

Martin Luther  
A Very Short Introduction  
By Scott Hendrix

#### Questions for thought and discussion

- How would you rate Luther's importance as an historical figure? Explain your evaluation.
- How was Luther different from the many reformers of Christianity who preceded him?
- In what sense were Luther's ninety-five theses a cause of the Reformation? Does it matter to you whether they were nailed or mailed? Why?
- Did Luther ever think of himself as a reformer of Christianity? If so, at what point in his life did he come to that understanding?
- Many people would say that Luther was the first Protestant and that he broke away from the Roman Catholic Church? Do you agree? If not, how would you modify the statement?
- In what sense was Luther a theologian? What did you find appealing or unappealing about his religious ideas?
- Because of Luther, say some people, Christians can read the Bible for themselves and know the truth about God without any help from the church or other authorities? Would Luther agree?
- What was Luther's greatest lasting achievement?
- What was Luther's greatest mistake?
- How political was the Reformation? Would you give more weight to religious or to political factors in shaping the outcome of the Reformation?
- Was the reform movement that Luther initiated a success?
- Would you call Luther an anti-Semite as some writers have done? How does Luther's historical setting affect your answer?
- Are there perspectives from Luther's writings about the "Turks" that inform current relationships between Christianity and Islam?
- How would you characterize Martin Luther as a person? As a father and married man? As a public figure? As a friend?
- If you had to write a biography of Luther, which parts of his life would you place in the forefront?
- Do you find Katharina von Bora a sympathetic figure? How would you describe the relationship with her husband? Imagine what it would be like to be married to Martin Luther. How did marriage in sixteenth-century Germany differ from marriage today in western societies?

#### Other books by Scott Hendrix

Hendrix, Scott H. *Luther and the Papacy*. Philadelphia, 1981.

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Hendrix, Scott H. *Luther. Pillars of Theology*. New York & Nashville, 2009.

#### Further reading

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Brecht, Martin. *Martin Luther*. 3 vols. Stuttgart, 1981-1987 (English: 1985-1993).

Edwards, Mark U., Jr. *Luther and the False Brethren*. Stanford, 1975.

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Kolb, Robert. *Martin Luther As Prophet, Teacher, and Hero*. Grand Rapids, MI, 1999.

Oberman, Heiko A. *Luther: Man between God and the Devil*. New Haven, CT, 1989 (German 1982).

Steinmetz, David. *Luther in Context*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI, 2002.