



**ILLUMINATING
THE BIBLE :
WOODCUTS &
ENGRAVINGS**

September 2013 ~ July 2014

SALOME.

Quayle Bible Collection
Baker University
Baldwin City, KS



“A fool sees not the same tree that a wise man sees.”

- William Blake

From the prehistoric cave paintings in Lascaux, France to this morning's Facebook post, images have been used to tell stories. At a glance, the observer of an image takes in spatial relationships, emotions, and details that would take pages of text to express. The staying power of an attractive or arresting image was well-understood by the printers of early Bibles as the movers and shakers of the Reformation sought to bring biblical enlightenment to the people of renaissance streets and villages.

Illuminating the Bible focuses primarily on woodcuts and engravings. Woodcuts developed in the late 14th century and were used to illustrate early printed books because they could easily be incorporated onto a page with type. Woodcuts are made by carving wood out of the surface of a woodblock, leaving the image on the surface. The surface can then be inked and pressed onto a sheet of paper to make the printed image.

Engraving, on the other hand, involves incising lines into a copper plate. The printer inks the plate, pushing the ink into every crevice, and wipes the ink off of the surface. When the plate is pressed onto the paper, it is the ink from the crevices that makes the image.

Artists of the 15th and 16th centuries often worked in both mediums. Woodcuts could be incorporated into the book printing process more fully and they stood up well to heavy use. Some were used for centuries. But by engraving, an artist could use subtle shading to show perspective and give their figures some weight. They could also provide wonderful details which were difficult to show with a woodcut. The advantage of the simpler, flatter woodcuts was that there were fewer details to distract from the storytelling function of the image.

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The 16th century tapestry on the wall of the exhibit area, showing scenes from the early life of David, was another medium, along with stained glass and frescoes in public places, that was used to familiarize people with stories of the Bible.

In the Exhibit Cases

“In the Beginning...”

Woodcuts, possibly by Jean Bourdichon. *Biblia Sacra*. Lyon : Jacob Sacon, 1518. *The six panels provide an overview of the days of the Creation at the beginning of Genesis.*

Woodcuts from the workshop of Michael Wolgemut, from *The Nuremberg Chronicle*, by Hartmann Schedel. Nuremberg : Anton Koberger, 1493. *Albrecht Dürer was an apprentice in this workshop as the Nuremberg Chronicle was illustrated and may have participated in the work.*

Opus Primæ Diei, engraving by Johann Andreas Pfeffel from *Physica Sacra*, by Johann Jakob Scheuchzer. Ulm : Christian Ulrich Wagner, 1731-35.

Photographic reproductions, from *The Bible in Art*, edited by W. Shaw Sparrow. London : Hodder & Stoughton, 1904. *These larger paintings and frescoes told stories of Bible in large public places.*

The Image of God ~ God in human form, as symbol and word

Behemoth & Leviathan, engraving by William Blake from *The Book of Job*. London : William Blake, 1825.

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John, Chapter XVI, woodcut by Virgil Solis from *New Testament*.
Nuremberg : Valentin Neuber, 1562. *The Holy Spirit, God represented as a dove.*

Creation of Eve, woodcut by Virgil Solis, from the *Holie Bible*. London: Richard Jugge, 1568.

The woodcuts for this Bible were imported from Cologne. The original block (top) showed God in human form, but the English Protestants objected to that portrayal. So they altered it (bottom). A section of the woodblock was cut out and replaced with a rabbit and a tree and the word Yahweh in Hebrew to represent God. You can just make out the edge of God's robe to the left of the tree.



Original woodcut, by Virgil Solis



Altered woodcut

Creation of Eve, engraving by Gustave Doré from *The Doré Bible Gallery*. Philadelphia : Henry Altemus, 1890. *The Doré Bible Gallery* was immensely popular and was published many editions in French, English, German, Swedish.

Christ points out signs in the sky, woodcut by Jost Amman from *Postilla*, Simon Musäum. Frankfurt am Maim : Feyerabend & Schwarzenber, 1574.

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Demons & Beasts

The Angel Binding Satan, engraving, by John Landseer from *The Holy Bible*. London : Thomas Bensley, 1800.

The Fire of God is Fallen from Heaven, engraving by William Blake from *The Book of Job*. New York : United Book Guild, 1947.

Döden [Death], engraving by Gustave Doré from *Den Heliga Skrift*. Stockholm : Familj-Journalens Boktryckeri-Aktiebolag, 1877.

Woodcut, after Hans Holbein, the Younger, from the *New Testament*. Publisher unknown, 1549. *Holbein's woodcuts were widely used and copied and they influenced many of the artists who followed him, notably Bernard Salomon and Virgil Solis.*

Woodcut by Bernard Salomon from *Biblia Sacra*. Lyon : Jean Tournes, 1556.

Plagues & Pestilence

The Plague, engraving by William Blake. *Twenty-Seven Drawings of William Blake*. McPherson, KS : Carl Smalley, 1925.

[plague of frogs], woodcut by Andreas Reinhardt from *Catholische Mayntzische Bible*. Frankfurt am Main : Bronner, 1740.

[plague of locusts], woodcut, by Bernard Salomon, from *Biblia Sacra*. Lyon : Jean Tournes, 1554.

Miracles

Daniel i lejongropen [Daniel in the lions' den], engraving by Gustave Doré, from *Den Heliga Skrift*. Stockholm : Familj-Journalens Boktryckeri-Aktiebolag, 1877.

Resurrection of Jesus Christ, engraving after Bernardino Passeri from *Rerum Sacrarum Liber*, by Lorenzo Gambara. Antwerp : Christoph Plantin, 1577.

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Miracles (cont'd)

Jonas englouti par un poisson & La baleine rejette Jonas sur le rivage [Jonah swallowed by a fish & The whale deposits Jonah on the beach], engraved by Louis-Antoine de Marne, from *L'Ancien et le Nouveau Testament*. Paris : Theodore Dehansy, Claude Herissant, & Guillaume Despres, 1756.

The Life of David

Scenes from the early life of David, the tapestry hanging on the wall in front of you was likely made in Belgium in the mid-sixteenth century. *The central grouping is likely David, his first wife Michal, and a priest. In the upper left the boy David defends his sheep from the lion and the bear. To the right, he prepares to cut off Goliath's head.*

The Singer David, illustrated by William Wilke, from *Psalms of the Singer David*. San Francisco : John Henry Nash, 1929.

Saul Presenting His Daughter Merab to David, engraving by Jean-Marie Delattre from *Holy Bible*. London : Thomas Bensley, 1800.

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On the walls

Wicked Women

Salome Receiving the Head of John the Baptist, engraved by Charles Grignon, after the drawing of Henry Fuseli, from *A Practical Family Bible* (Francis Willoughby). London : J. Payne, 1774.

Salome Receiving the Head of John the Baptist, outline engraved by Thomas Holloway, after the original plate of Charles Grignon, from *Essays on Physiognomy*, by Johann Caspar Lavater. London : John Murray, 1792.

Jezebel, engraved by Jacob Andreas Fridrich, after the drawing of Johann Melchior Füssli, from *Physica Sacra*, by Johann Jacob Scheuchzer. Ulm : Christian Ulrich Wagner, 1731-35.

Delilah, engraved by Johann Balthasar Probst, after the drawing of Johann Melchior Füssli, from *Physica Sacra*, by Johann Jacob Scheuchzer. Ulm : Christian Ulrich Wagner, 1731-35.

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Maps

Maps generally reflect the needs and interests of the people who produce and use them. In the ancient world maps were painted on cave walls, incised in clay tablets and drawn on papyrus and represent concrete facts about the immediate surroundings.

Early medieval maps, on the other hand, began to describe the whole known world. They showed the three continents – Asia, Europe and Africa – inscribed in a circle with Asia at the top. Biblical maps set the Holy Land at the intersection of the continents, often with tiny drawings to evoke events from the Bible.

The value of maps was explained by 17th century historian, Thomas Fuller, saying, “the eye will learn more in an hour from a map, than the ear can learn in a day from a discourse.”

The maps to the right show the Holy Land. They were published as guides to locations mentioned in the Old Testament. However, geographic accuracy would have been difficult to attain. Over 400 places are mentioned, many of which no longer existed in the 16th century. In addition, different translations provided differing descriptions of the Holy Land.

The River of Eden in the 1731-5 map flows south to join three other rivers as described in Genesis 2:10.

¹⁰ A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters.

¹¹ The name of the first is the Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. ¹² (The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin and onyx are also there.) ¹³ The name of the second river is the Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush. ¹⁴ The name of the third river is the Tigris; it runs along the east side of Ashur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

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The maps to the left are more narrative, showing the Travels of Paul made from two woodblocks, the route of the Israelites in the book of Numbers, and a hybrid map and illustration setting the events of Numbers into a landscape.

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Acknowledgements

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Thanks to Chris Ortiz, Quayle Bible Collection Intern, summer 2013. Chris is a junior at Baker University majoring in Art and Art History. He selected the items to be included in this exhibit and researched them.

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For more reading:

How to identify prints : a complete guide to manual and mechanical processes from woodcuts to inkjet, by Bamber Gascoigne.
London : Thames & Hudson, 2004.

Early Bible illustrations : a short study based on some fifteenth and early sixteenth century printed texts, by James Strahan.
Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Blake's Job : William Blake's illustrations of the Book of Job, by S. Foster Damon. Princeton : Brown University, 1966.

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Quayle Bible Collection at

Baker University

518 Eighth Street

Baldwin City, KS

The Quayle Bible Collection was a gift of Bishop William A. Quayle, sometime student, professor and president of Baker University. He built an outstanding collection of Bibles and other sacred materials. These rare books and manuscripts include early handwritten and printed materials, handwritten scrolls, significant Bible translations and editions with an additional collection of related reference volumes.

More than 900 works are housed in the wing of Collins Library provided by Kenneth A. and Helen F. Spencer.

It is regularly open 1:00~4:00 on Saturday & Sunday afternoons through July 2014. To arrange a visit at other times or a guided tour, please contact us at:

785.594.8414
quayle@bakeru.edu