

Dear Darryl,

Thank you for writing us at Christian Questions Radio. You wondered how Martin Luther could have been the sixth messenger to the church if he held an inferior view of the books of James, Jude, Hebrews and Revelation, had a hatred for the Jews, believed in eternal torment, condemned the belief that there would be a reign of Christ on earth and may also have had several other wrong doctrines.

Although we acknowledge all the negatives you listed regarding Martin Luther's views, we must also look at his many achievements and reasoning ability, which led him to the conclusion that the Catholic Church was not the way to Jesus Christ, but justification through faith was. He was a rebel as well as the guiding force that opened the door to let a beacon of Light in on the oppressive Middle Ages.

Luther's posting of the 95 theses in 1517 created a sensation throughout the land and shook the very foundation of the church. In 1520 he continued his defiant stance by publically burning the pope's bull excommunicating him. This act was followed in 1520-21 by three great tracts clarifying his main beliefs. In *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, he attacked the whole sacramental system, especially the Mass, and asserted that there were but two valid ordinances, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. He saw no biblical basis for popes or priests and believed that all members of the body of Christ were equal before God.

Did Martin Luther have the complete doctrinal truth, as we now know it today? No, he did not. Was he correct in every aspect of his beliefs, especially regarding his hatred of the Jews in his later life? No, he certainly was not. However, Luther, in spite of his imperfections, clearly was the moving force of the Reformation, whose daring life forever shattered the medieval church and emphasized the rightful place of the Bible and translated it into the vernacular so the common man could read it. We believe Luther's greatest contributions were his identification of the Antichrist system and his understanding of "justification by faith." He stands foremost among those called to lead God's people out of the darkness of the Middle Ages into the light of a purer faith and a clearer understanding of the truth. Do we consider Martin Luther to be the sixth (or as many believe the fifth) messenger to the Church? Yes, we do.

We hope we have answered your question. Be sure to sign up for CQ Rewind at www.christianquestions.net. The service is free without obligation and will provide you with scriptural perspective on many questions and topics.

Sincerely,

Christian Questions Radio