**Reading the Reformation**

Martin Luther and the Reformation are the subjects of thousands of books. Some are big, other are small. Some are simple, others are difficult. Some are good reads, others will try your patience. The following annotated bibliography is list of some of the best books about Luther and the Reformation.

Luther Biographies:

Roland H. Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther*  (many editions). This is the classic biography of Luther. It was first published in 1950 and it has remained in print ever since. Bainton is a fine writer whose prose makes for a smooth and easy read. It focuses on Luther’s life up to 1530 and then proceeds very quickly to his death in 1546.

Martin E. Marty, *Martin Luther: A Life* (2004). An excellent short biogtaphy. Marty is a prominent church historian and a retired professor at the University of Chicago. He is also an ordained Lutheran pastor.

Scott H. Hendrix, *Martin Luther: A Very Short Introduction* (2010). This is a good, very brief biography by an highly respected Luther scholar.

Heinrich Bornkamm, *Luther in Mid-Career 1521-1530*. Published in German in 1979 and published in English translation in 1983. It focuses on the decade of 1520s and provides a richly detail account of Luther’s activities in those years. Bornkamm’s book is highly respected.

Heiko A. Oberman, *Luther: Man Between God and the Devil*. Published in German in 1982 and in English in 1989. Oberman was an intellectual historian of late medieval and early Reformation theology. It is full of insights but not a good choice to read for a first biography of Luther.

Derek Wilson, *Out of the Storm: The Life and Legacy of Martin Luther* (2007). This is a more recent popular biography of Luther. Wilson researches his topic well and is a very good writer.

Specialized Books about Luther

Steven Paulson, *Luther for Armchair Theologians* (2004). An excellent summary of Luther’s theology for the layperson.

David M. Whitford, *Luther: A Guide for the Perplexed* (2011). Looks at the some of the difficult aspects of Luther’s teaching and ideas.

Eric W. Gritsch, *The Wit of Martin Luther* (2006). This little book looks at the role of humor in Luther’s life. By all accounts, Luther was pleasant company socially as this book demonstrates.

Martin E. Marty, *31 October 1517: Martin Luther and the Day that Changed the World*. (2016). Looks at the significant of the Reformation for the people of 2017.

Ian Siggins, *Luther and His Mother* (1981). A nice short study of Luther’s mother Hanna Lindemann.

Rudolf K. Markwald and Marilyn Morris Markwald, *Katherina von Bora: A Reformation Life* (2002). Entertaining and insightful biography of Luther’s wife, a renegade nun. The Luther’s had a modern style marriage of love and partnership. Unlike many Renaissance era intellectuals and theologians who insisted women were inferior, Luther treated his wife as an equal partner.

General Histories of the Reformation

Rudolph W. Heinze, *Reform and Conflict: From the Medieval World to the Wars of Religion, A.D. 1350-1648* (2005). An excellent overview of the Reformation that is well written and authoritative.

Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation: A History* (2005). This history is more detailed than Heinze. It is a fine and long book for those seeking to delve deeply into the Reformation.

Patrick Collinson, *The Reformation: a History (2006).* A brief survey of the Reformation by an acknowledged expert. Good for those seeking a brief account.

Peter Marshall, *The Reformation: A Very Short Introduction* (2009). For those seeking an even briefer survey of this Reformation, this book is an excellent choice.