

How We Got Our Bible #7

The King James Version

Introduction:

1. We saw last week that there were several English version of the Bible before the KJV
2. We learned that the Wycliffe Bible was produced before printing was invented in 1450
3. We saw that Tyndale was killed for producing his NT
4. We learned that these Bibles were translated mostly from Latin texts and not from Greek or Hebrew

I. The Reign of Queen Elizabeth – 1558-1603

A. Religious Hostility

1. The Church of England was straddling the fence between the RCC and the Protestant churches on the continent
2. This midway position angered the RCC since the Church of England abolished the power of the pope in England
3. Puritans were angered at the midway position of the Ch of England
 - a) *They wanted a more “pure” worship*
 - b) *They did not want the superstition and rituals that were in the Church of England*
 - c) *This group was growing stronger*

B. The Early Life of James

1. Mary Stuart (Bloody Mary) was Queen of the Scots
 - a) *She was a strong Catholic*
 - b) *At the same time Scotland was strongly and radically protestant*
2. To strengthen her position, Mary married her cousin, Lord Darnley, who was also a strong Romanist
3. The next year their son, James, was born (1566)
4. The following year Darnley was murdered and Mary was forced to abdicate the throne and flee from Scotland
5. The young child was declared King James IV of Scotland
 - a) *He was educated by several tutors*
 - b) *He received strong training in languages so he would be a Protestant king*
 - c) *He was schooled in theology and began to reign in 1583 at the age of 16.*
6. Mary was beheaded in 1587 and the Spanish Armada was defeated in 1588 and the struggle between Catholics / Protestants lessened

C. King James 1 of England

1. In 1603, King James IV of Scotland also became king of England – uniting the two realms
2. He was a protestant, but liberally minded toward the Catholics
3. He did not like the rising Puritans
 - a) *Puritans wanted simplification of ceremonies*
 - b) *They wanted abolition of bishops and archbishops*
 - c) *They wanted greater strictness in morals*
4. James early training helped to make him a student of the Bible
 - a) *He translated the Psalms*
 - b) *He paraphrased the book of Revelation*
 - c) *He liked the Geneva Bible text but did not like it's notes which were too Calvinistic*

II. The King James Version

A. The Hampton Court Conference - 1604

1. The Puritans had a petition with the names of 1000 preachers on it and they sent it to the king
2. Being a new king, he at least wanted to listen to the Puritans
3. They wanted to get rid of the superstitions in the church such as the sign of the cross and wedding rings
4. They wanted to change worship services
5. The Puritans complained that they could not use the Church of England prayer book because it contained translations that were corrupt and not according to the originals
 - a) *The mistranslations were from the Great Bible and the Bishop's Bible*
 - b) *The Puritans liked the Geneva Bible*
6. The suggestion of a new translation of the Bible was pleasing to the vanity and imagination of the new king
 - a) *What better way to start a reign than to have a new translation of the Bible made?*
 - b) *In the past 40 yrs there had been progress made in Greek and Hebrew*
 - c) *The Great Bible was antiquated and cumbersome*
 - d) *The Geneva Bible was a favorite of the people but the king didn't like the Puritan notes*
 - e) *The Bishop's Bible was an inferior production and disrespected by scholars*
7. Dr. John Reynolds made his speech to the king and said, "May your majesty be pleased to direct that the Bible be translated, such versions as are now extant not answering to the originals."

B. The Translators

1. Bishop Bancroft, Bishop of London, wrote to all the bishops of England to ask them to find men in their areas who were learned in the Bible tongues
 - a) *The bishops sent in names of those qualified to do the work*
 - b) *The list of candidates was shown to King James and he and the Bishop of London chose 54 men to be on the translation team*
 - c) *The list included Anglican churchmen, Puritans, linguists and theologians, laymen and divines.*
2. Lancelot Andrews became chairman of the project
 - a) *He was one of the rarest linguists in Christendom*
 - b) *He knew Hebrew, Latin, Chaldee, Syriac and 15 modern languages so well that he could have been the "interpreter general at the confusion of the tongues."*
 - c) *He was one of the rarest linguists in Christendom*
3. John Overall – "He spoke Latin so long that it was troublesome to speak English in a continued oration."
4. Hadrian Savaria – noted Hebraist
5. William Bedwell – "greatest living Arabic scholar"
6. John Rainolds – "his memory and reading were near to a miracle"
7. Thomas Holland – "He was so familiar with the Fathers as though he had been one."
8. Miles Smith – wrote the preface – "Had Hebrew at his finger's ends"
9. Richard Brett – "Skilled and versed to a criticism in Latin, Greek, Chaldee, Arabic and Ethiopic."

C. The Work Begins

1. The translators were divided into three groups
 - a) *The Westminster Group*
 - (1) OT – Genesis – Kings
 - (2) NT – Romans – Jude
 - b) *The Oxford Group*
 - (1) OT – Major and Minor Prophets
 - (2) NT – Gospels, Acts and Revelation
 - c) *The Cambridge Group*
 - (1) OT – Chronicles – Esther
 - (2) NT – Apocrypha
2. This group arrangement was different from previous translations
 - a) *Wycliffe and Tyndale translated alone*
 - b) *The KJV translators were given a passage which they translated and presented to the rest of the group.*
 - c) *It was discussed*
 - d) *When one book of the Bible was completed it was given to the other groups to examine*
 - e) *All groups had some input on the entire translation*

3. At the end of the project there was a committee to examine the final work and make any final changes
 - a) *Two men from each of the 3 groups were chosen to be part of revising work*
 - b) *Beginning in 1609 and continuing daily for 9 months this revising work continued*
4. When it came to pay for their work, King James gave them only his enthusiasm

D. Rules that the Translators Had to Follow

1. The Bishop's Bible was to be followed as much as possible
2. The names of the books of the Bible were to stay the same
3. Old ecclesiastical terms were to be kept – church / baptize, baptism
4. When words had different meanings, the meaning most used by the Fathers was to be used
5. Words that were added to give clarity to the text were to be distinguished from the text
6. New chapter titles were to be added
7. A very perfect genealogy and a map of the holy land were to be added to the new translation
8. The names of Bible characters were to be unchanged
9. The only notes that were allowed were explanations of Greek / Hebrew words and parallel passages

E. The KJV Printed

1. The huge printing job was given to the royal printer – Robert Barker
 - a) *He had a monopoly on printing Bibles, prayer books, statutes and proclamations*
 - b) *His typesetting was poor and there was an average of one mistake for every ten pages of Bible text in the first edition*
 - c) *1611 /1614 editions differed from each other in over 400 places*
2. The new Bible didn't really catch on right away
 - a) *Even some of the translators did not use the new Bible right away*
 - b) *Catholics thought that it leaned too far to the Protestants*
 - c) *Armenians thought it favored the Calvinists*
 - d) *Puritans and Baptists disliked the way it used the words, "church", "baptize", and "Easter"*
3. The KJV turned out to be the most popular English Bible until only recently when the NIV took over as best-seller