

But there was a monk named Tetzel who was quite a rabel rouser who was given the duty to set these indulgences. Tetzel would come to a town and he had a man who would beat on the drum and the people would gather. Of course they had no newspapers in those days. They did not have the way to get publicity we have. But Tetzel would come into town, beat on the drum and then they would go into the churches and Tetzel would say, I have something wonderful the Pope has made available to you. Here I have these letters of indulgence; these letters, you get one of them, and it will forgive you of every sin you ever have committed, ever sin you will commit. Think of your parents; think of people who have died and who are in purgatory. You get one of these letters, and just as quick as your coin drops into the box here in which I keep the coins, just that quick will his soul fly into heaven. He said, These indulgences are so valuable that if you were to rape the blessed Virgin Mary, you would be forgiven of it if you had one of these indulgences. That's a true quotation of the things Tetzel said in town after town.

But it so happened that Saxony which had belonged to the grandfather of the man who was head of it in Luther's day, had been divided into two parts. So the Elector Frederick who had had the university founded ~~Wittenburg~~ held one half of Saxony, a little more than half. His cousin Duke George held the other half, of Saxony. In Duke George's territory Tetzel went all through selling indulgences ~~but~~ but the Elector Frederick refused to allow them to come into his territory. So he did not come into that territory and he was going about for some time before Luther ever heard of him. But the line between the sections was drawn very peculiarly, and the people in Wittenburg began going across the border and hearing Tetzel speak and sell indulgences.

One day Luther spoke to a drunken fellow and said, You should not go into this drunkenness and sin. He said, You should turn to the Lord. You want to go to ~~hell~~ hell and suffer forever? The man said, I'm not going to hell, I'm going to heaven. Luther said, What makes you think you can go to heaven? Well, he said, I've got a paper here from the pope and it's sold by the fellow Tetzel who comes with the big drum and beats it, and he said, I paid a lot of money for this paper, you can't touch me. He said, I can drink, I can do whatever I feel like. Luther said, I'd like to make a hole in his drum! Luther said, This is wrong, I don't believe the Pope has anything to do with this. I think these are forgeries; I'm sure they must be. He said, The church would never support anything like this. But, he said, There are people who have a misunderstanding. Let's look into this matter of indulgences. So he wrote nearly 100 theses. That was the custom in those days. You would write a thesis and you ~~would~~ would post them, and then other people would argue about them. He said, We'll discuss this and get the truth clearly brought out as to exactly what an indulgence is. Because theoretically the indulgence only forgave you for a penalty that the Pope had a right to put on you. It had no effect on your eternal situation at all. That's the theory but not the practice, either then or now. So Luther said, I'm going to write these in Latin and post them on the church door where they can be seen, and I will post them the day before All Saints day when there are always big crowds at Wittenburgh.