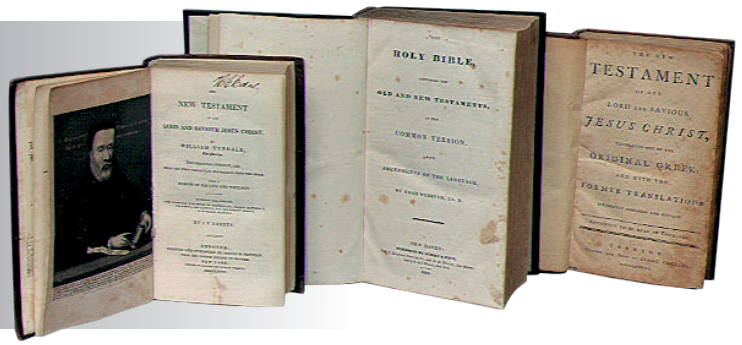


# Dunham Bible Museum NEWS



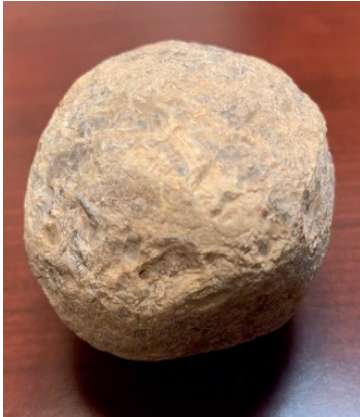
Houston Christian University

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## Hitting the Mark

At the entrance to the Dunham Bible Museum is a small display of archaeological artifacts, including cuneiform tablets and ancient oil lamps. Among the items is a round sling stone, about two inches in diameter – the kind of stone David aimed against the giant Goliath. David undoubtedly became skilled in the use of the sling when he was shepherding sheep. Herders often used slings



*Sling stone in the Dunham Bible Museum's archaeology collection*

to help control their animals and ward off predators. Slings were also weapons used in warfare by the ancients, including Egyptians, Babylonians, and Persians. The earliest written reference to the military use of slings is in the Bible at Judges 20:16, where it speaks of the 700 men of Benjamin who “were

left-handed; every one could sling a stone at a hair and not miss.”

Though simple and inexpensive, a sling in a practiced hand could be highly effective. Don't think of a sling shot when you think of David's weapon. A sling was a woven pouch, usually of linen or wool, with two cords on each end, 2 to 4 feet long. The slinger placed the ammunition in the pouch and rotated it either over his head



*A sling was a woven pouch with two long cords at each end.*

or at his side. He then let go of one of the cords and released the ammunition. David's ammunition was a stone from a brook. Stones worn by water became rounded, such as the one in the Dunham Bible Museum. Rounded stones flew straight, providing far greater accuracy. Ammunition could also be made of clay or metal.



*Assyrian slingers in attack on Lachish, c. 701 B.C. from palace of Sennacherib, Nineveh, now in the British Museum, London*

A skilled slinger could shoot with some accuracy at 180 yards, and more precise accuracy at 140 yards. David probably was about 40 yards from Goliath, which would enable absolute accuracy. The longer the cords of the sling, the greater the speed generated, reaching over 100 m.p.h. As a skilled slinger, David carefully aimed at Goliath's unprotected forehead – “The stone sank into his forehead and he fell on his face on the ground.” The Lord had delivered Goliath into David's hand, “that all the earth may know there is a God in Israel.” (I Samuel 17)

(See Boyd Seevers' *Warfare in the Old Testament* for more on slings and other ancient weapons).



## A Man with a Vision



Dr. John Hellstern  
1935-2024

On February 13, 2024, Dr. John Hellstern, aged 88, died peacefully in his sleep. Dr. Hellstern was a chaplain in the USAF for twenty years, during which time he had nine different assignments. When stationed in England, at Woodbridge Air Force Base, he began collecting antique Bibles, including manuscripts, 16th century Bibles, and early English Bibles.

After retirement, Dr. Hellstern began displaying his Bibles in local churches. He joined with another Bible collector, Dr. Donald Brake, Dean of Multnomah Seminary, and they began displaying their collection in major venues in Branson, Tulsa, and Dallas/Fort Worth. The exhibits included printing on a replica of a Gutenberg press, made by Dr. Hellstern's brother Joe.

In 2009, the joint collections of Drs. Hellstern and Brake were purchased by Houston Baptist University for the Dunham Bible Museum, whose collection then only included American Bibles. The placement of his Bible collection at the Dunham Bible Museum was an answer to Dr. Hellstern's prayer for a permanent place for these volumes to be publicly exhibited and used in scholarly studies.

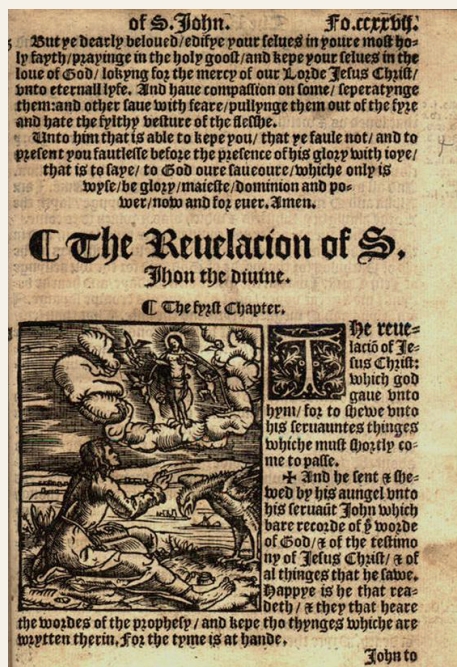
Dr. Hellstern was tremendously helpful in designing the Dunham Bible Museum's exhibits in the Morris Cultural Arts Center. He promised, "I will continue to pray for the Bible Museum at Houston Baptist University. Now, I pray for its leaders, who are the *Solomons* that carry on its mission. I include the leadership and supporters of this marvelous Christian university. I pray for the many students who will be influenced by those great mountain-peak persons of our Bible's history, as well as those who study the volumes. I include, with thanksgiving, the many individuals and church, school, and other groups who will come and be influenced to deeper appreciation of our Bible. And, above all, my prayer will continue that Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life will be lifted up, received, and followed."

We are deeply grateful to Dr. Hellstern and trust his prayers which have undergirded the Dunham Bible Museum's work and mission will continue to be answered.

## A Piece of the Past

In 2010 the Joella and Stewart Morris Foundation established "A Piece of the Past" essay contest to encourage students to research artifacts in the Houston Christian University's Museums - the Dunham Bible Museum, the Museum of American Architecture and Decorative Arts, the Museum of Southern History, and the Museum of Fine Arts and Contemporary Arts. April 18, an award dinner for this year's winners was held in the Center for Law and Liberty. First and Second Place and Honorable Mention were given for each museum category, as well as a Grand Prize winner over all the Museums.

The essay which won Grand Prize was on an artifact in the Dunham Bible Museum - Tyndale's English New Testament. "Tyndale's Dying Prayer" was written by Leena Bouchenni, a junior majoring in legal studies. Ms. Bouchenni recounted the history of William Tyndale's passion to translate the Bible into English, against the legal prohibitions of a Bible in English. Having to flee to Europe to complete his work, Tyndale had to live life on the run and was finally trapped by a spy and arrested for heresy. Condemned to death, Tyndale's dying prayer was, "Lord, open the King of England's eyes." Within a year after Tyndale's death, King Henry VIII allowed the English Bible in England, much of which was Tyndale's work. Tyndale's English Bible translation helped shape the English language and stood for religious freedom.



Opening of the book of Revelation in the 1536 Tyndale New Testament. The book was heavily illustrated, with 24 illustrations in Revelation alone. The illustrations were done by the famous artist Cranach the Elder.

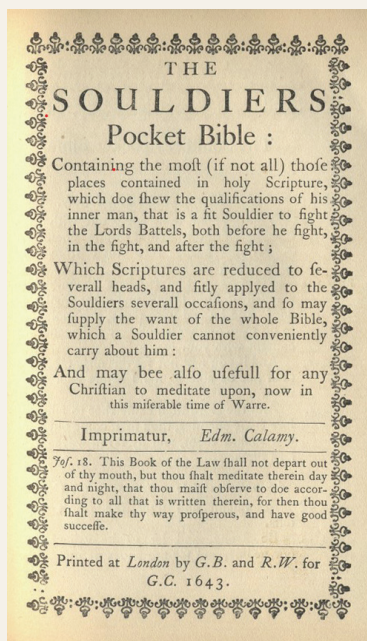
"Tyndale's Conquest: A New Testament for all English People" by Ella Ritter won first place in the Dunham Bible Museum category. Ms. Ritter was originally drawn to the 1536 edition of the Tyndale New Testament because she had long been inspired by Tyndale's story and courage, as well as the importance of Tyndale's translation work for later English Bible translations. In doing her research, she was encouraged how illustrations helped make the gospel more accessible to non-readers.

“*Uncle Tom’s Cabin: When Pen Strokes Shaped the World*” by Corinne Sandifer won second place in the Dunham Bible Museum category. Ms. Sandifer, who graduated this May with a degree in nursing, chose a book from the Bible Museum’s “Bible and Literature” exhibit. Ms. Sandifer showed how Harriet Beecher Stowe’s novel *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* powerfully helped change the course of a nation by showing a picture of Christian love. Sandifer wrote the novel “continues to invite individuals to combat harsh injustice with the Christlike weapons of empathy, courage, and sacrifice.”

Kevin Welsh received an Honorable Mention in the Bible Museum category for his essay “The Soldier’s Bible in the Age of Warfare.” Mr. Welsh covered the history of soldiers’ bibles from the 1643 *Soldiers’ Pocket Bible* issued by Oliver Cromwell through the Bibles issued in more recent conflicts. The 1643 *Soldiers’ Pocket Bible* was actually a collection of passages of Scripture to encourage the soldier. This was even reprinted during the American Civil war in the 19th century. By the time of World War I, soldiers’ pocket Bibles came to include the entire New Testament. During World War II, these pocket New Testaments often had metal covers, which could protect the heart from bullets. In the late 20th century, during the war in Iraq, New Testaments often had camouflage covers.

Welsh wrote, “As a personal testimony, I fought in this war, and I too have one of these Bibles, which stayed with me every day in the cargo pocket of my trousers. I sought passages such as Psalm 91 and Isaiah 43 to seek spiritual comfort during times of rest and recuperation. When I would go on missions or get into intense firefights, my Bible would be with me, and I had a sense of peace during the prolonged exposure to combat. I credit God with my homecoming and protection during that time. His Word in this Soldiers’ Bible drove me to be better and to fight with peace in my heart as I daily walked a fine line between life and death.”

Congratulations to all the winners of the Piece of the Past contest. The winning essays can be read at <https://hc.edu/museums/a-piece-of-the-past-contest/>.



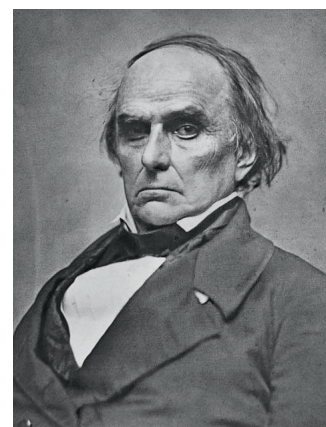
1643 Soldiers Pocket Bible issued by Oliver Cromwell



## Importance of the Bible to the Nation

As the United States will hold an important election in the fall, it might be helpful to listen to past statesmen as they consider the future of the nation.

Daniel Webster (1782-1852), a lawyer, Congressman, and Secretary of State, wrote: “There is no solid basis for civilization but in the Word of God...



Daniel Webster

If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering; but if we and our posterity neglect its instructions and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury all our glory in profound obscurity...If religious books are not widely circulated among the masses in this country, I do not know what is going to become of us as a nation. If truth be not diffused, error will be; if God and His Word are not known and received, the devil and his works will gain the ascendancy; if the evangelical volume does not reach every hamlet, the pages of a corrupt and licentious literature will; if the power of the Gospel is not felt throughout the length and breadth of the land, anarchy and misrule, degradation and misery, corruption and darkness will reign without mitigation or end.”

Herbert Hoover (1874-1964), 31st President of the United States recognized that “The whole inspiration of our civilization springs from the teaching of Christ and the lessons of the prophets.

To read the Bible for these fundamentals is a necessity of American life.”

George Washington (1732-1799), commander-in-chief of the Continental Army and first president of the United States, knew that “It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible.



George Washington





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*"The Bible is the chief moral cause  
of all that is good, and the best  
corrector of all that is evil in human  
society; the best book for regulating  
the temporal concerns of men, and  
the only book that can serve as an  
infallible guide to future felicity."*

— Noah Webster

## ***Current Special Exhibits***

- ❖ **Celebrating the life of Jesus, the Christ:  
Three Centuries of Bible Art**
- ❖ **The Treasured Word**
- ❖ **Out of this World – the Bible on the Moon**

The Dunham Bible Museum's regular exhibits include:

- Bible manuscripts
- American Bibles
- Early printed Bibles
- *The St. John's Bible*
- English bibles
- Foreign Bible translations

...all designed to show the Bible's history, influence,  
and impact.

## ***Become a Friend***

The Dunham Bible Museum Friends support the programs and collections of the Museum through annual contributions and participation in Museum events. Friends have the satisfaction that their tax deductible gift will benefit the Dunham Bible Museum, enabling it to achieve its goal of being a premier museum dedicated to the Bible, its message, history, and influence. All Friends will receive year-long benefits of a printed subscription to the Dunham Bible Museum News, invitations to exhibit openings, and a discount on Museum store purchases. Visit the Museum's website ([hc.edu/biblemuseum](http://hc.edu/biblemuseum)) for the membership form.

The Dunham Bible Museum is OPEN  
10 a.m.-4 p.m. 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@hc.edu](mailto:dseverance@hc.edu)**



Visit our website at [www.hc.edu/biblemuseum](http://www.hc.edu/biblemuseum)  
There you will find virtual tours of the  
Museum's exhibits, past and present, as well as  
videos of past lectures and much more.

On your next Dunham Bible Museum visit, try out our new audio tour using your cell phone!