

1635 AD – ‘BIRTH OF SPENER: LUTHERANS RESIST SPIRITUAL LIFE’

“Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil.” (Jeremiah 13 v 23)

EVENTS IN 1635 AD

In **1635 Philipp Spener** was born in Ribeauville, Alsace; part of the Holy Roman Empire.

SPENER’S CRUSADE FOR SPIRITUAL LIFE¹

In **1651** he went to Strasbourg where he devoted himself to the study of philology, history and philosophy.

In **1653** he won his degree of master by a disputation against the philosophy of Thomas Hobbes. He became tutor to the princes of the Palatinate, and lectured in the university.

From **1659** to **1662** he visited universities in Switzerland. In Geneva his interest was turned in the direction of searching for spiritual life within the believer.

In **1663** he returned to Strasbourg where he was appointed preacher without pastoral duties, with the right of holding lectures.

In **1666** he was invited to become the chief pastor in the Lutheran Church at Frankfurt.

In **1675** he published his chief work on Pietism: Pia Desideria (“Pious Desires”)

In **1686** he accepted the invitation to the first court chaplaincy at Dresden. The Elector was soon offended when **Spener** condemned the morals of his court. **Spener** refused to resign his post, and the Saxon government hesitated to dismiss him.

In **1691** the court of Brandenburg offered him the position of rector in Berlin. **Spener** was held in high honour, though the tendencies of the court were rationalistic not pietistic.

In **1694** the University of Halle was founded under his influence.

In **1695** the theological faculty of Wittenberg formally laid to his charge 264 errors.

In **1705 Spener** died in Berlin. All his life **Spener** was attacked by Lutheran theologians.

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philipp_Spener

SPENER'S THEOLOGY OF THE HEART

Spener's writings emphasize personal transformation through spiritual rebirth and renewal.

It is this focus on individual devotion and piety that places him within the realm of Pietism.

Spener wanted to renew the church through the development of more devoted members.

In his Pia Desideria, he gave six proposals of how to enact this reform:

- (1) to encourage the faith of believers through private Bible readings and study groups;
- (2) to increase the involvement of laity in all aspects of the community of believers;
- (3) to emphasize that believers put into practice their faith through holy living;
- (4) to avoid religious controversy and speak gently and mercifully to those who oppose;
- (5) to ensure that pastors are both well-educated and engaged in personal devotions;
- (6) to focus preaching on developing faith in ordinary believers, not on dry theology.

Spener saw hope for the assembly only in the spiritual progress of individual believers.

CONNECTION TO HERRNHUTT REVIVAL

Spener was a godfather to Count von Zinzendorf, the leader of the Moravian Brethren Community at Herrnhut in Saxony.

PROPHECY OF JEREMIAH 13 V 23

“Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil.” (Jeremiah 13 v 23)

The Protestant Reformation was a rebellion to the authority of the Pope, the fatal error of transubstantiation theology, and the abuses of selling indulgences. However, the Lutherans retained many Catholic practices such as meeting in church buildings, the centrality of sacraments, observing holy days, ordination of priests, and suppression of laity through limiting exercise of their spiritual gifts. See our paper [1516 AD](#).

Ultimately, the Protestant Reformation was merely a theological battle in a war of religions.

Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots?

The prophetic ‘**Ethiopian**’ is the Roman Catholic Church. Lutheranism came out of the Roman Catholic Church. Does God work this way? Are there good religions and bad religions?

Will the Kingdom of God come in the hearts of believers by renovating man’s religion? Can the Ethiopian **change his skin**? Can the leopard change **his spots**?

It is a rhetorical question. The obvious answer is: no. An Ethiopian cannot change the color of his skin, no more than a leopard can change his spots.

You can’t take Roman Catholic priests and a Roman Catholic congregation, re-arrange the furniture and change the liturgy and expect reformation in the hearts of the people.

Then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil

Spener spent a lifetime proving Lutheranism was just another religion of man. Religion always kills the prophets. Religion always resists the Holy Spirit.

The only solution to this problem, just as **Spener** proposed, was to get believers out of organized religion. So he proposed small group meetings in homes to read the Bible and pray.

As the revival in **Herrnhutt** proved, **Spener**’s proposals for the spiritual development of the laity were exactly what God had in mind. See our paper [1727 AD](#).

SPIRITUAL NUMBER ANALYSIS

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

PART ONE

Chapter **13** of Jeremiah is the **82nd** chapter of The Prophets.

The spiritual number **82** means 'Throne of God'

Religion is all about taking authority away from God. Religion tells the people: meet here at this time; stand up and sit down on command; be silent; perform rituals which the priest will explain; give your money; go home and don't do anything radical like read your Bible and obey whatever the Holy Spirit tells you!

Here is the truth: the Lord Jesus sits on the highest throne in the Universe. He is God Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth. The Holy Spirit takes words from his mouth and brings them directly to the heart of the believer – no need of an intercessor like a Catholic priest / Lutheran minister.

Any man, woman, boy, or girl is free to read their Bible and do whatever the Holy Spirit convicts them to do. It is the right way, the only way, to live the Christian life.

PART TWO

Jeremiah **13 v 23** is the **19,290th** verse in the whole Bible starting at Gen **1 v 1**.

The number **19,290 = 30 x 643**

The spiritual meaning of **30** is 'Blood'

The spiritual meaning of **643** is 'Deceitful Tongue'

The word 'Blood' here refers specifically to fighting and contention between relatives. The **30th** chapter of Genesis is the account of the jealousy of Rachel and Leah for the love of Jacob. It is also the story of Jacob's unsuccessful attempts to divide the flock between him and the tyrant and wicked sorcerer Laban.

The **643rd** chapter of the Bible is Proverbs 15 where it says “**The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit.**” (verse 4) We can only imagine how difficult it was for **Spener** to hold on to the meek and gentle spirit of love for his brethren when all around him the wild religious animals roared and threatened him.

The satanic nature of religion comes to the surface when a man filled with the Holy Spirit enters the camp.

PART THREE

Jeremiah **13 v 23** is the **1635th** verse of The Prophets starting at Isaiah **1 v 1**.

The number **1635 = 3 x 525**

The spiritual meaning of **3** is 'Binding'

The spiritual meaning of **525** is 'I Seek God's Face in Prayer'

Spener was not successful in converting the Lutheran religion.

The Lutherans resisted: 'Binding' by religious decree – the pastoral advice of **Spener** for the people to meet in small groups, meditate on God's word, and pray – 'I Seek God's Face in Prayer'.