

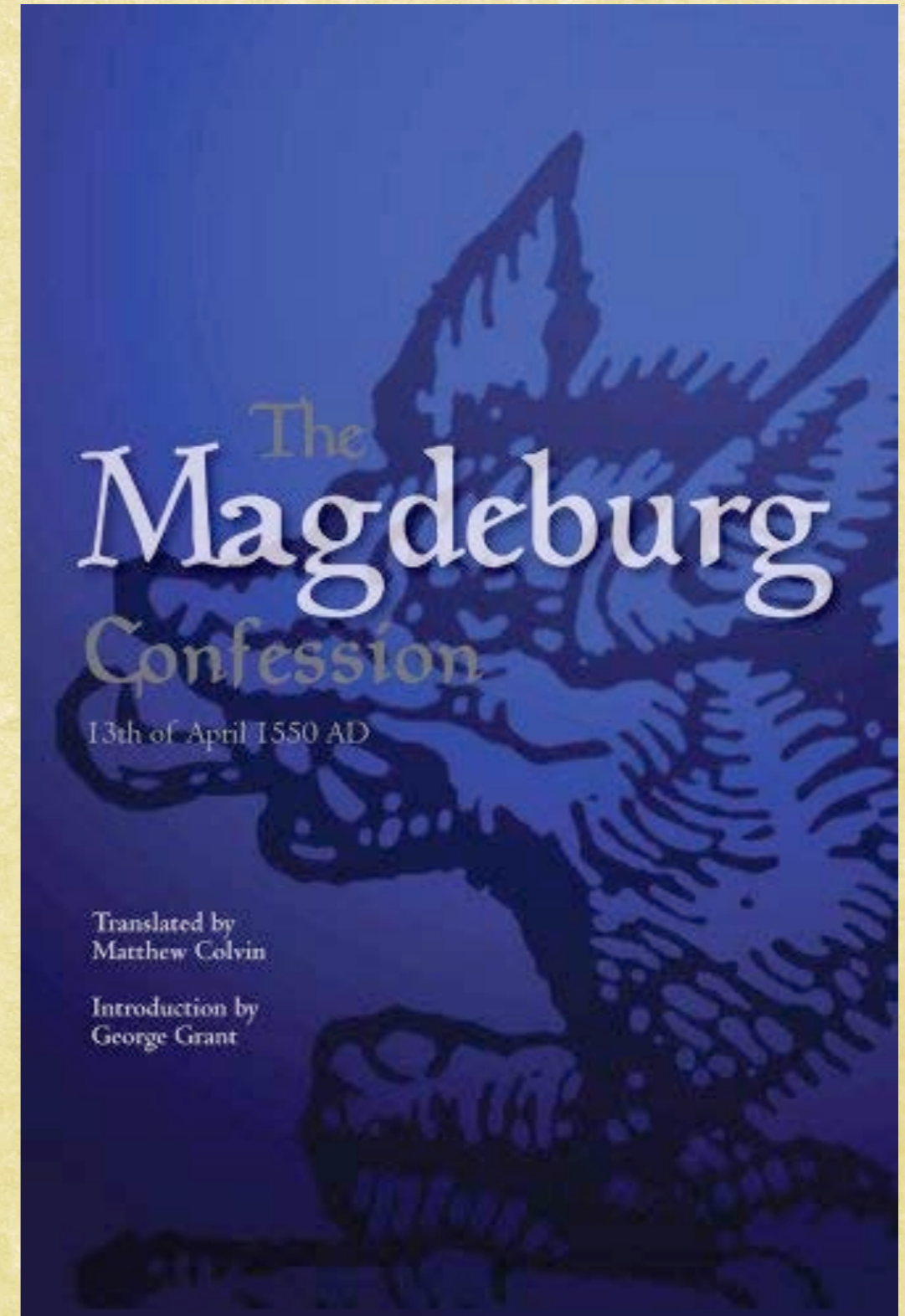
HT 501 Church History
Class 10; Lecture 2
The Magdeburg Confession

AD 1517–1551

The Magdeburg Confession

or

The Doctrine of the Lesser Magistrate



Background to the Magdeburg Confession

- 1. Oct. 31, 1517: Reformation Day. Luther posts the 95 Theses to the church door in Wittenberg, Germany.**

1500

1600

1517

X

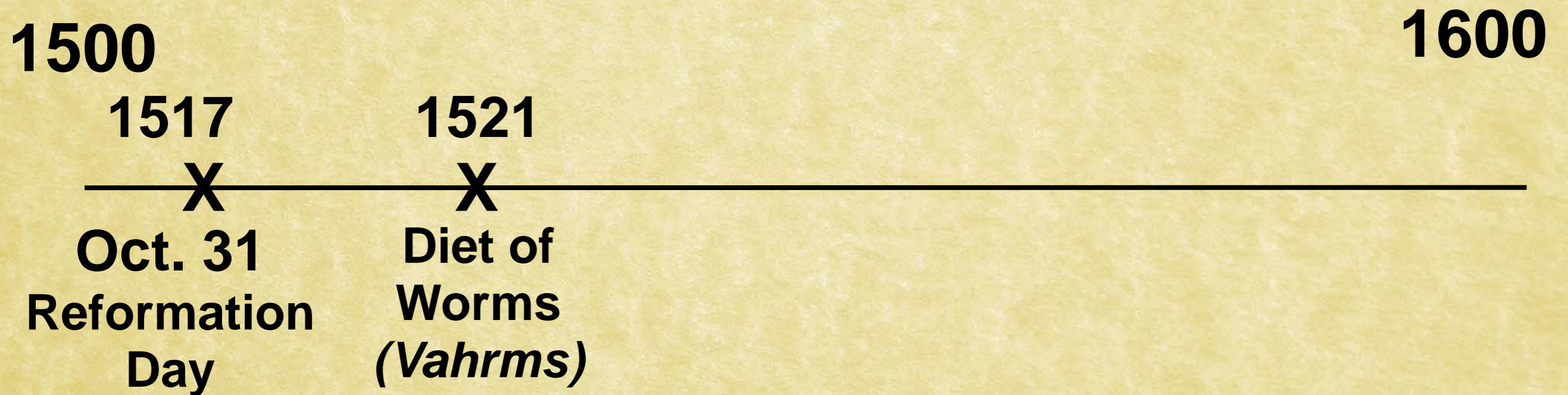
Oct. 31

Reformation

Day

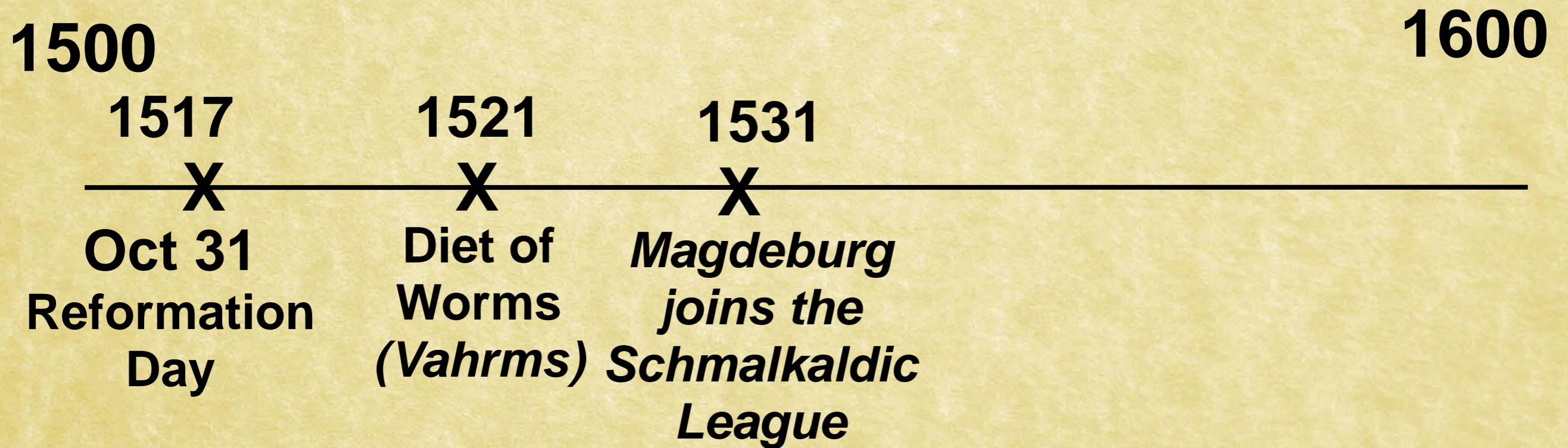
Background to the Magdeburg Confession

2. 28 Jan–25 May, 1521 Luther tried by Emperor Charles V for heresy.



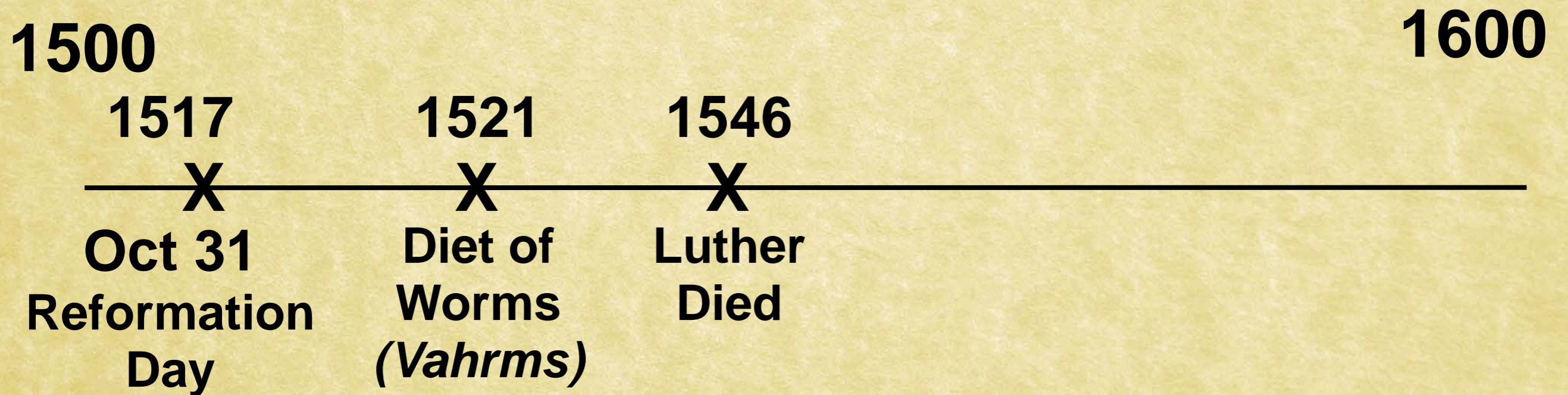
Background to the Magdeburg Confession

3. 1531 Magdeburg joins the Schmalkaldic League.



Background to the Magdeburg Confession

4. Luther died, 1546



Four months after Luther's death, Charles V entered a treaty with Pope Paul III to end the spread of the Reformation.

“... In the name of God and with the help and assistance of his Papal Holiness, his Imperial Majesty should prepare himself for war, and equip himself with soldiers and everything pertaining to warfare against those who objected to the Council [of Augsburg], against the Smalcaldic League, and against all who were addicted to the false belief and error in Germany, and that he do so with all his power and might, in order to bring them back to the old faith and to the obedience of the Holy See.”

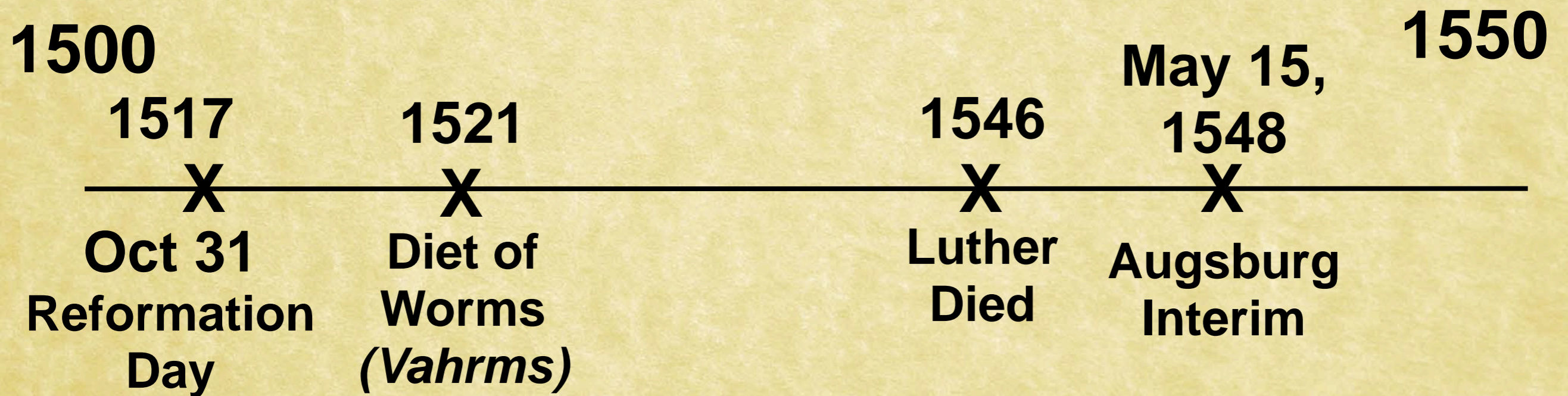
Schmalkaldic League War

July 4, 1546–April 24, 1547.

Charles V defeated them. Imprisoned Phillip of Hesse and John Frederick of Saxony.

Background to the Magdeburg Confession

5. May 15, 1548 Charles V, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, issued the *Augsburg Interim* to end the Protestant Reformation.



**The only city to stand against the Emperor
was Magdeburg.**

2. The Confession is divided into 7 chapters.

- i. Of God and the distinction of the persons.**
- ii. Of creation, of the cause of sin, and the chief kinds of sin.**
- iii. Of the Law.**
- iv. Of the Gospel and Justification.**
- v. Of the Sacraments.**
- vi. Of the Church and its ministers, and of the power of the Church and its ministers.**
- vii. Of polity and economy, and of the power of each.**

“When a higher or superior authority makes an unjust or immoral law or decrees, the lower (lesser) authority in government has the right—even the duty in the sight of God—to interpose against that immoral law or decree, to refuse obedience to the immoral law or decree, and if need be, to openly resist the unjust or immoral law or decree made by the higher authority.”

“the idea of unlimited obedience to the state is an invention of the Devil.”

“When the state makes laws commanding us to do that which God forbids, or makes law forbidding us to do that which God commands, we obey God, rather than the state.”

“... Whether a Christian magistrate can or ought to preserve his State and the Christian teachers and hearers in it against his own superior magistrate, and drive off by force one who is using force to compel people to reject the true doctrine and true worship of God and to accept idolatry.” [49]

Warning

“... Even good men are sometimes carnally impatient of injuries, and can badly abuse opinions that have been rightly handed down to them by employing them at the wrong time or place.”

“... we will gladly render obedience—as much as we are able and we owe you.

“... That except for the preservation of our religion, nothing else is sought; that when this is gained, our Senate and citizens will be most obedient in all their proper duties according to your Majesty’s laws.”

“We again affirm from the sure Word of God that when superior magistrates attempt to force Papistical idolatry upon their citizens, to overwhelm the true worship of God and His true worshippers, just as they have now begun to do, by unjust maneuvers with their laws, even if they pretend otherwise—then pious magistrates are not only able, but even have an obligation to resist them as far as they are able, to defend the true doctrine, worship of God, life, modesty, and the property of their subjects, and preserve them against such tyranny.”