

Martin Luther (2): Lightning Strike

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Clouds gathered and darkened. A storm brewed in the air. A young, traveling university student bent his head and held his cap in place as raindrops started to pelt the ground and a gust of wind swept over his path. It was a warm day in July. Thunderstorms were not frequent in the land of Germany, but neither were they unheard of. They were cause for concern, though. In 1505, storms were not merely storms. Thunder was not merely loud noise. Thunder was the voice of an angry God. His judgments were surely near those within the hearing of such displeasure. Besides that, elves and other such mysterious gnomes might be lurking behind the next tree or bend in the road. The twenty-one-year-old law student crouched a little more as he heard the rumble of thunder in the distance. He hurried on his way back to school.

The storm strengthened. Suddenly the young man sensed something strange, but it was only for a moment. There was no time to consider what it might mean. A clap of thunder exploded in his ears as a bolt of lightning knocked him to the ground. Yet, he was not left speechless.

“St. Anne, help me! I will become a monk,” he cried out. All his life he had been taught to seek help from departed saints. He had been taught that salvation depended not on the cross of Christ alone, but also on one’s own works of penance and pilgrimage. He was a very conscientious young man. He worked for his salvation with all his heart, but it never seemed to be enough. This grieved him deeply. And now—a bolt of lightning from God! He was terror stricken.

Whether from wind, rain, or dread, he began to shake. A vow was a vow. He was alive—to become a monk. He slowly rose and continued on his way, knowing his path in life was forever changed. Yet this young law student, named Martin Luther, could not know how very different his way in life would truly be. God, indeed, controlled every lightning bolt and drop of rain. Martin was alive for a very special work and purpose.

Originally Published in:

Vol 65 No 10 November 2006