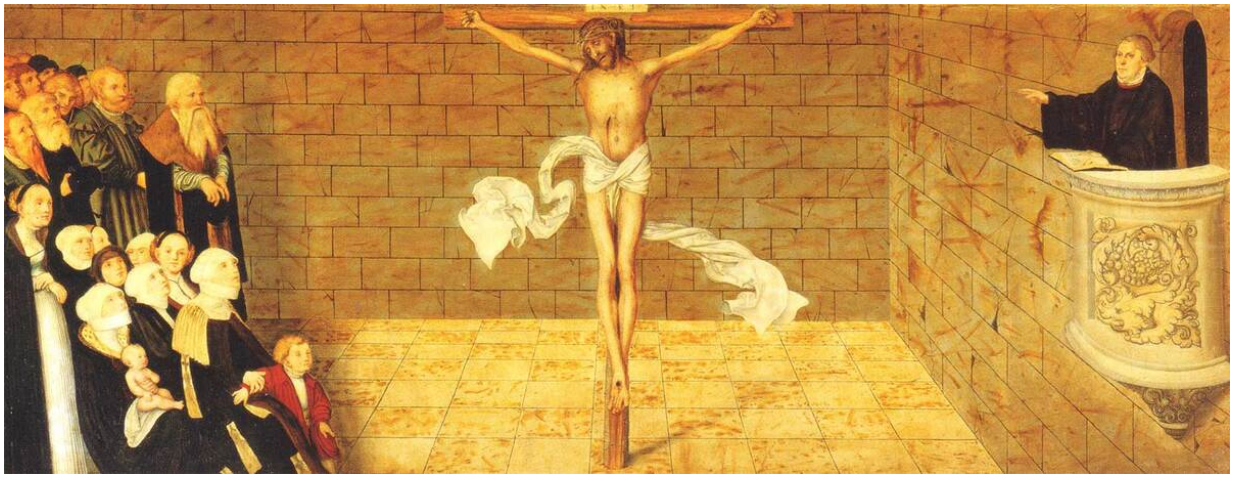
Martin Luther Preaching (1547)

Abstract

This painting is one of four plates that comprise the altarpiece in the Wittenberg parish church where Martin Luther once preached. Executed by the workshop of Lucas Cranach the Elder in 1547, it has become known as the "Reformation altar," since it depicts the Reformer's understanding of the church of Jesus Christ. While the other plates depict the three sacraments accepted by Protestants (the Eucharist, Baptism, and Confession), this painting, the fourth and most famous one (the predella), shows Martin Luther preaching in the pulpit. One of his hands rests on the Bible; the other points to Christ on the cross as the embodiment of the word of God. The congregation includes Luther's wife, Katharina von Bora, his young son Hans, as well as Cranach himself. A close friend of Luther, Cranach was also well acquainted with many of the Wittenberg reformers. That he placed himself in their midst suggests that he identified with them.

Source



Source: Workshop of Lucas Cranach the Elder, Reformation altarpiece, Stadt- und Pfarrkirche St. Marien zu Wittenberg, Predella (Luther preaching), oil on wood, 1547-1548. Online available from Wikimedia Commons, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lucas_Cranach_d.J._-_Reformationsaltar,_St._Marien_zu_Wittenberg,_Predella.jpg

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