**Historical Thinking Skill – Analyzing Evidence**

**Doc. 1: Instructions for Selling Indulgences, Albrecht of Brandenburg (1517)**

Here follow the four principal graces and privileges, which are granted by the apostolic bull, of which each may be obtained without the other. In the matter of these four privileges preachers shall take pains to commend each to believers with the greatest care, and, in-so-far as in their power lies, to explain the same.

The first grace is the complete remission of all sins; and nothing greater than this can be named, since man who lives in sin and forfeits the favor of God, obtains complete remission by these means and once more enjoys God’s favor: moreover, through this remission of sins the punishment which one is obliged to undergo in Purgatory on account of the affront to the divine Majesty, is all remitted, and the pains of Purgatory completely blotted out…after they have explained to those making confession the full remission and privileges, shall ask of them, for how much money or other temporal goods they would conscientiously go without the said most complete remission and privileges; and this shall be done in order that hereafter they may be brought the more easily to contribute. And because the conditions and occupations of men are so manifold and diverse that we cannot consider them individually, and impose specific rates accordingly, we have therefore concluded that the rates should be determined according to the recognized classes of persons.

**Doc. 2:** **“Ninety-five Theses on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences,” Martin Luther (1517)**

21. Thus those preachers of indulgences are in error who say that by the indulgences of the Pope a man is freed and saved from all punishment.

27. They preach man who say that the soul flies out of Purgatory as soon as the money thrown into the chest rattles.[1]

28. It is certain that, when the money rattles in the chest, avarice and gain may be increased, but the effect of the intercession of the Church depends on the will of God alone.

43. Christians should be taught that he who gives to a poor man, or lends to a needy man, does better than if he bought pardons.

51. Christians should be taught that as it would be the duty so it would be the wish of the Pope even to sell, if necessary, the Basilica of St. Peter, and to give of his own money to very many of those from whom the preachers of pardons extract money.

# Doc. 3: *Against the Execrable Bull of the Antichrist*, Martin Luther *(1520)*

Having given my testimony I proceed to take up the bull. Peter said that you should give a reason for the faith that is in you, but this bull condemns me from its own word without any proof from Scripture, whereas I back up all my assertions from the Bible. I ask thee, ignorant Antichrist, dost thou think that with thy naked words thou canst prevail against the armor of Scripture? Hast thou learned this from Cologne and Louvain? If this is all it takes, just to say, “I dissent, I deny," what foo1, what ass, what mole, what log could not condemn? Does not thy meretricious brow blush that with thine inane smoke thou withstandest the lightning of the divine Word? Why do we not believe the Turks? Why do we not admit the Jews? Why do we not honor the heretic if damning is all that it takes?

Where are you now, most excellent Charles the Emperor, kings, and Christian princes? You were baptized into the name of Christ, and can you suffer these Tartar voices of Antichrist? Where are you, bishops? Where, doctors? Where are you who confess Christ? Woe to all who live in these times.  The wrath of God is coming upon the papists, the enemies Of the cross of Christ, that all men should resist them. You then, Leo X, you cardinals and the rest of you at Rome, I tell you to your faces: "If this bull has come out in your name, then I will use the power which has been given me in baptism whereby I became a son of God and co-heir with Christ, established upon the rock against which the gates of hell cannot prevail. I call upon you to renounce your diabolical blasphemy and audacious impiety, and, if you will not, we shall all hold your seat as possessed and oppressed by Satan, the damned seat of Antichrist; in the name of Jesus Christ, whom you persecute. But my zea1 carries me away.

**Doc 4:. Papal Bull of Excommunication (1521)**

We have been informed that after this previous missive had been exhibited in public and the interval or intervals it prescribed had elapsed [60 days]-and we hereby give solemn notice to all faithful Christians that these intervals have and are elapsed-many of those who had followed the errors of Martin took cognisance of our missive and its warnings and injunctions; the spirit of a saner counsel brought them back to themselves, they confessed their errors and abjured the heresy at our instance, and by returning to the true Catholic faith obtained the blessing of absolution with which the self-same messengers had been empowered; and in several states and localities of the said Germany the books and writings of the said Martin were publicly burned, as we had enjoined. …Nevertheless Martin himself-and it gives us grievous sorrow and perplexity to say this-the slave of a depraved mind, has scorned to revoke his errors within the prescribed interval and to send us word of such revocation, or to come to us himself; nay, like a stone of stumbling, he has feared not to write and preach worse things than before against us and this Holy See and the Catholic faith, and to lead others on to do the same.

He has now been declared a heretic; and so also others, whatever their authority and rank, who have cared nought of their own salvation but publicly and in all men's eyes become followers of Martin's pernicious and heretical sect, and given him openly and publicly their help, counsel and favour, encouraging him in their midst in his disobedience and obstinacy, or hindering the publication of our said missive: such men have incurred the punishments set out in that missive, and are to be treated rightfully as heretics and avoided by all faithful Christians, as the Apostle says ([Titus 3:10-11](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Titus%203.10-11)).

[3]](http://bookofconcord.org/decet-romanum.php%22%20%5Cl%20%22para3) Our purpose is that such men should rightfully be ranked with Martin and other accursed heretics and excommunicates, and that even as they have ranged themselves with the obstinacy in sinning of the said Martin, they shall likewise share his punishments and his name, by bearing with them everywhere the title "Lutheran" and the punishments it incurs.

**Doc. 5: Edict of Worms (1521)**

Edict and mandate of Charles, Fifth of this name, Emperor Elect of the Romans, ordered and written on the imperial day celebrated in the city of Worms. In the year of our Lord one thousand five hundred twenty-one.

Against brother Martin Luther of the order of the Saint Augustinian Eremites, reviver of the old and condemned heresies and inventor of new ones.

*By permission.*

Against each and every one of the books and writings under the name of the said Luther already published or to be published, and also against those who henceforth will print, buy, or sell those books and writings.

Item. Against accomplices receiving or favoring Luther and his works in any way.

Item. Against all insulting and libelous books, and other such writings and illustrations, and also against writers, printers, buyers, or sellers, whoever they are or whatever social status or condition they have.

Law for printers to defend against the evils which come from the abuse of the praiseworthy craft of printing.

*Punishments*

For the crime of *lèse majesté* [high treason] and for very serious offense and indignation against the prince.

Item. Confiscation and loss of body and belongings and all goods, fixed and movable, half of which will go to the Lord, and the other half to the accusers and denouncers. With other punishments as given more fully in the present edict and mandate. …

For this reason-after having learned of the mistakes and heresies of a certain Martin Luther, of the order of the Eremites of Saint Augustine, who teaches iniquity, preaches false doctrines, and writes, in both Latin and German, evil things against our Catholic faith and the Holy Roman and Universal Church, things which have already been spread throughout almost all of Christendom, and abusively into some of our lands and domains, greatly diminishing the honor of God and the Catholic faith, imperiling and endangering Christian souls, and bringing future confusion to all the public affairs of our Holy Mother Church-if we do not put an end to this contagious confusion, it could lead to the corrupting of all faithful nations and to their falling into abominable schisms…

As far as the said Martin is concerned, if he would not admit that he was wrong and repent, recognizing his mistakes in a given period of time, he would be declared disobedient, child of iniquity, and heretic. As such, he would have to be arrested, and, consistent with the ordinance and the rights, he would have to be punished according to the contents of the apostolic bulls.

**Doc. 6: Luther’s words at the Diet of Worms (1521)**

Unless I am refuted and convicted by testimonies of the Scriptures or by clear arguments (since I believe neither the Pope nor the Councils alone; it being evident that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am conquered by the Holy Scriptures quoted by me, and my conscience is bound in the word of God: I can not and will not recant any thing, since it is unsafe and dangerous to do any thing against the conscience.

**Doc. 7:** **An Admonition to Peace, Martin Luther (1525)**

We have no one on earth to thank for this mischievous rebellion, except you princes and lords; and especially you blind bishops and mad priests and monks, whose hearts are hardened, even to the present day, and who do not cease to rage and rave against the holy Gospel, although you know that it is true, and that you cannot refute it. Besides, in your temporal government, you do nothing but flay and rob your subjects, in order that you may lead a life of splendor and pride, until the poor common people can bear it no longer. The sword is at your throats, but you think yourselves so firm in the saddle that no one can unhorse you. This false security and stubborn perversity will break your necks, as you will discover. I have often told you before to beware of the saying, in Psalm 107:40, Effundit contemptum super principes, “He poureth contempt upon princes.” You are striving after it, and want to be smitten over the head, and no warning or exhorting will help you to avoid it…The rest of it is now here, for the peasants are mustering, and this must result in the ruin, destruction, and desolation of Germany by cruel murder and bloodshed, unless God shall be moved by our repentance to prevent it.

For you ought to know, dear lords, that God is doing this because this raging of yours cannot and will not and ought not be endured for long.

**Doc. 7:** **Luther Rages “Against the Murdering and Robbing Bands of Peasants” (1525)**

In my preceding pamphlet [on the "Twelve Articles"] I had no occasion to condemn the peasants, because they promised to yield to law and better instruction, as Christ also demands (Matt. vii. 1). But before I can turn around, they go out and appeal to force, in spite of their promises, and rob and pillage and act like mad dogs. From this it is quite apparent what they had in their false minds, and that what they put forth under the name of the gospel in the “Twelve Articles” was all vain pretense. In short, they practice mere devil’s work…

First, they have sworn to their true and gracious rulers to be submissive and obedient, in accord with God’s command. … But since they have deliberately and sacrilegiously abandoned their obedience, and in addition have dared to oppose their lords, they have thereby forfeited body and soul, as perfidious, perjured, lying, disobedient wretches and scoundrels are wont to do. …

Second, they cause uproar and sacrilegiously rob and pillage monasteries and castles that do not belong to them, for which, like public highwaymen and murderers, they deserve the twofold death of body and soul. It is right and lawful to slay at the first opportunity a rebellious person, who is known as such, for he is already under God’s and the emperor’s ban. Every man is at once judge and executioner of a public rebel; just as, when a fire starts, he who can extinguish it first is the best fellow. Rebellion is not simply vile murder, but is like a great fire that kindles and devastates a country; it fills the land with murder and bloodshed, makes widows and orphans, and destroys everything, like the greatest calamity. Therefore, whosoever can, should smite, strangle, and stab, secretly or publicly, and should remember that there is nothing more poisonous, pernicious, and devilish than a rebellious man. Just as one must slay a mad dog, so, if you do not fight the rebels, they will fight you, and the whole country with you.

Third, they cloak their frightful and revolting sins with the gospel, call themselves Christian brethren, swear allegiance, and compel people to join them in such abominations. Thereby they become the greatest blasphemers and violators of God’s holy name, and serve and honor the devil under the semblance of the gospel, so that they have ten times deserved death of body and soul, for never have I heard of uglier sins. And I believe also that the devil foresees the judgment day, that he undertakes such an unheard-of measure; as if he said, “It is the last and therefore it shall be the worst; I’ll stir up the dregs and knock the very bottom out.” May the Lord restrain him! Lo, how mighty a prince is the devil, how he holds the world in his hands and can put it to confusion: who else could so soon capture so many thousands of peasants, lead them astray, blind and deceive them, stir them to revolt, and make them the willing executioners of his malice. …

And should the peasants prevail (which God forbid!),–for all things are possible to God, and we know not but that he is preparing for the judgment day, which cannot be far distant, and may purpose to destroy, by means of the devil, all order and authority and throw the world into wild chaos,–yet surely they who are found, sword in hand, shall perish in the wreck with clear consciences, leaving to the devil the kingdom of this world and receiving instead the eternal kingdom. For we are come upon such strange times that a prince may more easily win heaven by the shedding of blood than others by prayers.