

The History of the King James Bible – Part 10 – From Tyndale to the Geneva Bible

Isaiah 8:20 “***To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.***”

1 John 4:1 “***Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.***”

The only way we can shed light as to whether a sermon, comment, action, or proclaimed truth is true or false is through the light of God’s pure words. The master deceiver would delight in tampering with the truth.

If our adversary can convince you that there are 50 bibles which contradict one another you could not try the spirits! – This is why knowing the truth of our KJV is essential.

Without God’s word we do not know who is lying, who’s right or wrong and the only refuge we have is comparing the spirit with God’s preserved word.

The following is the line after Wycliffe (not the Antiochian as Vulgate used in Wycliffe’s translation):

- 3rd Edition of Erasmus’ bible in 1522 (same year as Luther’s German)
 - Work of Tyndale in 1534
- Revision of the work of Myles Coverdale in 1535-1553
 - The Matthews Bible in 1551
 - The Great Bible in 1539
 - The split:
The Bishops Bible of 1568 – The Geneva Bible in 1557

Authorised Version in 1611

Notice how rapidly God starts to use these men in the 16th century leading towards the AV in 1611AD.

William Tyndale said in a debate with a church leader “*If God spared my life ere many years, I will cause that the boy who driveth the plough will know more of the scripture than though does.*”

Tyndale set out to translate the bible from the Greek and the Hebrew languages and the manuscripts that had become available due to a Muslim takeover in Constantinople. – This caused the Greek centre of Greek scholarship of that day to flee into Europe.

Here again we see God at work. The NT headquarters was in Syria, then Constantinople and God allowed that Muslim army to come up in this time period and run the Christians out of Constantinople to flee into Europe. When they fled they carried with them all their manuscripts and ancient materials pertaining to the bible. When they brought the manuscripts a great amount of God’s word came into Europe that was not in the hand of the Pope. – This allowed Tyndale to begin to work with it.

Tyndale began his work in 1524 in Hamburg, Germany. – He translated the NT in 1525 and went to Cologne to have it printed.

What he did was discovered and he was betrayed by a man called John Cochlaeus who was a deacon of the “church of the blessed virgin” at Frankfurt (on the RCC side).

Knowing he was discovered Tyndale fled with the printed sheets to Worms, Germany. Here, the addition to what he had printed in Cologne was completed in 4-column form with notes. – Another issue was with 8 columns without notes and some scholars believe the addition without notes was done to get by customs to avoid the appearance of the more known edition and thus avoid confiscation.

This was the first printed English NT as Wycliffe’s were hand written.

In the year 1526AD copies of both editions of Tyndale’s NT were secretly brought to England and were eagerly read.

However, measures were soon adopted for their destruction to such success that of the 1000s of copies printed between 1526-1530 only 1 complete copy of the 8-column edition remains and a single fragment of the 4-column edition.

This just shows how much Satan hates God's word and is one more proof of its' power and great worth.

Tyndale continues his work of translation and in 1530AD the Pentateuch was printed in Marbury and it was revised in 1534AD. – Chronicles and Joshua were written in manuscript form in 1531AD and Tyndale revised the English NT is 1534AD.

The nature of Tyndale's work was independent translation (1 man and all himself) and based upon the Hebrew and Greek languages while making use of the available sources, such as Luther's German translation, Latin translation published by Erasmus and Purvey's translation of Wycliffe's work.

Tyndale was not dependant on these but based his work on the Hebrew and Greek texts and referred to these for reference to help him with difficult passages.

His intimate acquaintance with both Hebrew and Greek languages cannot be questioned and there is abundant evidence to show that his knowledge of both languages was thorough, and the Greek text underlying Tyndale's work was that published by Erasmus in 1516AD (plus revised in 1522AD).

To master 3 languages and learn to translate and work with them to such a skilful was shows Tyndale was a genius and a brilliant man.

In 1535AD he was living in Antwerp and betrayed by Phillip, an Englishman, into the hands of officers of king Charles V. – Tyndale was in prison on the charge of heresy in Valverde, Belgium.

This was the doing of the church of Rome which clearly shows they think the work of God to be heresy. – This means they are not the biblical church!

So, in October 6h 1536AD they killed brother Tyndale. – His dying words were "Lord, open the king of England's eyes." – And God answered that prayer!

By the time of Tyndale's death in 1536AD 50,000 copies of his English NT had been distributed. – Remember the population was not millions in England but 1000s so that many copies would blanket the nation!

Tyndale lived his life on the run and in hiding with many enemies with a prominent one being Sir Thomas More. – This wicked man More is more highly revered in school/education institutions than Tyndale which rather exposes the system. – Very little is taught about men who stood for God and His word.

Tyndale had a good friend and fellow worker called Myles Coverdale. – He was an Augustinian fryer in Cambridge and his search for the truth led him to Luther's writings. – He believed in the Lord and became a Puritan of the reformation and soon found himself preaching against idols and the RCC mass.

In 1529AD he helped Tyndale with the translation of the Pentateuch into English. – When the catholic queen Mary took to the throne she got a taste for protestant blood, and she wanted Coverdale's. – The people of Denmark protected him from being burnt at the stake and at her hand.

God used Henry VIII in 1534AD (the year before Tyndale's arrest) to be petitioned by the upper house of convocation to authorise an English version of the scriptures.

Thomas Cranmer had significant influence in the task and suggested how it might be done. – His proposals were not met with favour and had much to do with Thomas Cromwell's move, as secretary of the state, to encourage Myles Coverdale to publish an English translation.

Coverdale engaged in bible translation from 1531-1540AD and returned to England in 1548AD and was made chaplain of the king in 1551AD.

He gained doctorate degree from Cambridge in 1563AD and died in 1568AD.

When Tyndale was killed Thomas Cromwell urged Coverdale to speedily complete his English bible translation and it was completed and published in 1535AD.

Coverdale was not a translator, but an editor and his bible was basically a revision of Tyndale's work.
– He took other German and Latin versions and used these to change what Tyndale had produced.

The influence of Coverdale was not in his translating but in his language. – It is said that around 80% of our authorised version came from Tyndale and came to us by way of Coverdale improving the language. – Tyndale got his translation right, but his style was very hard to read. – The flow, cadence, and ease to be memorised does not come from Tyndale but from Coverdale.

Coverdale's bible is sometimes called "the bug bible" due to his rendering of Psalm 91:5 "So yt thou shalt not nede to be afraide for eny buggesby night, ner for arowe that flyeth by daye".

The Matthews Bible is the completed work of both Tyndale and Coverdale and so is the man that produced the first complete English bible.

The Matthews bible was the work of John Rogers who lived 1500-1555AD and was a friend and assistant to William Tyndale. – Before Tyndale was put to death he gave all his handwritten manuscripts to John Rogers. – Rogers, seeking not to be a martyr for the faith, worked under the name Thomas Matthew but this did not keep him from being the first martyr under the reign of "Bloody Mary".

His bible was first published in 1537. – His OT was a combination of Tyndale and Coverdale. – His NT was Tyndale's 3rd unpublished edition with the translation also compared with 2 French translations. – Lefevre's in 1534AD and the Olivetan of 1535AD.

This Olivetan French bible of 1535AD is the equivalent of Luther's German translation and our KJV and disappeared from France with the exception of a few copies in museums. – That bible is now being printed and distributed by TBS by the efforts of one man, Brad Roberts. – He found the Olivetan bible and produced a paper showing that the Olivetan bible was the receptus bible and AV bible for the French people. – Brad Roberts presented that work to TBS, and they changed the French version they were printing and distributing because of the work of Brad Roberts (of BBC, Deland).

The apocrypha was in the appendix of the OT of the Matthews bible and had over 200 marginal notes.

The Taverner's Bible by Richard Taverner who was an Oxford graduate skilled in Greek. – This was the revision of the NT of the Matthews bible. – This bible exhibited great scholarship but was overshadowed by the production of "The Great Bible" which was published in 1539AD.

The translator of The Great Bible was Myles Coverdale. The OT of this bible version was from the Matthews bible, compared with the Latin vulgate, and the NT was the Matthews bible compared with Latin vulgate and Erasmus' work. – It was published in 1539AD which was just 3 years after Tyndale's dying prayer.

The printing of the Great Bible began in Paris and was completed in London due to the inquisition causing Christians to flee if they could.

It was called "The Great Bible" because of its; size (16"x11") and it was the first English bible to place the books of the bible in the order we have them in today. – It is often referred to as the second revision of Tyndale's bible.

The Geneva bible (1557AD) was the first English bible translated entirely out of the Hebrew and Greek languages without the use of the Latin.

The Geneva bible was produced during the reign of catholic queen Mary and many English protestants fled the continent of Europe or were exiled to Europe and Swiss city of Geneva became a refuge for many people.

It was in Geneva that a group of men decided to produce a new English version. – Included in this group were Myles Coverdale, Theodore Beza and John Knox.

The work was done primarily by William Whittingham who was brother-in-law to John Calvin.

This was the first printed English bible to use verse divisions and the first to use italics for words supplied by the translators. – The 1st English bible to remove the Apocrypha.

Before the Geneva, the English bibles used gothic style writing and the Geneva was the first to use Roman type.

It was dedicated to queen Elisabeth 1st and contained many outspoken Calvinistic quotations as well as many anti-Catholic footnotes and was perhaps the most anti-Catholic bible of all time.

It became the bible of the people and extremely popular with the puritans and other non-conformists. – The people that were against the church state were for the Geneva bible.

It was the official version of presbyterian Scotland and was the bible quoted by Shakespear. – It was the bible that went over to America on the Mayflower.

It became known as “the breeches bible” as in Genesis 3:7 instead of aprons Adam and Eve were said to have sown “breeches” of the fig leaves!

In 1643AD the soldiers pocket bible was published in England by use of Cromwell’s troops. – It contains collections taken from the Geneva bible and 50,000 copies were re-printed in America and distributed among union soldiers during the civil war.

The final edition of the Geneva bible was printed in 1644AD and in its’ 84-year history over 140 editions had been made.

The Bishops bible – The popularity of the Geneva bible concerned the clergymen of the state church in England. They saw themselves losing the authority over the people (much like the Pharisees hating Jesus for the same reason).

The state church, having been separated from the RCC, adopted the same controlling approach to the bible as that of the church they ran away from. – This is the church of England!

In 1563AD Matthew Parker, the Archbishop of Canterbury, initiated a revision of the Great bible. 15 men, including 8 bishops, worked in several independent companies under Parker to produce the translation.

Whereas the Geneva bible had a puritan flavour, the Bishops bible had a church of England flavour. – It was made the official English bible by an English church convocation in 1571AD but because it was such a poor translation it never became the official English bible as the English people were not interested in it. – They knew a good or bad bible when they saw one!

The one benefit we got from the Bishops bible is that it laid a foundation in England for the idea of companies of men working together to translate. – To check, double-check, re-correct on another’s work. – The KJV method of translation was first tried for the Bishops bible.

In 1582AD the Rheims Douay bible was produced by Jesuit priests and decreed the official bible of the church. – William Allen led the translating group in Rheims and translated the RCC bible into English and when it was printed they ordered it to be locked away so nobody could read it!

The man who introduced the chapter and verse divisions was Robert Stephanus. – He issued the entire bible in 1560AD and are the same chapter and verse divisions used today.

This really brought the teaching of the scriptures into play as you could reference, cross-reference, and divide into sections and so God really used the work of this man.