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❖ Preface ❖

Welcome to *The Mystery of History*. It is an honor and a privilege to be presenting you with *Volume III* in this series — this time we are spanning *The Renaissance, Reformation, and Growth of Nations*. I have personally developed a new love and fascination for this era. But here are a few important disclaimers and an explanation of the new format.

First, though I have spent years in the research of this book, I would like to apologize ahead of time for any inaccuracies, discrepancies, or errors that lie within this text. None are intentional. But invariably, archaeologists, Bible scholars, and expert historians will dig, discover, and develop new ideas and facts that will outdate the information contained here. With an ever-expanding sea of knowledge at my disposal, I will strive to modify this work accordingly and ask your patience as I do so.

Second, it would be negligent of me not to mention that though this is a “world” history course, there is a greater amount of attention given in this Volume to the history of the Western world through the accomplishments and failures of its men and women. This imbalance is in no way meant to imply superiority of any race, color, sex, or culture, but rather it is a reflection of the history most pertinent to the majority of my readers.

Third, without reservation, this book is written from a Christian perspective. I have sincerely tried to discuss other faiths with dignity and respect while at the same time pointing my readers to what I believe is the true Gospel of Jesus Christ according to the inspired Word of God.

Fourth, the time period of this Volume includes the Protestant Reformation. I have prayerfully sought to write with sensitivity toward Protestants and Catholics alike in regard to this piece of tumultuous history. I have approached the Reformation by presenting doctrine and theology of both Protestants and Catholics, along with the history of disagreement and bloodshed between them. I have included “heroes of the faith” in both Protestant and Catholic circles. However, the differences between these groups are vast and divisive. It is beyond the scope of this book to bridge them. As I am a Protestant, I have undoubtedly written with a bias toward Protestantism, though I have tried to in no way offend or attack modern-day Catholicism. Forgive me if I have. I hope all my readers will take the information contained here and use it for its historical value and for examining their own faith, whatever it may be.

As for the format, this Volume of world history is written for all ages. If you are 8 years old, or 80 years old, I hope you will enjoy the stories. However, for those who are interested in this material for meeting particular academic requirements, please know that the accompanying *Companion Guide* now contains everything you need for making *The Mystery of History, Volume III*, a complete world history course.

Pretests, quizzes, mapping exercises, timeline work, hands-on activities, research projects, and more can be found in the paperback *Companion Guide* (which is also available on CD). One special feature is a long list of supplemental books and literature for all ages

that will greatly enhance any study of world history. Even more resources can be found on my Web site or on that of my publisher (www.themysteryofhistory.com or www.brightideaspress.com). The *Companion Guide* will provide you with a framework for teaching “Younger, Middle, and Older Students,” with attention given to high school requirements. To personalize this book for my broad audience of students, I’ve written letters to three different age groups in the pages that follow this Preface. Please read the letter(s) that applies to you and/or your students.

Last, for additional resources, encouragement, fellowship, or questions to the author and publisher, please visit any of *The Mystery of History* Yahoo support groups. To subscribe, visit:

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Linda Lacour Hobar