

## Footstep #10 - No Biblical Basis - 1517

*“If you will look over my theses, you will see how dubious is the doctrine of indulgences, which is so confidently proclaimed.”* (Roland Bainton. *Here I Stand*, p. 65)

God’s intervention in the forces of history may be apparent in the inequality of wealth in the German states of the Holy Roman Empire under Emperor Maximilian. Jakob Fugger became the leading banker of the Habsburg Dynasty replacing the northern Italian monopoly in finance. Although the German merchants opposed trading monopolies, the Fuggers were able to secure the right to sell indulgences in Germany in 1514 to finance the construction of St. Peter’s Church in the Vatican with the hope of paying the debt on the sins of a deceased family member in purgatory waiting to enter heaven.

Unfortunately, the rural peasant population was starving and living in poverty while the new urban population benefited from the developing consumer economy. Municipal leaders restricted the movement of the peasants into the towns. Although the cost of indulgences was not expensive, Martin Luther opposed the sale of indulgences on both theological and economic principles. He was most upset by the direct marketing strategies used by the indulgence preachers in Germany.



St. Peter's Basilica