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Luther and the Bible

In commemorating the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation, it is almost impossible not to mention Martin Luther. Yet it is equally impossible not to mention the Bible itself. Indeed, one of Luther's greatest contributions to the movement was his German Bible.

Prior to the Reformation, the masses had no access to the Bible, and relied almost entirely on what the priests taught them. Luther, however, wanted others to be able to read and understand Scripture for themselves. Therefore, he started translating the New Testament into contemporary German. It was completed in 11 weeks and published in 1522. Within two months, 5000 copies were sold! Following this success, Luther gathered a team of scholars and translated the rest of the Bible. The complete German Bible was finally published in 1534.

Luther's German Bible was a monumental achievement. It not only helped create a standard, modern German language, but also inspired people in various countries to translate the Scriptures into their mother tongues. Hence, it may even be said that the Reformation laid the groundwork for the global Bible Mission that started almost 300 years later!

Because of Luther and the Reformation, we have the Bible available in so many languages and formats today. Let us give thanks for that. At the same time, let us also heed Luther's call: "Let the man who would hear God speak, *read Holy Scripture*".