

Dunham Bible Museum News



Houston Baptist University

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2017 and a 500th Anniversary!

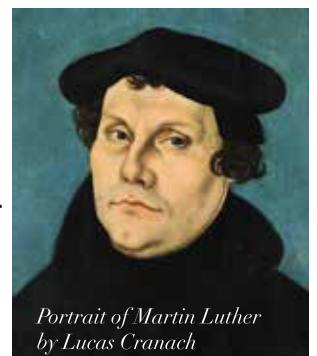


The Posting of Luther's 95 Theses by Julius Hubner, 1878

Historians debate whether Luther nailed his theses on the Church door October 31, 1517. Certainly he mailed a letter with a copy of the theses to the Archbishop of Mainz on that date. Probably the theses were posted on the church door, frequently used as a bulletin board for such calls to debate, in November of that year.

Five hundred years ago, in 1517, Martin Luther, a German monk and university professor, posted 95 theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany. The theses, written in Latin, were an invitation to a scholarly debate on indulgences, the certificates by which the Roman Church offered early release from suffering in Purgatory. Beginning “Out of love for the truth and the desire to elucidate it...”, the theses were soon translated into German and spread throughout Germany. Luther’s call for debate led to the Reformation, a major turning point in world history which transformed the face of Europe and deeply influenced settlements in America. Luther and other Reformers reasserted the authority of the Scripture alone, as opposed to tradition and church hierarchy. They maintained that salvation comes by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, to the glory of God alone. These phrases or theological principles are often called the “Five Solas of the Reformation” (*sola* being the Latin word for “lone” or “only”): *sola Scriptura, sola gratia, sola fide, solus Christus, soli Deo Gloria*.

To reflect upon this important Christian anniversary, the Dunham Bible Museum’s special exhibit, *God’s Word Endures Forever: Martin Luther & the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation*, will open February 1 and remain through December 16. Special focus will be on Luther’s return to the Scriptures as the authority for Christian truth and the influence of his translation of the Bible into German.



Portrait of Martin Luther by Lucas Cranach

Luther believed “A simple layman armed with Scripture is to be believed above a pope or cardinal without it.” When called before the Emperor to recant his views, Luther famously replied, “Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the pope or in the councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted

Cont.

themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted, and my conscience is captive to the Word of God.” Early printed sources say Luther concluded, “Here I stand, I can do no other. God help me.”

Luther was condemned as a heretic and an outlaw. With his life endangered, Luther’s patron secretly kidnapped Luther and placed him in hiding in the Wartburg Castle.

While in hiding, Luther translated the New Testament from the Greek into German - the first translation from the Greek into a vernacular language in a millennium, since Jerome’s translation into Latin in the 4th century. Luther’s translation remains the standard German translation today and spurred on many other vernacular translations, including the English translation of William Tyndale.

One person greatly influenced by Luther’s translation was the composer Johann S. Bach, a devout Lutheran. A recently acquired facsimile of Bach’s Bible will be part of the Dunham’s exhibit. The numerous handwritten notes in the Bible show Bach as a careful student of the Scriptures. Bach believed “The aim and final reason, as of all music... should be none else but the Glory of God and recreation of the mind. Where this is not observed, there will be no real music but only a devilish hubbub.”

In his preface to his Commentary on Psalm 119, Luther wrote, “The neglect of Scripture, even by spiritual leaders, is one of the greatest evils in the world. Everything else, arts or literature, is pursued and practiced day and night, and there is no end of labor and effort but Holy Scripture is neglected as though there were no need of it.... But its words are not, as some think, mere literature; they are words

of life, intended not for speculation and fancy but for life and action. ...May Christ our Lord help us by His Spirit to love and honor His holy Word with all our hearts. Amen.”

In one of his last sermons, given six months before his death, Luther spoke on John 5:39-43. After reading Jesus’ words in John 5:39, “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me,” Luther reaffirmed the importance of the Scripture in revealing Christ and the salvation found in Him: “He who would correctly and profitably read Scripture should see to it that he finds Christ in it then he finds life eternal without fail. On the other hand, if I do not so study and understand Moses and the prophets as to find that Christ came from heaven for the sake of my salvation, became man, suffered, died, was buried, rose, and ascended into heaven so that through Him I enjoy reconciliation with God, forgiveness of all my sins, grace, righteousness and life eternal, then my reading in Scripture is of no help whatsoever to my salvation.”

When asked how he could explain the spread of the Reformation, Luther replied, “We should preach the Word, but the results must be left solely to God’s good pleasure...I opposed indulgences and all the papists, but never with force. I simply taught, preached and wrote God’s Word; otherwise I did nothing. And while I slept, or drank Wittenberg beer with my friends Philip and Amsdorf, the Word so greatly weakened the papacy that no prince or emperor ever inflicted such losses upon it. I did nothing; the Word did everything.”



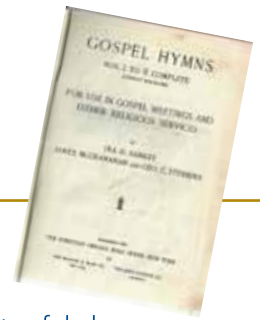
Translating the Bible in the Year 1532, an engraving by J.C. Buttre after a painting by P.A. Labouchere, shows part of Luther’s Old Testament translation team. From left to right: Philip Melancthon, Martin Luther, Johann Bugenhagen, and Casper Creziger.

“I would advise no one to send his child where the Holy Scriptures are not supreme. Every institution that does not unceasingly pursue the study of God’s word becomes corrupt...I greatly fear that the universities, unless they teach the Holy Scriptures diligently and impress them on the young students are wide gates of hell.”

– Martin Luther.

Many universities today exemplify Luther’s warning words. Thankfully, at Houston Baptist University the Scriptures are taught, and God’s Word continues to be honored.

SACRED Songs & Solos



The Dunham Bible Museum's collection includes a nice assortment of hymnals and Gospel songbooks, some of which are displayed in the Severance Lyceum. Recently the Museum was given an additional copy of Ira Sankey and Philip Bliss's Sacred Songs and Solos, no. 2 (1876).

When the evangelist Dwight L. Moody and Gospel singer Ira Sankey brought their revival meetings to Great Britain in the 1870s, many of the American gospel songs were unknown in Britain. Moody and Sankey decided to publish a book of American Gospel songs. When no publisher in Britain would get behind the publication of the American songs, Moody financed the publication himself - a 16 page pamphlet of words and music by Ira Sankey. A smaller edition of words only was also published. Both editions sold out quickly, and a British publisher soon offered to publish the works with a nice royalty. By the time Moody and Sankey left England, the royalties amounted to \$35,000 (about \$750,000 in today's dollars). Moody and Sankey sent the money to the London gospel campaign committee saying they should use the funds for Christian work. The London committee refused to take the funds, saying the money belonged to Moody and Sankey, and they should not "pay this large a sum for the privilege of preaching." It was finally decided that the money be forwarded to Chicago and used for the rebuilding of Moody's Chicago church, which had been destroyed in the great Chicago fire.

Up to 1900, sale of the hymnbooks brought in royalties in excess of one million dollars (just under \$28 million in today's dollars). Moody and Sankey never accepted any of the funds from the hymnbooks, but set up an independent board of trustees to distribute the funds to YMCAs, needy churches, and Moody's schools at Northfield. When Moody died in 1898, the British magazine *The Literary World* called the Moody-Sankey hymnbooks "the best-paying literary properties in existence."

Sankey composed the music to about 1200 songs in his lifetime, including music to songs written by Fanny Crosby. One of the most popular songs in the collection was "The Ninety and Nine." The story behind it is interesting. Before Moody and Sankey took the train from Glasgow to Edinburgh, Sankey bought a newspaper. When looking over the advertisements, he noticed a poem in the corner of the page by Elizabeth Clephane. Sankey was moved by the poem and clipped it out and placed it in his pocket. During the meetings in Edinburgh, Moody spoke one day on "The Good Shepherd". At the close of his message, Moody asked Sankey if he had something appropriate to sing to close the service. Sankey thought of the poem in his pocket, sat at the piano, improvised a tune, and movingly sang, "The Ninety and Nine,"

There were ninety and nine that safely lay
In the shelter of the fold;
But one was out on the hills away,
Far off from the gates of gold.
Away on the mountains wild and bare;
Away from the tender Shepherd's care....

But none of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed;
Nor how dark was the night the Lord passed through
Ere He found His sheep that was lost.
Out in the desert He heard its cry—

When the Shepherd rescues the lost sheep, the hymn concludes,

And all through the mountains, thunder-riven,
And up from the rocky steep,
There arose a glad cry to the gate of heaven,
"Rejoice! I have found My sheep!"
And the angels echoed around the throne,
"Rejoice, for the Lord brings back His own!"

Based on Jesus' parable of the lost sheep in Luke 15, the poem and song have moved many a soul in thankfulness to the Savior.

You are invited to become a DUNHAM BIBLE MUSEUM FRIEND

Friends have the satisfaction that their tax deductible gift helps the Dunham Bible Museum continue to develop its special exhibits and programs, like the upcoming exhibit and lectures on the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, enabling the Museum to achieve its goal of being a premier museum dedicated to the Bible, its message, history and influence.

Memberships are available at several levels and benefits:

King James (\$50), Geneva (\$75), Coverdale (\$250),
Wycliffe (\$500), Tyndale (\$1000),
Gutenberg (Corporate) & St. Jerome (Lifetime- \$10,000)

For more information, visit the Museum's website at
www.hbu.edu/biblemuseum or contact
Dr. Diana Severance: dseverance@hbu.edu, 281-649-3287.

Memberships may be submitted online or by mailing to Dunham Bible Museum, HBU, 7502 Fondren Road, Houston, TX 77074



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Visits our website at hbu.edu/biblemuseum

Nothing is more effectual against the devil, the world, the flesh, and all evil thoughts than to occupy oneself with the Word of God, talk about it and meditate on it...as St. Paul says in Romans 1:16, God's Word is "the power of God," indeed, the power of God which burns the devil and gives us immeasurable strength, comfort and help."

— *Martin Luther*

SPECIAL EXHIBIT

God's Word Endures Forever: Martin Luther & the 50th Anniversary of the Reformation, Feb. 1 – Dec. 16, 2017

UPCOMING EVENTS

MARCH 2-4, 2017

"How the Bible Came into Being", on the formation of the biblical canon, with keynote speakers Drs. James Charlesworth of Princeton and Lee McDonald of Acadia Divinity College. Sponsored by HBU's School of Christian Thought, more information can be found at hbu.edu/theologyconference.

THURSDAY, APRIL 20, 2017 - 6:30 p.m., Belin Chapel

"The Bible in the Reformation," a two-part lecture by Matthew Barrett, author of *God's Word Alone*, editor of *Credo* magazine, and professor at Oak Hill Theological college, London.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2017 - 6:30 p.m.

"The Bible, Luther, and the Reformation," a two-part lecture by Dr. Paul Maier, professor emeritus of Western Michigan University and a leading Lutheran scholar.

**The Dunham Bible Museum is
OPEN**

**10-4 Monday – Saturdays,
except University Holidays.**

To make an appointment for group tours, or
for further information, contact

**Dr. Diana Severance at
281-649-3287 or dseverance@hbu.edu**



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CONNECTING YOU,
THEN AND NOW

