

BBI 2009

How we Got the Bible

(The story of the Bible in English)

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In the beginning was the Word¹

That Word was communicated to finite, mortal beings by an eternal, all-powerful God.

That's a mouthful! How would an all-powerful God choose to present His message?

In what language would He choose to communicate? He chose to communicate through men whom His Spirit so moved and empowered that though their personalities shown through and their peculiar traits can be discerned, the words are God's words.

Men wrote words in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. The people who were written to were able to understand the writings. They were the common, everyday languages of that day.

Fast forward 2-3,000 years...

The 21st century is the century of the internet and cellular towers.

Urgent and important messages circle the globe instantly.

In our part of this 21st century no one speaks Hebrew, Aramaic or Greek.

As far as we know no original writings (autographs) of holy writing survive.

For several 1,000 years the Scriptures were copied by hand laboriously onto sheets of papyrus, vellum or paper.

By the year 382 AD the hand-copied Latin manuscripts of the Bible were corrupted to the extent that even the church authorities called for a revision.

Pope Damasus invited St. Jerome to revise the text.

He was well-qualified...

...schooled in classical Roman tradition...widely traveled.

For many years he lived as a hermit in the Syrian desert where he acquired knowledge of not only Hebrew, but Chaldee, the Semitic language of southern Babylonia.

He also studied Greek with the eastern church. In 405 AD Jerome's revised Latin Bible was finished.

It was skillfully done, but alas, it met with the fate of most new translations. His enemies alleged that it was "tainted with Judaism"—

Conservatives automatically adhered to the older Greek and Latin versions which they

¹*The New American Standard Bible, 1995 Update, 1996.*

were used to.

St. Jerome in frustration wrote,

If my occupation had been to plait rush baskets or to weave mats out of palm leaves, in order by the sweat of my brow, to gain my daily bread, envy would have spared me.

But since, in obedience to the precepts of the Savior, I have, for the good of souls, chosen to prepare the bread which perishes not and have wished to clear the path of truth of the weeds which ignorance has sown in it, I am accused of a twofold crime.

If I correct errors in the sacred text I am denounced as a falsifier; if I do not correct them, I am pilloried as a disseminator of error.

Over time his translation was accepted as the standard text upon which all others were based.

It was written in Latin and was called the Latin Vulgate which meant "common version". For 1,000 years it reigned supreme as the Word of God.

Latin was the language of the clergy. Most of the common people could not read it or understand it.

So the Bible was controlled by the Roman church and the people only knew it by what they were told by the priest.

The clergy were an ignorant lot.

Around 1530 in England the Bishop of Gloucester surveyed 311 deacons, archdeacons and priest in his diocese.

He discovered that 168 or 54% were unable to repeat the Ten Commandments.

31 had no idea where the commandments came from.

40 could not repeat the Lord's prayer.

40 couldn't say who the author of the prayer was.

These were men who had been trained for years at college and universities. These were men who were leading the people in matters of religion.

Many of them didn't know Latin. They simply memorized the words that were used in mass and other services and rattled them off by rote.

The church told the people what the Bible said and meant. And the church was very jealous of its power over the people through its monopoly on the Scriptures.

Incredible as it seems to us today, in 12th-13th-14th-century England it was a crime

punishable by death to own or read a Bible or any part of the Bible in English.

The church prided itself on the fact that it "shed no blood". So after the church had tried the heretic he/she was handed over to the civil authorities to be executed.

What was the method of executing a heretic? Burning.

Tied to a stake with chains, faggots piled high around and ignited. Sacks of gunpowder were often fastened around the neck. The idea was that the fire would ignite the powder which would kill the victim.

All kinds of things could and did go wrong. The wind might blow the fire away from the victim so that one side would be roasted while the opposite side was unsinged.

There is an account of a martyr who was able to reach over with his good hand and remove his roasted arm and drop it into the fire.

The faggots might be green or wet and the victim had to endure the torture of inhaling hot smoke and endure the agony of a slow fire. The gunpowder might ignite poorly and burn but not kill the victim.

Burnings were public spectacles.

Bishops and dignitaries sat on elevated platforms.

Sermons were preached exhorting the heretic to recant and be pardoned.

One strike, you are out rule.

If a recanted person fell into heresy a second time burning was automatic.

Crowds would gather and jeer and make merry.

The victim's ashes would be thrown into the river.

So what did you have to do to earn this fate?

...read or own a Bible in English.

The theory was that if the people read the Bible in English they would understand how they were being misinformed by the clergy.

The church reasoned that God punishes heretics by burning and so should they.

They weren't too careful about due process.

Powerful officials had spies and informers who were paid to give them information about anyone who was reading or trafficking in banned books.

The victim was questioned and often tortured to extract a confession and then handed over to the civil authorities for execution. Often the officials, the crown and/or the informers shared in the property of the executed.

One of the officials in Tyndal's day said, "It is not so important that the people we burn are guilty; just that we terrify others".

The clergy was incredibly corrupt—
 Many had mistresses and concubines.
 Immorality was widespread.

Greed/gluttony/extravagance were common. Cardinal Wolsey had palaces, jewels, feasts and a retinue of servants.

His palace, Hampton Court, was bigger than the King's palace. It had 1,000 rooms! and was lavishly decorated.

All of this decadence led to reformers speaking out against the abuses.

This speaking out was judged to be heretical.

The first question asked by an inquisitor of the heretic was whether he knew any part of the Bible in his own tongue?

Disagreement with church teachings were also heretical.

The doctrine of transubstantiation (the teaching that Christ's body and blood were actually present in the elements of communion) was often the tripping stone for persons being interrogated.

- If a person believed that faith alone was needed for salvation
- The Bible was the only means of instruction
- The traditions of the church were not as important as Scripture
- If he/she said the bread/blood were only symbolic and not the actual body and blood of Christ.

..and many other beliefs would doom the person to the fire.

It was a dangerous thing to be a Protestant believer in 12th to 14th-century England. It was a capital crime to translate, read or own any part of the Bible in English.

Autographs (New Evidence that Demands a Verdict 342)

The view that has persisted throughout the centuries and is common among evangelicals today is that inerrancy (or infallibility, inspiration) of the Scriptures pertains only to the text of the original autographs.

Augustine wrote to Jerome concerning anything he found in the biblical books that seems contrary to the truth:

I decide that either the text is corrupt, or the translator did not follow what was really said, or that I failed to understand it.

It needs to be reiterated quite unambiguously that evangelical restriction of inerrancy to the autographs:

(1) is a restriction to the autographic text, thereby guarding the uniqueness of God's verbal message.

(2) does not imply that present Bibles, because they are not fully inerrant, fail to be the Word of God.

King Solomon possessed a copy of the Law – Deut. 17:18 - Now it shall come about when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests.²

The copy obviously contained the Word of God.

In Ezra 7:14 we see that the copy in his hand clearly functioned as authoritative.

Nehemiah 8:1-8:

1 And all the people gathered as one man at the square which was in front of the Water Gate, and they asked Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses which the LORD had given to Israel.

2 Then Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly of men, women and all who *could* listen with understanding, on the first day of the seventh month.

²*The New American Standard Bible, 1995 Update, 1996.*

3 He read from it before the square which was in front of the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of men and women, those who could understand; and all the people were attentive to the book of the law.

4 Ezra the scribe stood at a wooden podium which they had made for the purpose. And beside him stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah on his right hand; and Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah *and* Meshullam on his left hand.

5 Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up.

6 Then Ezra blessed the LORD the great God. And all the people answered, "Amen, Amen!" while lifting up their hands; then they bowed low and worshiped the LORD with *their* faces to the ground.

7 Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, the Levites, explained the law to the people while the people *remained* in their place.

8 They read from the book, from the law of God, translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading.³

Several things from this passage:

First – This was clearly a copy but it was read out to the people as God's Word.

Second – v 8 says it was translated to give the sense so that they understood.

So general rules...

The autographs were inspired and inerrant. The scholarly procedure of textual criticism shows that the copies are accurate reflections of the originals.

It's another study, but we can be very confident that while the copies/and translations are not inspired and inerrant the way the autographs are, they accurately reflect the message of

³*The New American Standard Bible, 1995 Update, 1996.*

God's Word and for all practical purposes are the inspired Word of God.

We can be very confident that what we have in a good translation is the Word of God.

...doesn't apply to a translation that contains doctrinal or deliberate departures from the originals (Watchtower, cults).

In summary:

Let's talk a bit about the autographs. We think they all have perished. Small fragment magala...Scholars using powerful/sophisticated tools have determined that they are either a piece of an original manuscript or a direct number one copy from it!

That's pretty incredible! It is fashionable today to teach that the Scriptures were written years after the fact. Here are pieces of Scripture that go back to either the original or one copy from it.

Inspiration & Authority

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness – 2 Tim 3:16

theopneustos (Gr) "inspiration", "God-breathed"

"inspiration" "The mysterious process by which God worked through human writers, employing their individual personalities and styles to produce divinely-authoritative and inerrant writings (Geisler)

This is not general inspiration, like "The artist was inspired" or "That music was certainly inspired".

When used of the Bible we mean the Bible has been "breathed by God". The Bible claims to be His very Word; it has come from His very mouth.

Inerrancy

The Bible claims to be from God.

God is true, never lies, never errs.

Therefore if Scripture comes from God it cannot contain errors.

Consider God's character:

Heb. 6:18 - so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us.⁴

Titus 1:2 - in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago,⁵

Both Scriptures tell us God cannot lie. We impinge God's integrity when we deny Scripture's inerrancy.

⁴*The New American Standard Bible, 1995 Update, 1996.*

⁵*The New American Standard Bible, 1995 Update, 1996.*

John 17:17 - **thy word is truth**⁶

Psm. 119:160 - The entirety of Your word *is* truth⁷

Prov. 30:5 - Every word of God *is* pure⁸

Definition of:

When all the facts are known, the Scriptures in their original autographs, properly interpreted, will be shown to be wholly true in everything they affirm, whether this has to do with doctrine or morality or with social, physical or life sciences.

-Josh McDowell

God used a variety of expressions.

Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi:

Matt. - You are the Christ⁹

Mark – “You are the Christ.”¹⁰

Luke – The Christ of God.¹¹

Inscription on the cross:

Matt. 27:37 - “THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.”¹²

Mark 15:26 - “THE KING OF THE JEWS.”¹³

Luke 23:38 - “THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.”¹⁴

John 19:19 - “JESUS THE NAZARENE, THE KING OF THE JEWS.”¹⁵

⁶*The King James Version, 1769.*

⁷*The Holy Bible, New King James Version, 1982.*

⁸*The Holy Bible, New King James Version, 1982.*

⁹*The New American Standard Bible, 1995 Update, 1996.*

¹⁰*The New American Standard Bible, 1995 Update, 1996.*

¹¹*The New American Standard Bible, 1995 Update, 1996.*

¹²*The New American Standard Bible, 1995 Update, 1996.*

¹³*The New American Standard Bible, 1995 Update, 1996.*

¹⁴*The New American Standard Bible, 1995 Update, 1996.*

Inerrancy includes and extends to the diversity of expression in Scripture.

Inerrancy is not:

- Correct grammar; the rules of grammar represent normal language usage.
Skilled writers break the rules of grammar every day for effect.
Why deny the writers of Scripture that privilege?
- Figures of speech
Things like poetry, parable, allegory, metaphors do not include inerrancy. All are used in the inerrant Bible.

We talked briefly about "inspiration" and "inerrancy".

Define? Inspiration – "that process by which God caused the Scriptures to be written through human agency resulting in the very words of God coming to us"

"Inerrancy" – the doctrine that every word of Scripture is inspired by God and is without error (in translation?) No, only in the autographs.

2 Tim. 3:16 - All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God¹⁶

2 Peter 1:20-21 - Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. ²¹For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost. ¹⁷

What do those two Scriptures mean? Means we can't pick and choose what Scriptures we like.

Man reading Scripture said, "I don't agree with that!"

Lady I talked to said, "Well, did Jesus say that? Paul said it so I am not bound by it".

All Scripture is inspired by God!

Dangerous, dangerous thing to pick/choose which Scriptures we will accept/reject.

¹⁵*The New American Standard Bible, 1995 Update, 1996.*

¹⁶*The King James Version, 1769.*

¹⁷*The King James Version, 1769.*

Professor said Scripture is inspired "in spots" ...used a Scripture to prove...

Hand raised... "How do you know that 'spot' is inspired?"

If we begin to pick and choose we are left without an anchor, adrift on the sea of unbelief.

Biblical Criticism (Miller)

The science which seeks, by careful and detailed inquiry, to secure the exact words of the original manuscripts of the Bible from the external evidence of manuscripts, versions and quotations, and to determine the composition, date, authorship, and historical value as judged by internal evidence

Two branches:

- Historical
- Textual

1. Historical criticism seeks to determine age (date), authorship, composition, sources, character, and historical value from internal evidence.

Uses sciences of history, geography, *ethnology and archaeology.

Concerned with: canonicity, genuineness, authenticity and credibility.

Sometimes called higher criticism.

*eth-nol-o-gy – the anthropological study of socio-economic systems and cultural heritage, especially of cultural origins and of factors influencing cultural growth and change in technologically primitive societies.

Anthropology – the scientific study of the origin and of the physical, social and cultural development and behavior of man

2. Textual criticism seeks to determine the exact and correct text of the Scriptures as it existed in the original documents. It attempts to free the text of errors, corruptions and variations which came during copying and recopying.

Textual criticism deals with the text of Scripture. What did the author write?...sometimes called lower criticism.

- destructive higher criticism:

This branch of criticism seeks to show why Scripture is not authentic, historical, literal, the correct age, etc.

Scribal Errors

- Unintentional
- Intentional

1. Unintentional

A. Errors of the eye

- a. Repetitions (scribe sees double)
- b. Omissions (Scribe misses a letter; scribe omits a line with same first or last words)

1 John 2:23 KJV - Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: *(but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.*¹⁸

- c. Transposition of letters, syllables or words

2 Chron. 3:4 - And the porch that *was* in the front *of the house*, the length *of it was* according to the breadth of the house, twenty cubits, and the height *was* an hundred and twenty: and he overlaid it within with pure gold.¹⁹ - 120 cubits high?

Transposing two letters reads 20 which agrees with the Septuagint.

- d. Differences in spelling (luô, louô)
- e. Similarity of letters

Many Hebrew and some Greek letters look very similar.

¹⁸*The King James Version, 1769.*

¹⁹*The King James Version, 1769.*

f. Abbreviations: sometimes interpreted incorrectly.

Rom. 12:11 - Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; 12 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer²⁰ - kro – Some manuscripts read kurio (Lord), some kairo (opportunity).

g. Insertions – scribe copied gloss in the margin later moved to text.

h. Wrong word division – Original had no letter/word division – sometimes done wrong.

i. Wandering eye – taking or inserting a word from a neighboring line or column

B. Errors of the ear

- reader dictating, scribe mishearing
- words which sound the same – spelled differently
- Vowels/diphthongs – sound alike

C. Errors of speech

- Habits of speech
- Acquaintance with another language
- Rapid reading or writing

D. Errors of the mind/memory

- Thinking thoughts, not words
- Unconsciously writing/thinking differently
- Thinking while writing a thought/word slip in without knowing.
- Forget what saw/heard, write something else (write he spoke for he said)

- Judgment on marginal readings/glosses – John 5:4 , John 8:1-11, Rom. 8:1

E. Errors of carelessness or ignorance

1 Sam 13:1; (Saul's age?) (KJ)

1 Sam 12:11 Bedan/Barack

2. Intentional (rare)

- smoothing a rough reading
- Historical change (sixth to third at John 19:14 to conform to Mark 15:25 without noticing that two events are listed)...some manuscripts
- Harmonizing passages

Gospels/

Matt. 9:13 – "unto repentance" added to harmonize with Luke 5:32.

Mark 1:11 – "in thee" changed to in whom²¹ to conform with Matt. 3:17

- Substitution of a more agreeable word for an offensive one
Difficult to read in public

him that pisseth against the wall²² - 6X in KJV to designate a male.

Sometimes some scribes would try to clean these kinds of things up.

1 Sa 25:22 (KJV)

²²So and more also do God unto the enemies of David, if I leave of all that *pertain* to him by the morning light any that pisseth against the wall.

²⁰*The King James Version, 1769.*

²¹*The King James Version, 1769.*

²²*The King James Version, 1769.*

1 Sa 25:34 (KJV)

³⁴For in very deed, *as* the LORD God of Israel liveth, which hath kept me back from hurting thee, except thou hadst hasted and come to meet me, surely there had not been left unto Nabal by the morning light any that pisseth against the wall.

1 Ki 14:10 (KJV)

¹⁰Therefore, behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam, and will cut off from Jeroboam him that pisseth against the wall, *and* him that is shut up and left in Israel, and will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as a man taketh away dung, till it be all gone.

1 Ki 16:11 (KJV)

¹¹And it came to pass, when he began to reign, as soon as he sat on his throne, *that* he slew all the house of Baasha: he left him not one that pisseth against a wall, neither of his kinsfolks, nor of his friends.

1 Ki 21:21 (KJV)

²¹Behold, I will bring evil upon thee, and will take away thy posterity, and will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel,

2 Ki 9:8 (KJV)

⁸For the whole house of Ahab shall perish: and I will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel:

Ass / donkey

- Doctrinal

1 John 5:7-8 appears only in one 15th century and one 16th century manuscript. Jerome said he would include it if any manuscripts were found with it. One was found, suspect it is a forgery.

Most if not all of these errors have been discovered and eliminated by comparison of manuscripts.

Could heretics have corrupted the text deliberately? Far too many manuscripts over too wide a geographical area for anyone to alter them all—

Manuscripts written on papyrus/vellum – very hard to make a change/easy to detect/so answer is no.

Did some heretics corrupt individual copies of manuscripts? Absolutely, but easily found by comparison.

Approx. 20,000 NT manuscripts, versions, commentaries, writings of all or part of NT.

Families by style of writing; scribe.

The Bible in England

Patrick

...born in Roman Britain.

16 – sold into slavery

Escaped to continent.

Ordained bishop 432.

Went to Ireland.

Augustine came to Kent in AD 597.

...died May 26, 604.

...not the great Saint Augustine from North Africa—

But this Augustine was prior of a monastery in Rome till 596. He and 30 monks sent to England by Pope Gregory I.

He preserved pagan temples, destroying idols only, adapted Christianity as much as possible to pagan customs, rituals.

England had a Bible before Augustine.

During the Diocletian persecution around AD 300 Christians in England took refuge in woods, deserted places and caves. Jerome produced the Latin Vulgate NT around 382 AD.

Patrick evangelized Ireland. Missionaries from the West went to England.

The Lindisfarne Gospels are from approx. 550 AD...superbly illuminated with intricate interlacing patterns.

They were Latin with Anglo-Saxon written between the lines.

Caedmon of Whitby Abbey...approx. 670 AD – He was a cowherd who attended a social gathering at which a harp was passed around. When it came to you you were expected to sing.

When Caedmon saw the harp coming his way he went home. There he heard a voice calling him to sing about the creation. He heard the songs and sang them in the common language.

In 670 AD he joined the Abbey and sang till his death ten years later.

Aldhelm, a bishop (died 709)

...first translated parts of Scripture into English.

Bede born 674

...had a vision to deliver the Scripture to the people in their own language.

Translated the creed and the Lord's prayer. Toward end of his life began to translate Gospel of John.

He completed it on his deathbed.

His amanuensis () Wilbert scribbled anxiously.

Finally he said, "There remains yet but one sentence."

Bede translated the Latin into Anglo-Saxon:

And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.

He had them carry him to the window and as he gazed out through it he died.

King Alfred became king of Wessex at 22 in 865.

...translated parts of the Bible.

From approx. 900 there was a marked decline in scholarship among the clergy.

Many of the priests could not read the Latin Bible.

So many of the manuscripts had Anglo-Saxon written between the Latin lines.

The 14th century brought great changes.

Black death (1348-9) – one third of the people died.

The papacy was in decline. At the height of the Great Schism three popes were vying for power, condemning each other to hell.

Corruption of the clergy was rampant.

Men turned to the Bible.

A corrupt church...

A society in turmoil...

The background was in place for John Wyclif, the morningstar of the reformation.

Donald L. Brake writes,

All day a soft rain had followed him across the English countryside, his walking stick tapping out a song of progress, encouraging his aching joints to keep the rhythm. The large hat he wore on this trip directed the water in trickles down his long wool tunic, allowing only his feet to catch the runoff.

Evening was closing in around him. How he longed to find a drier spot rather than huddle under a broad tree. Straightening his stance, he turned in a circle, straining to see a light or even a sniff of smoke from a cooking fire where he might find comfort that night. Nothing appeared except a silhouette on the horizon ahead to the left of the path. Could it be a cave or an abandoned hut?

As this somber, introspective man took refuge in the semi-dry hut, he quietly reflected over the past twenty years and pondered the future of his movement. For some months he had felt his mortality more than ever. Had he done all he could for his Savior? Would his work continue after his earthly exit? What if his message—so faithfully taught to his followers—ceased after he was gone?

What more could he do to insure the continuation of the principles he was willing to die for? The principles, that is, or justification by faith, a complete rejection of transubstantiation and the sale of indulgences, and the importance of giving every ploughman, shopkeeper, and landowner access to the Bible.

His thoughts became as dismal as the weather outside.

The gloom settling over him was interrupted when a young man burst through the door. He too was seeking shelter from the cold, damp weather, but he wore a smile that warmed that place. His robust face and frame were a stark contrast to the old man's long, white beard and frail appearance. The young man presented himself well in their exchange about the weather.

After a brief silence, the young man leaned toward the old man and breathlessly asked, "Sir, have you heard of the Bible teaching as proclaimed by Dr. Wycliffe, the pastor at Lutterworth?"

The elderly gentleman smiled slightly. "Do tell me what you have heard."

The young man, so exuberant in sharing the Lollard teaching, could scarcely stay seated. He repeated the Lollard teaching point by point: God's Word should be in the language of the common man, and every layman was a priest before God. For nearly an hour, he earnestly shared what he knew of the teaching with the old man.

The young man gradually began to talk slower, as if savoring the words that proclaimed his faith in God. When he expressed his admiration of and desire to meet Dr. Wycliffe, the old man could contain himself no more, so he removed his hat and introduced himself as none other than Dr. Wycliffe!

The young man barely took a breath as he switched from an evangelist to a student. For the better part of another hour his questions were incessant. The patient Wycliffe, now with renewed energy, answered the young budding theologian with enthusiasm and joy.

That young man was John Purvey, who continued Wycliffe's work long after his death.

Little did Wycliffe know the influence he would have on biblical and theological studies. His Bible was the first ever translated into English. Even though it was a translation from the Latin Vulgate instead of from the Greek and Hebrew, no matter how ardently people tried to destroy it, the English Bible survived.

John Wycliffe was born between 1320/1330 in Yorkshire in a small village called Wycliffe-on-Tees.

He attended Oxford, receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1356.

...Doctor of Theology in 1372 or 1373

Wycliffe was drawn to a study of the Bible. He found moral authority there rather than from the church.

He taught/preached against the evils he saw in the church/clergy.

He was accused of heresy.

The pope sent three papal bulls (condemnations) to the archbishop, to Oxford and to the king. All indicted the rector of Lutterworth, John Wycliffe, for most wicked and damnable heresies.

First trial by authorities

The bishops acted before the bulls actually arrived. In February 1377 Wycliffe was ordered to appear in Our Lady's Chapel in St. Paul's.

His crimes were to expose the corruption of the church and with others to translate Jerome's 1,000-year-old Latin Bible into English.

Wycliffe had a powerful ally in John of Gaunt who was the King's son.

Great crowds turned out in support of Wycliffe.

When they had forced their way through the crowd it became clear that they were there for a trial.

In no time the crowd burst into the church and the trial was abandoned.

Wycliffe returned to Oxford. Wycliff was asked by Parliament to give his opinion on the matter of giving revenue to the Pope.

He was to support his views with Scripture. He argued against the papal tax and was well received by Parliament.

Second trial by authorities

The church/pope/and bishops weren't amused. They summoned him to Lambeth Palace. This time he went alone. There was an earthquake which his followers took as a sign of God's displeasure with the trial.

It hardly mattered.

An emissary arrived from court. He carried a warrant for safe conduct signed by the queen mother. The warrant forbade any sentence being passed on Wycliffe.

The bishops knew when they were beaten. Wycliffe walked to freedom through a jubilant mob.

He was forbidden to return to Oxford. He went to Lutterworth where he translated or supervised the translation of the NT in 1380 into English.

The whole Bible was translated in 1384.

No one knows how much of the work was actually done by him. We know he had help. Nicholas Hereford and John Purvey were two who worked with him.

The work was done entirely by hand. Wycliffe set up a scriptorium at Lutterworth. There hand-copied manuscripts of the Bible or parts of it were made.

Incredibly expensive. It took ten months to make a Bible.

People gave a whole load of hay for just a few pages of Wycliffe's Bible.

It took 3-4 month's wages to buy one. Wycliffe established a group of lay preachers called "Lollards"... means vagabond/tare. It was a title of disrespect.

Each of the Lollard preachers were given a handwritten Bible or portion. They went throughout England preaching to the people in English.

The church hated Wycliffe and the Lollards.

In 1401 the De Heretico Comburendo promised death to heretics by burning alive.

In 1408 the constitutions were formed to combat Wycliffe's Bible in English. They made it a capital crime punishable by burning to translate or read the Latin Bible into English. The Lollards were arrested and they and their Bibles were burned.

Even though it took ten months to make a Bible...even though hundreds of Bibles were burned, today there are still approx. 170 copies of Wycliffe's Bible in existence.

In 1384, two days before the end of the year, Wycliffe collapsed while conducting Mass at Lutterworth. He was carried out the back door and lovingly laid on a bed. He never spoke again until two days later in the presence of angels he spoke to his beloved Jesus.

David Marshall writes:

In a bleak churchyard in Lutterworth, Leicestershire, the freezing fog had lifted in late morning. Now an icy wind was beginning to howl through the branches of the leafless trees, bringing with it squalls of sleet.

It was a dark, cold day at the dawn of 1385. A small group of figures, some in cassocks of black or russet, and others with threadbare shawls pulled tightly around their bent shoulders, huddled together over an open grave. There was a flurry of words in Latin as the coffin was lowered. John Wyclif was safe at last from his enemies.

Wyclif had died on the last day of 1384.

Wycliffe was buried but he was not allowed to rest in peace. 44 years after his death the church condemned him as a heretic, exhumed and burnt his bones and cast them into the River Swift.

Brian Moynaham writes:

Early in the year of Our Lord 1428, the mortal remains of a former rector of the parish were exhumed from beneath the flagstones in the chancel of St. Mary's Church in Lutterworth, a market town in the English Midlands. An array of powerful men stood out from the plain crowd of local people in the church. Richard Fleming, the bishop of Lincoln, in whose see Lutterworth then lay, was present with his chancellor, his suffragan bishops and the priors and abbots of the diocese. The high sheriff of Leicestershire was attended by his officers. A coterie of canons and lawyers

huddled around the gravediggers as they worked. An executioner looked on with professional interest.

The coffin was raised, and opened, and its contents were exposed to the onlookers. The body was then taken out through a small door in the south side of the chancel, as the dying rector had been carried by his parishioners forty-four years before after he suffered a stroke while celebrating mass in December 1384. His remains were borne in solemn procession, under the dripping yews in the churchyard, along the streets of the town and down the wooded hillside to a field next to the hump back bridge that crossed the River Swift.

This was a field of execution. Public hangings continued here into coaching days, when Lutterworth was an important staging post on the route north from London past Leicester. The dead rector, however, was thought too evil to hang. A stake had been set up in the ground and piled with timber and kindling. Iron chains were attached to it at shoulder height. He was to be burnt.

A brief ceremony was held. Bishop Fleming confirmed that he was carrying out the command sent to him from Rome by Pope Martin V on 16 December last. This ordered him to carry out the sentence that had been passed on the body in 1415 by the great Council of the Church meeting at Constance on the German-Swiss border. The council had condemned two hundred propositions put forward by the dead man, John Wycliffe, the former master of Balliol College at Oxford and rector of Lutterworth, that touched on core doctrines of the Catholic faith. The council found that 'since the birth of Christ no more dangerous heretic has arisen, save Wycliffe'. It instructed that his body be removed from the consecrated ground in the chancel at Lutterworth and destroyed.

Tradition allowed for the body to be dressed in the vestments that the rector had worn to celebrate mass, so that these could be stripped from him, chasuble and stole, one by one, to signify that he was 'unfrocked' and deposed from the priesthood. We do not know if this ritual was observed, or whether Wycliffe's skull and fingers were scraped, to represent the removal of the oil with which he had been anointed at his ordination. Certainly, the bishops solemnly cursed him and commended his soul to the devil.

Heresy had been declared to be 'treason against God' by Pope Innocent III in 1199, and was thus regarded as the worst of all crimes. It's 'vileness' was said to 'render pure even Sodom and Gomorrah,' while the great medieval theologian St. Thomas

Aquinas declared that it separated man from God much more than any other sin. The Church imposed a double jeopardy on heretics. The earthly poena sensus, the punishment of the senses, was achieved by the stake and fire. If, like Wycliffe, the person was convicted after he was dead, the penalty was imposed on his remains. The poena damni proclaimed by the bishops on Wycliffe pursued his soul into the life everlasting. It damned him to absolute separation from God and to an eternity in hell.

The Church could not itself carry out a burning. To do so would defy the principle that *Ecclesia non novit sanguinem*, the Church does not shed blood. Pope Lucius III had bypassed this inconvenience in 1184 by decreeing that unrepentant heretics should be handed over to the secular authorities for sentence and execution. After cursing the remains, Bishop Fleming therefore delivered them up to the high sheriff of the county, as the representative of the civil power. The sheriff declared that they should be burnt by the executioner.

The executioner attached the dead man to the stake with the iron chains before setting fire to the kindling. He made sure that the bones and skull were burnt to ash in the fire, breaking them into small pieces with a mattock to help the process, until they merged into an indistinguishable grey pile of ash and embers. These were carefully scraped into a barrow. When the last particles of dust were swept clean from the patch of scorched earth, the barrow was tipped into the waters of the Swift.

Only then was the bishop sure that he had fulfilled the papal instructions, to rid the world of all physical trace of the heretic.

The popes of Wycliffe's time were pretty stuck on themselves.

Pope Gregory VII said:

The pope can be judged by no one: the Roman church has never erred and never will err till the end of time; the Roman church was founded by Christ alone; the pope alone can depose and restore bishops; he alone can make new laws, set up new bishoprics, and divide old ones; he alone can translate [transfer] bishops; he alone can call general councils and authorize canon law; he alone can revise his judgments; his legates, even though in inferior orders, have precedence over all bishops; an appeal to

the papal courts inhibits judgment by all inferior courts; a dully ordained pope is undoubtedly made a saint by the merits of St. Peter.

Pope Urban VI became violent and drank heavily after his election. He declared, "I can do anything, absolutely anything I like".

When he found that five cardinals had consulted a jurist to see if he could be dethroned for insanity, he had them tortured within earshot of the garden where he strolled, reading, ignoring their screams. Four of them were never seen again.

The Lollard burnings were not long in coming.

In 1401 William Sawtrey, a Lollard priest, was arrested. He was defiant, saying to Archbishop Arundel during his trial, "I, sent by God, tell thee that thou and thy whole clergy, and the king also, will shortly die an evil death".

He was burned alive and in public at Smithfield in London.

John Huss from Prague preached the Lollard doctrine.

He was summoned to appear for trial and given an imperial safe conduct. In spite of the safe conduct promise Huss was convicted and burned on the banks of the Rhine.

Sir John Oldcastle was a rich, military man who was very close to the future King Henry V.

He abandoned a brilliant career to become a Lollard preacher.

He was arrested and imprisoned in the tower of London to await execution. Before the sentence was carried out he escaped.

He tried to lead an armed insurrection against the king but it was put down. 38 of the rebels were hanged or burnt. Oldcastle escaped to become the most wanted fugitive in the land.

He hid for three years but was captured. He was hanged from a gallows in a chair while a fire was lit beneath him.

Lollard towers were prepared for the Bible men in the palaces of the English bishops and Lollard pits were prepared as places for Lollards to be burnt.

The stage was set for our next martyr hero, William Tyndale.

William Tyndale

Tyndale was born near the Welsh border in the early 1490s.

Nothing is known of his parents. Two brothers, Edward and John, are known.

Edward became a receiver of crown rents and a person of substance in the country.

John became a London merchant.

The family also used the name "Hutchyns". As a child at grammar school Tyndale demonstrated an unusual aptitude for languages. By the age of ten he could read Latin with ease. At age twelve he went to the university of Oxford. He earned the MA in 1515 and went to Cambridge, staying till 1521.

He hired himself to Mr. John Walsh as chaplain and tutor of his children.

Walsh was squire of Little Sodbury and his house was often visited by important church dignitaries.

Tyndale would often engage them in discussion. It is said that during one of these exchanges with the local bishop, Tyndale knew and repeated the Scriptures so well that the bishop who was no match for him said in exasperation, "We had better be without God's law than the pope's."

In reply Tyndale uttered the fateful words, "I defy the pope and all his laws. If God spare my life ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plough shall know more of the Scripture than thou doest."

The translating of the Bible into English became his life dream and his driving goal.

Tyndale had remarkable powers as a linguist, so skillful in eight tongues (Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, English and French – he also learned German in order to read Luther's translation in six months. He learned German well enough to use the German in his English Bible), that whichever he spoke you would think it was his native tongue.

The law said that it was illegal to translate Scripture into English unless it was authorized by a church official.

Tyndale had heard that the bishop of London, Cuthbert Tunstall, might be sympathetic to the translating of the NT. He was a man of learning and had done translation work himself.

He left Little Sodbury and with letters of introduction headed for London.

Tunstall didn't make it easy for Tyndale.

Tyndale arrived about July 1523.

The letters of introduction were to a friend of John Walsh's, Sir Henry Guildford. He was an officer in Henry VIII's court and knew Tunstall. He promised Tyndale he would mention him to Tunstall. He advised Tyndale to write to Tunstall to beg for an appointment to see him. Tyndale delivered the letter to one of the bishop's servants and waited for a reply. Tunstall was a liberal scholar, well-schooled in the biblical languages, widely-traveled and with friends in all the right places. He seemed like an excellent man to go to. As bishop of London he had the power to lift the constitutions of Oxford and authorize the translation of the Scripture.

Tyndale had high hopes. He said, "I was beguiled that my approach to the bishop was the next way upon my purpose."

In fact he had hopelessly misjudged both the man and the circumstances.

Tunstall was not just a cleric. He was part lawyer, part diplomat, part politician. He was deeply hostile to Lutheranism.

Translation of the Scripture into English was seen as aiding Lutheranism.

He kept Tyndale waiting all summer. Finally in September Tunstall finally found time to deal with the obscure young man who wished to translate the Bible.

He was polite but firm. He told Tyndale that he had all the workers he needed and advised him to look elsewhere for support. Tyndale was an unemployed priest with no means of support and no friends.

He turned on the bishop, saying, "He walked up and down all day musing and imagining mischief, a ducking hypocrite made to dissemble."

Tyndale was not fair or reasonable when crossed. It was a pretty outrageous request. The bishop was one of the country's most powerful men, Tyndale an unknown minor cleric whose last job was a child's tutor. He asked to live in this awesome person's palace and do something that had been punishable by death for more than 100 years.

Tyndale's attack came from anger that the bishop would deny his countrymen the means of salvation, the Bible in a language which they could understand.

Tyndale had met a Mr. Humphrey Monmouth, a kindly, wealthy cloth merchant.

Monmouth took Tyndale into his house for six months.

He said of Tyndale, "He studied most part of the day and of the night at his book. He would eat but sodden meat and drink but small single beer."

Sodden meat was served plain and without sauces. Small beer was thin and weak. Tyndale remained in London for approx. one year. He realized that it would never be

possible to have his NT printed in England and so made the heart-wrenching decision to leave his beloved England for the continent.

He would never see his native land again. He said in spring 1524, "I understood at the last; not only that there was no room in my Lord of London's palace to translate the New Testament, but also that there was no place to do it in all England, as experience doth now openly declare."

He sailed for Hamburg on or close to April 1524. Tyndale had an extraordinary ability to fade into the background.

The moment he arrived in Hamburg his movements were elusive. He was a self-exile on the European continent for eleven years. He was actively hunted for nine of those eleven years. For four of those years we don't know what city or even what country he was in.

Some think he spent time with Luther. It took Tyndale about ten months to translate the NT. His primary source was Erasmus' Greek New Testament. He also had a Latin Vulgate and Luther's NT for which he had to learn German (in six months!).

Tyndale and his helper William Roye went to Cologne in summer 1525.

Cologne was great trading city.

It had the largest market square in Germany.

It had good access to English ports.

It had printers! ...almost a score of them.

It was also anti-Lutheran. (a Catholic city)

Tyndale gambled that the good points would outweigh the bad.

Tyndale engaged the services of Peter Quentell. He printed both Lutheran and anti-Lutheran books. Just give me the money, I'll print it. It was illegal to do what Tyndale was doing. Tyndale mocked the law. He wrote, "Who could be so spiteful that he would envy a man so necessary a thing as the Scripture in English? Who was so bedlam mad as to deny the reader enslaved in the dark human ignorance and mendacity, the true light of God's Word?"

Things were looking good. The pages were being printed. Then disaster struck. Some of the printers after hours drank too much and boasted that two English apostates were working with them on an English NT. Soon England will be flooded with the Bible in English, they boasted. The authorities were alerted and ordered to seize the printed pages.

Tyndale got wind of this and grabbing as many of the printed pages as he and Roye could carry, they fled.

It is said that the two Englishmen were literally escaping out the back door while the authorities were busting through the front door. Imagine, you just left your country, spent approx. a year fleeing and authorities and translating. Now it is finally being printed and you are escaping out the back door with what you can carry—What a blow!

Tyndale fled to Worms. The interruption caused him considerable time and expense, but he didn't give up. Back in England the authorities were alerted to watch for the outlawed books. The ports were watched. Men were arrested on suspicion of trafficking in the books.

Peter Schoeffer was engaged to finish the printing. Less than six months later printed copies were being loaded on barges for shipment to England.

Of course it was illegal to ship them.

They were hidden in barrels of flour, bales of cloth, bundles of hides and all sorts of places and so found their way to a waiting England.

We don't know how many copies were printed. Only three copies survive today—only one complete. 70 leaves are missing from one copy. The other incomplete copy lacks a title page. Everyone who read the book was giving him/herself the death penalty. Can you imagine! Would you pick up the Bible if you knew you could burn because of it?

Tyndale asked his readers to forgive him if his attempt at translation was imperfect.

It is pretty impressive that this man, hunted like an animal, poor and friendless in a strange land, accomplished so good a translation that 85 years later the King James translators incorporated almost 90% of it into their authorized version.

They took four years and 54+ learned divines to translate the Bible with the full backing and resources of king and country. Tyndale translated the NT while fleeing for his life alone in a strange country in about one year.

Henry VIII was a king who was larger than life. He had been married to his brother Arthur's wife Catherine of Aragon when Arthur died.

When Henry was crowned king Catherine continued to miscarry, denying Henry his greatest wish, a male heir.

In 1526 Henry was actively trying to obtain a divorce from Catherine. He already had his sights set on Ann Boelyn. The affair would change the religion of England. For seven years Henry sought to obtain the divorce. He appealed to the pope but he was beholden to the king of Spain who was Catherine's nephew.

The pope was caught between a rock and a hard place, wishing to offend neither Henry or Spain's king.

Henry sent envoys to the pope. The pope delayed.

Finally Henry said, who needs the pope? and had himself appointed head of the Anglican Church.

He had Parliament and the clergy declare his marriage to Catherine illegitimate because of the Levitical prohibition against marrying your brother's wife.

He and Ann were secretly married and Catherine was divorced.

This is interesting for our story of the English Bible for two reasons. As already mentioned, the religion of England became Anglican and not Roman Catholic. The king and the law were still antireform, but the stage was set for the reformers. The second fact is the new queen. Ann was a sympathizer to the reformers.

She had a heretical Tyndale NT and read it. She tried to get the king to be more sympathetic to the reformers.

Henry would tire of Ann in about three years and she would lose her head. But for now she was a powerful well-placed ally to the reformers.

Thomas More, the Chancellor of England was gearing up his heresy hunting. Many men and women died as the authorities arrested them for possessing or reading the Bible in English. Smugglers were busy. There were many little creeks and quiet anchorages in England where they could land to discharge their cargoes. The NT in English began to flood into England.

We need to take a look at some people and events before we continue.

The Church

Probably established in the second century when merchants and travelers brought Christianity to Britain.

In 597 St. Augustine of Canterbury established a church under papal authority. This continued throughout the Middle Ages.

During the reign of Henry VIII the church split with Rome and the pope.

Henry was declared head of the church and the pope's authority and taxation to Rome ceased. This was right around the time of Tyndale and figures largely in the story of the Bible in English.

Henry remained Catholic in thinking.

Many of Henry's advisors and court were loyal to Rome and the Catholic Church. They regarded the Bible in English as heresy and those who owned or read it as heretics. There were also reformers at court who favored the Bible in English.

This created tensions with men like Sir Thomas More and Bishop Tunstal, engaged in heretic hunting and burning, while Queen Ann and some other advisors attempted to have the heretics treated with leniency.

The clergy was incredibly corrupt. Many could not even read the Latin Bible.

They were immoral/greedy and crazy.

Many abused the system by accepting salaries from parishes which they never visited – (livings)

Indulgences financed vast building programs.

Popes lived in splendor/immorality...graft/simony common. At one time there were three popes, all excommunicating each other and condemning each other to hell.

English Language

English developed from Germanic and Indo-European roots. For a while French was the language of nobility.

Engl goes back to the Angles, a Germanic tribe that invaded and colonized much of Britain during the fifth and sixth centuries.

Anglo-Saxon or old English was spoken till around 1066.

Middle English was developed from 1066 to approx. the invention of printing in 1450. The language between middle and modern English was under continuous development. Printing was right on the cusp of change. Tyndale's work helped to develop and stabilize the language.

As we have seen, Tyndale's work had a vast effect in shaping the English language which continues up to our time.

It's interesting to note that at the time of the translating of the KJ Bible in 1611 some of the phrases and words used by the translators were already becoming dated and obsolete. Fast forward 400 years and the development and change in the English language have really made some of the KJ difficult to comprehend in the 21st century.

Erasmus Desiderius (des-i-deer'-ee-uhs)

...Dutch scholar born 1466... humanist – emphasized education and the classics – someone said they said you could be saved through college, not Calvary—not quite that clear-cut.

He wrote against the excesses of the church and clergy.

He was not as militant as Luther and did not break from the church like he did.

In 1516 he published probably his greatest work—the NT in Greek. This was the NT used by Luther and Tyndale as they translated into German (Luther) and English (Tyndale).

Erasmus went back to the Greek text which lay behind the Latin Vulgate and produced a text which was much freer of errors than the Latin Vulgate was.

This was the Greek NT that Biliney read and which led to his conversion. He influenced many of the reformers including Tyndale.

Sir Thomas More

...leading English intellectual statesman.

He was a humanist and friend of Erasmus.

He refused to endorse the divorce of Henry from Catherine of Aragon, but after the fall of Thomas Wolsey More became Lord Chancellor, the second office after the king.

He was the first layman to be Lord Chancellor. We are told that he wanted to be a priest, but was beguiled by a young lady who became his wife. He apparently felt guilty about that and was driven in an almost insane way to persecute and hunt down heretics.

He flogged himself weekly, wore a hair shirt and engaged in other acts of self-denial. He was dedicated to hunting down and killing Tyndale.

Because of his refusal to recognize Henry as the head of the church he resigned and then was imprisoned in the tower of London and finally beheaded. More and Tyndale maintained a war of words/letters and books throughout many of the years of Tyndale's hiding. Tyndale wrote several books and tracts attacking and answering More's attacks.

More was beheaded before Tyndale was burned.

Martin Luther and the Reformation

... German priest/theologian who was the leading force behind the European reformation. He was educated for law but during a violent thunderstorm he promised God he would become a monk.

He grew increasingly dissatisfied with the moral laxity and decadence of the church. On Oct. 31, 1517 after seeing Johann Tetzel collect indulgences, Luther nailed his 95 theses to the door of the church at Wittenberg.

Indulgences were sold to enable a person to buy the right to sin or to get a soul out of purgatory.

Tetzel had a little jingle:

When the money in the box rings
The soul from purgatory springs.

The whole system was corrupt and unbiblical. Luther went on to translate the Bible into German and Tyndale probably visited and studied with him when he fled England. Luther's and Tyndale's works were absolutely terrifying to the English authorities. They collected all they could to be burned. They burned those who bought or read the NT, but they could not stop the power of the Bible in the people's language.

Funny story about the bishop of London...

He wanted to buy up Tyndale's copies of the NT in order to burn them.

He contacted a merchant on the continent, not realizing he was a friend of Tyndale's. The merchant told him he could get the books. He went to Tyndale and said, "You have a great store of books by you. I have a right good buyer for them." Tyndale asked who it was.

When he was told it was the bishop he said, "But he will burn them."

The merchant answered, "Yes, but we will charge him 4X the price. You will have money to revise the NT." The deal was struck. The bishop had the books; Tyndale had the money, and soon the Bibles were flowing into England again.

Later when More was interrogating a bookseller he asked him where Tyndale got his money. The man said, "Do you really want to know?" More promised him leniency if he would tell. Said he, "It is the bishop of London who supplies the money."

More said, "I thought so!"

Cardinal Wolsey

...the son of an east Anglican butcher. He rose to become Lord Chancellor of England. He was rich, decadent and one of Tyndale's enemies.

The great enemies in Tyndale's life...

...Sir Thomas More, Bishop Cuthbert Tunstall and John Stokesley were allied with Wolsey against Tyndale.

In 1520 Wolsey paid a visit to Cambridge University. The university addressed him as Majestas. He had combined the vast secular power of Lord Chancellor with the spiritual authority of being a special envoy for the pope. He plundered both state and church to build a new foundation of exquisite grandeur on the Oxford water meadows that he called Cardinal's College for himself.

He built a palace at Hampton Court that outdid the kings. It had 1,000 rooms, 44 acres of gardens and many lavish decorations and statuary.

He had attitudes to match. When criticized for flaunting his wealth he said, "How think you? Were it better for me, being in the honor and dignity I am, to make coins of my pillars and poleaxes and to give money to five or six beggars than to maintain the commonwealth as I do?"

Tyndale dubbed him "Wolfsee...this wily wolf, I say, and raging sea and shipwreck of all England. Wolsey was prey to all manner of voluptuousness, expert and exercised in the course of the world."

Brian Moynaham writes:

Beneath the brilliant display of the church—the altar cloths of silk, velvet and sarkanet, the robes and vestments of damask and linen, the chalices and cups of jeweled silver—there lurked a rottenness.

Wolsey was notoriously immoral and it was recorded that he fathered several illegitimate children.

His egotism was incredible. Servants served him on their knees, bishops tied his shoes and dukes held the basin while he washed his hands.

He had many salaries from parishes which he never visited.

Three times he pulled levers, wrote letters and exerted his vast power and influence to become pope. His attempts were unsuccessful. He exercised this power for years till the laity and clergy turned against him.

Then through the Ann of Cleaves fiasco when the cardinal saw that he had overstepped his authority, he sought permission to withdraw to York. This was the first time he had been there even though he had been paid to be the pastor there for 16 years.

In 1530 on Easter he set out for York in his customary splendor with a retinue of 160 people. All he wanted to do was to be left alone. But he had offended too many people.

The Lords listed 44 grievances against him and presented them to the king.

He was charged with treason and the constable of the tower of London came with 24 men to arrest him. Wolsey was terrified. He paced his bedroom, talked to himself and cried like a baby.

On the way they stopped for the night. Wolsey ranted about Luteranism, entreated the constable to destroy the reformers and died at 8pm. His death removed the pope's last obstacle in the path of reformation.

His type of decadence was typical of the abuses of the clergy which drove Tyndale and the reformers to give the Bible to the people in a language which they could read.

Thomas Cranmer

...served as Archbishop of Canterbury for 23 years during Henry VIII's and Edward's reign. He was a great help to the reformers. He was instrumental in getting Henry to command that every parish church provide an English bible for its people to read.

He was martyred under Queen Mary's bloody reign.

Thomas Cromwell

...a bridge builder between the political and religious reforms. He was in favor of the reformers and as Henry's Secretary of State helped to put Henry's policies into action. Cromwell arranged the Ann of Cleves marriage which didn't go well and helped lead to his downfall. He lost his head at the tower on June 10, 1540.

He was a principal agent in making the Bible available to every Englishman.

Henry VIII

...king of England from 1509 to 1547.

Larger than life... He was a huge man with great physical prowess. He excelled in the hunt and the joust.

He had six wives and several mistresses.

Shortly before his coronation he married his brother Arthur's widow Catherine of Aragon from Spain.

The marriage was happy for a number of years, but when Catherine failed to produce a male heir but miscarried several times, Henry concluded that his marriage displeased God. Quoting the Levitical text forbidding the marriage of a brother's wife (Lev. 20:21), he ordered his chief minister Cardinal Wolsey to ask the pope to grant him a divorce.

By this time the king had fallen in love (lust) with one of Catherine's ladies in waiting, Ann Boleyn.

Catherine and Charles V, King of Spain, (her nephew), opposed the divorce.

Catherine insisted that Arthur had never consummated the marriage and that she was a virgin when she met Henry.

It took seven years for Henry to get his divorce. Ann wisely refused to be his mistress, knowing the king's lust would insure her success in becoming queen.

Henry broke with the church, sacked Wolsey and elevated Thomas More, a layman, to the office of Lord Chancellor, the second highest in the land.

Henry took the title of head of the church and had Parliament and the universities declare his marriage to Catherine was null and void. He married Ann secretly some time before the divorce was finalized.

Catherine was banished to one of the king's palaces.

In Sept. 1533 Ann bore a daughter, Elizabeth. Henry tired of Ann and she was beheaded in 1536.

Henry's third wife, Jane Seymour, bore a son Edward, but she died shortly after the birth. Wife #4, Ann of Cleves, was the product of an arranged marriage orchestrated by Wolsey. Wolsey arranged to have a too-flattering portrait done of Ann for Henry.

When he saw her he was horrified. He was displeased with her appearance and her lack of poise. She spoke next to no English.

Henry quickly divorced her and married a 16-year-old lady in waiting, Catherine Howard. Catherine lasted approx. 2-3 years and was beheaded because of pre-marital and extramarital unfaithfulness.

Catherine Parr, Henry's last wife, outlived him.

Between 1536-1540 Henry dissolved and plundered all the monasteries and nunneries in England and confiscated their properties for the crown.

This did nothing to improve his standing with the pope.

Edward VI, Henry's son, succeeded him. He only reigned six years before dying.

Mary assumed the throne after a near civil war and reigned for five years.

She reestablished the Roman Catholic Church and unleashed a reign of terror against the reformers.

Approx. 300 were burned. Many fled to the continent to escape.

The Geneva Bible was published by some of them.

When Mary died childless her half-sister Elizabeth became queen.

Her reign of approx. 50 years was much more tolerant to the reformers.

At her death with no heir, James VI of Scotland succeeded to the throne as James I of England, Scotland and Wales.

It was James I who was the driving force behind the King James Bible.

Tyndale – part 2

John Foxe in his book of Martyrs writes:

We have now to enter into the story of the good martyr of God, William Tyndale; who, as he was a special organ of the Lord appointed, and as God's mattock to shake the inward roots and foundations of the pope's proud prelacy, so the great prince of darkness, with his impious imps, having a special malice against him, left no way unsought how craftily to entrap him, and falsely to betray him, and maliciously to spill his life, as by the process of his story here following may appear.

After Tyndale's NT flooded into England there ensued a vast war of words between Tyndale and More. The bishop of London commissioned More to write a refutation of Tyndale's NT. He did this in over 1,000 pages. Tyndale answered and the battle continued.

More said that 'no good Christian manne hauing any drop of witte in his head' should marvel that the New Testament had been burnt, for it had not. What had been consumed in the fire at St. Paul's Cross was Tyndale's Testament, 'for so hadde Tyndall after Luthers counsayl corrupted and chaunged it from the good and wholesome doctrine of Christ to the devilishe heresyas of their own, that it was cleane a contrarye thyng'. Tyndale was 'a hellhound in the kennel of the devil...discharging a filthy foam of blasphemies out of his brutish beastly mouth'. The work was as 'full of errors as the sea is of water', More said, and much of it was 'wilfully mistranslated .. to deceive blind unlearned people'.

The wrath of Tunstall and More rested on Tyndale's translation of three words. He translated "congregation" where the Latin Vulgate had "church".

So when Christ said to Peter upon this rock I will build my congregation, the church didn't like it a bit.

Tyndale translated senior/elder in place of priest. This had obvious problems for the church.

The final word was love in place of the Latin charity.

So More continued to rail against the translation.

The profits to be made from the testaments attracted private editions which began arriving in England in 1526. There were no copyright laws. It is estimated that five times as many pirate copies of Luther's works were sold as the number Luther sold.

Tyndale wasn't worried about the pirate copies except that he said they are so filled with so many mistakes, misspellings and mismeanings that when they reach me I do not even recognize my own books.

Tyndale published:

The Parable of the Wicked Manmon

It set forth the belief that a Christian is justified by faith alone. It took the church to task for its failure to reform.

Tyndale was confident that the book would share the fate of his NT. He said, "Inasmuch as they will burn it, seeing they burnt the gospel, if that was God's will."

He welcomed it: "Not more shall they do," he added, "if they burn me also".

Tyndale next published The Obedience of a Christian Man.

It laid out two themes—the supremacy of the Scriptures over the church and of the king over the state.

Both themes cut at the heart of the Roman Church.

These words drove More to distraction.

Two years later Tyndale wrote The Practice of Prelates, a strong indictment against the church and the divorce of Henry VIII.

It was not the manner of the English to be chivalrous or kind to each other.

Some examples of More:

A Dialogue Concerning Heresies was in four books, and its author, fully absorbed by the law and politics in the day, drove himself into the early hours to complete it by night. A man must 'wryte by candellyght whyle he were halfe a slepe' if the need were urgent enough, More said, and nothing was more pressing than the war against heretics. Exhaustion did not drain the venom from his onslaught.

He described Tyndale as 'a hell-hound in the kenel of the dyuy' who discharged blasphemies 'out of his brutyshe bestely mouth', and a 'drowsy drudge' who 'hath drunken depe in the dyuy's dregges'. When his anger courses directly from his heart

on to page, More's other facets—the cool and temperate lawyer, the humanist author or Utopia, the discreet diplomat, the measured politician, the courtly servant of the king—are eaten up by his hatred, and vanish. He claimed that Tyndale was so full of evil, so crammed with pus like a boil in a biblical plague, that he must burst; but this also describes the malice that More himself bore Tyndale. His enemy 'is the beast who teaches vice, a forewalker of Antichrist, a devil's limb', More scribbled. 'He sheweth himself so puffed up with the poison of pride, malice and evil, that it is more than a marvel that the skin can hold together.'

More said that 'no good Christian manne hauing any drop of witte in his head' should marvel that the New Testament had been burnt, for it had not. What had been consumed in the fire at St. Paul's Cross was Tyndale's Testament, 'for so hadde Tyndall after Luthers counsayl corrupted and chaunged it from the good and wholesome doctrine of Christ to the devilishe heresy'es of their own, that it was cleane a contrarye thyng'. Tyndale was 'a hellhound in the kennel of the devil...discharging a filthy foam of blasphemies out of his brutish beastly mouth'. The work was as 'full of errors as the sea is of water', More said, and much of it was 'wilfully mistranslated .. to deceive blind unlearned people'.

Simple Christians should be kept away from it. More said that the scripture was tricky – 'a fly may wade in, but an elephant can drown' – and would overtax uneducated minds. In particular, Paul's Epistle to the Romans, the key to the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith, contained 'such high difficulties as very few learned men can very well attain'. Tyndale was wrong to claim that it was necessary to read the Bible, More said. Christ had revealed to his Church all that was needed to gain salvation. The pronouncements of the Church were the Word of God as surely as any verse in the scripture. In a largely illiterate world, it was natural and just that they should be passed on orally, 'bye onely wordes and prechynges . . . by mouth amonge the people'. In any event, More denied that Tyndale's Testament was the Word of God. 'If Tyndale's testament be taken up,' he wrote, 'then shall false heresies be preached, then shall the sacraments be set at naught, then shall fasting and prayer be neglected, then shall holy saints be blasphemed, then shall Almighty God be displeased, then shall he withdraw his grace and let all run to ruin . . . then will rise up rifling and robbery, murder and mischief, and plain insurrection . . . then shall youth leave labour and all occupation, then shall folk wax idle and fall to

unthriftiness, then shall all laws be laughed to scorn...' Then, in short, society would suffer extreme breakdown; the Church, the fountainhead of law and authority, would be destroyed, and with it the continuity of the centuries would be shattered. Tyndale was guilty of a dual crime. Spiritually, he challenged Christ's true Church, and, in temporal terms, he was ruining the peace of the realm.

...Tyndale detailed various abuses of the priesthood, how (as he saw it) they had corrupted Christian doctrine, and the "feigned ordinances" by which they had sometimes usurped civil authority, acquired their worldly goods, and ruled over the consciences of men. In their insatiable arrogance and greed, he said, they had taken the people for all they were worth: "The parson sheareth, the vicar shaveth, the parish priest polleth, the friar scrapeth, and the pardoner pareth; we lack but a butcher to pull off the skin." He staunchly defended vernacular translations of the Bible and noted that Moses had given his people the law in Hebrew, that Christ and his apostles had preached in the language of their hearers (mainly Aramaic and Syriac), and that St. Jerome had translated the Bible into his own (Latin) tongue. "Why then," he asked, "should we, who walk in the broad day, not see as well as they that walked in the night, or . . . as well at noon as they did in the twilight? Came Christ to make the world more blind?" And he reminded his readers that just as the God of the Old Testament required his people to know the law, so Christ in the New had commanded them to search the Scriptures, that they might discriminate between prophets false and true.

As for the power of prayer, "as good the prayer of a cobbler," he wrote "as of a cardinal; of a butcher, as of a bishop; and the blessing of a baker that knoweth the truth is as good as the blessing of the pope."

More had also scoffed at the idea that because some might abuse the privilege of reading Scripture (by debating matters they didn't understand), it should be withheld from all—as if "a surgeon should cut off the leg by the knee, to keep the toe from the gout." Even so he thought the Bible should be carefully parceled out to parishioners at the discretion of their local bishop. One man, for example, might be allowed to read the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, or Luke (but not necessarily John), another, the Acts of the Apostles, but not Revelation. But how any given bishop could justly

determine the fitness of each and every individual for a particular text More does not say.

He was not above taunting. After recounting the trial of one heretic (to whose constancy Tyndale had alluded in one of his books) he exclaimed, "And this lo! is Sir Thomas Hytton, the devil's stinking martyr, of whose burning Tyndale maketh boast." He then refers to another named John Tewkesbury, a leather merchant who had been guilty of owning contraband books. For this More is sure that Tewkesbury "lieth now in hell and crieth out on [Tyndale]; and Tyndale, if he do not amend in time, he is like to find him, when they come together, a hot firebrand burning at his back that all the water in the world will not be able to quench."

If we remember that much of the King James Version of the Bible is substantially based on Tyndale's text, More's "book review" is perhaps the most wrongheaded ever penned. Tyndale replied in 1531 to More's attack with a substantial rebuttal (Answer unto Sir Thomas More), which brought forth from More in the following year a ponderous and sometimes hysterical work, Confutation of Tyndale, in which, among other things, he called his antagonist "a beast," discharging a "filthy foam of blasphemies out of his brutish beastly mouth"; "a shameful, shameless, unreasonable, railing ribald"; ... a "hell-hound fit for the hogs of hell to feed upon"; "a hellhound in the kennel of the devil."

More wrote of Luther (Please don't be offended):

Since he [Luther] has written that he already has a prior right to bespatter and desmirch the royal crown with shit will we not have the posterior right to proclaim the beshitted tongue on this practitioner of posterioristics most fit to lick with his anterior the very posterior of a pissing she-mule." Much similar language sullied the entire tract.

As mentioned, the English weren't delicate in their condemnation of one another.

There were many setbacks in Tyndale's career, but probably none so disastrous as the trip to Hamburg.

Tyndale had decided to translate and print the OT. He started on the work, got the first five books in manuscript form and embarked by ship for Hamburg. On the voyage a fierce storm wrecked the ship and everything was lost—his money, his precious manuscript which represented hours of work, and his reference books. It was a terrible blow. Miles Coverdale met him at Hamburg and they started over. Between April and December 1529 they redid the work. Early in 1530 the Pentateuch by William Tyndale came off the press.

By the time of his capture he had translated up to the book of 2 Chronicles and the Book of Jonah.

There were revisions of the NT before Tyndale died.

Then, an amazing thing!

The king, who had been Tyndale's enemy, sent an emissary to find Tyndale, offer him a pardon and bring him back to England in the king's service.

The king rightly concluded it would be better having Tyndale working for him than against him. The man's name was Stephen Vaughan. He sent letters to Tyndale in Frankfurt, Hamburg and Marburg, three cities where Tyndale was rumored to be located.

Vaughan received a reply from Tyndale. He smelled a rat and refused to meet with him. Vaughan wrote to the king that he would get him a copy of Tyndale's newly written *An Answer Unto Sir Thomas More's Dialogue* as soon as he could.

Vaughan wrote to Cromwell that if the king liked Tyndale's book he might be persuaded to come back to England.

Then remarkably, Tyndale broke cover.

Tyndale said that he had been a true subject to King Henry. He had suffered greatly for his work, through my poverty...mine exile out of my natural country, and bitter absence from my friends...my hunger, my thirst, my cold, the great danger wherwith I am everywhere encompassed.

Sounds like the Apostle Paul's list of hardships he endured for his Lord.

Tyndale refused to return to England. He did not trust the king's offer of amnesty.

Vaughan met Tyndale twice more.

Tyndale proposed a deal. Let the king authorize a translation into English by anyone the king chose. Tyndale promised never to translate again and to come home to England and be a loyal subject of the king.

He offered never to write again, to return to England, to submit to torture and death at the king's pleasure. All this if only the Bible—in whoever's translation the king chose, and in plain text without glosses or notes—could be given in English to the people.

Henry would have probably authorized an English Bible, but not at the urging of Tyndale. And Tyndale being Tyndale could not resist a sting for the king. The king should know that whatever I have written that is proved false I will renounce. But if those things which I have written be true and stand with God's Word why should his majesty, having so excellent gifts of knowledge in the Scriptures, move me to do anything against my conscience?

Vaughan reported to Cromwell that he found Tyndale singing one note. Unless Henry authorized an English Bible Tyndale would not budge.

Meanwhile Tyndale and More continued to spar verbally.

At times More's passion for heretic burning runs almost out of control.

He wrote, "There should have been more burned by a great many than there have been within this seven year last past." More looked forward to the fires and fantasized on punishments he would inflict on Tyndale and Luther.

More said, "And after the fire of Smithfield hell doth receive them where the wretches burn forever."

Bilney who read Erasmus' Greek NT and lit the fire of reformation in England, was burned by More.

It was a very windy day. There was a great flame which disfigured Bilney's face. He held up his hands and cried "Jesus" and "credo". The wind blew the flame away several times. It was many minutes before the wood caught solidly. More wrote with satisfaction, "God of his endless mercy brought his body to death." Bilney's little body shrank as it burnt and roasted. Eventually the executioner struck out the staple holding the chains to the stake so that the body fell to the bottom of the fire.

All because he read and preached from a Bible in English and believed what it said.

The attempt to win over Tyndale was finally abandoned by Henry.

The plan now was for Sir Thomas Elyot, the new English ambassador at the imperial court, to have Tyndale seized by force and shipped to London for punishment.

The appeal fell on deaf ears, because Charles V had no reason to grant Henry favors.

The humiliation of his Aunt Catherine did not amuse him.

His reply was curt. He told Henry no proof had been offered of Tyndale's guilt, but if Henry had any proof of his guilt, he, Charles, would be glad to pursue it. In the absence of proof Tyndale could stay put.

The king now had only private and illegal means—betrayal, kidnap were now the only solution. The king ordered that Tyndale be seized and brought to England.

Only one problem remained for Henry... He didn't know where Tyndale was located. Around this time the second edition of Tyndale's NT was published.

Tyndale had been living in the English house at Antwerp since the middle of 1534.

The English house was run by Thomas Poyntz who was related to Lady Walsh of Little Sodbury. As a resident of the house Tyndale was safe from arrest as long as he remained inside.

On 21 May 1535, the day of his betrayal, Tyndale had 16 months more to live. Thomas More was in the tower with a little over six weeks to live.

Henry Phillips

That spring Henry Phillips arrived in Antwerp. He was a snake in the grass and Tyndale was far too open and trusting for his own good. He met Henry Phillips and took a shine to him. He took him to his lodging, entertained him and showed him his books.

Poyntz was deeply suspicious of Phillips and tried to warn Tyndale, but he was unconcerned. Phillips arranged with the authorities to have Tyndale arrested.

When Poyntz left for a 30-day business trip the trap was sprung.

Phillips went to Tyndale's study and asked him to borrow 40 shillings because he had lost his wallet. "Master Tyndale, you shall be my guest this day," Phillips suggested.

"No," said Tyndale, "You will go with me to dinner today."

As the two men left the house through a long narrow entry Tyndale gestured for Phillips to go ahead. With a great show of courtesy Phillips insisted that Tyndale lead.

As they walked, Phillips, who was taller, pointed down to Tyndale to identify him to the waiting officers. The arrest was quiet and easy. The officers told Poyntz later that they pitied to see the simplicity when they took him.

He was taken to the castle prison at Vilvoorde, 18 miles from Antwerp.

The authorities searched Tyndale's lodgings and took away all his possessions as well as his books and other things.

The castle was dank, its walls running with damp. It had seven towers, a river-fed moat and a drawbridge.

We have a letter written by Tyndale from his cold, damp cell.

It is a patient, respectful letter. This man had been unjustly arrested for the crime of translating the Bible in English.

He writes:

I believe, right worshipful, that you are not unaware of what may have been determined concerning me. Wherefore I beg your lordship, and that by the Lord Jesus, that if I am to remain here through the winter, you will request the commissary to have the kindness to send me, from the goods of mine which he has, a warmer cap; for I suffer greatly from cold in the head, and am afflicted by a perpetual catarrh, which is much increased in this cell; a warmer coat also for this which I have is very thin; a piece of cloth too to patch my leggings. My overcoat is worn out; my shirts are also worn out. He has a woollen shirt, if he will be good enough to send it. I have also with him leggings of thicker cloth to put on above; he has also warmer night caps. And I ask to be allowed to have a lamp in the evening; it is indeed wearisome sitting alone in the dark. But most of all I beg and beseech your clemency to be urgent with the commissary, that he will kindly permit me to have the Hebrew bible, Hebrew grammar, and Hebrew dictionary, that I may pass the time in that study. In return may you obtain what you most desire, so only that it be for the salvation of your soul. But if any other decision has been taken concerning me, to be carried out before winter, I will be patient, abiding the will of God, to the glory of the grace of my Lord Jesus Christ; whose Spirit (I pray) may ever direct your heart. Amen. W. Tindalus.

What a Christian spirit! It is a noble, dignified letter, no flattery, no cringing, simply courteous and respectful. There followed a long (approx. 15 month) hearing and trial.

It was obvious from the start what the outcome would be.

Tyndale was found guilty of heresy, condemned to death and was handed over to the civil authorities to be executed.

He was 41 years old. He had given the best years of his life, had suffered intense hardships and suffering to provide his fellow countrymen the Scriptures in English.

Poyntz made strenuous efforts to have him released, but to no avail.

Henry and Cromwell made halfhearted requests for leniency, but to no avail.

Before his sentence was carried out he suffered a final humiliation. He was led into the service dressed as a priest about to celebrate mass. He was forced to kneel in front of the bishops. His hands were scraped with a knife, symbolically removing the oil he had been anointed with at his consecration.

The sacraments were placed in his hands and taken away. As the cup was removed the bishop intoned a solemn curse. "O cursed Judas, because you have abandoned the counsel of peace and have counseled with the Jews we take away from you this cup of redemption." Other curses were pronounced, then his priest's garments were ripped from him one by one and he was re clothed as a layman.

At the end the bishop intoned, "We commit your soul to the devil."

Early in October 1536 Tyndale was led to the public place of execution. He was chained to a stout stake and fetters were piled around him. Because his status as a scholar he was strangled right before the faggots were lit.

Just before they pulled the rope which took his life Tyndale cried, "Lord, open the king of England's eyes".

It appears that the executioner bungled his work and that Tyndale was still alive as the flames engulfed him.

He did not write his own epitaph.

A passage he left from 1 Corinthians serves us well. "And though I gave my body even that I burned, and yet had no love, it profiteth me nothing." That he used love and not charity was a prime reason More wanted him burned.

He died for love of God's words and their readers, and the most familiar work in the English language is thereby given the added grace of being a labor of love.

The KJ Bible

The King James Version of the Bible stood in a long line of English translations.

There was in manuscript:

- 1384 Wycliffe's translation (from Latin)
- 1396 Purvey's revision of Wycliffe

There were in print:

- 1525 Tyndal's New Testament (from the Greek)
- 1530 Tyndal's Old Testament (from the Hebrew)
- 1534 Tyndal's New Testament revised
- 1535 Coverdale's (from the Latin, Luther and Zwingli)
- 1537 Matthew (based on Tyndale)
- 1539 Taverner's revision (based on Matthew)
- 1539 Great Bible (based on Matthew)
- 1557 Whittingham's New Testament
- 1560 Geneva Bible
- 1568 Bishop's Bible
- 1582 Rheims New Testament (based on the Latin)
- 1610 Douai Bible (Old Testament based on Latin)
- 1611 Authorized KJ Version
- 1881 Revised New Testament
- 1885 Revised Old Testament
- 1901 American revision (of the revised version)
- after 1900 Modern translations

As you can see from the chart the King James translators were not breaking new ground, but had a long list of translations in English to consult.

Henry VIII had left instructions for the Tudor succession.

His son Edward was first, Mary next, and Elizabeth last.

Elizabeth never married and as her death drew near, her face became haggard and her frame shrank. She refused to change her dresses for a week.

Gradually her mind gave way.

The Privy Council was summoned and on March 22, 1603 gathered at her bedside. They dreaded to raise the question of succession (because of her temper). Lord Beauchamp was mentioned. She started up, crying, "I will have no rogue's son in my seat, but a king." They urged her to be clear. "Who, but our cousin of Scotland?" she answered.

Elizabeth reigned for 54 years.

James VI of Scotland was proclaimed king of England, France and Ireland as James I.

James' mother Mary Queen of Scots had been executed for treason against Elizabeth and her one-year-old son James had been crowned King of Scotland.

As James made his way to London he was met by a deputation of clergy who presented him with the Millenary Petition. Signed by over 800 Puritan clergy, it requested changes in the religious services and vestments of the clergy. James called a conference at Hampton Court to address the Puritan concerns.

It didn't go well for the Puritans. James pretty much denied most of their requests.

At the conference it was suggested that James authorize a new translation of the Bible or authorize the Geneva Bible as the official Bible of England.

James fancied himself something of an expert on the subject of the Scriptures. He violently disliked the notes in the Geneva Bible.

He seized the opportunity to seem to be doing something for the Puritans and at the same time getting a translation without the offensive notes.

Richard Bancroft, the bishop of London, oversaw the work.

Bancroft was a violent opponent of the new translations, but he coveted the Archbishop of Canterbury's seat. So he with the king arranged very strict rules for the translators.

He reserved to himself the privilege of final approval. One of the translators complained that Bancroft made 14 changes to the final copy, but no one knew then or now what the alleged changes were. It is ironic that a group of Anglican churchmen whose doctrine and practice many of us would not agree with translated a version which very conservative men today equate with the only true Bible, even though they would not agree with the Anglican practices of those who translated it.

The king approved a list of 54 translators (all but one ordained) arranged into six companies. (Only 48 actually translated; apparently some died or resigned.)

two at Westminster	}	Each assigned a portion of the OT Apophra and NT
two at Oxford		
two at Cambridge		

Money was needed to finance the project and James directed the bishops to reserve ecclesiastical preferment for those in need. The universities were directed to supply room and board for the translators.

James wasn't going to pay for it.

Oxford was associated with high church and royalist sentiments.

Cambridge with dissidents, reformers, martyrs and exiles.

Both were considered secular institutions.

Westminster represented clerical and legal interests.

So including the three universities made good political sense.

The translation work started in earnest in 1607 and was completed in 1611.

Each of the translation teams reviewed their assigned texts among themselves. There is evidence that one read while others followed from different versions and made suggestions.

Each final revision was passed around to each member of the committee and then was passed through the other teams.

It then went through a final panel of reviewers made up of two members of each team. As mentioned, Bancroft reserved himself the right of final review.

It was the work of committees and thus lacked anyone's own bias on doctrinal issues.

The translators followed 15 rules set up by Bancroft and the king.

Some of them are:

1. The Bishop's Bible to be followed and altered as little as the original will permit.
2. The old ecclesiastical words to be kept – church, charity, priest, etc.
3. The words to be kept that have been used by the most ancient fathers.
4. No marginal notes except to explain meaning.
5. The work to be compared among the entire teams of translators.

The King James translators were bound to use the Bishop's Bible as much as possible. This ensured the use of English which was already dated in 1611.

There were many mysteries and intrigue in the printing and publication of the KJ Bible.

Robert Barker was the king's official printer. He alone was authorized to print the Bible.

No one knows what happened to the original manuscript of the 1611 versions.

There could have been a manuscript copy which perished in the great fire of 1666.

It is known that Barker furnished 40 unbound copies of the Bishop's Bible to the translators for use in their work.

A heavily-annotated Bishop's Bible could have been used by the printer; we just don't know. There were three editions of the KJ during 1611. There were many variations in spelling and spelling errors in the early editions.

In 1631 the word "not" was omitted from the seventh commandment, thus reading, "Thou shalt commit adultery". It was known as the "wicked" Bible. Barker paid a heavy fine for the error. There is speculation that one of his disgruntled former partners broke into the shop and sabotaged the work.

The 1711 edition printed the word "vinegar" instead of vineyard in the chapter heading of Luke 20. It became known as the vinegar Bible. The 1795 edition was called the murderer's Bible as it misspelled "filled" as "killed" in Mark 7:27... "Let the children first be killed".

An edition revised by Dr. Blayney of Oxford in 1769 remains the standard KJ text to this day.

It differs from the 1611 version in at least 75,000 details. King James only advocates say the KJ was reinspired and its words are correct, even to saying that if the Greek is different it is correct and the Greek is wrong.

There were two editions claiming to be printed in 1611—One is the "he" Bible, the other the "she" Bible. At Ruth 3:15 one says and he went into the city (spelled "citie"); the other says and she went into the city.

No bill or decree officially authorizing the KJ has ever been found.

It is known as the Authorized Version even though we don't have a copy of the authorization. It could have been lost/destroyed or may simply never been officially authorized.

The new translation was not universally received. Many considered it too liberal and unsound (sound familiar?).

The pilgrims took the Geneva Bible to the United States because they didn't like the new Bible.

It took approx. 60 years for the KJ to triumph over its rivals, but it reigned supreme as the most read and sold Bible for at least 400 years.

An intriguing question is what happened to the paragraph markers after Acts 20:36?

Three reasons the KJ finally triumphed:

1. The translators placed a great deal of emphasis of literary as well as linguistic considerations. It had literary beauty, flowing patterns and rhythmic style. It helped to shape the English language.

2. It was accepted among English-speaking clergy and theologians. Because the Bible did not contain objectionable notes various theological positions embraced it.

3. Sheer merit. Its faithfulness to the original and its fluid expressions as literature guaranteed its success.

Some errors continued today:

Zechariah 4:7 – the running together of headstone²³

Matt. 23:24 - **strain at a gnat**²⁴...1611 correctly says, "strain out a gnat"

Matt. 4:2 - an hungred²⁵ or "ahungered"

²³*The King James Version, 1769.*

²⁴*The King James Version, 1769.*

²⁵*The King James Version, 1769.*

The King James Only Controversy

Everything you wanted to know about the KJV but were afraid to ask

In this age of uncertainty the last thing we need is the suspicion that the Word of God is somehow faulty or misleading. Yet many have set upon the task of undermining the authority of Scripture. This happens in places of radical, liberal higher criticism, but it also happens in places where we least expect it.

The radical, fundamental, King James only movement is not only illogical but irrational.

The salesclerk never saw it coming. He had just finished unpacking the new shipment of study Bibles and setting up the new display. He had been working at the Christian bookstore only a week. All seemed well. And then it happened. She seemed like any other lady looking for a Bible for her grandson. More than glad to help he pulled a nice NIV down from the shelf and opened the box. He noticed she immediately turned the Bible and looked at the spine. Her countenance changed. She put the bible back in the box, withdrawing her hands quickly, as a person does when discovering an object is dirty or oily. "I would like a real Bible," she says. "A real Bible?" the salesclerk asks. "Yes," she replied, "a real Bible, the Bible God honors, the King James Bible, the A.V. 1611."

The King James only controversy by its very nature brings disruption and contention right into the pews of our churches. Thinking and believing that the KJV is God's only true Bible, they have only scorn and vitriol for anyone who does not believe exactly like they do about the KJ Bible.

Simply stated the radical KJ only position can be reduced to:

"The King James Bible alone = the Word of God alone".

What they are saying, and what they are ready to brand all others as heretics for, is that God somehow miraculously reinspired the 16th-century King James translators so that the KJV is not only infallible, but inspired and inerrant; in short that it is "God's Word", the standard against which all other translations should be judged.

This leads to several results.

James White writes:

The willingness of many to sacrifice all semblance of logic and rationality in the cause of defending a great, yet imperfect translation of the Bible as if it were inspired is used by skeptics as evidence of how "backwards" conservatives as a whole truly are.

The other result, already mentioned, is that the KJ only controversy produces dissension, disrespect and division among God's people. Much time is wasted arguing about issues, time which would be better spent evangelizing and spreading the gospel.

If you are interested in pursuing the subject, James R. White's *The King James Only Controversy* is an excellent book. Unlike many of the KN only writers White treats the subject with clarity in a rational, loving way.

He is not "anti" K. James. He recognized there are those for whom the KJ works just fine. He opposes KJV onlyism, not the KJ.

As has already been mentioned the King James is itself a translation standing in a long line of English translations. Before the English translations there were many years of translations in handwritten manuscript form. Syriac, Ethiopian and Latin were handwritten. The Septuagint, produced around 300 BC, was the Bible of Christ. Printed translations before the KJ were numerous in many other languages.

Just a few:

The first printed Bible, the Latin Vulgate

The Czechs had the Bible in the vernacular since the 14th century.

1524 – Swiss Bible

1526 – Dutch Bible

1530 – French Bible

1540 – Icelandic

1541 – Swedish

1548 – Finnish

1550 – Danish

1569 – Spanish

1557-60 – Slovene

1563 – Croat

1561 – Polish

1590 – Hungarian

The KJV translators wrote in the preface:

Translation it is that openeth the window, to let in the light, that breaketh the shell, that we may eat the kernel; that putteth aside the curtain, that we may look into the most Holy Place; that removeth the cover of the well, that we may come by the water.

Remember that translation by its very nature is imperfect. Languages and cultures differ. It is often not possible to translate word for word or thought for thought from one language to another.

Some of the reasons for a better translation since the KJ are:

1. We possess more and better texts than the KJ translators used.

Today we have around 20,000 manuscripts of all or part of the NT.

The KJ translators had less than 25 late manuscripts of the NT and used them rather carelessly.

Of five primary uncial manuscripts now recognized as authority for the purity of the NT text, only one was available to the KJ translators and apparently it was not used by them.

The OT situation is even worse for the KJ translators.

Today's text is much more reliable and abundant for the OT.

So the text is much better today than it was in 1611.

2. We possess a much richer knowledge of the text, languages, culture and customs now than they did in 1611.

3. The English language used in the KJV was already becoming obsolete in 1611.

Add approximately 400 years to that and you have a translation which simply does not "communicate" to new believers or seekers whose primary language is English.

Some examples:

And Jacob sod pottage²⁶ (Gen. 25:29)

Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing²⁷ (Ps. 5:6)

Solomon loved many strange women²⁸ (1 Kings 11:1)

The noise thereof sheweth concerning it, the cattle also concerning the vapour.²⁹ (Job 36:33)

I trou not.³⁰ (Luke 17:9)

Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels.³¹ (2Cor. 6:12)

There are a host of words such as almug³², chode³³, chapt³⁴, kab, Raca³⁵, tatches, ephrata, wot³⁶, trou³⁷ which have no meaning to 21st-century readers. Even worse are words which said something in 1611 which in 2010 mean the opposite. The word "let" then meant prevent; now it means to allow.

The word "prevent" then meant come before. Now the word means to stop from doing something.

A great example of a verse that would cause confusion without our knowing it... We read And from thence we fetched a compass³⁸. A modern reader would assume they

²⁶*The King James Version, 1769.*

²⁷*The King James Version, 1769.*

²⁸*The King James Version, 1769.*

²⁹*The King James Version, 1769.*

³⁰*The King James Version, 1769.*

³¹*The King James Version, 1769.*

³²*The King James Version, 1769.*

³³*The King James Version, 1769.*

³⁴*The King James Version, 1769.*

³⁵*The King James Version, 1769.*

³⁶*The King James Version, 1769.*

³⁷*The King James Version, 1769.*

³⁸*The King James Version, 1769.*

went and got an instrument of navigation, but what is really meant is "they made a circuit". The word "conversation" today means talking. Then it meant "manner of life".

"Chief estates" meant leading men, not real estate or land holding.

"Meat" means flesh now, then food.

Phil. 4:6 - Be careful for nothing³⁹ really means "Don't worry about anything" but would not convey that meaning today.

Words in Hebrew ending in "im" are already plural, but the KJ translators added "s" to "cherubims", "seraphims", "nethinims" and "anakims".

Reflecting on these, and there are many more examples, we can ask the following questions:

1. Do we understand what we read because we are familiar with the wording or because someone told us what they mean?
2. Do we obey what the words say or what they mean?
3. Would it not be simpler and better to have a translation which would at the first reading, without comment, suggest the meaning the writer intended?
4. Is it not time to do what the KJ scholars said they were attempting to do, "to deliver God's book unto God's people in a tongue they understand"?

Just a few observations:

- The King James translators were all Anglican churchmen or scholars.
 - As such they practiced and taught "infant baptism".
 - Most if not all of today's KJ only people do not agree with infant baptism, but see no contradiction in the KJ translators' belief and practice of baptizing babies.

³⁹*The King James Version, 1769.*

- The KJ 1611 and all English Bibles till about 1729 included the apocryphal books which are not accepted by those who espouse the KJ only position.
- The issue of which KJ 1611 to follow is relevant:

Some people assume that the KJ Bible is a fixed phenomenon like the faith which was once delivered unto the saints:

However a current KJ differs in numerous details from the KJ printed in 1611. Books printed in the 17th century were very carelessly printed by modern standards. There were actually two editions of the KJ printed in 1611 differing in details from each other.

The first edition had "then cometh Judas" at Matt. 26:36, which should be "then cometh Jesus".

The 2nd edition repeated 20 words of Exodus 14:10.

The wicked Bible omitted the word "not" from the seventh commandment resulting in the command "to commit adultery". The King's printer paid dearly for that error.

Some printers' errors which continue to this day in our KJ Bibles are:

At Zech. 4:7 the words "head" and "stone" run together, making headstone⁴⁰, where two words are in the original text.

Matt. 23:24 reads **strain at a gnat**⁴¹ when the reading should be "strain out a gnat".

As early as 1612 improvements were made to the text.

413 changes were made in 1613.

In 1659 William Kilburne claimed to have found 20,000 errors in six currently-circulating KJ versions.

Most of our KJ versions are based on the Cambridge revision around 1750.

The point of all this is not to bash the KJV, but to point out that it is a translation like other translations with the problems and errors that are bound to be part of translations.

⁴⁰*The King James Version, 1769.*

⁴¹*The King James Version, 1769.*

It is a remarkably good translation for what the translators had to work with. Its majestic prose and stately language have dominated for over 400 years, but we now have the tools and knowledge to do better. To insist that it is somehow inspired and inerrant in the same way the autographs are is to convey on it a worship which the translators who did it would totally reject.

When we are dealing with the very Word of God it behooves us to get as close as we can to what the original writers penned. We do them no honor to insist that a 16th-century translation which they recognized as imperfect and fallible is perfect and the standard by which other translations should be judged.

We need to remember that when the KJ was published in 1611 it was violently rejected by many who felt it was too liberal and filled with error.

Hugh Broughton, who had been passed over as a translator, wrote of the new translation, "It crosseth me". It was so poorly done that it would grieve him as long as he lived. He insisted that he would rather be tied between wild horses and torn apart than to let it go forth among the poor people with his blessing. He contended that the translators had put the errors in the text and the correct readings in the margins.

The pilgrims sailed for America approx. ten years after the KJ was printed, but they took the Geneva Bible with them as their Bible, considering the new translation to be far too liberal for their taste.

It took approx. 60 years for the KJ to topple the Geneva from its place of prominence, but from then on it reigned supreme till the advent of the modern translations.

Jack Lewis writes:

The KJV came to be loved by the English-speaking people. For more than two centuries it accomplished what a Bible translation should. It spoke directly to the heart of the common man. That he forgot it was a translation and came to think that it was the original Bible does not negate its worth.

Frederick W. Faber, who left the Church of England for the Roman church in 1845, said of the KJV:

It lives on the ear like a music that can never be forgotten, like the sound of church bells which the convert hardly knows how he can forgo. Its felicities seem often to be almost things rather than mere words. It is part of the national mind, and the anchor of national seriousness, nay, it is worshipped with a positive idolatry in extenuation of whose grotesque fanaticism its intrinsic beauty pleads unavailingly with the man of letters and the scholar. The memory of the dead passes into it. The potent traditions of childhood are stereotyped in its verses. The power of all the griefs and trials of a man is hidden beneath its words. It is the representative of his best moments, and all that there has been about him of soft, and gentle, and pure, and penitent, and good, speaks to him for ever out of his English Bible. It is this sacred thing which doubt never dimmed and controversy never soiled. It has been to him all along as the silent, but oh, how intelligible voice of his guardian angel, and in the length and breadth of the land there is not a Protestant, with one spark of religiousness about him, whose spiritual biography is not in his Saxon Bible.