

A STUDY OF THE

# Protestant Reformation

1517 - 2017

The 500th Anniversary



# The Conclusion of our Study

We are now at the end of our study of the Protestant Reformation. From the beginning, I sought to make our method clear – that we would approach the Reformation biographically through the life of Martin Luther who, as a humble Augustinian monk in Erfurt, saw a Bible for the first time in his life and ultimately re-discovered in its pages the doctrine of justification by grace through faith. Of his 62 years, we considered 39 of them, from birth in 1483 to his return to Wittenberg after his long seclusion in the Wartburg Castle in Eisenach. Consequently, we never considered the lives and writings of other great reformers such as Philip Melanchthon, Andrew Carlstadt, Martin Bucer, John Calvin, Ulrich Zwingli, William Tyndale, Menno Simons, or

# The Conclusion of our Study

many others. If your heart has been moved by this brief introduction to the Reformation, it is hoped that the portal into a deeper understanding of Luther's legacy will be a bit more alluring and draw you into a deeper understanding of who God is and what He has done for you through Jesus Christ.



# Introduction: Part 15

- On January 27, 1521, the Diet of Worms was opened.
- Luther was summoned to the diet on March 6 and was questioned on April 17 & 18 before 204 men, including the Emperor.
- On May 8, Emperor Charles V issued the Edict of Worms with its imperial ban on Luther and his followers.
- “The edict of Worms, with its terrible proscriptions, was circulated by thousands throughout the empire, and even among the mountains of the Tyrol. Would not the Reformation be crushed by the iron hand that was weighing upon it?”



# The Edict of Worms

“We, Charles the Fifth, to all electors, princes, prelates, and others whom it may concern. The Almighty having confided to us, for the defense of the holy faith, more kingdoms and greater authority than He has ever given to any of our predecessors, we purpose employing every means in our power to prevent our holy empire from being polluted by any heresy.

“The Augustinian monk, Martin Luther, notwithstanding our exhortation, has rushed like a madman on our holy Church, and attempted to destroy it by books overflowing with blasphemy. He has shamefully polluted the indestructible law of holy matrimony; he has



# The Edict of Worms

endeavored to excite the laity to dye their hands in the blood of the clergy; and, setting at nought all authority, has incessantly urged the people to revolt, schism, war, murder, robbery, incendiarism, and to the utter ruin of the Christian faith....In a word, not to mention his many other evil practices, this man, who is in truth not a man, but Satan himself under the form of a man and dressed in a monk's frock, has collected into one stinking slough all the vilest heresies of past times, and has added to them new ones of his own...

“We have therefore dismissed from our presence this Luther, whom all pious and sensible men deem a madman, or one possessed by the



# The Edict of Worms

devil; and we enjoin that, on the expiration of his safe-conduct, immediate recourse be had to effectual measures to check his furious rage.

“For this reason, under pain of incurring the penalties due to the crime of high-treason, we forbid you to harbor the said Luther after the appointed term shall be expired, to conceal him, to give him food or drink, or to furnish him, by word or by deed, publicly or secretly, with any kind of succor whatsoever. We enjoin you, moreover, to seize him, or cause him to be seized, wherever you may find him, to bring him before us without any delay, or to keep him in safe custody, until you



# The Edict of Worms

have learned from us in what manner you are to act towards him, and have received the reward due to your labors in so holy a work.

“As for his adherents, you will apprehend them, confine them, and confiscate their property.

“As for his writings, if the best nutriment becomes the detestation of all men as soon as one drop of poison is mingled with it, how much more ought such books, which contain a deadly poison for the soul, be not only rejected, but destroyed! You will therefore burn them, or utterly destroy them in any other manner.





# The Edict of Worms

“As for the authors, poets, printers, painters, buyers or sellers of placards, papers, or pictures, against the pope of the Church, you will seize them, body and goods, and will deal with them according to your good pleasure.

“And if any person, whatever be his dignity, should dare act in contradiction to the decree of our imperial majesty, we order him to be placed under the ban of the empire.

“Let every man behave according to this decree.”

Signed on May 8, 1521 by Charles V



# GERMANY AT THE ACCESSION OF CHARLES V.

Scale of English Miles  
50 0 50 100

NOTE:—The Imperial Towns are written thus....Hamburg

Netherlands

Luxembourg

Central Arrow:  
Worms to Wartburg

France

Pomerania

Bohemia  
(Czech Republic)

Austria



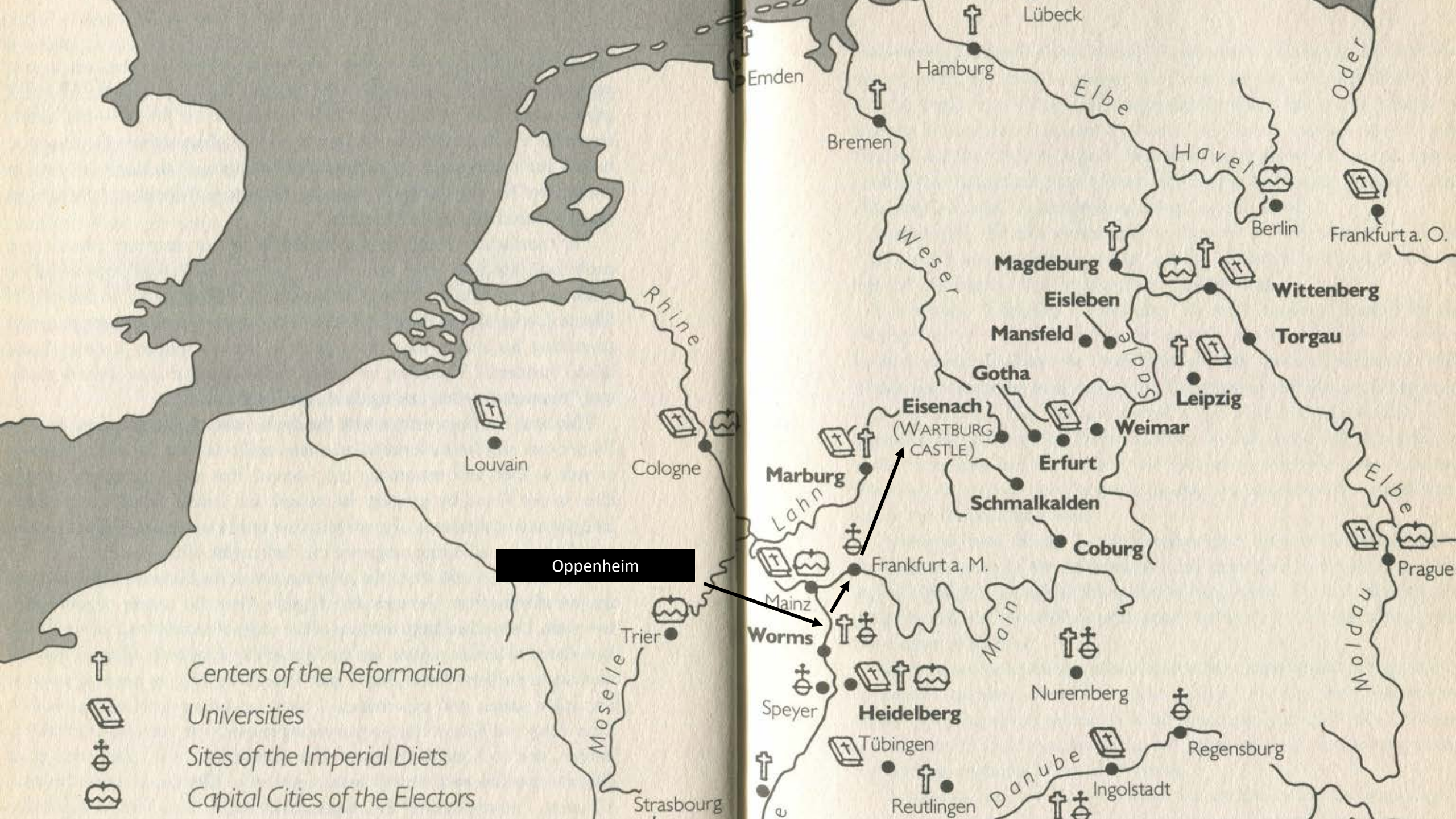


# Frederick the Wise



**Frederick the Wise**  
*Elector of Saxony*  
1463-1525

Frederick understood that Luther's liberty must be sacrificed to the anger of Charles V and the Leo X. Therefore, he ordered that Martin Luther be taken and hidden and demanded that no one tell him where he was sequestered. Luther's friends thought he was dead.



Oppenheim



Centers of the Reformation  
Universities



Sites of the Imperial Diets



Capital Cities of the Electors





# Luther's Route to the Wartburg Castle

- Friday, April 26, Luther blessed his friends who came to say their farewells and left Worms at 10:00 a.m. Twenty men on horseback surrounded his wagon.
- Saturday, April 27: Arrived in Frankfurt in the evening
- Sunday, April 28: Luther rested in Frankfurt
- Monday, April 29: Left Frankfurt for Friedberg (22 miles)
- Tuesday, April 30: Left for Hirschfeld
- Wednesday, May 1: Preached and left for Eisenach
- Thursday, May 2: Preached in Eisenach





# Luther's Route to the Wartburg Castle

- Friday, May 3: Left Eisenach for the village of Mora, near Erfurt, where his father had grown up. Luther visited his aged grandmother, his uncle Henry Luther, and some other relatives.
- Saturday, May 4: Luther entered the forests of Thuringia, 43 miles long by 12 miles wide. Skirted the woods of Thuringia on the road to Waltershausen. Five horsemen dismounted and “captured” Luther.
- Riding in every direction to throw off any attempt to track them, they arrived at the foot of the mountain where the Wartburg Castle stood at 11:00 p.m.

# About the Wartburg Castle

- The castle dates back to 1067.
- It sits on a 1350 foot precipice overlooking the town of Eisenach and is surrounded on all sides by the black forests that cover the mountains of Thuringia.
- It had been the main seat of German landgraves, or princes.
- In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was renovated and redecorated (medieval architecture was restored and new buildings added).
- In 1999, UNESCO placed the Wartburg Castle on the World Heritage List (UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization).



Wartburg Castle







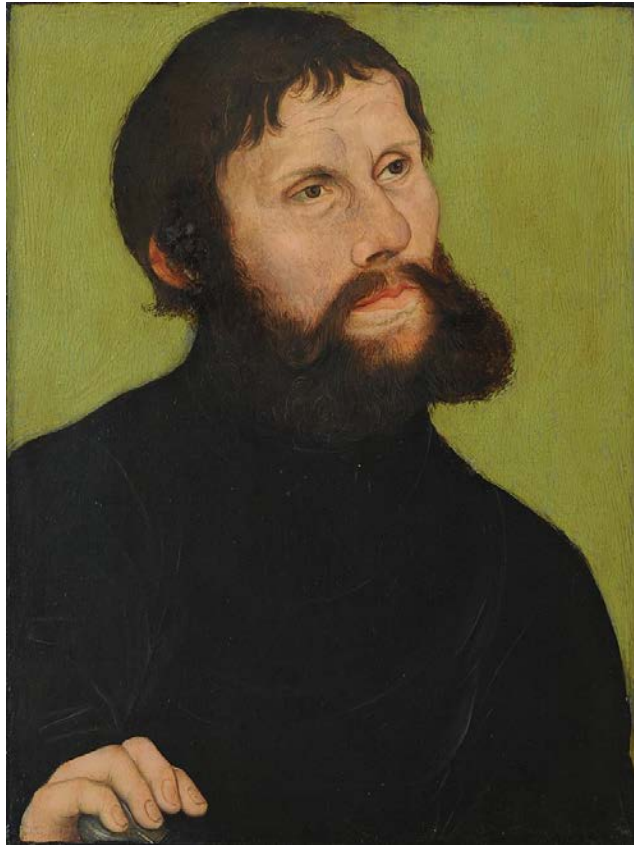




# Luther's Disguise

- Upon entering the Wartburg, the horsemen took away his ecclesiastical robes and dressed him in a knight's uniform which had been prepared for him.
- The men encouraged him to let his beard and hair grow so that no one in the castle might recognize him.
- The people in the castle only knew him by the name "Knight George."
- After he was left alone, he looked out from the narrow loopholes of his turret at the "gloomy, solitary, and extensive forests that surrounded him."
- "It was here that the doctor abode, like St. Paul in his prison at Rome."

# “Junker (Knight) George”



“Junker George”  
by Lucas Cranach

- Luther was concealed within the walls of the Wartburg for 10 months: May 4 – March 1, 1522.
- He called the castle “the Wilderness” and “My Patmos.”
- “I can tell you in this idle solitude there are a thousand battles with Satan. It is much easier to fight against the incarnate Devil – that is, against men – than against spiritual wickedness in the heavenly places. Often I fall and am lifted up again by God’s right hand.”



# Personal Hardships

- **Isolation:** “I did not want to come here. I wanted to be in the fray.” Again, “I had rather burn on live coals than rot here.”
- **Physical ills:** the restricted diet and sedentary ways made his digestive system worse.
- **Insomnia.**
- **Depression:** One cure he found was work (e.g., expositions on Psalms 36 and 67, a commentary on the *Magnificat*, a translation of Melanchthon’s reply to the University of Paris, sermons on the lessons from the epistles and Gospels, exposition of the ten lepers).



# Activities



Luther's Desk at the Wartburg

- “I am reading the Bible in Hebrew and Greek; I am going to write a treatise in German on Auricular Confession” (private confession).
- For nearly a whole year he “instructed, exhorted, reproved, and thundered from his mountain retreat; and his amazed adversaries asked one another if there was not something supernatural, some mystery, in this prodigious activity.”

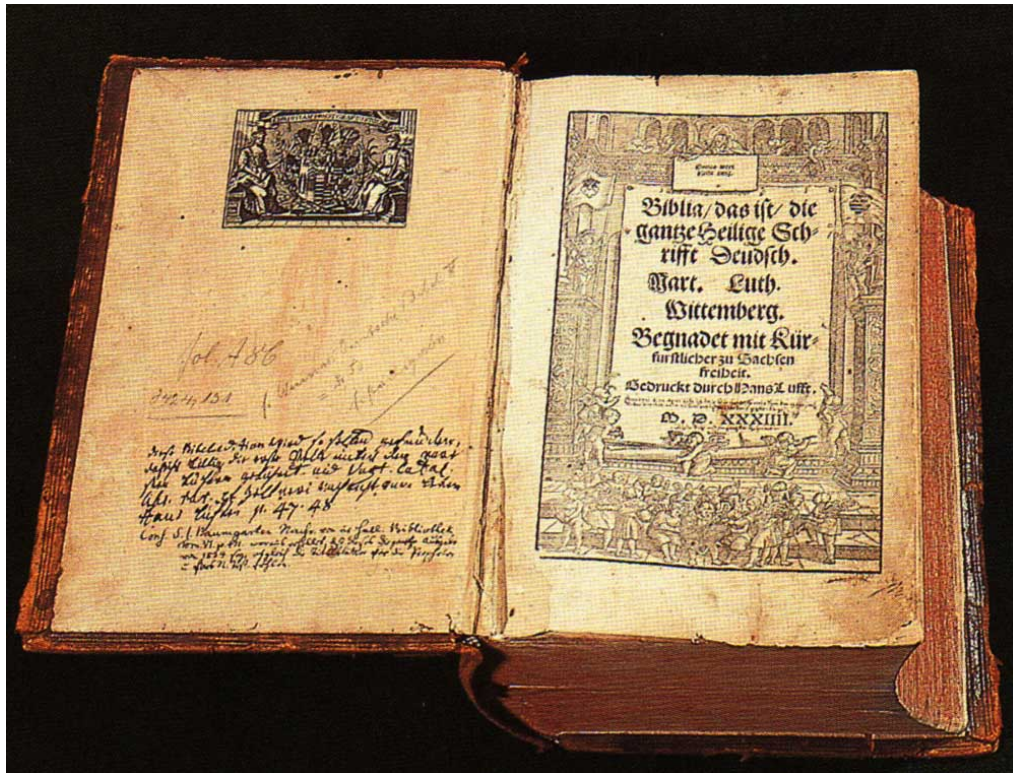


# Luther's Translation of the Bible

- Luther's greatest accomplishment while he was at the Wartburg was his translation of the New Testament into German.
- His translation of the New Testament marked the creation of a unified and accessible written German language.
- This was the first translation that was not based on Jerome's Latin Vulgate (late 4<sup>th</sup> century). [Note: the Catholic Church affirmed the Vulgate as its official Latin Bible at the Council of Trent (1545-1563)].
- Luther used the second edition of Erasmus' Greek New Testament published in 1519 (the first edition was published three years earlier in 1516). Total copies sold of both editions: 3,300 (Bruce Metzger).



# A New German Bible



Luther translated the New Testament  
into German in eleven weeks

December 1521 – February 1522

## Luther's German Bible

New Testament completed in 1522

Old Testament completed in 1534

# Oxford Scholar, Diarmaid MacCulloch

“While confined to the Wartburg, Luther devoted himself to a fever of writing: the most formidable task was the first part of his translation of the Bible into High German. It was an astonishing achievement at a time of great personal stress and amid the production of a welter of polemical writing. Although time only permitted him to complete the New Testament, and the complete Old Testament followed later, this was an extraordinary achievement, which has shaped the German language every since.”



**Diarmaid MacCulloch**

Oxford University

1951 -



“The Scriptures are a vast forest, but there’s no tree in it that I haven’t shaken with my hand.”

- Luther’s *Table Talk*



# What the Scriptures Had Done for Luther

- Faith in the Word of God had made him free.
- He had been emancipated from the dogmatical authority of the Church – from its hierarchy and traditions.
- He had been set free from the opinions of the schoolmen – the Scholastics.
- He was able to reject human ordinances in the light of God's Word.
- His agitated conscience and monastic ideas had been put to rest and his soul was at peace with God through Jesus Christ.
- He was set free from all authority except that of the Word.

# D'Aubigne on Luther's Translation of the Bible

“The hour had come in which the Reformation, from being a mere theological question, was to become the life of the people; and yet the great engine by which this progress was to be effected was not yet in being. This powerful and mighty instrument, destined to hurl its thunderbolts from every side against the proud edifice of Rome, throw down its walls, cast off the enormous weight of the papacy under which the Church lay stifled, and communicate an impulse to the whole human race which would still be felt until the end of time – this instrument was to go forth from the old castle of the Wartburg, and enter the world on the same day that terminated the reformer's captivity.”



# Was the Reformation Lost?

“The spring passed away; summer, autumn, and winter succeeded; the sun had accomplished its annual course, and still the walls of the Wartburg enclosed their prisoner. Truth had been interdicted by the diet; its defender, confined within the ramparts of a castle, had disappeared from the stage of the world, and no one knew what had become of him: Aleander triumphed; the reformation appeared lost....But God reigns, and the blow that seemed as if it would destroy the cause of the gospel, did but contribute to save its courageous minister and to extend the light of faith to distant countries.”

- J.H. Merle D'Aubigne



# Insights About Luther's "Captivity"

- "By his captivity he escaped a danger which might possibly have ruined the Reformation – that of always attacking and destroying without ever defending or building up" (some of the first promoters of the Reformation in Germany and Switzerland "ran upon the shoal of spiritual pride and fanaticism").
- God suddenly removed him from "the sphere of intoxicating ovations, and throwing him into an unknown retreat." His soul was "tempered in the waters of adversity." His sufferings and humiliation "compelled him to walk with the humble."
- "No great work is ever accomplished without suffering and martyrdom."





# Insights About Luther's "Captivity"

- "The Christian is not called upon to count his forces and to number his means of victory. The only thing he should be anxious about is to know whether the cause he upholds is really that of God and whether he looks only to his Master's glory."
- "We will not encounter Christ as our best friend, as the source of all true goodness, as the One who provides the sweetest pleasure to our souls, until we abandon ourselves to Him. And full abandonment, real trust, rarely happens until we meet God in the midst of shattered dreams, until in our brokenness we see in Him the only and overflowingly sufficient answer to our soul's deepest cry" (Dr. Larry Crabb).