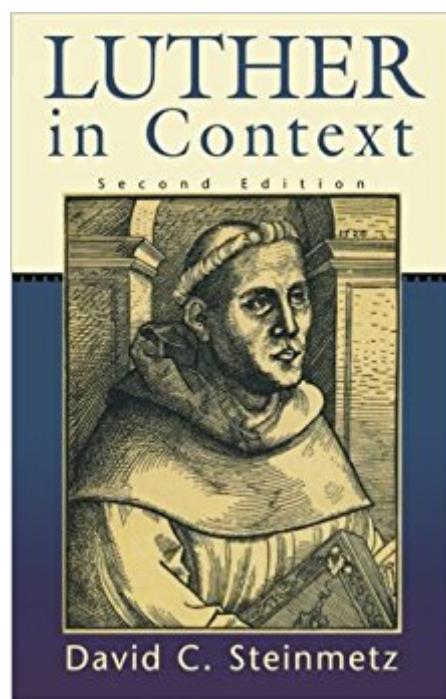


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Luther In Context



Synopsis

Places Luther's thought in the context of his theological predecessors and contemporaries, introducing themes and problems that concerned Luther. Includes three new essays.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

David Steinmetz offers an insightful glimpse into the thought and theology of Martin Luther. This expanded edition contains three additional essays, one of which is appearing in English for the first time. *Reviews of the First Edition* — This attractive collection . . . blends careful, current scholarship with an eminently readable style to create an enlightening guide to Martin Luther's religious thought. — *Journal of Religion* — Explores with elegance some of the fundamental loci of Reformation theology in a logical progression and with a refreshing method. . . . The essays illuminate the issues at stake and the range of choices available to and taken by Luther and his partners in the dialogue, often thereby clarifying differences that still exist within Western Christianity. — *Sixteenth Century Journal* — Steinmetz masterfully exhibits the novelty of Luther's reformation insights against representatives of the theological landscape of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. . . . Exceptionally well-written and lucid. — *Lutheran Quarterly* — David Steinmetz has provided an invaluable guide for the study of Luther. . . . It is not only a tribute to Martin Luther and to his enduring contributions these hundreds of years after his birth, but it is a witness as well to how a scholar like Steinmetz can make those contributions readily available and accessible to the broader Christian world and to the interested reader. —

Asbury Theological Journal —Professor Steinmetz . . . is a master at cutting through the complexities of late medieval and early Protestant thought and illuminating key issues in fresh and exciting ways. This book will benefit both students and specialists.® Restoration Quarterly —Whoever seeks to find out more about Luther in the late medieval theological context is well advised to study Steinmetz's essays.® Theology Today —The lectures are carefully informed, developed with an obvious interest in the listener or reader, and have a depth about them that should draw further interest. Steinmetz represents an American Luther scholarship finally coming into its own.® Interpretation David C. Steinmetz (Th.D., Harvard University) is Amos Ragan Kearns Professor of the history of Christianity at Duke Divinity School and a former president of the American Society of Church History. He is the author of *Luther and Staupitz* and *Calvin in Context*, and serves as the general editor of the *Oxford Studies in Historical Theology* series.

David C. Steinmetz (1936-2015; ThD, Harvard University) was Amos Ragan Kearns Distinguished Professor Emeritus of the History of Christianity at Duke Divinity School and a former president of the American Society of Church History. He authored a number of books, including *Luther and Staupitz* and *Calvin in Context*. He also served as the general editor of the *Oxford Studies in Historical Theology* series.

David Steinmetz brings an excellent study with "Luther In Context" (2002). This 195-page paperback offers 20 pages of informative endnotes and a helpful 7-page index. Steinmetz writes authentic Luther! Steinmetz brings a very readable style presenting a fresh new look at the originator of the Protestant Reformation. The book is replete with Luther theology (from salvation by grace alone, to only Scripture, to virtue arrives only through grace). Luther is diligently compared to Aquinas, Pelagians, Occamists and Anabaptists (and found superior to each). The book's discussions range from Augustinian doctrines that influenced Luther's early thinking, to the Zwinglian controversies that required Luther's later response (Luther strongly disliked the militant Protestant Ulrich Zwingli), to Luther's own commentary on Scripture (bringing, for me, his best Protestant effort). Steinmetz teaches the great Reformer's reasons for translating Scripture from Latin into German. We discover Luther's "Two Kingdoms" for 16th century political theory. The author submits chapter 9- "Luther and the Drunkenness of Noah"- to effectively demonstrate how Brother Martin went about Scriptural exegesis. Perhaps Steinmetz makes his best effort with chapter 8- "Luther and Calvin on Church and Tradition". This is a brilliant presentation hosting Luther and

Calvin together. We hear of the brief theological inter-play between the two Reformation icons (Luther was almost two generations older than Calvin). Steinmetz's account makes one wish for a presence during the Luther-Calvin 1539 conversation. This book is recommended to all students of the Reformation, Luther readers, students of Church history and those curious about Martin Luther. .com's price is good, order yours soon.

thank you, this book was very clean and unmarked. I will purchase more from this company in the future.

Steinmetz does a fine job placing Luther in the complicated context of late medieval theology. He brings out several points often overlooked. The set up of the book is not perfect, though. It was originally a collection of essays and many of the essays repeat main ideas in a juxtaposed manner (e.g., I forget how many times Denis the Carthusian shows up making exactly the same point he did in other chapters). Steinmetz mostly organizes his material around Luther's exegesis of certain text and compares those offered by other late medieval figures. Per Augustine on Romans 9, Steinmetz notes, "Luther's exegesis introduces a number of themes not found in Augustine: human virtue is a product of divine election (18). Steinmetz draws three conclusions (20): a. Neither Augustine nor Luther is particularly concerned about the problem which is uppermost in Paul's mind. b. The will of God--for Luther--is the cause of election. c. While Augustine worries about free will and the justice of God, Luther devotes his attention to certitude of salvation and the understandable fears of the spiritually weak." (35). Steinmetz surveys three late medieval and early Reformation commentators on St Paul (one of whom was Luther). He notes several competing strands between these exegetes.

"The dispute is intense because each interpretation of Paul presupposes, contains, and implies a competing vision of the nature of the religious life" (35). "If the literal sense of Augustine's proposition is true--no virtue without charity--then it is impossible for a sinner to earn justifying grace by a merit of congruity" (37). Luther on Faith "When Luther insists that the object of faith is invisible, he does so for two reasons, neither of which has very much to do with Plato or heavenly archetypes. The object of faith is invisible either because it is future (who of us can see next Wednesday?) or because it is hidden in the present under the form of a contrary and contradictory appearance" (39). Luther and Preaching "God's word, according to Luther, is a 'Deed-Word,' which not only names

but effects what it signifies. Adam looks around him and says, "This is a cow and an owl and a horse and a mosquito." But God looks around him and says, "Let there be light," and there is light. "God's word creates new possibilities where no possibilities existed before. The Word of God is a Word that enriches the poor, releases captives, gives sight to the blind, and sets at liberty those who are oppressed. It is a Word that meets men and women at the point of their greatest need and sets them free."

(115). "Preeminently for Luther it is Jesus Christ who is the Deed-Word of God. It is he and no one else who has been anointed to set at liberty those who are oppressed." (116). Conclusion: This is a fine intro to more detailed surveys of late medieval theology (Oberman, Muller, etc). There is a lot of new ground covered but also a bit of repetition. The book is short and easy to read.

There are Social Historians and there are Intellectual Historians. It is a sad thing that people today seems to prefer the findings of the Social Historians over the Intellectual Historians. For example, the Reformation is today analysed by many from the perspectives of economic pressures, political climate and social conditioning when the most crucial perspective of analysis should be centered upon the "Battle of Ideas". This book seeks to do just that. Steinmetz shows Luther as someone born to Theology as much as Bach was born to Music! More than that, Steinmetz's Luther is a fighter - a wrestler! Like Jacob of old, here we see Luther contending with his "contemporaries" - by that I mean the characters and ideas that more than any social concerns or pressures occupied his thoughts and demanded an appropriate response. We see Luther versus Abraham, Luther versus Isaiah, Luther versus Paul, Luther versus Augustine, Luther versus Ockham, Luther versus Erasmus and ultimately we see Luther versus himself and Luther versus God! In short, we see Luther's beliefs as the product of conflict/crisis - much unlike the convenient/functional sort we see in many today. Reading this book allows me to see many Lutheran doctrines with far greater clarity than ever - e.g. the Hidden God, the Bondage of the Will, etc. I see Luther as someone like Jacob in the Book of Genesis holding on to the LORD, clinging on for his dear life! Then I see Luther limping away after his fights... a better man, a defeated man, a victorious man, a rebel and a worshipper. Israel. Read Althaus' "Theology of Martin Luther" as your primer on Lutheranism. Then read this book to see everything in clearer perspective and context. I dare you to remain cool and disinterested after experiencing these vigorous battles of the mind and spirit.

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