What was the Reformation?

KS3 Ages 11-14 ⏰ 2 min read

In 1517, a German monk named **1** nailed a list of complaints to a church door, and accidentally started one of the biggest religious shake-ups in history. The **1** was a movement that split Christianity in Europe and created the **1** churches we know today.

Why People Were Fed Up

Back then, the Catholic Church was incredibly powerful — more powerful than most kings. But many people thought the Church had become corrupt. Priests were selling **1** (basically, tickets to heaven), and some Church leaders lived like wealthy princes while ordinary people struggled. When Luther wrote his famous complaints, called the **1**, he was saying what many people already thought: something was seriously wrong.

Think of it like a huge company that's become so big and powerful that it stops caring about its customers. Eventually, some employees quit and start their own competing businesses — except in this case, the 'business' was people's eternal souls.

The Split Spreads

Luther's ideas spread like wildfire across Europe, helped by the newly invented printing press. Other reformers like **1** in Switzerland and **1** in Scotland joined the movement. They all shared some key beliefs: people should be able to read the Bible in their own language (not just Latin), and salvation comes from faith alone, not from buying your way into heaven.

Different countries reacted differently. England's King Henry VIII broke with Rome partly because the Pope wouldn't let him divorce his wife. Some German princes saw it as a chance to grab power from the Church. Wars broke out between Catholics and Protestants that lasted for decades.

What Changed Forever

The Reformation didn't just change religion — it changed everything. It encouraged people to think for themselves rather than just accepting what authorities told them.

It promoted education so people could read the Bible themselves. It even helped create the idea that governments should serve the people, not the other way around.

Today, about 600 million people worldwide belong to Protestant churches that trace their roots back to the Reformation. The Catholic Church eventually reformed itself too, getting rid of many of the practices that caused the split in the first place. What started as one monk's complaints became a revolution that shaped the modern world.

Free for educational use