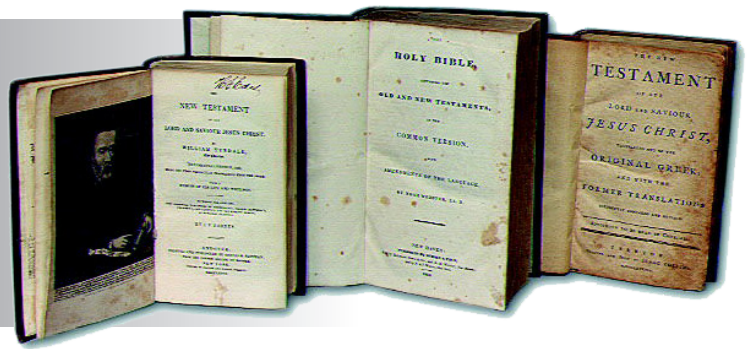


Dunham Bible Museum News

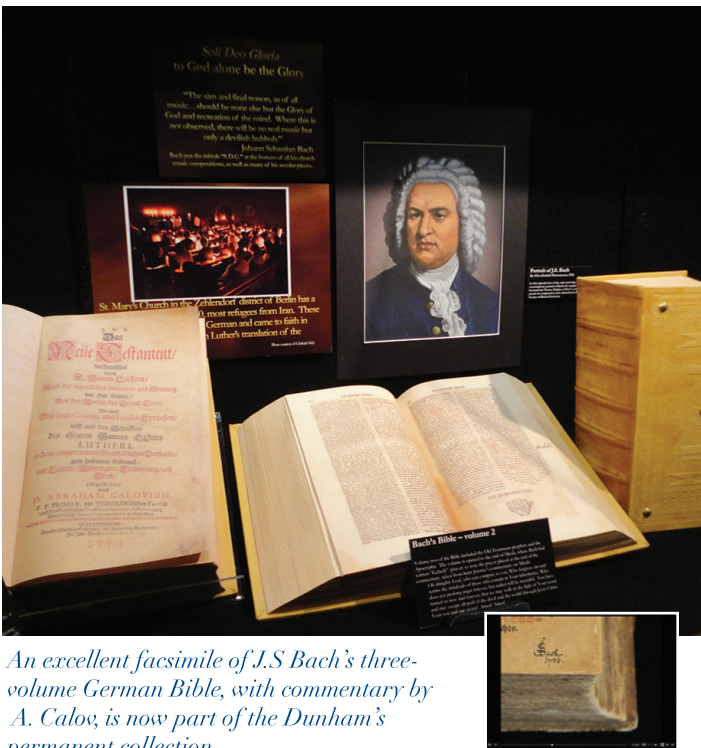


Houston Baptist University

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Bach's Bible Comes to the Dunham Bible Museum



An excellent facsimile of J.S. Bach's three-volume German Bible, with commentary by A. Calov, is now part of the Dunham's permanent collection.

Bible translation and a commentary on the Bible written by Abraham Calov (1612-1686), were published in 1681-1682. Calov was a staunch defender of Lutheran orthodoxy in the seventeenth century, and much of his commentary is actually taken from Luther's own works. Verses of Scripture are written in larger bold type, with Calov's commentary in smaller font. Scientific analysis of the 348 markings, underlinings, and marginal notes confirm them as by Bach's own hand.

Once the discovery of the early owner of the family Bible was made, Leonard Reichle made a gift of the volumes to Concordia Lutheran Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. As a way to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in 2017, publisher Dingemann van Wijnen of the Netherlands produced an excellent, limited edition facsimile of Bach's Bible. The Dunham Bible Museum had two volumes of the original Bach's Bible on loan from Concordia Seminary for five weeks in 2009. Now, through a donor's special gift, the three-volume facsimile will be part of the Dunham's permanent collection.

Women and the Bible

Women were an integral part of the early narrative of Scripture as well as Jesus' life and ministry. Throughout the history of the church women have read and studied the Scripture and shared its truths with others through numerous ways – as scribes, translators, missionaries, queens, mothers, and teachers. The Dunham Bible Museum's special exhibit for 2018 will explore some of these aspects of "Women and the Bible."

When Paul wrote his epistle to the Romans, he had never been to Rome, yet he knew many of the Christians there. At the end of his letter, he greets 28 people by name, at least eight of whom are women. He begins his closing greetings by commending Phoebe, "our sister" who was a "servant of the church in Cenchræa," a port city of Corinth. Phoebe was a business woman who brought Paul's letter to Rome. What a treasure she carried over the many Roman miles! Paul's *Romans* later was important in the conversion of Augustine, Martin Luther, John Wesley, and countless others. John Calvin wrote, "When anyone understands this

The story behind the Bible which belonged to Johann Sebastian Bach is a fascinating one. In his will, Bach listed about 80 theological works in his library as part of his estate, but by the beginning of the twentieth century, the whereabouts of none of the books from Bach's library were known. In 1934, Pastor C.G. Riedel attended the District Conference of the Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, in Frankenmuth, Michigan. During the conference, he stayed at the farm home of his cousin Leonard Reichle. As they were visiting, Leonard brought out the old three-volume German Bible his father had bought in Philadelphia, shortly after he came to America. Pastor Riedel noticed something the Reichle family never noticed – the signature "J.S. Bach, 1733" in the corner of the title pages of each volume. Could this truly have been signed by J.S. Bach 200 years before? Tracings of the signature were made and sent to Germany, where they were authenticated as being by Bach - and these volumes were ones listed in Bach's library. The three volumes consisting of Martin Luther's German

epistle, he has opened to him...the understanding of the whole scriptures." We all should be thankful for Phoebe's faithfulness as a courier and servant of the church.

In the fourth century, a group of patrician women in Rome were actively involved in Bible study and distribution. Marcella had an early "Bible society" in her palatial home, where she oversaw scribes copying Scriptures for distribution among the people. Marcella was a student of Jerome, a leading church father of the fourth century who translated the Bible into Latin, a translation which became known as the Vulgate, or the common translation, the Bible translation used in Europe for a millennium. Marcella was instrumental in bringing her wealthy friend Paula to faith in Christ. Paula and her daughter Eustochium moved to the Holy Land with Jerome and helped support Jerome's translation work, procuring early manuscripts for him and even learning Hebrew so they could sing the psalms in their original language.

Throughout the Middle Ages, the Latin Vulgate Bible was considered the authoritative Bible, and few translations into other European languages were available. When John Wycliffe translated the Scriptures into English in the 14th century, many women learned to read so they could read the Scriptures. Several women were active in Scripture distribution. With Scriptures scarce, some women memorized long passages of Scripture they could recite in meetings. Many of the church authorities were horrified that women would be so open to the Scriptures. Some were executed for having small portions of the Scripture in English. In 1519, a widow Smith was among those burned at Coventry for teaching her children the Lord's Prayer in English.



"Woman reading the Bible" ("Rembrandt's Mother") by Gertard Dou., a student of Rembrandt's, Rijksmuseum.

During the Reformation, however, the reading of Scriptures in the vernacular languages became allowed and encouraged. Luther encouraged schools where girls too were taught to read. His marriage with Katherine von Bora (1499-1552) and their life together became an example of Christian marriage and family. Luther encouraged his wife in the memorization of Scripture, and she memorized many of the Psalms.

BIBLE STUDY IN THE PALACE

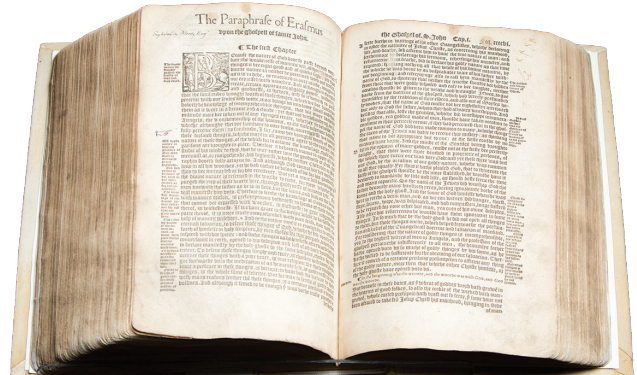
Several wives of Henry VIII had Bible studies in the Palace and encouraged Bible reading among their attendants. Henry's second wife, Anne Boleyn, was a supporter of the Reformation and encouraged her court ladies in Scriptural piety. Anne's copy of the 1534 edition of William Tyndale's translation of the New Testament into English, which was still outlawed in England, is not in the British Library. On the cover is the queen's court of arms.



Anne Boleyn's 1534 edition of William Tyndale's New Testament, a book then forbidden, is now in the British Library.

Catherine Parr, Henry's sixth and last wife had a regular Bible study in the palace for her ladies in waiting. She encouraged the translation of Erasmus'

Paraphrases of the Scriptures from Latin into English and helped with the translation of "Matthew" and "Acts". Princess Mary Tudor, later Queen Mary, translated the "Gospel of John" for the *Paraphrases*, though when she became queen she had the *Paraphrases* removed from the churches and destroyed.



One of the ladies who participated in the Queen's Bible studies was Jane Grey. Jane was an extremely well-educated teenager who knew Latin, Greek, and Hebrew and corresponded with leading reformers on the continent. Queen for nine days after the death of King Edward VI, the people did not accept Jane, and Queen Mary assumed the throne. Mary executed Jane for treason in 1554. The day before her execution, Jane gave her Greek New Testament to her sister Katherine. She wrote at the back of the Testament, *"I have sent you, my dear sister Katherine, a book, which although it be not outwardly trimmed with gold... yet inwardly it is more worth than all the precious mines which*

the vast world can boast of: it is the book, my only best, and best beloved sister, of the law of the Lord; it is the testament and last will, which he bequeathed unto us wretches and wretched sinners, which shall lead you to the path of eternal joy; and if you with a good mind read it, and with an earnest desire follow it, no doubt it shall bring you to an immortal and everlasting life: it will teach you to live, and learn you to die: it shall win you more, and endow you with greater felicity.” Before she was beheaded on February 12, 1554, Lady Jane recited Psalm 51.

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE AND THE BIBLE



*Harriet Beecher Stowe, c. 1852
Gurney & Sons, Bowdoin College Museum of Art*

The best-selling novel in 19th century America was *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, written by Harriet Beecher Stowe. The novel contains nearly 100 Biblical references and reflects an evangelical perspective on slavery. Themes of sin, suffering, repentance, and salvation are woven throughout the powerfully influential book. Harriet was a member of a prominent Christian family. Her father Lyman Beecher and brothers Henry Ward, Charles and Edward Beecher were all famous preachers, as was her husband, Calvin Stowe. Harriet wrote thirty books, all reflecting her biblical faith.

Two items in the “Women and the Bible” exhibit are by Harriet. One is a little 1834 “Thumb Bible” for children. In the preface to the little Bible, Harriet wrote, “The Bible is the best book in the world...We have made this small book, dear children, on purpose for you...After you read this

through, you will wish to know more about the Bible...Your mama will get you one or let you take hers, and you will learn much more than we had room to tell you.” Harriet’s 1873 *Woman in Sacred History: A Series of Sketches Draw from Scriptural, Historical and Legendary Sources* is beautifully illustrated with chromo-lithographs, bringing European art into American homes. Harriet described her purpose in the book: “to show, in a series of biographical sketches, a history of Womanhood Under Divine Culture, tending toward the development of that high ideal of woman which we find in modern Christian countries.”

HELEN KELLER GIVEN BIBLE BY AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY

Helen Keller became both blind and deaf from an illness contracted at 19 months. Yet, she learned to speak and communicate. She became the first blind person to earn a bachelor of Arts degree. Much of her life she gave lectures throughout the world, advocating for people with disabilities. In 1931 the American Bible Society presented Helen with its first Braille Bible. She then gave them her older raised-letter Bible. That stack of books in the photo is the Bible in Braille, not just many copies. With the thick paper and raised Braille markings, a complete Braille Bible is 21 volumes!



“Unless we form the habit of going to the Bible in bright moments as well as in trouble, we cannot fully respond to its consolations because we lack equilibrium between light and darkness.” – Helen Keller



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Visits our website at HBU.edu/BibleMuseum

“The more profoundly we study this wonderful book, and the more closely we observe its divine precepts, the better citizens we will become, and the higher will be our destiny as a nation.”

— President William McKinley

Special Exhibit

Women and the Bible

February 5 – December 14, 2018.

Women were an integral part of the early narrative of scripture as well as Jesus’s life and ministry. Throughout the history of the church women have read and studied the scripture and shared its truths with others through numerous ways – as scribes, translators, missionaries, queens, mothers, and teachers. This exhibit explores some of these aspects of “women and the bible.”

**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

