

# Alarming quotes from Luther

Martin Luther was a catalyst of the sixteenth century Protestant Reformation and founder of the Lutheran Church. To his credit, Luther opposed men wearing his name, saying, "I ask that men make no reference to my name; let them be called Christians, not Lutherans... let us abolish all party names and call ourselves Christians" (Luther's Works, 45). That is very commendable. I appreciate that Luther discouraged the wearing of unscriptural, man-made names. However, there are many other quotes from Luther that are extremely alarming.



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In 1521, Luther wrote a letter to Philip Melanchthon that said, "Be a sinner and let your sins be strong... no sin can separate us from Him, even if we were to kill or commit adultery thousands of times each day." These are very troubling words that contradict scripture. It encourages us to not sin (1 Jn. 2:1) and warns that immoral behavior can separate us from God (Heb. 12:15-17).

Luther described Christ on the cross as "the greatest thief, murderer, adulterer, robber, desecrator, blasphemer, etc., there has ever been anywhere in the world" and added, "Now He is not the Son of God, born of the Virgin. But He is a sinner..." (Luther's Works, 26). That is blasphemous! Jesus did not become the vilest of sinners on the cross. Though He was dying for the sins of the world, He never ceased being the Son of God and was still that perfect lamb without spot or blemish (1 Pet. 1:19).

Luther was skeptical of several books of the Bible and made disparaging comments about them. For instance, in the New Testament Preface of his 1522 German translation, Luther called the book of James "an epistle of straw" that has "nothing of the nature of the gospel about it." He even went so far as to say in 1542, "I almost feel like throwing Jimmy into the stove" (Luther's Works, 34). Notice how disrespectfully he referred to that sacred letter.

In his Preface on Revelation, Luther said that he considered the book to be "neither apostolic nor prophetic" and added, "I can in no way detect that the Holy Spirit produced it." He also claimed to be an "enemy" of the book of Esther and wished that it "had not come to us at all" (Luther's Table Talk, 24).

While there are some things to admire about Luther, there are many more things that should give us pause. He had a distorted view of God's grace, the sacrifice of Christ, and the inspiration of scripture.