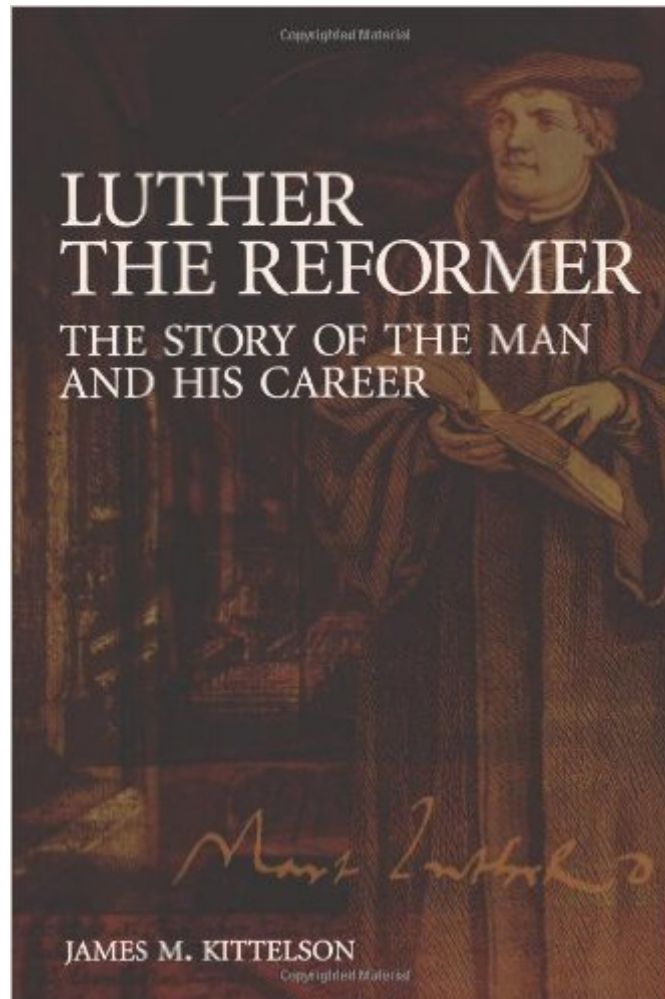


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Luther The Reformer: The Story Of The Man And His Career



Synopsis

Engaging and authoritative, Kittleson's important and popular biography is here "represented with a new cover and new preface by the author. His single-volume biography has become a standard resource for those who wish to delve into the depths of the Reformer without drowning in a sea of scholarly concerns.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Kittleson's concise treatment of the life and work of Martin Luther is a wonderful starting point for those interested in knowing more about Luther who are NOT interested in minute detail. Kittleson covers the major writings, the famous "here I stand" moments, and all the other basics to understanding Luther and his beliefs. While this is not as in depth as Oberman or Erikson's treatments, it is informative and well-thought out, put together in a manner which reads easily and stays in your head permanently, a must for seminarians and others who read quickly and forget even faster. Kittleson has done a marvelous job presenting Luther here; I highly recommend this book for others.

This book easily eclipses Bainton's and others in providing an accurate, yet readable for the layman as well as pastor and scholar who wants to begin understanding Luther and the Reformation. Not bogged down with the scholarly drawl of painstakingly covering all the angles and previous opinions on this most intriguing of historical figures. Great maps and index. Highly recommended.

This is a terrific book, both for people who want a first book to read about Martin Luther, and for those who know the story well. Luther has been the subject of many biographies; Kittelson's book is unique in blending the development of Luther's theology with an account of the life of the man. Kittelson's expertise allows him to tell a complex story clearly and concisely. The book inspired me to read more about Luther, including some of his own writings.

This was an exceptional biography of Martin Luther. While most biographies tend to focus on only a small portion of his life (usually his initial "discovery" of his doctrine of justification and the initial break from Rome), Kittleson tackles the life of Luther as a complete story. While he did spend far more time (i.e. the first 200 pages) on Luther's early life and "conversion," he spent the remainder of the book looking at the often neglected later life of Luther. While Bainton's biography was groundbreaking, and is still a good book, this one surpasses it in its fairness and completeness (though it does lack a little of the enthusiasm that Bainton had). This book makes Luther's life and theology very accessible to non-historians. Kittleson always puts Luther's ideas and writings in context, giving us a feel for why he said what he said. While many of Luther's words still seem harsh and divisive, they are at least a little more understandable when looked at in context. Further, Kittleson does what most biographers fail to do when writing about Luther: he really helps the reader understand what Luther's personality was like. Instead of presenting Luther as a disembodied intellect pumping out ideas, he gives information that helps us put together a picture of what Luther the person was really like. The only complaints I have about this book are the brevity of his treatment of Luther's later life and his slight bias in favor of Luther. While I can tell that he is trying to be fair, he often ends up defending Luther's harsh comments and actions. While I do admire Luther, I have no problem admitting that Luther was wrong about some things, was far too harsh at times, and really was far more divisive than he needed to be. Kittleson seems to realize this, but always tries to defend Luther's words or actions by explaining that he was doing these things because he was so devoted to defending his conception of true doctrine. That may be, but does that really mean he was not wrong about some things? Lest you think that this book is merely a defense of Luther, it is really not so blatant as I am making it sound. In comparison to most Luther biographies written by a Lutheran, I imagine that it is very objective. Kittleson never explicitly says that Luther did no wrong, he just seemed to lightly imply it in many places. The mere fact that he actually presents the distasteful writings/actions of Luther in the book should speak volumes about his desire to be fair, and my complaint is really very minor. Overall, this is definitely a recommended book. It seems to be

THE place to start in learning about Luther, even above Bainton's excellent biography. I have obviously not read every Luther biography out there, or even a decent portion of them, but I would be very surprised if there were a better one than this which covers Luther's whole life. Overall grade: A

Brought up as a Roman Catholic in the thirties and forties, I had a negative take on Luther. He was the heretic who caused so much trouble. I am no longer a Catholic, but mostly Buddhist. However, unable to find a Buddhist community in my area with which I could identify --- I tried some Christian churches, of which, naturally there is an abundance. I happened upon Peace Lutheran Church here in Las Cruces, NM, and found a place where I thought I might settle down at least for the sake of some spiritual community. I decided to read a biography of Luther -- starting but not finishing -- one by Ronald Bainton. I stopped reading it partly because of the writing style, and because I wanted some more time spent on Luther's theological explorations and the views that he came to have about Jesus and the Church. Luther the Reformer by Kittelson fitted my needs almost perfectly: It was clearly stated, well written, interesting, delving below the surface, but still not getting bogged down in erudite details. It was insightful, helpful, and an enjoyable book for me. Highly recommended.

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