



January 2003

Volume III, Issue 1

THE REFORMATION

I am aware that we diverted from the issues of the Reformation but several of you have commented on how much you enjoyed the two issues on Martin Luther. He was indeed a colorful personality and it is quite evident a worthy adversary to the Pope in Rome.

Along with Luther, many have shown a great interest in the era known as the time of the Black Death. We live in a generation that is, in truth, unacquainted with mass death. I was once in a situation in which people were being invited to watch a series called "We were brothers." This was about the Normandy Invasion. The person doing the inviting warned the people that there would be a lot of people getting killed and that there was a "lot of violence." Then it dawned on me that the only war this generation knows is the Gulf War in which we lost less than 500 people. At the invasion of Normandy the Allied Armies lost 10,000 in 24 four hours. The United States has a wall in Washington that has the names of nearly 60,000 men that were killed in Vietnam. This war lasted from 1961 until 1974-75. Approximately 14 years. In July of 1863 the United States was involved in a Civil War. In three days at the Battle of Gettysburg there were 55,000 casualties. These statistics are horrible, any or all of them, but they absolutely pale in the light of the horror of "the plague."

The Dark Ages lasted for 1000 years. Very little is clear about that dark era.

Intellectual life had vanished from Europe. Charlemagne, first of the Emperors of the Holy Roman Empire, one of the greatest

of all medieval rulers was illiterate.

Most of what is known about this period of world history is unlovely.

After all the existing materials have been fit together, the portrait which emerges is a history of incessant warfare, corruption, lawlessness, obsession with strange myths, and an almost impenetrable mindlessness.

It says much about the Middle Ages that in the year 1500, after a thousand years of neglect, the roads built by the Romans were still the best on the continent.

Among the lost arts was bricklaying; in all of Germany, England, Holland and Scandinavia, virtually no stone buildings, except cathedrals were raised for ten centuries.

Horse collar harnesses and stirrups did not exist until about 900. Therefore tandem hitching was impossible. Peasant farmers labored harder, sweated more, and collapsed from exhaustion more often than their animals.

Homicides were twice as frequent as deaths by accidents, but English coroners' records show that only one of every hundred murderers was ever brought to justice.

In all Christendom there was no such thing as a watch, a clock or anything resembling a calendar. Generations succeeded one another in a meaningless, timeless blur. Almost no one even knew the century in which they were living. In their mind the earth was the center of

the universe. Heaven was above the immovable earth, hell seethed far beneath their feet.

During the 1,436 years since the death of Saint Peter the Apostle, 211 Popes had succeeded him, all chosen by

(Continued on page 2)

 REFORMED DISCIPLESHIP MINISTRIES	Martin Luther	Page 1-2
	On A Personal Note	Page 3
	Ministry Update	Page 4
	Historical Facts	Page 5
	Shorter Catechism	Page 6
<i>This Issue:</i>	Encouraging Words	Page 7

(Continued from page 1)

God and infallible. The church was indivisible. The afterlife a certainty; all knowledge was already known and nothing would ever change.

During this time of intellectual mindlessness, word began to reach Europe of strange and tragic happenings far away in the East.

It must be understood that in the fourteenth century China was a never-never land; unheard of except by the more sophisticated and even to them a place of mystery which only a few merchants had ever seen.

Things were going badly:

1333: A drought followed by a famine. Floods followed and 400,000 died.

1334: Another drought followed by locusts, famine and pestilence.

An earthquake occurred and created a lake 100 miles in circumference. It is estimated that the quake killed 5 million.

1337-1345: Locusts had never been so destructive.

THESE WERE BUT CURTAIN RAISERS FOR WHAT WAS COMING.

By The end of 1346, it was widely known in European seaports that a plague of unparalleled proportion and fury was raging in the East.

Rumors were widespread: India was depopulated, Mesopotamia, Syria, Armenia were covered with dead bodies. In places such as Caesarea none were left alive.

In spite of all this foreboding news it does not seem to have occurred to anyone that the plague might one day strike Europe.

There was no reason to worry. China might as well have been on the moon and what was happening there was of no consequence to the intellectually bankrupt people of Europe.

At this point I would expect you to ask, "How did the plague get from China to Europe?"

The plague had settled in Asia Minor and 85,000 had died in the Crimea alone.

The Tartars of Asia Minor, were not unlike the medieval peasants of Europe and they made assumptions that the plague was caused by some human agency. They blamed the plague on those that were not from that region, or

Christians from Europe who were there trading.

The Tartars attacked the Christians in that area and a street brawl broke out. The Tartars chased the "Christian Europeans" to a city that the Christians had built on the Crimean coast.

The Tartar army settled down outside the city and decided to set the city under siege. Their siege plans were destroyed when the plague began to take a toll on the army encamped outside the city. As more and more died they decided to call off the siege.

First however they felt it only fair that the Christians should be given a taste of the agony which they were facing. They used their huge catapults to lob over the walls the corpses of the victims of the plague in hope that this would spread the plague within the fortified city. As fast as the bodies landed inside the walls, the European sailors took them to the walls and dropped them over the walls into the sea. When the Tartar army withdrew they took to their ships and fled from the Black Sea towards the Mediterranean Sea and then home. They took the Black Death with them.

Among the most vivid accounts of the Black Death's origins and symptoms are those of its earliest survivors. Giovanni Boccaccio, author of *The Decameron*, wrote one of the best of them. Boccaccio witnessed the plague in Florence in the spring and summer of 1348:

"Some say that it descended upon the human race through the influence of the heavenly bodies, others that it was a punishment signifying God's righteous anger at our iniquitous way of life.

Our Purpose...

**The Purpose of
Reformed Discipleship Ministries
is to bring the truth
of the Reformation
to a discipling ministry...**

ON A PERSONAL NOTE...

This past year has been a great year for Kay and me. We are involved in seven different Bible studies per week and are involved in the lives of many great people. These last few years have been some of the best years of ministry we have ever had.

Truth Matters seems to have been a big success with all of you as we get many responses regarding the articles. We have very gracious friends who allow me to write the articles and then they do all the work of putting them together, getting the articles printed and delivered to me. Thanks to them for all their hard work and friendship.

A few months ago I told you of Kay and my financial needs and as a group you responded in a way that was remarkable. We thank you for your love and caring attitude towards us.

I will continue to write the articles on the plague, attempt to show the history and horror of those times and how it eventually played a part in the coming of the Reformation in the years to come. When these particular articles are completed I will return to the actual history of the Reformation and we will enjoy this great time of history together. I welcome your thoughts and suggestions because just as I am personally a work in progress, so is Truth Matters.

I hope that you will spend good time in God's Word and will continue to grow spiritually in the months to come. Thanks for allowing me to enter your home and thanks for taking the time to read and grow.

There are some books that I have read lately that you might be interested in reading.

Bias: This is a book by Goldberg, an ex-reporter for ABC. He exposes the complete liberal bias that is in the television news and most of the major newspapers of the day. A note of warning is due here. The author is a liberal himself, a non-Christian and on more than a few occasions he uses bad language as he expresses his anger and distaste for the current media.

Slander: This is a book by Ann Coulter. She is seen quite often on television talk shows and is a very "right-wing" conservative. Her book is a follow-up to Bias but she does not use the language Goldberg uses.

The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire: This is a three volume set written by Edward Gibbon. This is a very old series that gives in great detail the causes of the fall of the great Roman empire. This series was written in the 1700's and uses a vocabulary that has long passed from the scene. Be prepared to read with a dictionary.

Louis

TRUTH*matters*



A Publication of Reformed Discipleship Ministries

Dr. Louis Hill, President

P.O. Box 7168 Colorado Springs, CO 80933-7168

(719) 473-5102 • Fax (719) 473-5063

<http://www.rdm.org>

MINISTRY *update:*

My wife Sarah and I have known Dr. and Mrs. Hill for several years, and over that time we have grown to not only love them dearly, but have been challenged greatly in our faith. Before working with the Hills we had already come to believe that the Doctrines of the Reformation represented the most accurate view of the whole of scripture, but it was under the leadership of Dr. Hill that we began to really appreciate the importance and implications of these doctrines upon the church, our family and our individual lives. I have personally benefited greatly from the one-on-one time that Louis and I have had together. He has challenged me to continue to study and wrestle with the significant issues of faith, yet he has done it in a gentle and gracious manner. Even my children have been beneficiaries to the Hill's ministry. Whenever they ask the really tough theological questions that dad can't answer, they refer me to Dr. Hill for the answer. We have really grown to love and appreciate Louis and Kay over our years of contact and consider them greatly used of the Lord in our spiritual growth.

Page & Sarah Clark

Pledge card (please print and mail to the address below)

Yes I pledge to give: \$25.00 \$50.00 \$100.00

Other: A month One time gift

Yes I will faithfully pray for Reformed Discipleship Ministries

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip code: _____

Please mail to: Dr. Louis Hill
P.O. Box 7168
Colorado Springs, CO 80933-7168

Reformed Discipleship Ministries Tape Of The Month Club

\$10.00 per month to receive your tape

- Enclosed is my gift of \$_____ for the month of March 2001
 Enclosed is my gift of \$_____ for _____ months.
 Please send me information about automatic bank withdrawal for the monthly tapes.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

Telephone _____

E Mail _____

Please mail to: Dr. Louis Hill
P.O. Box 7168
Colorado Springs, CO 80933-7168
(please print and mail to the address above)

Historical Facts



The first records of plague in Europe tell of an epidemic in Athens in 430 BC. One of the worse epidemics occurred in Rome in 262 AD, and killed 5,000 persons per day.

Some historians claim that in late 1349-1350 in London that a minimum of one hundred thousand persons died. Even today, grave yards are being discovered as plots of land are excavated to build new buildings.

The plague in London was so fearful that most of those who normally traveled there to take food for the people refused to enter. Since no food stuffs were entering the city you might think that a famine would also be included with the plague but so many people were dying that there was enough food to go around.

The plague subsided when it became known what was causing the horror but it surfaced again in 1894 in Hong Kong. This is of course one of the world's busiest seaports. As ships left Hong Kong they took the plague with them to the rest of the world.

One of the worst places hit at this time was India. More than 10,000,000 people died of this particular outbreak.

Recently there was a case reported in New York city. The first in that city in 100 years.

But whatever its cause, it had originated earlier in the East, where it had claimed countless lives before it unhappily spread westward, growing in strength as it swept relentlessly on from one place to the next.

Its earliest symptom, in men and women alike, was the appearance of certain swellings in the groin or armpit, some of which were egg-shaped whilst others were roughly the size of the common apple. Sometimes the swellings were large, sometimes not so large. From the two areas already mentioned this deadly plague would begin to spread, and within a short time it would appear at random all over the body.

Later on, the symptoms of the disease changed, and many people began to find dark blotches and bruises on their arms, thighs, and other parts of the body, sometimes large and few in number, at other times tiny and closely spaced. These, to anyone unfortunate enough to contract them, were an infallible sign that he would die.

Few of those who caught it ever recovered, and in most cases death occurred within three days from the appearance described, some people dying more rapidly than others, the majority without any fever or other complications.

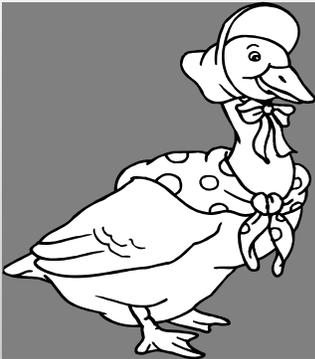
There were three types of plague, each with its own killing field.

1. Bubonic Plague: This was the strain of plague that actually attacked the lymph system of it's host and that is why the growths in the arm pits and groin areas were so predominant. There were some cases where the growths would burst, the black blood would ooze out and in a few of these cases the people would live.

When a person contracted this particular form of the plague he would normally live from four days to a week.

2. Pneumonic Plague: A more deadly form of the plague, which the people of the middle ages could not distinguish was that of the Pneumonic Plague. This is the more infectious form of the plague because it attacks the lungs so that there is the coughing of blood and the plague bacilli are

MOTHER•GOOSE



Now I Lay Me Down To Sleep

*Now I lay me down to sleep
I pray the Lord my soul to sleep
If I should die before I wake
I pray the Lord my soul to take*

This was a prayer that began during the period of the “Black Death.” We have already seen that with the more deadly of the three versions of the plague, the Pneumonic and the Septicaemic versions of the Bubonic, life expectancy was very short. As we continue our look at the plague we will see that many believed it was a punishment from God for the perversity of the times. People could literally go to bed at night and not

wake up.

Many people have shared that they learned this prayer when they were young and that it scared them to death as they prayed it.

SHORTER CATECHISM

Q32: What benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?

A32: They that are effectually called do in this life partake of justification, adoption, and sanctification, and the several benefits which in this life do either accompany or flow from them.

Q33: What is justification?

A33: Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

Q34: What is adoption?

A34: Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges, of the sons of God.

Q35: What is sanctification?

A35: Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.

Q36: What are the benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification?

A36: The benefits which in this life do accompany or flow from justification, adoption, and sanctification, are, assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and perseverance therein to the end.

sprayed into the air every time the infected person exhales.

Whereas the life expectancy of those with the Bubonic Plague was four days to a weeks, those with the Pneumonic Plague was 1.8 days.

This was very confusing to those involved. Some lived 4 days to a week, others lived less than two days, yet all were classified as having “The Plague” or “The Black Death.”

3. Septicaemic Plague: This form of the plague was like the Bubonic in that it is insect borne. The difference in Septicaemic and Bubonic is that in Septicaemic plague the brunt of the infection falls on the bloodstream. Within two hours of infection the bloodstream is swarming with infection and the victim is dead long before nodules have time to form in the lymph nodes.

This is why there was so much confusion and fear. All three were types that infected people and all three killed very quickly.

I hate to leave you hanging here but we have run out of space. The next article will deal with some of the personal examples of the results of the plague. I will also attempt to show that the plague contributed to the success of the Reformation that was yet to come.



Hear Dr.
Hill's
Teaching
at Home!

Some Available Series:

- Truths of the Reformation
- Reformation Truths For Families
- RDM Tape of the Month Club

Tel: 719-473-5102
Fax: 719-473-5063

RDM Tape Ministry

For more information on available tape series, go to RDM's website: www.rdm.org



Reformed Discipleship Ministries
P.O. Box 7168
Colorado Springs, Co.
80933-7168



REFORMED
DISCIPLESHIP
MINISTRIES