

1516 AD – KARLSTADT’S CRUSADE FOR A REFORMED CHURCH

“For, behold, I will send serpents, cockatrices, among you, which will not be charmed, and they shall bite you, says the LORD.” (Jeremiah 8 v 17)

HISTORY

Andreas Karlstadt was similar in some ways to **John Wycliffe**, but in other ways not. Both were professors of theology. Both saw through the corruption of the Roman Church. Both published theses to raise awareness. Both called for a purified faith. **Wycliffe** did not see his views widely accepted. **Karlstadt** watched his Reformed Church replace the Roman Church.

Luther was a student of **Karlstadt** who caught on to abuses in Papal authority. But **Luther** was a priest with sensitivity to political winds. He picked his battles carefully. **Karlstadt** was more radical – he wanted to gut the Roman Church and replace it the sooner the better.

In **1516** **Karlstadt** published a series of **151** theses. He had issues with a range of church doctrines and practices. In contrast Luther’s **95** theses dealt more narrowly with the issue of the sale of indulgences. **Karlstadt** was a crusader for reformation. Luther was not as bold a reformer but he still stuck his neck out too far. In **1520** they were both excommunicated.

In **1521** **Karlstadt** performed the first reformed communion service. He wore secular clothing. He spoke in the vernacular not Latin. He spoke loudly so all could hear what he was saying. He spoke from his heart – he did not follow the script of the mass. He rejected confession as a prerequisite for partaking of the elements. He let communicants serve themselves.

In **1522** **Karlstadt** obtained city council approval to remove imagery from churches. **Karlstadt** believed the Ten Commandments prohibited images of saints. **Karlstadt** spoke out against pictures of Mary and pilgrimages to them. He asked for shrines to be destroyed.

In **1524** **Luther** preached **Karlstadt**’s reforms were too revolutionary and might provoke peasants to revolt.¹ That year the peasants did revolt, but unlike in England, the nobility would not negotiate with them. At least 100,000 peasants were slaughtered. The primary cause of the peasants was eliminating serfdom. While **Karlstadt** did not cause the peasants to

¹ Please see our paper [1381 AD](#) – Wycliffe’s Crusade was closely followed by a peasant’s revolt.

revolt – the excesses and abuses of the Roman Church he brought to light fed a broader discontentment with the medieval system already percolating in society.

Karlstadt's cleansing of church images anticipated a reform movement of iconoclasm. In 1523 there were riots in Zurich. A wave of iconoclasm swept through cities in northern Europe.

Karlstadt was exiled from Saxony by the Duke. He moved to Switzerland. He was a prolific writer who inspired the Anabaptist view of communion. He is credited with removing apocrypha from the Bible, abolishing celibacy, abolishing liturgy, and abolishing images.

Karlstadt's reformist credentials were proved in Germany but he probably made his most enduring impact in Switzerland when he worked closely with leaders of the wider movement.

We will address the issue of how God evaluates **Karlstadt**'s work in the next section.

PROPHECY OF JEREMIAH 8 V 17

"For, behold, I will send serpents, cockatrices, among you, which will not be charmed, and they shall bite you, says the LORD." (Jeremiah 8 v 17)

The sins of the Roman Church were evident for all to see. **Karlstadt** slew the dragon. But wasn't the Reformed Church just another religion? With temples ('places of worship') and priests ('ordained ministers') and seminary approved doctrine ('reformed theology')?

But what did **Karlstadt** accomplish? Did he champion the kingdom of God? Or did he merely replace the Roman Church with a watered down version that still retained enough religion to make it toxic to the gospel? In fact, did **Karlstadt** become a high priest of a new religious sect?

Yes. Yes. Yes.

The Reformation accomplished a restoration of Biblical authority but it did not hold itself up sufficiently to the light of the gospel to set the prisoners free. Parishioners merely transited from the Church of Rome to another institutional church. Their new prison cells came with a friendlier prison warden and better cafeteria food but the same prison walls.

Here is the Christian faith: "**If you confess with thy mouth 'Jesus is LORD' and shalt believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you shalt be saved.**" (Rom. 10 v 9)

What does it mean to say '**Jesus is LORD'**? It means **Jesus Christ** is risen from the dead, seated at the right hand of the **Father** in Heaven, and is the living eternal HEAD OF THE CHURCH.

What does it mean when a man is appointed 'minister' over a congregation? In such a case that man has usurped the authority of **Jesus Christ** to be the head of every Christian man.

The Reformed Church is another snake – a little more subtle – just as venomous.

All religious sects are anathema to God. What the Reformed Church gained in liberating Bible knowledge it lost by setting into motion the splintering of believers into sects we call Anabaptists, Baptists, Bretheren, Lutherans, Presbyterians. And then further divisions within those categories. The Roman Church was corrupt and completely apostate concerning the way of salvation, but at least it retained catholicity. The Reformed Church lost that.

The Kingdom of God preached by **Jesus** and the Apostles is an invisible company of the redeemed. **Jesus Christ** is the head of the church. There is no need at all for any institutional church, any buildings, any priests, or any sacraments. The temple for the **Holy Spirit** is our bodies. Our high priest is **Jesus Christ** and we are all priests. Our **Father** is in Heaven. Our hope is to go to Heaven to be with **Jesus** forever. We can worship **Jesus** alone or with other believers. We can meet in a car, in a park, or in an apartment. Being a 'member' of an institutional church is not an option in the Christian faith. '**Jesus** is **LORD**' means belonging to a church organization is anathema. (See Galatians, Ephesians, and Hebrews)

In the end we can say Andreas **Karlstadt** was a False Prophet because he promoted religious sects. A snake that cannot be charmed! A snake that will bite you!

SPIRITUAL NUMBER ANALYSIS

For a mind that has wisdom please read on. See truth from another perspective.

PART ONE

Chapter **8** of Jeremiah is the **77th** chapter of The Prophets.

The spiritual number **77** means 'False Prophet'.

{**7** means 'Sword'. To understand **77** picture two 'Sword's guarding the entrance to the Garden of Eden so people CAN'T go back to GOD – Gen. 3:24}

The spiritual number **8** means 'New Man' or 'Holy Man'

This applies to **Karlstadt**, a high priest of the Reformed Church, and all the other leaders of the Reformation like **Luther**, **Zwingli**, and **Calvin**. It also applies to all the hatchlings: to all the churchmen that ever sat in authority over Reformed Churches the world over since 1501.

PART TWO

Jeremiah **8 v 17** is the **19,171st** verse in the whole Bible starting at Gen **1 v 1**.

The number **19,171 = 19 x 1009** [**169th** prime]

The spiritual meaning of **19** is 'Faith'

The spiritual meaning of **169** is 'Demon Worship'.

The spiritual meaning of **1009** is 'No Ears To Hear, No Eyes To See'

Faith is destroyed when we set a man in authority over a congregation. It doesn't matter if it is a vain Pope enthroned in a glorious cathedral or a 'minister' in plain clothes speaking from a lectern on a platform elevated above the people. The result is the same, when the people turn to one man to hear only his teaching, they give him their ears. As a result they lose their ears to hear the Holy Spirit. Our paper '[The Mount of Transfiguration](#)' explains this.

PART THREE

Jeremiah **8 v 17** is the **1,516th** verse of The Prophets starting at Isaiah **1 v 1**.

The number **1,516 = 4 x 379**

The spiritual meaning of **4** is 'Message'

The spiritual meaning of **379** is 'Defeat Before Enemies'.

The spiritual meaning of **1516** is 'Saints Possessed by a Man'

The Reformers had a zeal for God but not a right understanding of the gospel. They broke the bondage of the Roman Church but they put the saints into another bondage to other man-made institutions. Karlstadt slew the Dragon. But a dragon cut into pieces just became a nest of vipers (little dragons)!