself at the Reichstag in Worms. Again he is prompted to recant his teachings. His answer is as follows: „If I am not convinced by the Bible itself, I can not recant, for it is not good to act against the conscience. God help me, Amen! „



On the track
of Martin



6. Martin is being taken captive

Hidden on the Wartburg

After Martin left Worms, the Emperor declared him an outlaw. Everyone can kill him without being punished. But God holds his hand over brave Martin. On his way home, soldiers attack his carriage. His friend, Elector Frederick the Wise, has him „kidnapped“ and take him to the secluded Wartburg. His stay is secret. Martin changes his name to „Knight George“ grows his hair and a beard. He must remain undetected. He lives in a simple room above the first courtyard. Lone-

liness and melancholy overcome the reformer. He fights them with prayer, joyful singing and reading of the Bible



On the track
of Martin



7. Martin translates the bible

The Word of God for all

While Martin hides in the Wartburg he translates the New Testament from Greek into German. He needs only eleven weeks. Now the ordinary people can read the bible for themselves. In the evangelical areas, the copies go very fast. Later Martin translates the Old Testament. In 1534 the whole Bible in German is finally finished. The wide distribution of the Bible is only possible, because a few decades earlier Johannes Guttenberg invented the letterpress with movable metal letters.

Although in Martin's days there were already a few printed German Bibles available, these translations were dif-

ficult to understand for the ordinary people because of their artificial and unnatural German. Martin „looks at the people's mouth“ and uses powerful, pictorial and generally intelligible expressions, that the people could understand. So Luther becomes the creator of the New High German written language.



Room in the Wartburg in which Martin stays while he translates the Bible

KATHARINA LUTTERIN



8. Martin finds a family

Marriage and life in Wittenberg

Martin hides on Wartburg for about a year. Then he returns to Wittenberg. There he meets a former nun, Katharina von Bora, who is 16 years younger than him. They marry and they are given three daughters and three sons. But only four children reach the adult age. Katharina takes over the household, above all she manages the money which Martin can not handle well. She proves herself to be a good housewife and gardener. The Luther family also house students to help the family's finances.

A single rose has been known as Luther's sign. The five-petaled white rose with a red heart appears in his coat of arms. In the middle there is a cross. The new „Protestant faith“ is enthusiastically received in many areas of Germany.

Martin travels around and encourages his followers. He writes on various subjects and continues to teach at the University of Wittenberg.

On 17 February 1546 he experiences chest pains. When he goes to his bed, he prays, „Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God“ (Ps. 31:5), the common prayer of the dying. On the next day, aged 62, he dies.

Martin Luther, besides Melanchthon, Zwingli, Calvin, and Knox, are among the most important innovators of the biblical faith (reformers). These and many others are the founding fathers of Protestantism. The seventh-day Adventists also see themselves as the heirs of the Reformation.

Reformation 500th Anniversary

On the track
of Martin



Reformation 500th Anniversary

9. Martin's work goes on

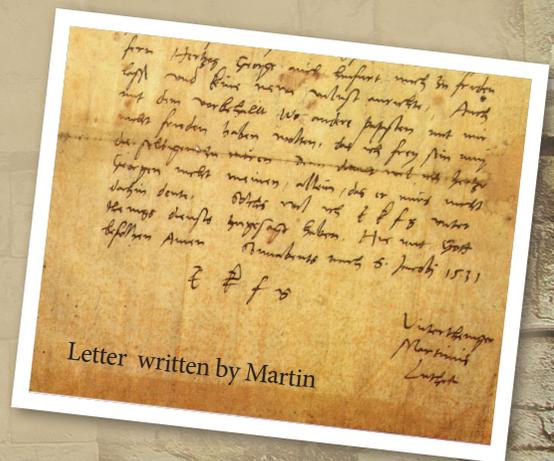
Four „soli“

Even today the Bible translation of Martin is used and appreciated among German-speaking people. Martin has turned people's attention to the Word of God. It is the foundation of the Christian faith.

The Protestant doctrine is often summarized in the „four soli“ (Latin):

- **Solus Christus** (only Christ). The Popes do not determine what men should believe but Christ.
- **Sola scriptura** (by Scripture alone). The faithful make their lives according to the Bible and not according to secular customs and pagan ideas.

- **Sola gratia** (by grace alone). Humans are saved by grace and not by good works.
- **Sola fide** (all by faith). An indulgence or Catholic saint can not forgive sins. Man is saved by faith in Jesus Christ.



Letter written by Martin