

Bible IN America™

MUSEUM

Newsletter

Houston Baptist University

October - December 2005

Vol. 3, Issue 1

Tyndale Production Cancelled



We are very sorry to have to cancel the October 28th dramatic production of “Fire for the Ploughman” about the life and death of William Tyndale, the first translator of the Bible into English from the Greek and Hebrew. Playwright and actor Jack Caulfield has been battling pancreatic cancer for several years. Though he had been cancer free for two years and was resuming his performance schedule, the cancer has recently returned and metastasized. We offer our deepest prayers to Jack and his family as he continues this struggle.

At this time we also reflect on the words of Scripture, as translated by William Tyndale: *For we know that all things work for the best unto them that love God which also are called of purpose ... What shall we then say unto these things? If God be on our side: who can be against us? which spared not His*

own son but gave Him for us all: how shall He not with Him give us all things also? ... Who shall separate us from the love of God? ... Yea and I am sure that neither death nor life nor angels nor rule nor power nor things present nor things to come nor height nor low nor any other creature shall be able to depart us from the love of God shown in Christ Jesus our Lord ... O the deepness of the abundant wisdom and knowledge of God: how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out. For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who was His counselor? or who has given unto Him first that He might be recompensed again? For of Him and through Him and for Him are all things. To Him be glory for ever Amen (Romans 8:28-39; 11: 33-36. Spelling has been modernized).

William Tyndale lived a life of exile and eventually suffered martyrdom so that his countrymen could have in English these Biblical words of hope, strength, and life. Americans and English-speaking peoples everywhere continue to be indebted to his sacrifice. Our prayers continue with Jack Caulfield as he faces struggles and sacrifices of his own.

Christopher Columbus and the Bible

Almost every school child knows that “In 1492, Columbus sailed the ocean blue” and opened the western hemisphere to European settlement. What is often not known, however, is how Columbus’ Bible studies influenced his voyages of exploration. Christopher Columbus was a student of the Latin Vulgate Bible. He collected numerous quotes from the Bible as well as from other writers to support his vision of exploration to the East. Columbus’ manuscript of what is known as his *Book of Prophecies* is in the library of the Cathedral of Seville in Spain. One of the verses in his *Book of Prophecies* was Isaiah 59: 18-20, “He will repay the islands their due. From the west, men will fear the name of the LORD, and from the rising of the sun, they will revere his glory. For he will come like a pent-up flood that the breath of the LORD drives along. The redeemer will come to Zion.” Columbus also cited many other verses from the Scriptures, especially the Old Testament, which spoke of the islands, the ends of the earth, or all nations and tongues coming to the Lord. Columbus believed once the Gospel had been brought to the uttermost islands,



October 13, 1492 - Landing of Columbus on San Salvadore.
Painting from Rotunda of U.S. Capitol

then Christ would return to earth. His voyages of exploration were to help bring that to pass. In a letter to King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella, the Spanish sponsors and patrons of his voyages, Columbus wrote, “It was the Lord who put into my mind (I could feel his hand upon me) that it would be possible to sail from here to the Indies. All who heard of my project rejected it with laughter, ridiculing me. There is no question that the inspiration was from the Holy Spirit, because He comforted me with rays of marvelous inspiration from the Holy Scriptures.”

Interestingly, the first printed biography of Columbus also has Biblical connections. In 1516 Agostino Giustiniani published in Genoa a Psalter with parallel texts in Hebrew, Greek, Arabic, and Chaldean (or Aramaic), with marginal notes in Latin. This Genoa Psalter was exquisitely printed with intricate woodcut borders and beautifully designed parallel columns of red and black print. In a note for Psalm 19:4, “and their words shall go

to the ends of the earth,” Giustiniani’s Latin note comments that Christopher Columbus, a native son of Genoa, had explored more lands and seas than anyone else in the world and had discovered the “ends of the earth”, thus fulfilling the Scripture. Giustiniani’s lengthy note described Columbus’ background and exploits. Columbus’ first printed biography thus is found in the marginal note of a Psalter.

As new lands and peoples were discovered, Christians sought to understand how this new knowledge fit in with the world as described in the Bible. The Bishops Bible, first published in 1568, contained a curious note concerning the “gold of Ophir” mentioned in Psalms 45: 9 – “Ophir is thought to be the land in the west coast, of late found by Christopher Columbo: from whence at this day is brought most fine golde.” Christopher Columbus and his discoveries at least twice found a place in the marginal notes of early printed Bibles.

And There are Three

We would like to correct three errors or misimpressions from our last issue, noted by some of our readers:



St. Paul's Cathedral,
London

1) There is only one complete copy of Tyndale’s 1526 New Testament. This was discovered in the Stuttgart Landesbibliothek in 1996. The copy purchased in 1994 by the British Library from Bristol Baptist College lacks the title page. Another copy belonging to St. Paul’s Cathedral lacks the title page and 70 leaves. Isn’t it a bit of irony that the volume which was condemned and burned in front of St. Paul’s is now among the Cathedral’s treasures?

2) Though the exact date of William Tyndale’s birth is uncertain and estimated to be 1494, the exact date of his death is known to be 1536 (not 1535 as we stated). Tyndale was arrested in 1535 and after 16 months in prison was executed, traditionally on October 6, 1536.

3) Within months after Tyndale’s execution, King Henry VIII permitted licensing a Bible in English, first Coverdale’s and then Matthew’s Bible. Miles Coverdale’s Bible, first printed in 1535, was basically Tyndale’s Bible with Coverdale’s English translation from the German and Latin for Old Testament passages Tyndale had not lived to translate. This was the first complete English Bible printed in English and was dedicated to the King. The King, in the midst of the controversy over his divorce, tolerated the Bible. In 1537, when Coverdale issued a second edition and when John Rogers issued Matthew’s Bible, they both were able to receive licenses from the King for their English Bibles, and the English Bible was encouraged to be placed in the churches. In 1539, King Henry VIII authorized a printing of the English Bible and decreed a copy be placed in every church in England. This became known as the Great Bible because of its size. Framed leaves from the important **Matthew’s** and **Great Bibles** can be seen in the **Bible in America Museum**.

Recent Acquisitions

- David and Charlotte Oldham recently donated a *Washburn College Bible* to the **Dunham Family Bible in America Museum**. An excellent example of contemporary Bible printing, the *Washburn Bible* was designed by noted graphic artist Bradley Thompson. The text is laid out according to the phrases of the scripture rather than tightly justified, making the text easier to read.
- Patricia Martin donated an 1851 family Bible published by E.H. Butler of Philadelphia.
- William E. Paul, Chief Editor of the International Society of Bible Collectors’ *Bible Editions and Versions*, donated his framed collection of 16 postage stamps featuring the Bible in some way. The stamps date from a 1939 Hungarian stamp commemorating Karoli, a 16th century Bible translator, to a 1970 stamp from Granada. Other stamps

from Australia, Sweden, South Africa, Finland, the Pitcairn Islands, Brazil, Austria, and the United States commemorate Bible-related events such as the Gutenberg Press, the 250th anniversary of the King James Bible, and the foundation of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

There have been many other commemorative stamps featuring the Bible since 1970. We welcome any interested philatelist adding to the good beginning Mr. Paul has made to a Bible stamp collection!



WHY A BIBLE MUSEUM?

Catch the Vision



From the days of the earliest colonies in America through the opening decades of the twentieth century, the importance of the Bible as a foundation for western civilization and American life was recognized by all, even those who were not professing Christians. By reading the Bible, one learned the wisdom of God, the nature of man, man's place in creation, the best laws for a nation, the best morals for an individual, the cause of evil in the world, and the forgiveness for sin through faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. Indeed, the Bible provided the framework for understanding all of life. Besides being the source for all religious truth and the foundation for education and law, the Bible was the inspiration for the greatest art, literature and music ever composed. This Word of God, ever "alive and powerful" transformed individual lives and the society in which they lived. The Bible is not read as widely, nor as widely revered as in earlier days. Yet it is impossible to understand American history or western civilization apart from the Holy Bible and its teachings.

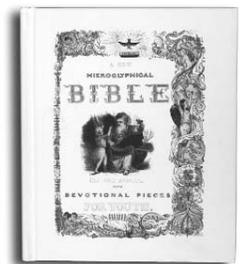
Exhibits at the **Dunham Family Bible in America Museum** enable visitors to appreciate how the Bible came to be in the form we have it today. They can actually see the changing format the Bible has taken – from parchment or papyrus scrolls, to manuscript texts, to earliest printed books, and even to microfilm, audio recordings and digital formats. The story of the Bible's preservation through the centuries is a tribute to the Providence of God, as early American Bible prefaces often stated. Not only has the Bible been preserved in thousands of Greek and Hebrew manuscripts, but it has been translated into English for us to understand today. Visitors to the **Bible Museum** learn the inspirational stories of men like John Wycliffe and William Tyndale whose dedication and sacrifice enable us to have God's Word in English today. With its unique collection of rare American Bibles, the **Museum** is also able to show the place the Bible has had in American life, from the colonial period to the present. Bibles with the same commentaries as those used by James Madison, Abraham Lincoln, John Quincy Adams, or Harriet Beecher Stowe, help visitors begin to understand the degree to which regular Bible reading was foundational for the lives of many famous Americans as well as the common citizen.

In 2006 construction will begin on the University Cultural Arts Center, which will include a chapel, a performing arts theater, and expanded facilities for both the **Bible in America Museum** and the Decorative Arts Museum. With nearly five times the current space, the **Bible Museum** will be able to arrange, from materials now in storage, a wide variety of attractive exhibits that will draw local, regional, and even national attention. Hi-tech climate control will preserve the Museum collection. The additional new space will enable the Museum to expand its collection by acquiring Bible manuscripts and printings prior to the Declaration of Independence. The new facilities will also have a reading-study area for pastors, seminary professors, and scholars who desire access to the Museum collection for research.

As the **Dunham Family Bible in America Museum** moves into this next phase of development, there are many opportunities for our supporters to get involved. Financial support is needed for designing and preparing the expanded displays, acquiring additional rare Bibles and manuscripts, and establishing an annual lecture series on the Bible in America. If you are able and interested to support the Museum financially or with donations, please contact Rick Ogden, 281-649-3355 or rogden@hbu.edu. Volunteers are also needed to help type documents for inclusion on our website or donate their time at the Museum. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Dr. Diana Severance, 281-649-3287 or dseverance@hbu.edu. We ask all our supporters to pray that **Bible in America Museum** visitors will better appreciate their Bibles and be encouraged to read and search the Scriptures, which are the very words of truth and life.

Ideas for Your Gift List

- **For the child on your list:** Visitors to the **Bible in America Museum** are often most intrigued by the little "Hieroglyphic Bibles" for children popular in the 18th and 19th centuries. Children of the 21st century can also enjoy this piece of the past. The **Bible in America Museum** has reprinted a facsimile of an 1836 children's Bible in the **Museum's** collection. The illustrated children's book includes Bible verses in the form of rebuses (pictures replace some words) and poems for children written by the famed hymnwriter Isaac Watts. The *Hieroglyphic Bible* is available for \$14.95 from the HBU bookstore or the **Museum** (add \$1.23 tax and \$1.42 for shipping and handling).
- **For the special person who has everything:** Make a gift to the **Dunham Family Bible in America Museum** in that special person's honor. An attractive certificate will be mailed to honorees notifying them of your thoughtfulness.
- **For yourself (or someone equally special):** The **Dunham Family Bible in America Museum** has acquired a limited number of actual pages from 1611 first edition King James Bibles. These are not replicas, but are over 350 year-old pages from fragments of antique Bibles. Donors who contribute a gift of \$1000 to the Museum will receive a folio, pulpit edition page; those who contribute a gift of \$500 will receive a quarto edition page.





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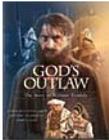
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“OF ALL THE BOOKS YOU WILL READ, THE BIBLE IS THE MOST INTERESTING AND USEFUL, TO THOSE WHO READ IT ATTENTIVELY. IT RECOUNTS THE TRUE STORY OF CREATION, THE FIRST HUMAN FAMILY, AND CLEARLY UNFOLDS OUR DUTY AND DESTINY.”

GOODRICH'S SCHOOL READER, 1857

Please notify us of any changes or corrections in your address. If you would like to receive the *Dunham Family Bible in America Museum* Newsletter by e-mail and save the University postage, send your e-mail address to dseverance@hbu.edu.

Special Offer!



Though we are not able to have the dramatic production on the life of William Tyndale this October, we have been able to make special arrangements with our friends at Vision Video for supporters of the **Dunham Family Bible in America Museum** to purchase *God's Outlaw*, the award-winning video on the life of William Tyndale, at a 20% discount. The DVD for \$15.99 plus shipping can be ordered from Vision Video at 1-800-523-0226 or www.visionvideo.com.

Mention the **Dunham Family Bible in America Museum** to receive your discount for this inspiring production.

Woodrow Wilson on the Bible in America

In 1911, Woodrow Wilson, then Governor of New Jersey, gave addresses in Trenton, New Jersey and in Denver, Colorado in observance of the Tricentennial of the King James Bible. Wilson, son of a Presbyterian minister, thought a Bible-reading people was important to the American nation:

There are great problems, ladies and gentlemen, before the American people. There are problems which will need purity of spirit and an integrity of purpose such as has never been called for before in the history of this country. I should be afraid to go forward if I did not believe that there lay at the foundation of all our schooling and of all our thought this incomparable and unimpeachable Word of God. If we cannot derive our strength thence, there is no source from which we can derive it.

October 1, 1911 in Trenton, NJ

Houston Baptist University and the Dunham Family Bible in America Museum will be closed
December 17, 2005 – January 2, 2006.

Museum Hours:

- Tuesdays, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
- Thursdays, 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.
- 2nd Saturday of the month, noon – 5 p.m.

Tours at other times are available by appointment.

For appointments or more information, contact Dr. Diana Severance at 281-649-3287 or dseverance@hbu.edu. There is no charge for admission.

America was born a Christian nation. America was born to exemplify that devotion to the elements of righteousness which are derived from the revelations of Holy Scripture.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have a very simple thing to ask of you. I ask of every man and woman in this audience that from this night on they will realize that part of the destiny of America lies in their daily perusal of this great book of revelations – that if they would see America free and pure they will make their own spirits free and pure by this baptism of the Holy Scripture.

May 8, 1911 in Denver, CO