

**Letter written to Duke Johann of Saxony,
Allstedt, 13 July 1524**

This letter was written to Duke Johann of Saxony, This is the same Johann who, with his son Johann Friedrich, had just sat and listened to Müntzer's "Sermon to the Princes" in Allstedt Castle earlier on the same day. He became Elector of Saxony in May 1525, after the death of his brother Friedrich ('the Wise'). Johann was threatening to close down all of Müntzer's operations in Allstedt, including a printery

To the dear Duke and ruler of Saxony, my dear father, Duke Johann the Elder.¹

My dear father and lord. It is my intention to lay God's knowledge and faith before poor, miserable Christianity in the way that I have been guided by God's explicit testimony, just as Paul did for the Romans in the 8th chapter. But if I am to be punished for that, then I appeal to the whole world, and will announce to every nation that I will speak and write a message which is constant and defensible before all peoples, despite all those scholars who openly deny the spirit of Christ. If I should now be delayed or be obstructed in this task, then you must consider seriously what grievous damage will arise from any further delay: the people have an insatiable hunger after God's righteousness, even more than I can say, Matthew 5: in short, it is said that the mouths of the depraved will be stopped up, for they fear the light, John 3. But I have no wish to avoid the light, I wish my voice to be heard concerning the intolerable wrongs against the elect.

If you ask that I should attend a hearing alone with those men from Wittenberg, then I will refuse.² I want the Romans, the Turks, and the heathens to be present. For I promise you that I will lay such blame at the feet of uncomprehending Christianity that it will crumble to the ground; I know how to give an account of the beginning of my faith. If you

¹ 'The Elder' distinguishes this Duke Johann, brother of the Ernestine Friedrich the Wise, from the Duke Johann who was the son of the Albertine Duke Georg of Saxony (Georg was a cousin of Friedrich the Wise and Johann the Elder).

² Note that Müntzer is not refusing to debate with the Lutherans – but he insists on being heard in a public forum, something that both the Wittenberg and Saxon authorities refused to do, despite several requests.

will then let my books be published,³ then I shall be pleased; but if not, then I will entrust the matter to God's will. I will loyally hand over all my books to you to be read in advance. I will join with you in Jesus Christ, our saviour, in whatever God reveals to you, may He preserve your most beloved self and your people. Amen.

Thomas Müntzer, a servant of God.

*(Translated by Andy Drummond,
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Original German text available at pages 259-263 of:
Thomas Müntzer: Briefwechsel,
edited by S. Bräuer and M. Kobuch, Leipzig 2010

³ The books in question were the *Deutsch Evangelisch Messe* (German Evangelical Mass), still being printed in July 1524, and a draft of what would later become Müntzer's *Ausgedrückte emplössung* (Explicit Exposure)