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Carter Wyatt

## The Renaissance

One of the key aspects of human nature is to improve upon itself. People are not content with the status quo and are always working on achieving the next level of power in this world. Whether it be through technology, stronger methods of warfare, or venturing further into the deep cold beyond, humans are always striving to learn more about the world and grow. We can look to the Renaissance as a textbook example of the constant growth of humankind. Indeed, the Renaissance is perhaps one of the greatest periods of growth that humans has ever experienced. It was in this time that the skill over the arts was stretched and fresh ideas were brought forth onto the earth through a handful of brilliant minds that walked the same streets as a normal person. These people all shared ideas that were equivalent to the Greeks and Romans. It is from here where the Renaissance gets its roots, specifically the Greeks who have been remembered to be a very intellectually gifted nation and allowed it to differ from the early middle ages.

You could consider this Renaissance as a much more modern version of the golden age of Greece. Greece is remembered in this time for coming up with many mathematical equations and formulas as well as great art and architecture. Some of the great inventors that came from this era were Aristotle, Archimedes, and many more thinkers. Many of the things that were invented during this golden age are still relevant and studied to this day. But it is important to ask on how

this is important to the Renaissance. It seems that through the things that came about during this time was just a continuation of the Golden Age of Greece. These thinkers that were present during this time had taken the ideas and findings of Greeks and expanded upon them. This is especially true when it comes to art. Many sculptures like Michelangelo were inspired by the Greeks art style and how it was related to the humans as individuals. That is why much of the art is very detailed when it comes to the individual that the work is focused upon. But how does the Renaissance differ from the early Middle Ages? The answer to this question is God. In the middle ages, people were much more focused on serving God because Christianity was the most prominent religion in Europe. The Renaissance shifted the attention from the divine over to the human individual. Through that shift, many ideas like liberalism and other theologies were born in the renaissance through that focus on the individual. It would be through those individuals that would give the inventions of the Renaissance their beginning.

What makes this time so significant was that it was the beginning of the modern world as we know it. Many pleasures and utilities that we take for granted today had found its origin in this time and was highly valued by the people who were first exposed to it in its infancy. One such example was the printing press. Although this device was invented by Gutenberg in 1440 which was ten years shy of the Renaissance's beginning in, the effects and implications that it would have in the years to follow could not be comprehended by mankind. Normally all books or written texts would have to be done by hand and would take a very long time to write. This made books a commodity restricted to the clergy and the wealthy. With the printing press in use, books could now be enjoyed by people of all classes. Not only did this allow books to be obtained by all people, but this would greatly effect how information was spread in the centuries to come. If

it were not for the printing press, information may have been more restricted and it was possible that some of the great inventions and ideas of the age to come could not have been conceived in the great intellectuals minds. Thanks to Gutenberg, this would not be the case and the printing press would allow for the ideas and inventions of the Renaissance to come to full fruition.

Another great man who lived during the Renaissance was Michelangelo. This man is remembered for being an artist who had a knack for sculpting. His most notable works are the statue of David and painting the Sistine Chapel. This chapel was perhaps the work that took him the longest to complete with an estimate of 4 years to complete and displays many different events featured in the bible with the most notable being the painting about the last judgement. This information may make one wonder how long this chapel took to be built. One of the reasons why he has contributed greatly to the Renaissance period was showing the impact of the Greeks upon his work. The Greeks placed a great deal on the individual and through his work on the statue of David, Michelangelo is able to remind us on how impactful the Greeks have been over the last 2000 years and how they will continue to impact us.

This was an age of great human advancement, and this is partially thanks to the ages of past. Thanks to their work, we have picked up where they left off and expanded further on their ideas. Through the printing press, the advancements in art, and the advancements of many ideas along with single mindedness, the Renaissance proved to be one of the most influential periods in human history. Thanks to the great minds like Newton and many others, we will forever remember what had been discovered in this time and one day we will hope to continue what they started and venture into more unexplored territory.

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## The Reformation

There was once a time when Christianity was more unified and each Christian believed the same thing about the God they all shared, With the exception of some of some heretics and a schism, Christianity was unified under the Roman Catholic Church. This would be until Martin Luther posted his 95 theses and helped sparked what would become the protestant reformation. The tree that was Christianity had been splintered with no hope of ever recovering. Different denominations like methodism, Baptist, and Lutheran would come from this mass unorganized schism. However, It was Martin Luther who really got this schism going. Although there have been people who have come before him who are not remembered by many, Martin Luther was able to finish what they started. However, it is important to see how this was important and the real significance behind this wide movement from Luther's point of view.

The reason why this was so important because it permanently ended the unity of Christianity in the west of Europe. The east had been in control of the Eastern Orthodox church after the East-West schism with the Catholics. West Europe had still been united for the most part with exception of some heretics that had no large impact at all. Once Luther and his followers, who were called "Lutherans" packed up their shop and left the Catholic church, the church had finally been broken apart in the west. However, Luther would not be the only one to lead his

dissenters out of the Church. There would be many others like John Calvin and the Calvinists who would

eventually form branches like Baptist and Presbyterian and King Henry VIII who would create his own Church of England with him at the head after a dispute with the Catholic Church. The church would only continue to splinter from here on out. Martin Luther once was a member of clergy in the Catholic Church, and it is very important to understand why he left and what exactly he thought about Christianity.

Martin Luther had many gripes with the church. He first and chiefly believed that all revelation in faith comes from the scriptures alone. This clashed with the church because the Catholic Church places a great importance on tradition. Along with this, he thought that only through scripture could the will and truth of God be discerned. Along with this, Luther thought that it was by our faith in God that would save us and doing any sort of works to earn salvation was meaningless. The Catholic faith encourages works on earth as penance for sins. One of the biggest things that Luther had issues with the Church was the authority of clergy. Luther believed that the Pope had no authority on earth and that he may be a representative of the devil. He also thought that a clergyman's ability to absolve one of his sins was heretic and thought that only God could forgive sins. He also condemned purchasing indulgences, which would eventually be outlawed in the year 1567. There are many more issues in the Catholic Church that Luther has and he speaks about them in his 95 theses. After being summoned before the church asking him to retract what he said, he would eventually be excommunicated from the church. Now that Luther was out of the church and leading his followers towards Christ, we have to understand what kind of impacts his actions would have not just for Europe, but for the entire world.

This reformation, although no one could see much of it at the moment, would have grave consequences for humanity. One of these consequences would be the Spanish Inquisition. Spain was not swayed when the reformation occurred and maintained its place in the Catholic faith. Some even consider Spain to be the most Catholic nation in the present day. The Inquisition that occurred was used to help combat and sort of heretics, including protestants, who would not convert to the Catholic faith. The consequence of this was that it led to an unforeseen amount of death in the country and the centralizing of the Spanish monarchy. The Spanish were not the only ones doing this, King Henry VIII would also start persecuting Catholics and others who did not convert to the church of England in his country. While there were many sorts of debacles that were occurring in Europe, the true consequence would not take place in Europe, but in the new world. The people who took control of the new world were the English who were protestants. Along with this, England was fighting against Spain, who was catholic, over who would have control of this new world. Eventually, England and the protestants won and that is why today much of Christianity in America are protestants. If Spain had been the victor, we could not fathom the implications it would have on society in America as it may have been completely Catholic.

Martin Luther had many issues with the Church which caused him to publish his 95 theses. Eventually, this sparked a fire that could never be doused as Christianity as people in western Europe had come to an end. No more was the unified Catholic church that reigned supreme as it had now been demographically broken into different denominations. These ideas eventually led to a mass persecution of Christians in Europe and permanently shaped the new world and what about God they would believe. Luther's actions would lead other thinkers who

Kresak IV.

had issues with the catholic church to follow in his steps and permanently change Christianity

forever



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