

16th September

NEA - Lesson 3: **"Anti-Semitism - Luther and the Reformation"**

Learning Gain: explore the impact of Luther's religious revolution on the development of anti-Semitism in the Germanies of Central Europe.



Learning Steps:



- Luther's Reformation and the Jews.
- Explore the impact of Luther on developing anti-Semitism.
- Examine how the Wars of Religion intensified anti-Semitism particularly in the Germanies.
- What was the result on Prussia of Luther inspired anti-Semitism?

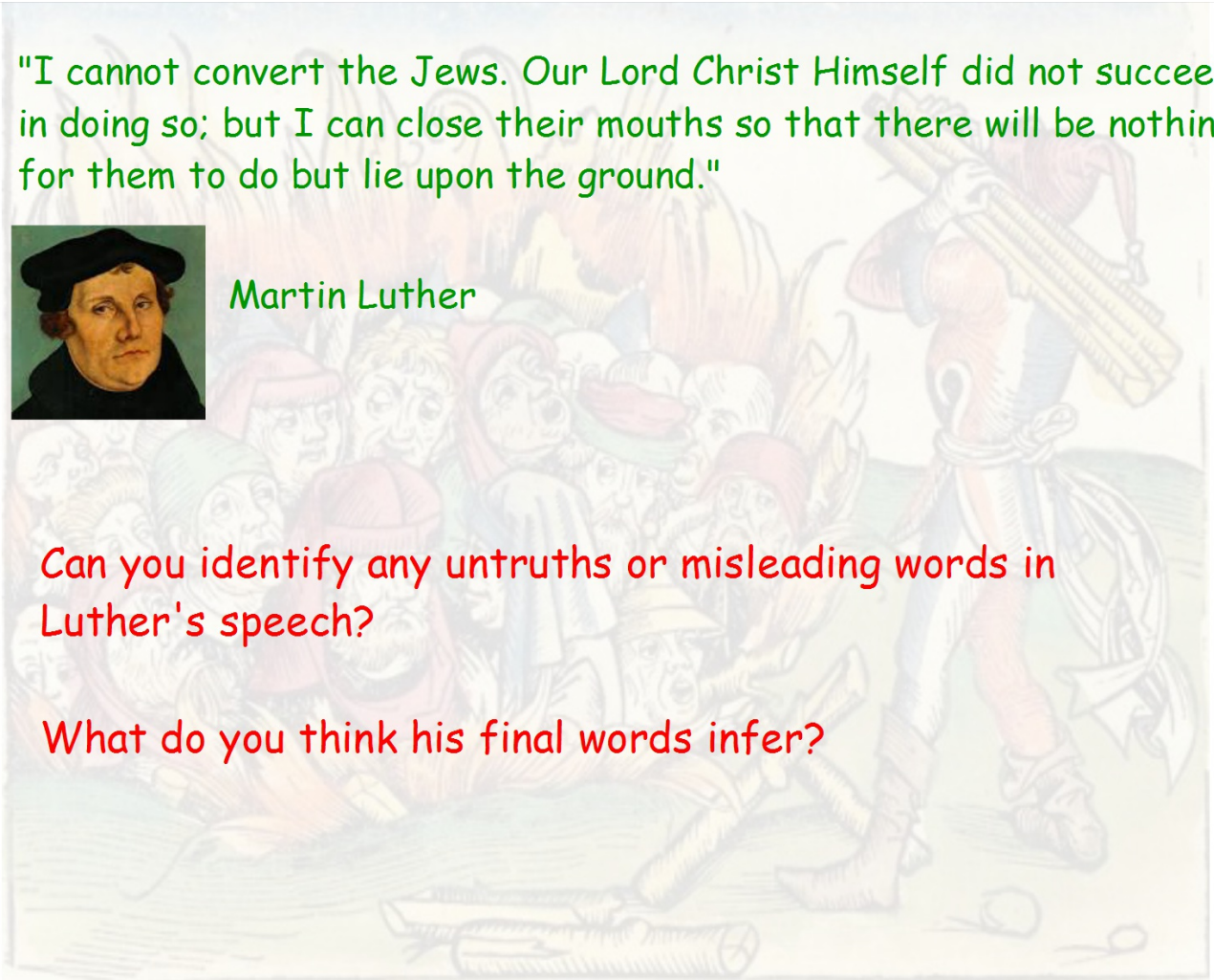
"I cannot convert the Jews. Our Lord Christ Himself did not succeed in doing so; but I can close their mouths so that there will be nothing for them to do but lie upon the ground."




Martin Luther

Can you identify any untruths or misleading words in Luther's speech?

What do you think his final words infer?





Modern Germany began its historical career with the sweeping religious revolution of Martin Luther and the German Reformation of the 16th century.

Starting as a religious revolt against the Catholic Church in Rome, the Reformation culminated in the Wars of Religion of the 16/17th century.

These were European Civil Wars in which opponents massacred each other regardless of sex, age or military involvement.

From 1618 - 1648 (the Thirty Years War) the Germanies suffered most. Amid scenes of horror, whole communities were wiped out and what was left was laid waste by famine and plague.

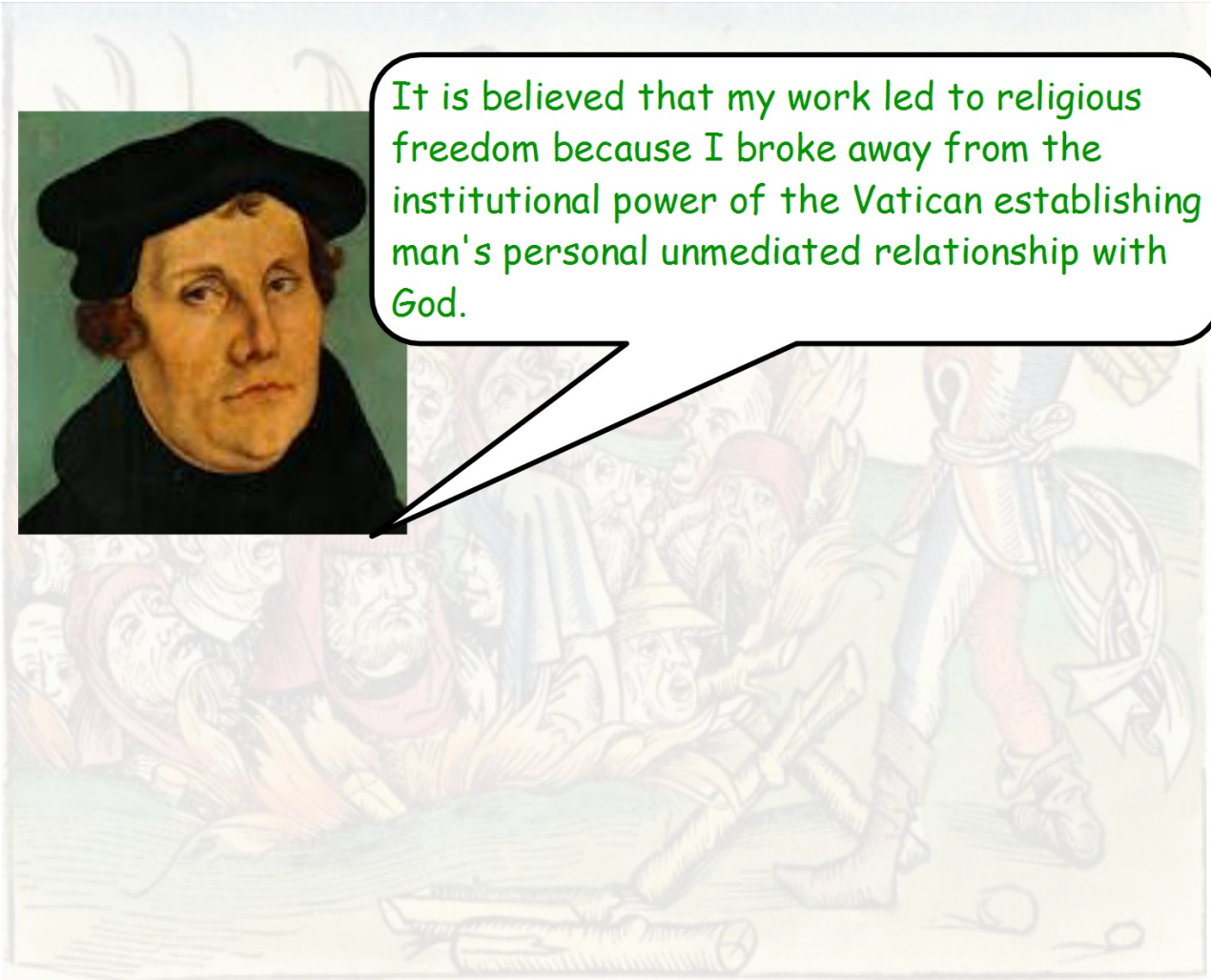
Amidst such terrors traditional Christian hatred for Jews intensified manyfold.

Percentage Loss:





It is believed that my work led to religious freedom because I broke away from the institutional power of the Vatican establishing man's personal unmediated relationship with God.

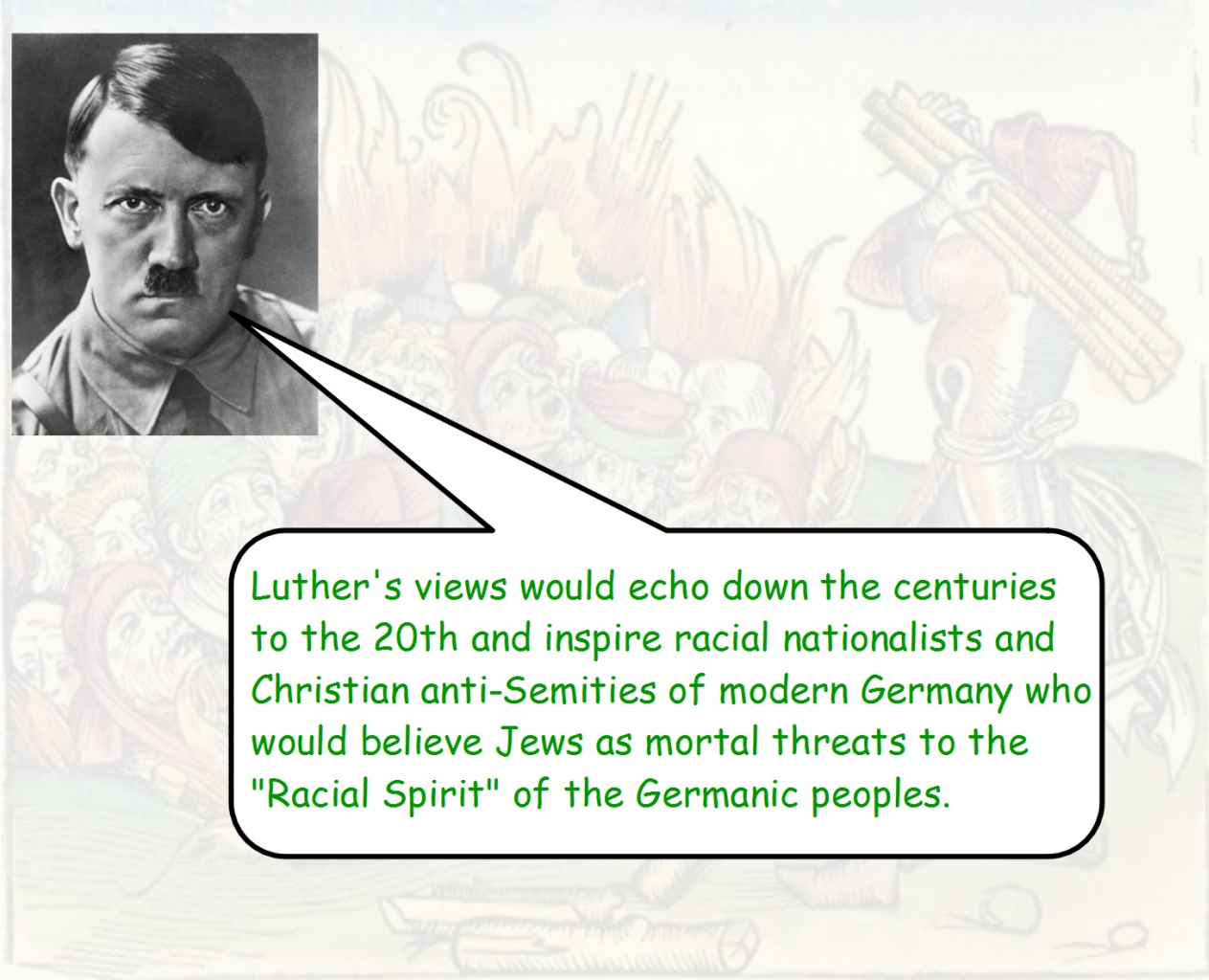




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This he did but he also revived the passions and conflicts of the early Church reinforcing the hatreds of generations. This time without the restraining hand of the Catholic clergy.

A faint, stylized background illustration. On the right, a building is on fire with thick smoke rising. In the foreground, a crowd of people is depicted, some wearing hats and coats, looking towards the viewer. The overall style is reminiscent of early 20th-century propaganda art.

Luther's views would echo down the centuries to the 20th and inspire racial nationalists and Christian anti-Semites of modern Germany who would believe Jews as mortal threats to the "Racial Spirit" of the Germanic peoples.

Luther declared that God alone through Jesus Christ could reach across that terrible abyss and grant salvation - NOT the Church.

Faith not works, rituals or the law would bring salvation.



I have destroyed the justification for the existence of the Roman Church - its hierarchy, sacraments and priests.

Man's relationship with God through Christ became the sole focus of faith; only those who accepted this could form the "invisible church" of true believers.

I have revealed the true meaning of Christianity and exposed the falsehoods of the Catholic Church. Finally you Jews can convert to Christianity...

Why would we give up the faith and culture that has served us for millennia for another upstart claiming Christ is our Messiah.



If I were a Jew I would have preferred to be a pig before a Christian.

How rude?!

Having failed to convert them the Christian establishment treated them as dogs and not men. Falsely accusing them of crimes such as ritual murder and devil worship.





Luther's Anger!

Look! Christ is not our
Messiah - whether you
are Catholic or Lutheran!



Typical bloody Jews...
How can they reject
Christ, especially our
new improved Christ?!

Luther in his anger at the Jews refusal to embrace his new Theology repeated the cycle of the earlier Christian church fathers and swiftly became far more brutal and virulent an enemy of the Jews than the Catholic leaders had ever been.

"Cursed Goy that I am, I cannot understand how the Jews manage to be so skillful, unless I think that when Judas hanged himself his guts burst and emptied. Perhaps the Jews sent their servants with plates of silver and pots of gold to gather up Judas' piss and other treasures and then they ate his offal."

Read carefully Luther's words - can you identify phrases or ideas from the existing iconography of Christian anti-Semitism?



We may hate the Jews but we counseled against their massacre - God will punish the Jews.



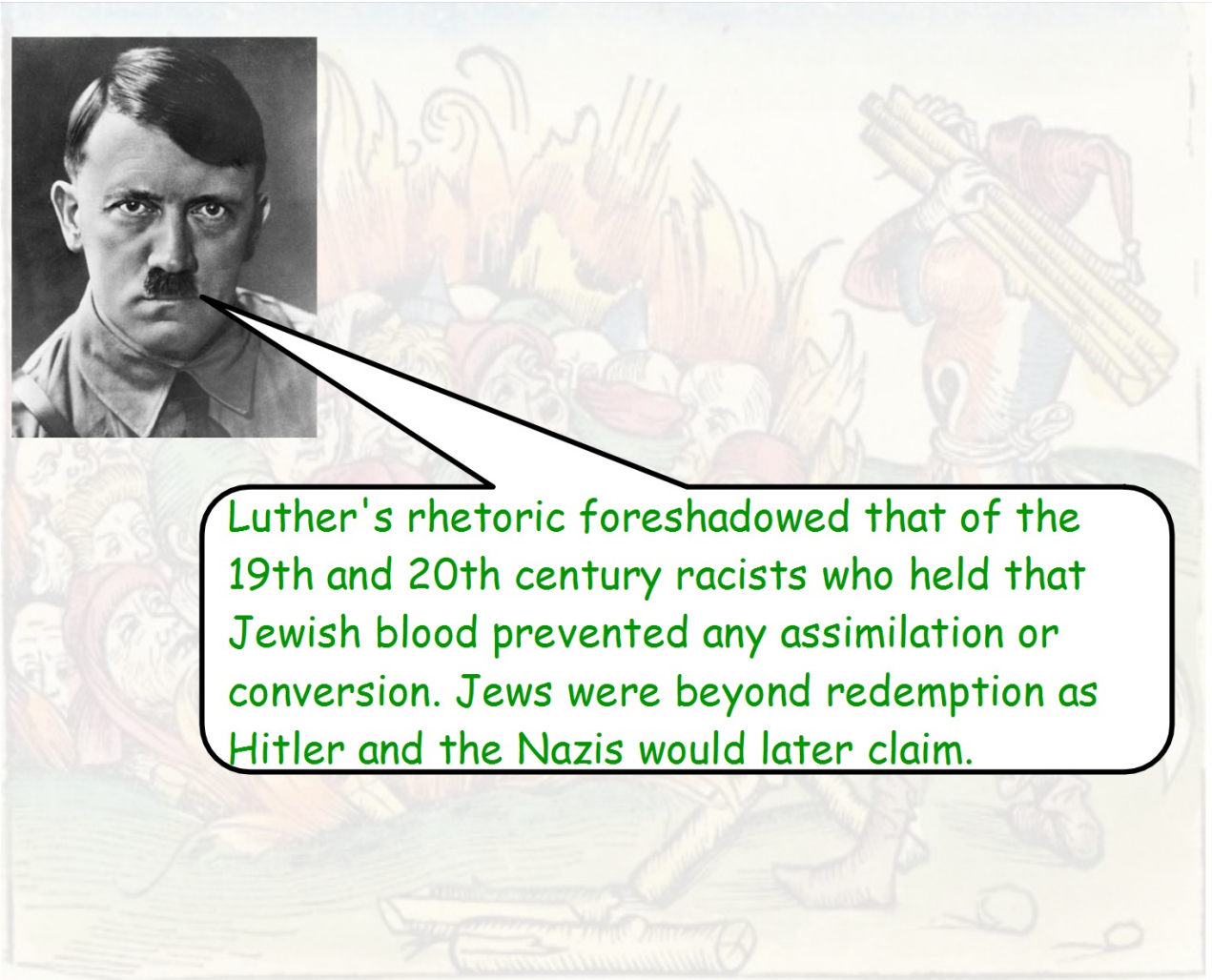
Luther as the informal head of a new "reformed" version of Christianity sweeping Germany had no patience with the Catholic Hierarchy's theological evasions.

Luther denounced the Jews with a violent language previously limited to the demagogues who had slaughtered Jews during the Crusades: "the devil is the God of the Jews".

Luther even outdid these mobs - he declared that they could never be converted anymore than you could convert the devil for whom they worked.



Luther's rhetoric foreshadowed that of the 19th and 20th century racists who held that Jewish blood prevented any assimilation or conversion. Jews were beyond redemption as Hitler and the Nazis would later claim.



Thinking challenge:

Identify what was new and radical about my ideas and what remained the same?
Particularly as it relates to the Jews.

