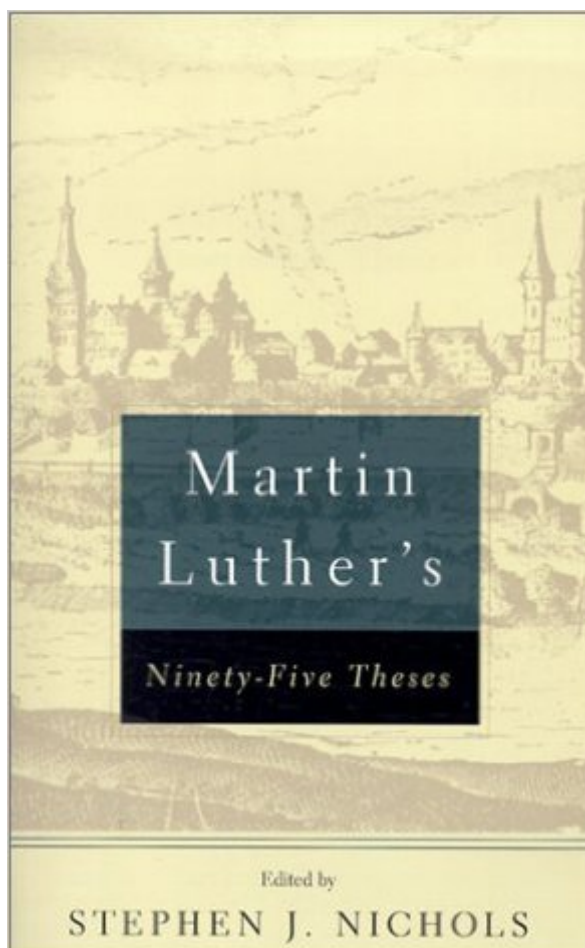


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# Martin Luther's 95 Theses



## Synopsis

Prepared with an introduction, explanatory notes and illustrations; all to help readers in discerning the significance of Luther's call to reformation. The Ninety-Five Theses are reproduced in their entirety.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In this booklet, the second of Stephen Nichols' trio of booklets highlighting major Reformed figures (the other two booklets feature Jonathan Edwards and J. Gresham Machen respectively), Nichols' stated aim is to bring Luther's Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences - better known as the Ninety-Five Theses - to contemporary Christians who have heard of the theses, but never read them. This edition of the theses includes two helpful features: an introduction which sets the theses in historical context, and a minimal commentary on every facing page, while the main text appears on the right hand page. Not every thesis warrants a commentary, so Nichols has sensitively selected which theses bear specialized notes. Even then, the notes provide context or expansion only when necessary, and often in Luther's own words derived from his later work explaining the Ninety-Five Theses (suitably entitled *The Explanations of the Ninety-Five Theses*). A few preconceptions of mine were dispelled by this booklet. Firstly, that Luther's main goal in 1517, as demonstrated by the document's official title, was 'merely' to expose Johann Tetzel's abuse of papal indulgences (in effect a get-out-of-purgatory-free card) by generating a debate among churchmen. Secondly, Luther's reformational theology was far from being definitively worked out at

this point; he was still very much a sympathetic Catholic intent on reforming the Church, not destroying it. Tellingly, the Ninety-Fifth Thesis itself portrays salvation by suffering rather than by faith. This emphasis would change in the years to come. But the two preconceptions which were most jarringly dashed were a) Luther's consistent defense of the pope throughout the document, and b) the content of the sequence of theses derived from the questions of shrewd parishioners. Unless Luther was representing his own questions as those of his parishioners for rhetorical effect - which would have been dishonest - I would not have thought that the average working class 16th century German was thinking reformational thoughts. No wonder this spark on the tinder lit up the spiritual and ecclesiological landscape of Europe for generations to come. Embedded in the midst of the theses is the one I consider Luther's gem, the Sixty-Second. It contains the reason why Luther was compelled to act on that October day in 1517, and why he persevered to bring true biblical teaching to the gospel-hungry masses throughout the rest of his life: "The true treasure of the church is the most holy gospel of the glory and grace of God." Luther staked his life on this gospel, which is why we remember him and commemorate him today - and more importantly, the God he served.

On the last day of October in 1517, a 33-year old highly enraged Augustinian monk named Martin Luther posted his 95 Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany, objecting to the sale of indulgences by the Roman Catholic Church. Exactly what were those 95 theses? This book by Stephen J. Nichols explains with introduction and commentary. It is only 48 pages and is very easy to read. Highly recommended for people with curious mind. Side note - the original church door is no longer there. It was replaced by a bronze door in 1857 with all 95 Theses embossed on it. My husband and I stood in front of it in awe last month. The entire church is covered in white tarps in preparation for Martin Luther's 500-yr anniversary in 2017. The town of Wittenberg is very pretty. You can follow Martin Luther's footsteps from the church to the house where he lived with his wife Katharina von Bora and their children.

Of course the 95 theses haven't changed much in the last few years! But this booklet is really nice. Its very sturdy for a small booklet and has very helpful notes and a fine introduction. I highly recommend this if you want to get an idea of the context and message of Martin Luther's famous "Ninety-Five Thesis".

I studied the 95 Theses over 50 years ago. Over the last 8 years, I have been with a teaching team

in Lutherstadt Wittenberg, Germany, and the Reformation of the 16th Century is a major if not the major focus of the seminary course. If one wants to "hear" the authentic Luther, inevitably one must read and think and discuss the Theses. There are other treatises of Luther but of seminal value, I give the 95 Theses a prime spot. James A. Glasscock B.D., B.D., Th.M., D.Min. Diploma in Jurisprudence and Human Rights [Strasbourg]

My pet peeve has to do with technical issues. I was unable to view this great book due to "technical difficulty". I was unable to remove the sample of this book. My gripe is with the Kindle editors.

I especially like the modern-language commentary on the left side. It makes the theses much more understandable, something I need as a college student studying classic political theory.

You will understand the problem with the philosophy of the Roman church, all Lutherans especially need to understand what Martin Luther went through personally and public. The theses speak directly to the problems the church had that required so much of the Christian, but God directs us in the path of forgiveness without works. That is very important to your understanding.

Great writings from a humble follower of the Lord!

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