

Is My Bible Reliable?
Cornerstone Community Church
Winter of 2021
Tony Slavin
Lesson 6 (Part 2 of Session 5)

H. The Printed Greek New Testament

1. Review

By way of review, there are well over 5,000 manuscripts that span the time frame of the 2nd century to the 16th. These manuscripts come from all over the Mediterranean World and have been classified by geographical regions (i.e., Alexandrian, Byzantine, and Western). We have learned that no two of these manuscripts are identical. The textual critic's job is to practice his/her trade on individual variants to determine which is most likely to be the wording of the original author (e.g., Romans 5:1; *exōmen* or *exomen*; ("let us have . . ." vs "We have . . .").

2. The Manuscript Situation in the Middle Ages

As I mentioned in class last week, starting in the 7th century, the Muslim conquest of North Africa and the Eastern shores of the Mediterranean greatly limited the reproduction of manuscripts from that region. The Western Church's official language was/became Latin, thus the reason we have over 10,000 manuscripts that are translated from Greek to Latin.

The Byzantine Church (which became known as Greek Orthodoxy or Eastern Orthodoxy) continued to use Greek as their *lingua franca*, thus why thousands of the extant Greek manuscripts are from this region.

In the late 4th Century, the Greek and Hebrew Scholar Jerome started his magnum opus translation that became known as the Vulgate. This translation became the official translation of the Western church (i.e., the Roman Catholic Church) all the way up the early 1960s when the 2nd Vatican Council allowed translations to be made from the Greek and Hebrew instead of just the Vulgate.

3. The Religious Situation in the Western Church in the Late Middle Ages

As we know, certain members of the Roman Catholic Church grew discontented with what they perceived as corruption in the hierarchy of the RC church. The German priest, Martin Luther, being chief among them. This discontent became the motivation behind what became known as the Reformation. These discontents were called Protestants (i.e., *those who protested*). They were not trying to start a "new" Church, they wanted the current one to be reformed. We all know that outcome.

It was also during this time that the last Christian city, Constantinople, fell to the Ottoman Empire in 1453. The Muslims renamed the city Istanbul which is its name to this day (it is also on my bucket list to visit). When the Christians fled this invasion, many fled to West and brought with them their Greek manuscripts.

Now, remember what is going on in the West at this time. The Renaissance had started in Italy a generation before this event. One of the movements that drove the Renaissance was called *ad fontes* which roughly translates "*back to the sources*." These "sources" included the Latin and Greek classics

but they also included New Testament manuscripts. This fueled the Reformers' and other scholars' passion for pursuit of what exactly God did say to His Church.

4. *The Origin of the Textus Receptus*

a **The Race to Publish First**

One of those scholars I just mentioned was a man named Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam. He was a Dutchman who was widely considered to have been one of the great scholars of the northern Renaissance. Though he was loyal to the Roman Catholic Church, he too wanted to see reform take place among its priests and bishops. Given that he was Renaissance man, he wanted people to have access to the Greek manuscripts so he set out to publish an Edition of the Greek New Testament.

i **The Complutensian Polyglot**

The first printed Greek NT was not Erasmus' but an edition by the cardinal primate of Spain, named Francisco Ximenes de Cisneros (1437-1517). His edition was called the Complutensian Polyglot printed in 1514. A polyglot is an edition with several versions and/or languages in columns. This edition had the Old and New Testament, with columns in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek, and the Aramaic Targums at the bottom of the page. ***Though this was the first one printed it was not the first text published for the public to purchase.*** For various reasons the public distribution was delayed for several years.

ii **Erasmus wins the race**

With the knowledge that Ximenes was going to be soon publishing his polyglot, Erasmus, spurred on by his publisher Johann Froben, hurried to get his published first. His original desire was to simply find a complete manuscript to give to Froben with his own Latin translation. To his dismay, he could not find a complete manuscript worthy of the goal. So, he hastily gathered a half dozen or so manuscripts that needed correcting and started the printing process on October 2nd 1515. It was published on March 1st, 1516. As Bruce Metzger informs us:

As Erasmus himself declared later, [this edition] was 'precipitated rather than edited.' Owing to the haste in production, the volume contains hundreds of typographical errors; in fact, Scrivener once declared '[It] is in that respect the most faulty book I know.' Since Erasmus could not find a manuscript which contained the entire Greek Testament, he utilized several for various parts of the New Testament. For most of the text he relied on two rather inferior manuscripts from a monastic library at Basle, one of the Gospels and one of the Acts and Epistles, both dating from about the twelfth century. Erasmus compared them with two or three others of the same books and entered occasional corrections for the printer in the margins or between the lines of the Greek script. For the book of Revelation he had but one manuscript, dating from the twelfth century, which he had borrowed from his friend Reuchlin. Unfortunately, this manuscript lacked the final leaf, which had contained the last six verses of the book. For these verses, as well as a few other passages throughout the book where the Greek text of the Apocalypse and the adjoining Greek Commentary with which the manuscript was supplied are so mixed up as to be almost indistinguishable, Erasmus depended on the Latin Vulgate, translating this text into Greek. As would be expected from such a procedure, here and there in Erasmus' self-made Greek text are readings which have never been found in any

known Greek manuscript - but which are still perpetuated today in printings of the so-called Textus Receptus of the Greek New Testament.⁴⁷

Because Erasmus' text was the first one published, it became the standard text that future scholars used. Erasmus subsequently published several more editions that improved the text. Likewise, over next 100 years, many subsequent Greek scholars edited and improved upon his work. Martin Luther used Erasmus 2nd edition to translate his German edition of the New Testament in 1522.

Subsequent editors included Robert Stephanus (a Protestant whose real name was Robert Estienne). He improved the text by consulting Ximenes Complutensian polyglot. Stephanus is the man who separated the Greek text into verses, adding to the chapter divisions that the 12th century scholar Stephen Langdon added to the Latin text. We basically still follow these today.

Another editor was Theodore Beza (successor to John Calvin in Geneva), who published several editions of the Greek NT. It was his 3rd edition of 1588-89 that the translators of the Authorized Version (i.e., KJV) leaned heavily upon.

In 1633 we are introduced to the phrase "*textus receptus*." The preface to the 2nd edition of the Elzevir Brothers text boasted that "the reader has the *text* which is now *received* by all, in which we give nothing changed or corrupted." (Latin: "*Textum ergo habes, nunc ab omnibus receptum: in quo nihil immutatum aut corruptum damus*"). This unwittingly started a tradition that has not died to this day.

Again to quote Metzger:

Thus from what was a more or less casual phrase advertising the edition (what modern publishers might call a 'blurb'), there arose the designation 'Textus Receptus', or commonly the received, standard text. Partly because of this catchword the form of the Greek text incorporated in the editions that Stephanus, Beza, and the Elzevirs had published succeeded in establishing itself as 'the only true text' of the New Testament, and was slavishly reprinted in hundreds of subsequent editions. It lies at the basis of the King James Version and of all the principal Protestant translations in the languages of Europe prior to 1881. So superstitious has been the reverence accorded the *Textus Receptus* that in some cases attempts to criticize or emend it have been regarded as akin to sacrilege. Yet its textual basis is essentially a handful of late and haphazardly collected minuscule manuscripts, and in dozen passages its reading is supported by no known Greek witness.⁵⁰

We will now turn to the history of the English Bible that parallels this history of Erasmus' Greek text.

IX Translations of the Bible

A Translation Methodology

If the foundation for all truth is God's Word, which translation should we read? One of the most common questions that people ask is "which translation is the 'best' or 'right' one?" There are a

⁴⁷Bruce M. Metzger, The Text Of The New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) :99-100.

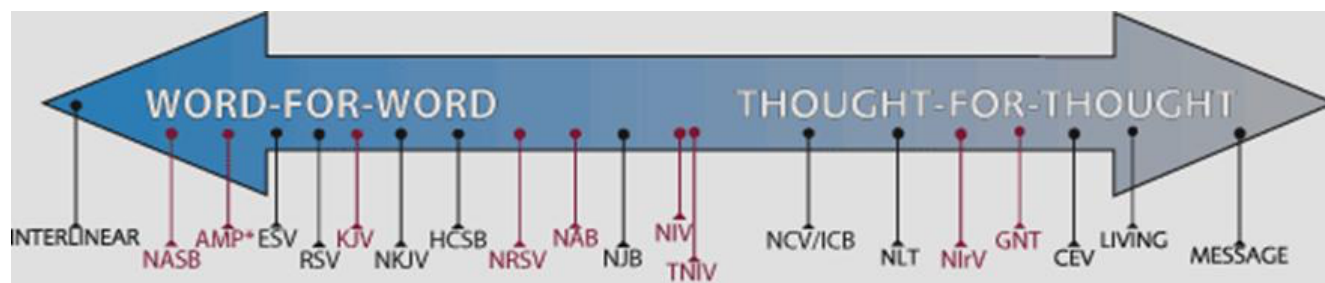
⁵⁰Metzger, 106.

variety of opinions to this question. Most people choose their translation, not by careful thought, but by default. Either they use the translation their pastor uses or the first translation they had after their conversion. **But we need to put great thought into which translation we read and why.** Let's look at the basic reason why there are many different types of translations out there.

Translation Methodology We have many translations on the market today, so what is the best one? Is there a best translation? Before we can answer that we need to first understand something about translation methodology. see the graph below, and remember that this graph represents a spectrum and not an *either/or* situation.

Formal Equivalence

Dynamic (Functional Equivalence)



NASB	New American Standard Bible (1971; update 1995)	NIV	New International Version (1984)
AMP	Amplified Bible (1965)	TNIV	Today's New International Version (NT 2001, OT 2005)
ESV	English Standard Version (2001)	NCV	New Century Version
RSV	Revised Standard Version (1952)	NLT ¹	New Living Translation (1 st ed. 1996; 2 nd ed. 2004)
KJV	King James Version (1611; significantly revised 1769)	NIrV	New International reader's Version
NKJV	New King James Version (1982)	GNT	Good News Translation (also Good News Bible)
HCSB	Holman Christian Standard Version (2004)	CEV	Contemporary English Version
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version (1989)	Living	Living Bible (1950). Paraphrase by Ken Taylor. Liberal treatment of 'blood.'
NAB	New American Bible (Catholic, 1970, 1986 (NT), 1991 (Psalms))	Message	The Message by Eugene Peterson (1991-2000s)
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible (Catholic, 1986; revision of 1966 Jerusalem Bible)		

Formal equivalence tries to achieve a *word for word* translation that still makes sense. Notice the following statement by the Lockman Foundation (the owners of the NASB)

The editorial board had a twofold purpose in making this translation: to adhere as closely as possible to the original languages of the Holy Scriptures, and to make the translation in a fluent and readable style according to current English usage. . . The attempt has been made to render the grammar and terminology in contemporary English. When it was felt that the word-for-word literalness was unacceptable to the modern reader, a change was made in the direction of a more current English idiom⁵⁴

⁵⁴From the forward of my NASB written by the Lockman Foundation.

Dynamic Equivalence, (or functional equivalence) on the other hand, strives for a *thought for thought* translation. These translations are concerned with getting the meaning of the text across, even if it takes twice the words that the original language used. The NIV's goal is to have a translation that is understandable to all the English speaking world.

The first concern of the translators has been the accuracy of the translation and its fidelity to the *thought* of the biblical writers. They have weighed the significance of the lexical and grammatical details of the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts. At the same time, they have striven for more than a word-for-word translation. Because thought patterns and syntax differ from language to language, faithful communication of the meaning of the writers of the Bible demands frequent modifications in *sentence structure* and constant regard for the contextual meanings of words.⁵⁵

It is important to remember that ***all translation is interpretation***. The closer your translation is to dynamic equivalence, the more interpretation there will be. Many times a more dynamic equivalent translation, like the NIV, takes away an interpretive choice from you. On the other side of the argument is that the NASB and KJV do not always make sense because English and Greek are not syntactically similar languages. ***Therefore, my recommendation is to always have one of each available***, and if you are a teacher, always know and read the translations of your students.

Let's compare Romans 8:1-4 in the NIV, NLT, and the NASB

See Handout

Let's ask a few questions:

Which translation is the best?

Which translation methodology is the best?

Let's make some other comparisons in the various translations that we use.

1 John 2:1-2

Psalm 23

1 Peter 3:7

→ Which verses do you want to look at?

⁵⁵From the preface to the NIV written by The Committee On Bible Translation.

B. The History of the English Bible

1 Old English Translations

During the reign of King Alfred the Great (871-901), portions of the Bible were translated into English for various reasons (books for parish priests, law codes, etc.) There was a translation of the gospels known as the Wessex Gospels, But a full English translation of the Bible was not accomplished till the modern English period.

Example: Fæder ure þu þe eart on heofonum, Si þin nama gehalgod. to becume þin rice, gewurþe ðin willa, on eorðan swa swa on heofonum. urne gedæghwamlican hlaf syle us todæg, and forgyf us ure gyltas, swa swa we forgyfað urum gyltendum. and ne gelæd þu us on costnunge, ac alys us of yfele. soþlice.

➤ *Can anyone guess what passage this is?*

2 Middle English Translations

In 1066 the Norman's (i.e. French) invaded England which resulted in a permanent change to the English language. The only translation from this period that we have is Wycliffe's. His translation is an example of how English looked at the end of the Middle English period.

a Wycliffe Bible

Wycliffe was an eminent Oxford Scholar who was displeased with the feudal hierarchy within the Church. He believed that every man was directly and personally responsible to God. So each man must know what God expects from him; thus the English citizen needed the Bible in the vernacular so he could properly obey God. This placed Wycliffe among the ranks of the Lollards who had similar doctrines about the believer. Since Lollards were regarded as heretics, Wycliffe was likewise.

The first version (1380-1384) of Wycliffe's Bible was quite literal and he actually had little to do with the translation work. The second edition (1388) adopted a more dynamic translation but was finished 4 years after Wycliffe's death. His disciple John Purvey was one of the major moving forces behind both editions. Though Wycliffe's edition was a literal translation of the Latin,

Wycliffe's "*Bible*" was nevertheless a landmark in the English language. Over 1,000 English words were first recorded in it, most of them Latin-based, often via French, including *barbarian, birthday, canopy, child-bearing, communication, cradle, crime, dishonour, emperor, envy, godly, graven, humanity, glory, injury, justice, lecher, madness, mountainous, multitude, novelty, oppressor, philistine, pollute, profession, puberty, schism, suddenly, unfaithful, visitor, zeal*, etc, as well as well-known phrases like *an eye for an eye, woe is me*, etc. However, not all of Wycliffe's neologisms became enshrined in the language (e.g. *mandement, describe, cratch*).¹

¹ Taken from http://www.thehistoryofenglish.com/history_middle.html on March 30th, 2016

3 *Modern English Translations*

Modern English starts sometime in the late 14th century to early 15th century, the exact date cannot be determined like that of Old English to middle English. Linguists suggest that “a major factor separating Middle English from Modern English is known as the Great Vowel Shift, a radical change in pronunciation during the 15th, 16th and 17th Century . . .”² It is in the early part of the modern period that we start to get a proliferation of English translations.

a **Tyndale’s Bible (1525-6)**

In 1408 the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Arundel, convened what became known as the Constitutions of Oxford. It stated that any person that was caught with a Wycliffe Bible could be tried for heresy. The seventh of the thirteen constitutions read

*The translation of the text of Holy Scripture out of one tongue into another is a dangerous thing; as blessed Jerome testifies, because it is not easy to make the sense in all respects the same; as the same blessed Jerome confesses that he made frequent mistakes in this business, although he was inspired: therefore we enact and ordain that no one henceforth do by his own authority translate any text of Holy Scripture into the English tongue or any other by way of book, pamphlet, or treatise. Nor let any such book, pamphlet, or treatise now lately composed in the time of John Wicklif aforesaid, or since, or hereafter to be composed, be read in whole or in part, in public or in private, under pain of the greater excommunication, till that translation have been approved by the diocesan of the place, or if occasion shall require, by a provincial Council. Let him that do contrary be punished in the same manner as a supporter of heresy and error.*³

With this negative development in the history of the English Bible came some positive developments.

1. The Printing press.
2. The revival of learning (i.e., the Renaissance).
3. The influx of Greek manuscripts to the west after the fall of Constantinople in 1453.
4. The plethora of translations on the Continent (in Spanish, French, Italian, and German; Luther’s being the most influential). At this point enters William Tyndale.

Tyndale was born in 1494/5 and by the time he was 17 years old he had already graduated from Oxford with his Bachelor of Arts. Three years later he had his master’s degree. When Tyndale was exposed to Erasmus’ book, “*The Christian Soldier’s Handbook*” (also known as the *Enchiridion*) in which Erasmus insisted that the Christian must use the Scripture as the court of appeal in all matters of

² Taken from http://www.thehistoryofenglish.com/history_early_modern.html on March 30th, 2016.

³ Taken from <http://www.bible-researcher.com/arundel.html>, where you can read the entire document.

life and doctrine.⁵⁸ This helped Tyndale develop his belief that the reason for vast ignorance among the English clergy and laity is that they did not read the Bible in the vernacular.

Since the *Constitutions of Oxford* were still in effect, Tyndale moved to the Continent in 1524 where he stayed in both Germany and France. In 1526 he published the English NT in Worms, Germany. This edition was primarily translated from the Greek with reference to Luther's German translation and the Latin Vulgate. It is interesting to note that in Tyndale's table of contents the order of books is different than ours today. He puts Hebrews, James, Jude, and Revelation as the last four books of the Bible and they are indented without any numbering system identifying them. The last book that is numbered is 3rd John at #23. This has caused many people to suggest that Tyndale thought less of these four books than the other 23. Whether or not we can confidently say this is questionable. But what is not questionable is that Tyndale simply copied Luther's table of Contents. Luther "*did not think that these four books had the same canonical quality as the 'capital books', and expresses his opinion vigorously in his prefaces to the books in question.*"⁵⁹ This order in the Table of Contents stayed that way until the Great Bible of 1539.

So, the Tyndale Bible became the first **printed** Bible in English. It was based on Erasmus' Greek Text, 3rd edition. The Ecclesiastical leaders of England were not pleased with Tyndale's translation *or his annotations in the margins*. Since the British Monarchy was greatly opposed to Lutheranism⁶⁰ and since Tyndale spent time in Germany while translating, it was supposed by many that Tyndale's translation was simply an English version of Luther's German edition.

Tyndale's translation was banned from England but that did not stop its circulation. In an attempt to stop its distribution Bishop Cuthbert Tonstall devised a plan to buy all the remaining editions and publicly burn them. This did take place, but it was Tyndale who benefited because he used the proceeds from the sale and published his 2nd edition. One of the most ardent opponents of Tyndale was The Lord Chancellor, Sir Thomas More. He and Tyndale wrote public letters back and forth denouncing one another's views. More's primary problem was with Tyndale's choice of English words such as "congregation" instead of "church," "elder" instead of "priest," and "repentance" instead of "penance."

Eventually, Tyndale translated portions of the OT from Hebrew. It followed a dynamic equivalence methodology. He also revised the first edition of his NT in 1534 and it is universally accepted that this revision is quite superior to the 1st edition. This edition of Tyndale greatly influenced succeeding translations. F. F. Bruce says "***nine-tenths of the Authorized New Testament (KJV) is still Tyndale, and the best is still his.***" More than that: in a number of places where the Authorized Version of 1611 departs from Tyndale's wording, the Revisers of 1881 return to it.

Tyndale, in the later years of his life, lived in Antwerp, which was a free city, and his opponents could not arrest him there. So, on May 21st, 1535 he was kidnapped in the middle of the night and taken to a fortress outside of Brussels. He was tried and convicted of heresy and subsequently executed in August of 1536. John Foxe states in his book of Martyrs "he was brought forth to the place of execution, was there tied to the stake, and then strangled first by the hangman, and

⁵⁸Bruce, *The English Bible*. 28.

⁵⁹Bruce, 34.

⁶⁰An interesting historical note is that Henry the VIII wrote a book against Luther called *Assertion of the Seven Sacraments*. Due to this book, Pope Leo X gave Henry the title "***Defender of the Faith***" which all English Monarchs have used till this day.

afterwards with fire consumed . . . crying thus at the stake with a fervent zeal and loud voice: ‘Lord, open the King of England’s eyes’”

c **The Coverdale Bible (1535)**

What Tyndale was unaware of was that King Henry VIII had already given permission for a Bible to be circulated throughout England. Myles Coverdale’s Bible was titled “*The Bible: that is the holy Scripture of the Olde and New Testament, faithfully and truly translated out of Douche* (i.e. German) *and Latyn into Englishe*. This Bible was the first whole bible in English. Since Coverdale was not the scholar that Tyndale was, he claims to have used several sources. Besides the original languages Coverdale depended heavily upon Tyndale’s Bible. He also wisely dedicated it to Henry VIII. Henry’s wife at that time was Anne Boleyn and she was interested in having the Coverdale Bible available in England. Upon her untimely death, the Coverdale Bible also struggled to gain wide influence among the clergy due to its Lutheran influence. One of the unique features of the OT was that Coverdale separated the Apocrypha and made it an appendix at the end of the OT.

d **Matthew’s Bible (1537)**

The Title page reads *The Byble which is all the holy Scripture: in whych are containyd the Olde and Newe Testament, truly and purely translated into Englysh by Thomas Matthew*. Thomas Matthew was the pen name for John Rogers, an associate of Tyndale’s. This Bible was licensed by the King himself. This happened as a result of Archbishop Cranmer asking Sir Thomas Cromwell to convince the King of the need for a legal English Bible for the churches. Cranmer’s letter to Cromwell asks that it “*be sold and read of every person, without danger of any act, proclaimed or ordinance heretofore granted to the contrary, until such time that we, the bishops, shall set forth a better translation, which I think will not be till a day after doomsday.*”⁶¹ The result was that the Matthew Bible and Coverdale’s 1537 edition were both approved for public use.

Here is the ironic thing, Matthew’s Bible is actually a reprint of Tyndale’s Pentateuch and historical books with the remainder of the OT being Coverdale’s; the NT is entirely Tyndale’s. So, the man who was martyred for his heretical views just two years previous ends up getting his own translation authorized by some of the people who asked for his death.

e **The Great Bible (1539)**

As a result of the royal authorization of English Bibles, Some Bishops were requiring that every Church in their diocese had a Bible chained to a desk which allowed the literate to read it and the illiterate to hear it as often as they liked. Both the Coverdale and the Matthew Bible were used in this manner. But due to the clearly protestant notes in the margins of the Matthew Bible, the Bishops agreed to revise it and make it more presentable. The revision work was assigned to Myles Coverdale. This translation again was primarily Tyndale’s Bible with some revisions to improve it. The 2nd edition of the Great Bible was also known as Cranmer’s Bible” because of the preface that he wrote. The Great Bible went through many editions and was ultimately required to be chained to a desk in every church in England.

Even though there was a great advance in the allowance of owning and publicly reading the Scriptures during this time, it did not last long. With the spread of Protestantism, the English

⁶¹Bruce, 64-65.

Parliament recognized the role the Scriptures were playing in it. In 1543 Parliament passed an act *“for the advancement of true religion and for the abolishment of the contrary.”* According to Bruce this *“banned ‘the crafty, false and untrue translation of Tyndale’, made it a crime for any unlicensed person to read or expound the Bible publicly to others, and went so far as to forbid even the private reading of the Bible by people belonging to the lower classes of society.”*⁶² In the last year of Henry’s life, he even went further, he ordained that no man or women, no matter their status, was to have a Tyndale or Coverdale Bible.

These attempts were incredibly absurd when you realize that The Great Bible was in essence, Tyndale’s Bible edited by Myles Coverdale. With the rise of Edward VI to replace his father, many of these negative attitudes were reversed and there was a resurgence of the public reading of the Scripture in the Church services in English.

In 1553, When Edward’s sister, Mary Tudor, also known as Bloody Mary, succeeded Edward she reversed Edward’s reforms. She had translator John Rogers (Matthew’s Bible) and English Bible advocate Thomas Cranmer executed. Coverdale escaped to the Continent to avoid death and church services were no longer held in English. But even during this time of Bible burnings the Great Bible was not removed from Churches because it was accepted by her Father, Henry the VIII, but many churches’ Bibles had become worn out and dilapidated. After Mary’s 5 year reign, her sister Elizabeth returned to Edward’s reforms and demanded that the largest bible possible be placed in all English churches for the people to read.

f The Geneva Bible (1560)

Following the Great Bible’s success, a man named William Wittingham went to Geneva to study with the likes of Calvin, Beza, and John Knox. Other English exiles (e.g. Coverdale) also resided there and with the leadership of Wittingham they revised the Great Bible and greatly improved it, especially the portions of the OT that were not translated by Tyndale. These portions had never been translated from the Hebrew before, only the Latin.

According to Bobrick,

It was unquestionably the most scholarly, well annotated, and accurate English Bible yet to appear. . . . As in many Bibles today, words not in the original but inserted to complete the sense were printed in italic, and for ease of reference the text was divided (for the first time, in English) into chapter and verse. . . [There was a] running commentary of explanatory notes. Some two thousand alternate readings and 725 literal renderings were packed into the margins of the New Testament alone.⁶³

Bobrick continues,

Their work won broad acceptance, soon became and long remained the household Bible of English-speaking Protestants and was the Bible on which Shakespeare and other great Elizabethan poets and dramatists were reared. Within England its recognized superiority to all other versions, and its wide distribution and use, made it a powerful instrument of religious reform. Over the course of the next eighty-five years (between 1560 and 1644), it went through 140 editions, sixty during the reign of Queen Elizabeth alone.⁶⁴

⁶²Bruce, 78.

⁶³Benson Bobrick, Wide as Waters. 175.

⁶⁴Ibid.

It is interesting to note that it was never appointed to be used in the Churches of England. Bruce states, The notes of the Geneva Bible are famous, largely because they irritated James I so much; yet they are mild in comparison with Tyndale's. They are, to be sure, unashamedly Calvinistic in doctrine, and therefore offensive to readers who find Calvinism offensive; but for half a century the people of England and Scotland, who read the Geneva Bible in preference to any other version, learned much of their biblical exegesis from these notes. One may surmise that the Geneva Bible, translation and notes together, played no little part in making British Puritanism the strongly vertebrate movement that it was.⁶⁵

But it should be surprising that it was not appointed to be used in the Churches of Scotland since 1560 was the year of the Scottish Reformation. It would seem natural that John Knox would use the translation that was achieved by his fellow exiles in Geneva. It is also interesting to note that in the 1611 A.V. preface, titled "*The Translators to the Readers*," the Bible quotations come not from their own translation (i.e., the A.V.) but from the Geneva Bible. In a closing note of humor, The Geneva Bible was also known as the "Breeches" Bible due the translation in Genesis 3:7 where it says that Adam and Eve sewed together fig leaves and made themselves "breeches."

g The Bishop's Bible (1568)

Even though the Geneva Bible was accepted in Scotland, it was rejected by the English government due to its overt Reformed theology. Therefore, the throne and the Church agreed that they needed an official Bible that could be used in the Church. The Great Bible was now passé due to the superiority of the Geneva Bible. So, the Bishops, under the authority of Archbishop Matthew Parker, set out to revise the Great Bible. The revisers were only to change the Great Bible where the Greek or Hebrew was clearly not well represented by the English. They were also not to put any sectarian note in the margins like the Geneva Bible had. The Bishops Bible was placed in every church in England and went through 19 editions between 1568 and 1606.

h The Douay Rheims Bible (1609)

This is the Roman Catholic version of the English Bible. It is translated from the Latin Vulgate. Douai (or Douay) and Rheims were cities on the Continent where there were English Catholic schools. The Old Testament was translated at Douay and the NT was translated at Rheims. Together these volumes were published in 1609 to form the Douay-Rheims Bible. Here we can see the English rendition of the Latin where "do penance" was the translation instead of "repent." (See Acts 2:38 for an example).

⁶⁵Bruce, 90.

History of the English Bible

Wycliffe NT 1380/OT 1382

Not entirely translated by Wycliffe but
by Purvey

Translated from the Latin

Constitutions of Oxford 1408

Tyndale NT 1526/OT Portions 1534

2nd edition 1534

Excellent language scholar and godly man.

1st NT trans. from Greek into English, Only
finished portion of OT from Hebrew.

Martyred Oct. 6, 1536

Luther's German NT published in 1522

Coverdale 1535

Consulted many translations of various
languages.

Dedicated to Henry the VIII

Basically Tyndale's translation

Apocrypha separated at end.

Churches allowed to read

Henry VIII, reigned from 1509-1547

Matthew Bible 1537

Thomas Matthew was pen name for John Rogers.

Approved by King through Cranmer/Cromwell.

Bishops encouraged Churches to have for
public reading

Apocrypha separate.

Revision of Coverdale and Tyndale.

John Rogers martyred by bloody Mary in 1555

Great Bible 1539

Cromwell asks Coverdale to revise Matthew Bible.

Called "great" because of size 16 ½ by 11 inches.

Henry VIII decreed this Bible be in every church.

Bible reading becoming very popular among the Laity.

Law: Can't read out loud during service.

In An Act of Parliament of 1543, King outlawed the owning of the Tyndale and Coverdale's translation

Edward VI 1547-1553

Bible widely published during Edward's reign.

Mary of Tudor 1553-58

Bloody Mary kills many Protestants and suppresses English Bible translations.

Geneva Bible 1560

Lead by William Whittingham.
Calvinistic notes.
Scotland shakes off R.C. rule.
Law requires citizens to buy Geneva Bible.
Bible of Puritans and Pilgrims.

Elizabeth I 1558-1603

Reverses R.C. policies of Mary

Bishop's Bible 1568

In many ways, was a response to the Geneva Bible.

Douay-Rheims Bible NT-1582; OT-1609-10

Translated from the Latin Vulgate,
It had little success among RC readers

The **Geneva** and **Bishop's Bible** became the standard translations in English until the Authorized Version (KJV) was published in 1611.

Examples of English Bible Translations of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew 6

Wycliffe (Middle English; 1380)

But in preiying nyle yee speke myche, as hethene men doon, for thei gessen that thei ben herd in her myche speche. Therfor nyle ye be maad lich to hem, for your fadir woot what is nede to you, bifore that ye axen hym. And thus ye schulen preye, Oure fadir that art in heuenes, halewid be thi name; thi kyngdome come to; be thi wille don `in erthe as in heuene; yyue to vs this dai oure `breed ouer othir substaunce; and foryyue to vs oure dettis, as we foryyuen to oure dettouris; and lede vs not in to temptacioun, but delyuere vs fro yuel. Amen.

Tyndale (1526/1534)

And when ye praye bable not moche as the hethe do: for they thincke that they shalbe herde for their moche bablynges sake. Be ye not lyke them therfore. For youre father knoweth wherof ye haue neade before ye axe of him. After thys maner therfore praye ye. O oure father which arte in heven halowed be thy name. Let thy kyngdome come. Thy wyll be fulfilled as well in erth as it ys in heven. Geve vs this daye oure dayly breede. And forgeve vs oure treaspases even as we forgeve oure trespassers. Mat And leade vs not into temptacion: but delyver vs from evell. For thyne is the kyngedome and the power and the glorye for ever. Amen.

Coverdale (1535)

And when ye praye, bable not moch, as ye Hethen do: for they thinke that they shalbe herde, for their moch bablynges sake. Be not ye lyke them therfore. For youre father knoweth where of ye haue nede, before ye axe of him. After thys maner therfore shall ye praye: O oure father which art in heauen, halowed be thy name. Thy kyngdome come. Thy wyll be fulfilled vpon earth as it is in heauen. Geue vs this daye oure dayly bred. And forgeue vs oure dettes, as we also forgeue oure detters. And lede vs not in to teptacion: but delyuer vs from euell. For thyne is the kyngdome, and the power, and the glorye for euer. Amen.

Matthew (1537)

But when ye praye, bable not much as the Heathen do: for they thinke that they shalbe herde, for their mucche bablynge sake. Be ye not lyke them therfore. For your father knoweth wherof ye haue neade, before ye axe of him after this manner therfore pray ye. Our father which art in heauen, halowed be thy name. Let thy kingdome come. Thy wyll be fulfilled, as well in earth, as it is in heauen. Geue vs this daye our daylye breade. And forgeue vs our trespasses, euen as we forgeue oure trespassers. And lead vs not into temptaciou. But delyuer vs from euyll. For thyne is the kingdome and the power, and the glorye for euer Amen.

Great Bible (1539)

But when ye praye bable not moch, as the heathen do: for they thyncke it will come to passe, that they shalbe herd for their moch bablynges sake. Be not ye therfore lyke vnto them. For youre father knoweth what thinges ye haue neade of before ye aske of him: after thys maner therfore praye ye. Oure father which art in heauen, halowed be thy name. Lett thy kyngdome come. Thy will be fulfilled, as

well in earth, as it is in heauen. Geue vs this daye oure daylye bread. And forgeue vs our dettes, as we forgeue oure detters. And leade vs not into temptacyon: but delyuer vs from euyl. For thyne is the kyngdome and the power, and the glorye for euer. Amen.

Geneva Bible (1560)

Also when ye pray, vse no vaine repetitions as the Heathen: for they thinke to be heard for their much babbling. Be ye not like them therefore: for your Father knoweth whereof ye haue neede, before ye aske of him. After this maner therefore pray ye, Our father which art in heauen, halowed be thy name. Thy Kingdome come. Thy will be done euen in earth, as it is in heauen. Giue vs this day our dayly bread. And forgiue vs our dettes, as we also forgiue our detters. And leade vs not into tentation, but deliuer vs from euill: for thine is the kingdome, and the power, and the glorie for euer. Amen.

Bishops Bible (1568)

But when ye pray, babble not much, as the heathen do. For they thynke [it wyl come to passe,] that they shalbe heard, for theyr much bablinges sake. Be not ye therefore lyke vnto them. For your father knoweth, what thynges ye haue nede of, before ye aske of hym. After this maner therefore pray ye. O our father, which art in heauen, halowed be thy name. Let thy kyngdome come. Thy wyll be done, as well in earth, as it is in heauen. Geue vs this day our dayly breade. And forgeue vs our dettes, as we forgeue our detters. And leade vs not into temptation, but delyuer vs from euyl. For thyne is the kyngdome, and the power, and the glory, for euer. Amen.

Douai-Rheims Bible (NT-1582; OT-1609-10)

Acts 2:38 But Peter said to them: **Do penance:** and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins. And you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Acts 14:22 And when they had ordained to them **priests** in every church and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, in whom they believed.

Acts 2:38 Peter *said* to them, “**Repent**, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. NASB

Acts 14:23 When they had appointed **elders** for them in every church, having prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed. NASB

i The King James Version of 1611.

First let's read a lengthy quote from F.F. Bruce regarding the history behind the KJV. Following are the facts about the KJV.

- It is also called the Authorized Version because it was promoted by King James I, but to be truly “authorized” it would need to be by an act of Parliament, which it never was. ***It was only called the King James Version in America.***
- It is the first English translation to be translated by a committee. There were approx. 50 men divided into 6 groups. Three groups worked on the OT (*Gen-2 Kings, 1 Chron – Ecclesiastes, Isaiah – Malachi*), one group worked on the Apocrypha, and two groups worked on the NT (*Gospels, Acts, Apocalypse* while the other group worked on *the Epistles*).
- The Bishop's Bible was to be used as the basis for the revision, and any changes were to be in light of the Greek and Hebrew text.
- Theodore Beza's (successor to John Calvin in Geneva) 3rd edition of 1588-89 was the primary Greek Text used in their NT translation. This text was based on approx. a dozen late Greek manuscript (most between the 12th & 16th century)
- Even though it is considered a formal equivalence translation, it still tried to use a variety of different English words when translating the same word in the original (i.e. it used dynamic equivalent principles also).
- There were to be no marginal notes that expressed theology because of the negative reaction to the Geneva Bible's footnotes. They did insert translational footnotes.
- All the revisers were approved personally by the King and they were very able scholars.
- While the translators were given free room and board, they did their work for free.
- The revisers put in very heavy punctuation in the text for the purpose of proper public reading, this is especially true of proper names.

This translation became the standard for the English-speaking world for the next 350 years, it superceded both the Great Bible and the Bishop's Bible.

The KJV went through several revisions. The early major ones occurred in 1613 (where over 300 changes were made), 1629 and 1638. The need for revisions was in part due to mistakes in printing. Below are some of the most humorous mistakes.

- The 1631 edition was known as the “Wicked Bible” because it forgot to put “not” in the 7th commandment.
- The 1717 edition was known as the “Vinegar Bible” because of the misspelling of the parable of the Vineyard in Luke 20.
- The 1795 edition was called the “Murderers Bible” because of the misspelling of *filled* to *killed* in Mark 7:27, “Let the Children first be killed.”

In the Cambridge edition of 1762 and the Oxford edition of 1769 the spelling of words was modernized so that it matched common usage. ***This is basically the same version we have today.***

The KJV had the Apocrypha from day one included as an appendix between the testaments. The Puritans opposed this and wanted it excluded. In 1615 Archbishop Abbot forbid any printer from excluding the Apocrypha. If they did exclude it, they would face one year of imprisonment. In time, the Geneva Bible stopped printing the Apocrypha and the Westminster Confession of Faith (1646) stated that the Apocrypha had no authority in the church. Those who were persecuted and fled England to go to America took with them the Geneva Bible and not the A.V. But by the dawn of the 18th century the KJV had sole reign over the English speaking world.