



The Luther Bible of 1534

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Martin Luther's Bible, first printed in 1534, was not only the first complete German publication of the Bible but also a major event in the history of Christianity. Luther's revolutionary translation, very modern in vernacular and interpretation, made the Bible accessible to laypeople for the first time in history and gave life to a new religion: Protestantism. The Luther Bible remains the most widely used version in the Germanic world today. In commemoration of Year of the Bible (2003), TASCHEN is publishing a sumptuous reprint of this seminal book. Including both the Old and New Testaments, separated into two volumes totaling over 1800 pages, TASCHEN's complete Luther Bible has been meticulously reproduced from a rare colored copy of the original. Careful attention has been paid to Lucas Cranach's woodcuts and elaborate ornaments, which are printed in color and gold so as to be perfectly faithful to the original. Contained in a third volume is Stephan Füssel's introduction, providing an overview of Luther's life, a discussion of the significance of his bible, and detailed descriptions of the illustrations.

The author:

Stephan Füssel is Director of the Institute of the History of the Book at the Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz, and holder of the Gutenberg Chair at the same university. He is President of the Willibald Pirckheimer Society for Renaissance and Humanist Studies, member of the board of the International Gutenberg Society and editor of the annual Gutenberg Jahrbuch and Pirckheimer Jahrbuch. He has published widely on early printing, on bookselling and publishing from the 18th to the 20th century, and on the future of c

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

The most elaborate bestseller reprint in recent history has got to be Taschen's *Luther Bible of 1534: Complete Facsimile Edition*. The owner of the original copy wanted it to be a precious, unique object, so the 117 woodcuts were illustrated in brilliant colors by a single hand. In a helpful booklet included with the two hardbound volumes, Stephan Fuessel gives a quick history in English of Martin Luther and how he rendered the Bible in vivid, poetical German. ("We do not have to ask about the literal Latin," wrote Luther, "as these asses do.") He also explains what each of the bold blue, green, red, and gold illustrated woodcuts mean. Often Luther had an angry political message: in Revelations, the most wildly illustrated book, the Whore of Babylon is not only riding a terrifying, reptilian seven-headed beast, but wearing the Pope's crown; the battle of Gog and Magog and the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse feature Turks. Imagine the impact these exquisite visions of flaming miracles must have had on people in 1534. Or behold these books and feel it for yourself. --*Tim Appelo*

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