

Church History Literacy

Ulrich Zwingli

Lesson 52

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Ulrich Zwingli

1484-1531

Early Life

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- He went to live with an uncle in 1489 and attended a Latin school in Wesen.
- When he turned ten he was sent to Basel and spent two years before he went to another school in Bern. He showed great ability in Latin and music.



Zwingli entered the University of Vienna in 1498 but was subsequently expelled. It was a major university that was begun in 1368 and by this time had a student population of over 5000.

University of Basel

- Zwingli entered the University of Basel in 1502.
- It only had around 100 students with very skilled scholars such as Sebastian Brant and Johann Reuchlin.
- It was deeply rooted in the Renaissance with followers of Erasmus.
- He received his bachelor of arts in 1504 and his masters in 1506.
- He would also have an opportunity to hear Thomas Wytttenbach, from the University of Tübingen, lecture. The professor had a profound influence on the young student and Zwingli remembered him “as having taught him the sole authority of Scripture, the death of Christ as the only price of forgiveness, and the worthlessness of indulgences.”

The Years at Glarus

He was ordained and appointed parish priest in Glarus from 1506 to 1516. He took his pastoral duties very seriously and said, “Notwithstanding my youth the ecclesiastical functions aroused in me more fear than joy, for I knew, and I remain convinced, that I must give account for the sheep that should perish through my negligence.”

Papal Swiss Guards

The Swiss were known for their valor in battle.

Various countries would hire Swiss young men to fight in their battles as mercenaries. They even fought battles for the pope. Zwingli was a chaplain for the troops from Glarus. In a battle on behalf of the pope against the French in 1515, close to ten thousand Swiss troops were slaughtered.



Between Glarus and Zurich

- Zwingli began to amass an impressive library including one of the first copies of the Greek New Testament produced by Erasmus.
- In 1516, he met Erasmus in person.
- He taught himself Greek, began studying Hebrew, immersed himself in the classics, the Bible and the writings of the church fathers.



*On Saturday
January 1,
1519, Ulrich
Zwingli
preached his
first sermon as
the people's
priest in the
Grossmunster
church in
Zürich.*

A Great Start!

It was on his thirty-fifth birthday when he took his place in the cathedral pulpit and began his sermon by saying, “*It is to Christ that I desire to lead you, to Christ, the true source of salvation. His Divine Word is the only food that I wish to set before your hearts and souls.*”

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- He lost his younger brother Andrew.

The similarities and the differences!



Zwingli



Luther

Oh No! The Sausages!

The event that sparked the Swiss Reformation
happened on March 12, 1522.

Acts 10:10-16

1 Corinthians 6:12-14

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- They stopped singing hymns and the services became shorter and simpler.
- He no longer wore robes and served round bread and wine in the midst of the people for communion.

The Anabaptists

- **Conrad Grebel**
- **George Blaurock**
- **Felix Mantz (1527)**



A cave where Anabaptists hid from persecution

Stephen Tomkins -

“Just seven years after Luther had staked his life on the right of Christians to interpret the Bible against the will of popes, the Protestants were killing those who read it differently from themselves. But they had not learned as much from the apostle Paul as they liked to think, for their persecution, like his, merely spread the heretics from their home city throughout the empire, and those that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word.”

Charles V Has His Hands Full!

The Road to Marburg 1529





The Marburg Colloquy 1529

The Marburg Colloquy 1529

Zwingli vs. Luther



Zwingli

Transubstantiation ?

Consubstantiation?

Memorial?

Spiritual Presence?



Luther

John 6:63, “The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.”



The Second Kappell War of 1531.

The hatred between Catholics and Protestants continued to intensify. Zwingli's movement gradually gained ground in German-speaking areas of Switzerland, including Geneva where John Calvin would carry on and expand the Reformed tradition. Fighting eventually broke out between Catholics and Protestants.



*Ulrich Zwingli was killed in battle
on October 11, 1531.*

Points for Home

- Zwingli was a passionate and courageous reformer willing to give his life for the Gospel and break with tradition when he felt it conflicted with what the Bible taught.
- His view on the Lord's Supper was clearly rooted in Scripture and seems to be more in keeping with the meaning of the text in Luke 22:18-20 and 1 Corinthians 11:24-25.
- Having ties too close and strong between church and state can be very problematic. The true church consists only of born again believers.

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- His view of baptism is not quite as Biblical. Consider Acts 2:38, "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Consider Jesus' baptism in Luke 3:21. It was to serve as a model for us to follow.

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- Be careful to not let dogmatic views you have ultimately negate the Spirit's work in your life. Lively discussion and theological debates are good. There are some essentials that cannot be forsaken: the inerrancy of the Scriptures, the Virgin Birth, the Atonement of Christ on the cross and grace through faith and not works. However, the main characteristic that Jesus said his true disciples would be known for is love (John 13:34-35).