

The History of the King James Bible – Part 11 – Translation of the AV 1611

2 Timothy 2:15 “**Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.**”

RSV says, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman that has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.”

Only the KJV commands you to study, and this is why the great bible students since the day the pure words were available have always been men who had the pure words of the KJV in English.

2 rulers came to the throne of England in 1558AD – Queen Elizabeth 1st (1558-1603AD) and Mary queen of Scots (1558).

From the reign of Henry VIII the English reformation had been both religious and political in character. – 3 partied vied for control of church and state. – The papists ,the Episcopalians (church of England) and the Puritans.

During the reign of Elizabeth 1st, the power of the Catholic party was broken by 2 events. – 1st it was the execution of Mary queen of Scots (Bloody Mary). – Mary Stewart (1542-1587) was cousin of Elizabeth and since Elizabeth was childless she was the heir of the English throne.

Mary was the Scottish queen and was a strong Roman Catholic. – Under the reformer John Knox Scotland was strongly protestant and in 1567AD Mary was forced to abdicate the throne and her infant son James was made king of Scotland.

Mary fled to England, and she sought military aid from Elizabeth but instead she was put in prison. – For 19 years she plotted against Elizabeth and the English throne before finally being executed in 1587AD, removing the powerful Catholic threat to England.

The 2nd major event was carried out by Sir Francis Drake. – He got hold of Fox’s Book of Martyrs and read it. – He then bought some ships, and he sailed the 7 seas looking for RC treasure ships heading from the new world and from Asia bringing money to the Pope and to refinance his operations around the world. - Wherever Drake found such a boat he would track it down and sink it for the glory of God and the preservation of the reformation!

Sir Francis Drake just about bankrupted the Papacy and when they ran out of money they couldn’t keep sending armies into take over countries and couldn’t keep buying off spies and political leaders to control governments. – Drake broke the RCC bank!

So, when things got bad for the RCC Mary (Bloody) left in her will England to Philip II of Spain so Philip could defeat England and re-establish Catholicism. – Spain was the great power of the day.

Spain in the 1500s was to the world what the USA has been to the world for the past 100 years.

In 1558AD Philip sent the Spanish Armada. – A fleet of 136 heavily armed galleons and other ships of war to invade England.

Under the providence of God England sent a navy out under Sir Francis Drake with 30 boats and some tugboats! – Drake destroyed them, and the Armada was destroyed by storms who tried to retreat from Drake on their way back to Spain and by the time this event was done Drake’s fleet looked like Pharaoh’s army!

From that day to this the RCC has never regained their power.

Luther and Erasmus destroyed the RCC’s intellectual stranglehold on Europe and God used Sr Francis Drake to break the RCC military and muscle power over Europe. – They have not recovered such power over Europe since! What a God and what a victory won by God on 2 fronts.

England then became the great military and sea-faring nation of the world and the question of whether England would be Catholic, or protestant had been settled.

So Drake's victory not only broke the RCC influence but now England is the dominant power on the scene so that William Carey can sail to India and Taylor is going to be able to sail to China and God was going to use these money-loving merchants who would take the money and freedom Drake has won for them all over the world and colonise in the name of the king of England. – God allows all that to happen, as He is not concerned with that, to open entire continents to Englishmen, Scotsmen and Welshmen who will sail on those merchant ships with the word of God and carry the gospel into those countries.

This is what God is doing with America today. – Many in America say, "God's going to destroy the USA because of perversion, pornography etc...!" but God is using American money to send the word of God around the world. – God will not destroy America until He is finished with their financing of His work!

If God finds another nation to do the job England once did He will raise them up with no interest in politics. – God is interested in getting His word out to the nations. – God will use many circumstances to enable His great endeavour.

James was the son of Mary Queen of Scots. – He was proclaimed King James VI of Scotland as an infant in 1567AD and raised by the Scottish nobility as a protestant king. His effective reign began in 1583AD.

Upon the death of Elizabeth, he became King James 1st of England thereby uniting the 2 realms for the first time. – As a child James had received instruction in several languages and was a student of the bible.

He personally translated the Psalms and personally paraphrased the book of Revelation. – King James was confronted by 2 religious parties in the Episcopalians and the Puritans. – Each seeking to dominate the course of the English reformation.

Raised in Presbyterian Scotland James preferred the episcopal notion of the divine right of kings. – A dogma based on scripture like Proverbs 16:10.

For this reason, James despised the Geneva bible as its' notes were republican in nature and not in favour of a monarchy. – E.g. A note on Exodus 1:19 commended the Hebrew midwives for their disobedience to Pharaoh and King James thought that footnote might lead people to rebel against him.

It was this conflict between 2 religious parties that God used to bring about the publication of the KJV (not called the KJV until 1929!).

In 1603AD there was the millenary petition because it was signed by approximately 1000 puritan pastors. – They presented this to King James as he came to England from Scotland to be its' new king.

The petition called upon King James to allow certain changes in church services and government. They asked the king to do the following:

1. Eliminate the use of the sign of the cross in church services.
2. Eliminate elaborate priestly garments.
3. Eliminate wedding rings.
4. Enforcement of stricter church discipline.
5. That the king provide a ministry trained in the bible.
6. Provision for biblical church polity.
7. Corrections to corrupt quotations from corrupt translations contained in the English book of common prayer.

In response King James called the Hampton Court Conference to settle things presented to be amiss in the church.

They met in Hampton in January 1604AD. – The members of this committee were 4 puritans chosen by the king, 9 bishops, 9 preachers and 4 professors from Cambridge and Oxford. – It was stacked against the puritans.

Dr John Reynolds was the main speaker on behalf of the beleaguered Puritans. – The outcome was that the Puritans were defeated, they said, by quote “kingly insolence and pride.”

John Reynolds made 1 suggestion that caught the attention of the king. He said “King, we desire that a translation be made of the whole bible. As consonant as can be to the original Hebrew and Greek texts and this to be set out and printed without any marginal notes and only to be used in all churches in England in time of divine service.”

John Reynolds heard all these different viewpoints and basically said that the only way to sort it all out was if every church in England used the same bible!

Don't we see this very issue today! Our position (KJV only) is the very position of the men that gave us the authorised version.

It was this suggestion that led to the translation of the KJV. – The king was a very astute politician and recognised the need for a unifying translation. – The Great bible was too cumbersome, the Geneva bible too controversial, the Bishops bible too careless with too many mistakes so on June 12th 1604 the king announced that he had selected 54 men to translate the new bible. – The main qualification required of these men was quote “That they had taken pains in their private study of the scriptures.” – He wasn't looking for degrees, titles, connections, or political allegiances but one who knew the scriptures.

The work of the translation was formerly begun in 1607AD.

In 1605AD 8 men, including Guy Fawkes, who were all Jesuits elected to fill the palace with dynamite and gunpowder to blow up the king, his court and all his kin folk because Satan did not want 1 authorised bible so men could agree on bible doctrine.

Some men caught wind of the plot and rounded all 8 men by arresting them and it turned out they were Jesuits trying to kill the king to prevent the translation of the bible.

There is no question that the RCC has a history for hating God's word! – They have been consistent in preventing you from reading the bible.

The king put companies together to set up a system of these learned men as he did not want the translation from a man of particular religious persuasion. – The majority of the translators were split between Anglican and Puritans. – A system that resulted in checks and balances preventing either group from running off from the true translation and making it just a one-group translation like the Bishops bible.

All the men had access to the same manuscripts and were divided into 6 separate companies. 54 men and 6 groups.

They met at 3 separate locations and each company was responsible for translating a particular section of the scripture. – Here were 15 rules given to the translators:

1. The ordinary bible (Bishops bible) read in the church is to be followed and as little altered as the manuscript evidence will permit.
2. The names of the prophets and holy writers where commonly used in the OT and NT were to be left that way.
3. The old ecclesiastical words were to be kept such as the word “church” is not to be translated “congregation”. – If there are 3 to 4 words to describe one word just stay with the word saved people are accustomed to using.
4. When any word has significant significations that was to be kept which had been most commonly used by the church fathers and to be agreeable to the propriety of the place and the analogy of faith. – On other words, if they came across a word that could be translated

with a Christian word or a word that could be translated with a secular word, let's use the Christian term. – I.e. Deacon or servant.

5. The division of the chapters is to be altered either not at all or as little as may be if necessity so required.
6. No marginal notes at all are to be affixed but only for the explanation of the Hebrew or Greek words (this is the word we had to work with, and this is how we rendered it).
7. Such quotations of places to be marginally set down shall serve as the fit references from one scripture to another. – No marginal notes but cross-references are fine.
8. Every particular man of each company is to take the same chapter or chapters and having translated or amended them severally himself where he thinks good all are to meet together to confer what he had done and agree for their part what should stand. – Every member of a group will check a member's work and once agreed all together the translating work will be presented.
9. As any one company had dispatched any one book in this matter they shall send it to the rest to be considered of seriously and judiciously for his majesty is very careful of this point. – When one group is all done translating their portion of the scriptures their work is to be sent to **ALL** the other groups and their groups are to go through the same process again. - This is 54 men translating and then 53 men checking their translation!
10. If any company upon the review of the book so sent shall doubt or differ upon any places should send them word thereof to note the places and the wherewithal to send their reasons to which if they consent not the difference to be compounded together at a general meeting which is to be the chief persons of each company at the end of the work. – In other words, if you get it all done and there are some verses you are not sure about or words not sure on I want each company to send their best man and you guys meet together and get it sorted out. – King James did everything possible to give us the right rendering so that there would be no arguing later!
11. When any place of scriptural obscurity is doubted of letters to be directed of authority to send to any learned in the land of judgement in such a place. – Where there was uncertainty all the manuscript evidence the 54 were working with were to be sent to nationwide experts with the reasons for the uncertainty. – Such an effort is almost unheard of!
12. Letters were to be sent from every bishop to the rest of his clergy admonishing them of this translation at hand and move in charge as many as being skilled in the tongues who had taken pains in that kind to send their particular observations to the company either at Westminster, Cambridge or Oxford according to as it was directed afore in the king's letter to the archbishop. – The king says to the church leaders of every denomination send word to your preachers that if he has some extensive knowledge in a Hebrew or Greek passage and believes that he has a proper or more accurate rendering of a passage please encourage that man to send his information to the translators.
13. The directors of each company to be the deans Westminster and Chester and the king's professors in the Hebrew and Greek in the 2 universities.
14. These translations are to be used when they agree better with the text of the Bishops bible. – That is Tyndale's, Coverdale's, Matthew's, and Geneva. – No Rheims Douay or Jesuit influence! – No Roman bibles, no Alexandrian text to be consulted!
15. Besides the said directors before mentioned 3 or 4 of the most ancient and great divines in either of the universities not employed in the translating to be assigned by the vice-chancellor upon conference with the rest of the heads to be overseers of the translation as well Hebrew as Greek for the better observation of the 4th rule above specified. – If there is some area of disagreement gather men from the universities that might not know Hebrew and Greek but understand the church fathers and what they believed.

These 15 rules are so detailed you can tell God was in it to refute and detractors from His book in the English language.

When 1 company had finished a book what they had done was reviewed in the committee and the learned men from all over the empire who weren't part of the translation were invited to come and review the work.

No good intellect in the land was ignored, everyone that could help was allowed to help. – After the translation was completed and reviewed by any qualified man in the kingdom it was then reviewed again by a final board of 6 of the original translators and then sent to the printer.

Material they used

The KJV translators had both the Hebrew and Greek witnesses. – The text of Erasmus, Bisa and Stephanus. – Ancient versions in Latin, Syrian, Chaldean, Spanish, French, Dutch, and Italian. – There has never been an undertaking of this size and scope.

The physical layout. – Because it was valued as a history book, rather than the word of God, the Apocrypha was placed between the testaments.

The chapters and verses were divided in accordance with the Geneva bible. They went back to the gothic type font instead of the Roman.

The KJV bible came off the presses in Oxford and Cambridge in 1611AD and the group ended up with 47 from 54 scholars. – The Westminster group did Genesis through to 2 Kings and Romans through to Jude. – The Cambridge group did 1 Chronicles through to Ecclesiastes and the Apocrypha. – The Oxford group did Isaiah through to Malachi and the gospels, Acts and Revelation.

These translators were no ordinary men but a collection of minds like has never been gathered together before or since.

Lancelot Andrews was one of them. – He studied at Cambridge and majored in Eastern languages and divinity. – As a child he was totally addicted to study and his mother had to make him put down his books and play!

He learned a new language each year during his 1-month Easter holiday with his parents. – He was an honouree fellow at Jesus College at Oxford, Vicar f St Giles, Master of Pembroke Hall, and all by the age of 24. – He was chaplain to queen Elizabeth 1st at the age of 31 and a brilliant man used greatly by God.

There were some problems with bible printing down the year with notable typographical errors (text set one letter at a time at the printing press to give large scope for the error of man).

Exodus 38:10-11 in the 1611 said “hoops” instead of “hooks” so this wasn’t an error in translation by a man getting a letter wrong that shouldn’t be there!

Leviticus 13:56 said “plane” instead of “plague”.

Matthew 16:25 saif “his” twice instead of once.

Psalms 69:32 came off the press saying “...seek good” rather than “....seek God” and this was changed in 1611AD.

Isaiah 13:8 said “...a woman that travelleth” instead of “...a woman that travailleth”.

“Daughter” in Ezekial 14:18 was changed to “Daughters”.

“Burnt” was changed to “Burn. – This is not changing words, altering meanings and doctrines or verses but corrections to the errors of man.

Because there is no set spelling until 1800s (when Samuel Johnson produced a dictionary in English in 1755AD) and Noah Webster produced one in America you couldn’t actually spell a word wrong!. – There wasn’t a right way to spell it.

The gothic of the 1611 would make distinguishing between letters hard with such little difference noted between f and s.

In the 1611 “v” and “u” were used interchangeably and so what looked like “vs” all the way through the 1611 now is “us”. – Same word but you could not tell with a quick look. – “Loue” is now “love” etc...

Also, in 1611 you did not have a “J” so all the greater clarity is given as they are revised ending in 1769AD and our standard text/edition.

It became clearer when the size and structure of the lettering changed from gothic to roman type.

There have been a few changes in word order with some words added. – “this thing” was changed to “this thing also” in 1638. – “A fiery furnace” changed to “A burning fiery furnace” etc...

Some unusual errors such as 1641AD printing of the KJV said “move sea” in Revelation 21:1 instead of “....no more sea”.

In 1653AD the printer failed to pick up on a couple of letters and “the unrighteous” bible came off the press. – 1 Corinthians 6:9 “the unrighteous shall inherit the kingdom of God” and so forgot to put the word “not” in there!

This all shows that this was not the work of translators but of God and men were being used to change the errors of man.

The chronological dates of Usher were added to the marginal notes of the 1701AD edition.

The “Profit” bible of 1711 where Isaiah 57:12 read “...and he shall profit thee” instead of “...he shall not profit thee”.

The “sin on” bible of 1716 printing read in John 5:14 “...sin on more” instead of “sin no more”.

The “vinegar bible” of 1717 has a chapter heading that should have read “The parable of the vineyard” ended up being “The parable of the vinegar”.

The “tongue stinging bible” read in Mark 7:35 should have read “Jesus loosed the string of his tongue” but read “Jesus loosed the sting of his tongue”.

The power of that bible and the perfect and superiority was such that within just a few years, it didn’t matter if the king ordered it or not, everyone wanted that bible!

There was never any defection (apart from small groups) from this AV bible from 1611AD all the way up to 1952AD. – That is a long time despite other attempts made within that timescale. – God’s people saw the folly of such and stuck with the book praise the Lord.