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# MARTIN LUTHER IN 10 OBJECTS

A life in logos

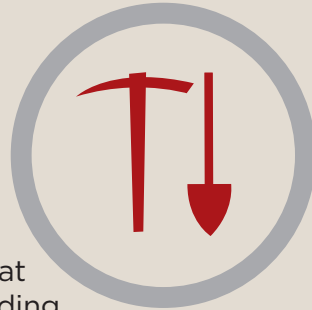
MARTIN  
LUTHER

A hammer with a wooden handle and a metal head is positioned vertically in the center. Several nails are scattered on the wooden surface around the base of the hammer handle.

REDISCOVERING THE GOSPEL TRUTH

## 1: A PICK AND SHOVEL LUTHER'S FAMILY

Martin Luther was born to Hans and Margaret Luther on 10 November 1483 at Eisleben, part of modern day Germany. Martin's father worked hard as a miner and became the mine manager. Hans ensured that Martin received a very good education including how to read and speak Latin. This was very important as Latin was, "the language of the church, of law, diplomacy, international relations, scholarship and travel." Martin then attended Erfurt University where he studied between 1501 and 1505, and attained a BA and MA. Martin began to study law, which his father was keen for him to follow as a career.



## 2: A TROWEL A CHANGING WORLD

Europe was unsettled, both politically and religiously. The Islamic Ottoman Empire was advancing into Europe and had almost reached Germany. Pope Leo X had exhausted the churches finances with wars and the massive building project of St. Peter's and the Vatican. He needed money. At the same time the ambitious Cardinal Albrecht of Brandenburg in Germany wanted a third 'bishopric.' For this he needed the Pope's permission, and this came at a price. They entered into a financial arrangement. The Pope also gave Albrecht permission to raise an 'indulgence' – asking people to pay the Church money to forgive their sins and to release souls of the dead from purgatory. It was the sale of these 'indulgences' against which Martin Luther would later protest.



## 3: A LIGHTNING BOLT A CHANGED LIFE

During a storm when a student of law Martin Luther was nearly struck by lightning. In his terror during that moment he cried out, "Saint Anne, save me and I will become a monk." He was unharmed but still took his vow seriously. A few weeks later he presented himself at an Augustinian monastery and joined their Order. Martin thus turned his back on a lucrative career in law. Hans Luther was very unhappy about his son's decision. He knew nothing about it until after it happened. For Hans, all the high hopes he had in his son seemed lost.



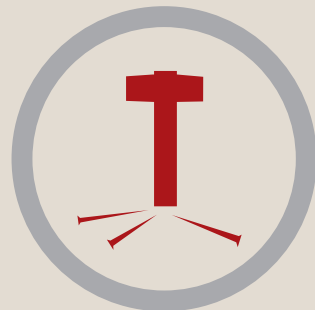
## 4: A 'MORTAR BOARD' LIFE AND EDUCATION

Martin Luther was not only a monk. In 1507 he was ordained as a priest. It was during Luther's first mass that he was powerfully challenged about his own sinfulness. He realised that peace with God could not be found in religion. Despite this anxiety, in 1512 he became the Doctor of Theology at the new University of Wittenberg. This meant Luther had the roles of preaching, pastoring people, and lecturing students about the Bible. His Bible teaching was very thorough: he spent 1513–15 lecturing on the Psalms, Romans (1515–16), Galatians (1516–17), Hebrews (1517–18) and Psalms again from 1519–21. Yet he still struggled with his sin. Was it forgiven or was it not? He simply didn't know. It was during his study of the Bible, in particular the Epistle to the Romans, that he discovered that salvation is in Christ alone, by grace alone, through faith alone. Truly 'the Just shall live by faith.'



## 5: A HAMMER AND NAILS THE '95 THESES'

Johann Tetzel, a Dominican monk, was tasked with selling indulgences to raise money for the Church, and eventually he arrived at Wittenberg. This distressed and infuriated Pastor Martin Luther. People he knew, loved and cared for were in danger of being duped into spending the little money they had on indulgences. Luther responded by writing the '95 Theses' which he nailed to the town's notice board on 31st October 1517, a very public attack on the Church and the Pope. Luther's aim was to start a debate amongst theologians. Unknown to Luther the '95 Theses' were copied, translated from Latin into German and circulated round the country. The '95 Theses' suddenly and unexpectedly became big news throughout Europe. As we might say today, it 'went viral'.



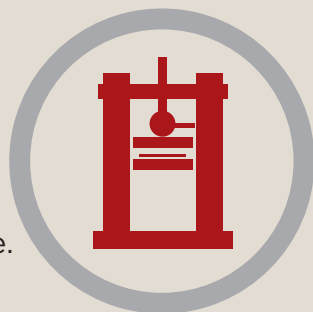
## 7: A ROOF TILE 'HERE I STAND'

By this stage Martin Luther had already been excommunicated by the Pope, but now he was summoned to a meeting of the Holy Roman Empire (called a Diet) held in the city of Worms. Prior to setting out on his journey he said, "I would go to Worms if there were as many devils as there were tiles on the roofs. If Huss had been burned, the truth had not been burnt with him." John Huss (Jan Hus) was executed in 1415 and is often thought of as the first church Reformer. Luther was expected to change his mind and admit that his own teaching was wrong. However, he reaffirmed his writings, questioned the accuracy and constancy of Roman Catholic teaching and concluded his speech: "Here I stand, I can do no other, so help me God!"



## 6: A PRINTING PRESS LUTHER'S WRITING

The relatively recent invention of the printing press provided the means to spread Luther's writings throughout Europe. His works were also circulated in England and Scotland. This provoked an angry King Henry VIII to write against Luther's teachings! However Luther's printed books, pamphlets and sermons were widely read and gladly received. In fact, much of his writing is available freely online today! Also the 'Fortress Press and Concordia Publishing House' have an English translation of Luther's works in 55 volumes. It is documented that he would have been happy even if only his 'Large and Small Catechism' along with 'The Bondage of the Will' survived. Millions of copies of his writings swept across Europe.



## 8: A BIBLE IN THE PEOPLE'S LANGUAGE

Today it is hard to imagine not having a Bible in the language we speak, but this was not the case in the 1500s. Luther believed the people needed a Bible, one in their own language, one that was readable and accurate, and one translated from the original languages of Greek and Hebrew. This work of translation and revision continued throughout his life. Luther's passion can be evidenced when he went to a slaughter house to get the right words for a goat's innards! The printing press made it possible for copies to be printed quickly and cheaply. Luther's work was a great influence on and encouragement to the English Bible translator William Tyndale and the young Scottish Reformer Patrick Hamilton - both of whom would later be brutally martyred.



## 9: A WEDDING RING THEOLOGIAN DAD

Martin Luther married Catherine von Bora in 1525. She had escaped from her convent and travelled to Wittenberg in a barrel! They parented six children and allowed students to be lodgers in their home, the old Augustinian monastery. For Luther, clergy marrying was no longer a theological matter but personal choice. Now no longer an unmarried academic in a secluded cloister, he needed to know how he could best teach the children gathered round his knee. As a father and a pastor he constantly moulded his teaching and preaching to ensure he engaged with people on their level.



## 10: A BEGGING BOWL FINAL WORDS

Luther travelled to Eisleben in 1546 (against the wishes of his wife Katie, and the Elector of Saxony) to help settle a disputed will. Whilst far away from his beloved Katie he became ill and died. He was 62, an old man by the standards of his day. His final recorded words were, "We are beggars, this is truth". It is recorded that he spoke the first part in his native German and the second in the scholarly Latin – thus, in death as in life, uniting the common man with the theologian. As a spiritual beggar, he saw himself destitute and bankrupt without Christ; but in Him he was spiritually rich and had all that he needed. These words tell us much about his life, ministry and faith. He relied, by faith alone, upon the crucified and risen Jesus Christ, for salvation.



## LUTHER READING LIST



### LUTHER'S OWN WRITING

- *95 Theses* (1517)
- *The Bondage of the Will* (1525)
- *Commentary on Galatians* (1535)

(Also see further reading list)

### LUTHER'S THEOLOGY

- *Luther on the Christian Life: Cross and Freedom* Carl Trueman (Crossway)
- *Histories and Fallacies: problems faced in the writing of history*. Carl Trueman (Crossway)
- *The Genius of Luther's Theology* Robert Kolb & Charles P Arand (Baker Academic)
- *Reformation Thought an Introduction* Alister McGrath (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing)
- *On being a theologian of the cross: reflections on Luther's Heidelberg Disputation (of 1518)* Gerhard O Forde (Wm B Eerdmans Publishing Co.)

### LUTHER'S LIFE

- *Martin Luther a Life*. Martin Marty (Penguin Books)
- *Martin Luther: the man who started the Reformation*. Thomas Lindsay (Christian Focus)
- *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther*. Ronald Bainton
- *The Wit of Martin Luther*. Eric W Gritsch (Fortress Press)

### FURTHER READING

An excellent reading list can be found here:

- <http://www.reformation21.org/articles/reading-luther-not-wisely-but-well-part-one.php>
- <http://www.reformation21.org/articles/reading-luther-not-wisely-but-well-part-two.php>

### BOOKSHOPS

The following shops do not appear as adverts but as possible sources for books on this reading list. Other bookshops are also available.

#### BEULAH BOOKSHOP

25 Central Promenade, Newcastle, Co Down BT33 0AA  
T: 028 4372 2629 [www.beulahbooks.com](http://www.beulahbooks.com)

#### EVANGELICAL BOOKSHOP

15 College Square East, Belfast BT1 6DD  
T: 028 9032 0529 [www.evangelicalbookshop.co.uk](http://www.evangelicalbookshop.co.uk)

#### GOWAN BOOKS

Boho Rd, Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh BT74 8AS  
T: 028 6634 1239 [www.gowanbooks.com](http://www.gowanbooks.com)

#### ICM BOOKS

115 Dunkirk Road, Lurgan, Co Armagh BT66 7AR  
T: 028 3832 1488 [www.icmbooksdirect.co.uk](http://www.icmbooksdirect.co.uk)

#### WESTMINSTER BOOKS (ONLINE)

[www.wtsbooks.com](http://www.wtsbooks.com)

On 31 October 1517, Martin Luther took a hammer and nailed his '95 Theses' to the church door in Wittenberg, Germany. His stand for the Gospel was the beginning of the Protestant Reformation.

'Martin Luther in 10 objects' is a simple and memorable introduction to his life.

Using the images of: a Pick and Shovel, a Trowel, a Lightning Bolt, a 'Mortar Board' hat, a Hammer and Nails, a Printing Press, a Roof Tile, a Bible, a Wedding Ring, and a Begging Bowl, we swiftly move from Martin Luther's childhood to his final words!

Each object is accompanied with a short explanation. This booklet is suitable for young people but can be used by any age group.

**FOUR OTHER BOOKLETS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE**

Written by Robert Campbell, ©2016



The Luther 1517 project has been jointly published by the Imperial Grand Black Chapter and the Grand Orange Lodge of Ireland. It is our desire that this project will reaffirm for our members how central faith is to our two Institutions, will stir up faith within our memberships, and will be a Gospel witness to wider society.