

SS Simon and Jude. 28th October
Luther and the Continental Reformers 31st October

Simon, referred to in all four Gospels as one of the Twelve, the chosen disciples of Jesus, is named as "the Zealot". This identifies someone who, like Paul before his conversion, was "zealous for the Lord", espousing Jewish resistance to the Roman invaders, if necessary by violent means, so Simon's following Jesus marked an entry into an extreme change of heart.

John 14

22 Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, how is it that you will reveal yourself to us, and not to the world?" 23 Jesus answered him, "Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. 24 Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me.

A "Judas" ("not Iscariot") is mentioned in Luke, John and Acts (at Pentecost); he is often identified with the disciple named as Thaddeus in Matthew and Mark. In Luke and Acts he is referred to as "Jude of James" (the James known as "The Less") but it is not certain if this means the relationship was one of brothers, or of father and son.

Tradition has it that Simon sought to spread the Gospel in Egypt and Jude in Mesopotamia before joining together as evangelists in Roman Syria, and further east, and being martyred together around 65.

Simon is often shown with a large saw, the implement with which, according to the Golden Legend, he was killed.



Joseph Prötzner - St. Simon the Apostle 1753-55.
Church of St. Peter, Munich



SS Simon and Jude
Oviedo Cathedral, Spain 12th c

Judas/Jude is often referred to as "the saint of lost causes". This stems in part from visions recorded by St Bernard (1090-1153) and St Bridget of Sweden (1303-1373) naming him as "the Saint of the despairing and impossible".

Luther and other Continental Reformers 31st October (Reformation Day)

According to Philip Melanchthon, 31 October 1517 was the day - the eve of All Saints' Day - that Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-five Theses on the door of the All Saints' Church in Wittenberg, in the Electorate of Saxony. This day is celebrated as a holiday in Germany.

Luther set a stone in motion that was unstoppable and changed the world forever. Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany in Wittenberg on 31 October 2017 (The 500th anniversary of this event).



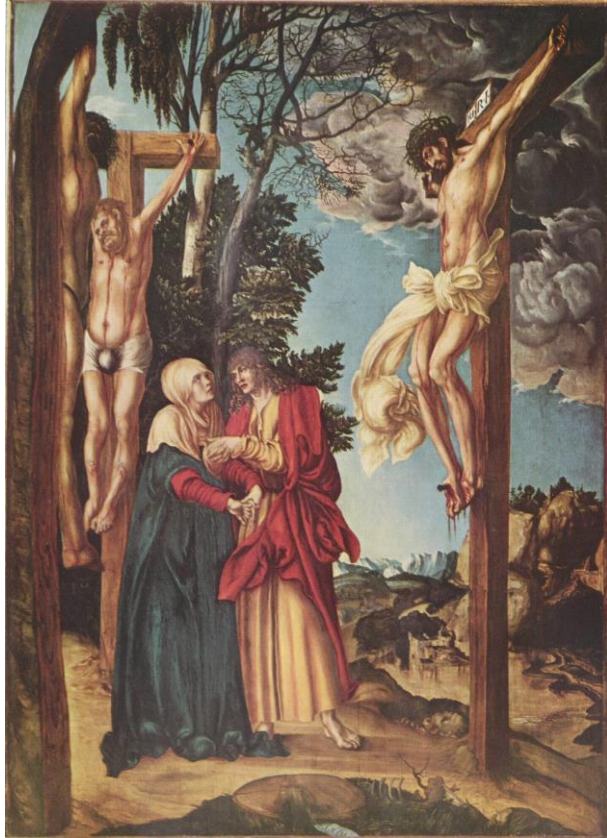
Lucas Cranach the Elder-
Luther as an Augustinian monk.1520



Workshop of Lucas Cranach
Luther 1526

Lucas Cranach the Elder (c 1472 -1553) was a very successful, entrepreneurial painter and printmaker, Court Painter to the Elector of Saxony and a close friend of Luther and other Reformation figures. (Interestingly, the Episcopal Church of America commemorates Cranach, along with Dürer and Grünewald in the Lectionary on August 5th)

Although he painted both religious and mythological subjects early in his career, like the Crucifixion of 1503 (below), his work under the inspiration of the Reformers has a very different character, sometimes highly polemical, and with a turn toward the illustrative.



The relationship of Luther (1483-1546) to images was a complex one, and involved a redefinition of their role in worship and the Church. Ferdinand Pauwels 1872 imagining of Luther nailing the 95 Theses in 1517 (above) in fact inverts Luther's own subordination of image to words. The "Scripture alone" approach, facilitated by the rapid spread in Luther's own time of printing, helped to fuel the destruction of many older art works.

Towards the end of his life Cranach began a large altarpiece for the Stadtkirche in Weimar, and it was completed after his death by his son, another Lucas.

It has been described as "the single most important visual monument of German Reformation."



In the central panel Christ appears on the Cross, and also, in a swirling red garment, trading underfoot Death and the Devil/Serpent. On the other side are John the Baptist, Luther and Cranach himself. The stream of blood from Christ's side strikes Cranach, while Luther points to the text "The blood of Christ cleanses from sin". In the background appear prophetic intimations of Christ's coming, including the Brazen Serpent.

The figures in the side wings are members of the ruling family of Saxony, who commissioned the altarpiece.