

# A Light in the Darkness

THE DOCTRINE OF THE WORD OF GOD



# Brief Review of Highlights...

- Septuagint
- Latin Vulgate
- John Wycliffe
- William Tyndale



# The Word Became... English

- The Great Bible
  - Great because of its large size and not due to its translation quality, Miles Coverdale revised Thomas Matthews's earlier (1537) English translation in 1539.
  - Authorized by the King of England (King Henry VIII), it measured over fourteen inches tall.





# The Word Became... English

- The Geneva Bible

- A Calvinistically oriented work, the Geneva Bible was first published in 1560 (though not in England until 1575) and was the primary Bible used by English Protestants during the 16<sup>th</sup> century, including individuals like William Shakespeare, Oliver Cromwell, John Knox, and John Bunyan. It

- Contrary to popular belief, the Geneva Bible was the Bible taken over on the Mayflower and the Bible of the Jamestown settlement.
    - It is sometimes called the “Breeches Bible” because it says that Adam and Eve “sewed figge leaves together and made themselves breeches” (Gen. 3:7).
    - The Geneva Bible contained many Reformed notes and/or annotations, much like the ESV Study Bible of its time, including identifying the Pope with the beast in Rev. 11:7.







# The Word Became... English

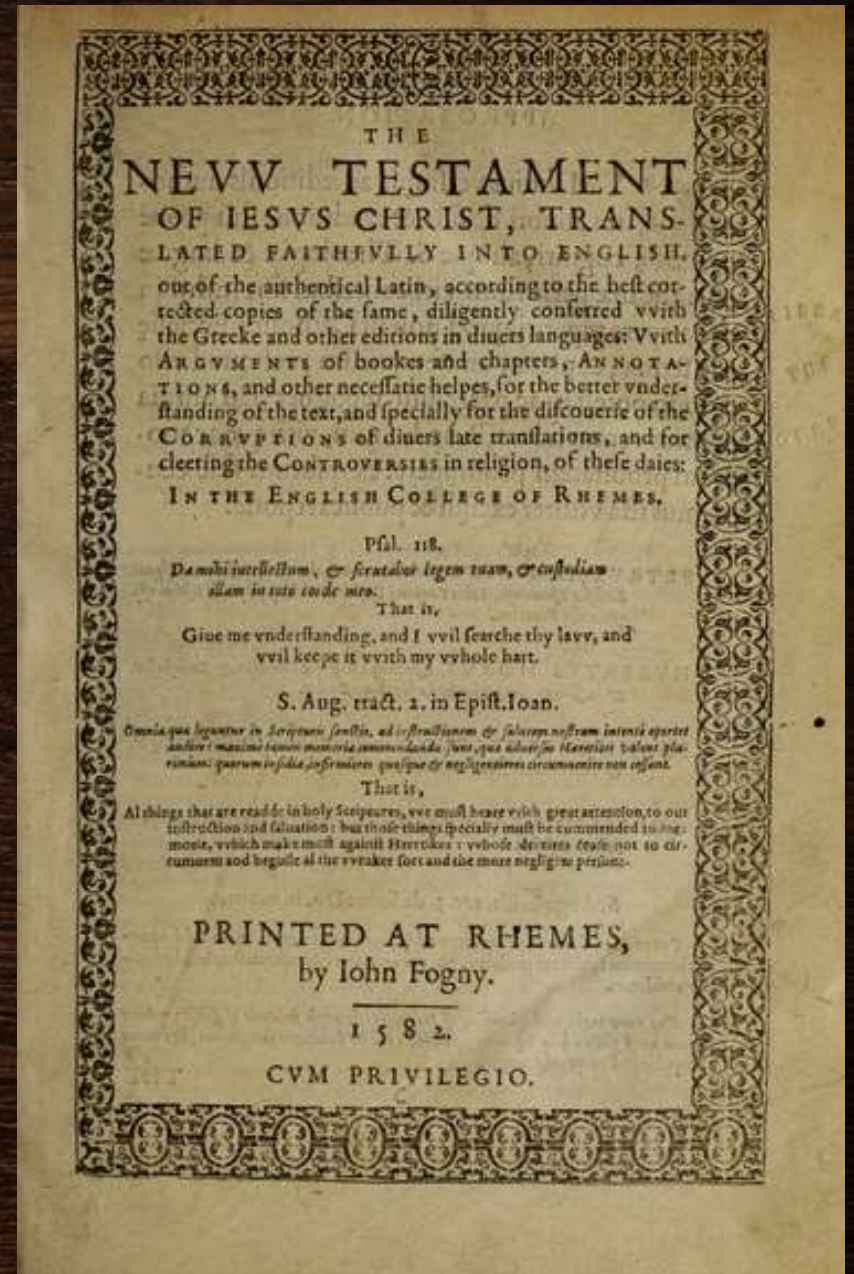
- The Bishops' Bible
  - Well aware that the “Great Bible” was deficient (not least because it was translated from the Latin Vulgate and not the original languages) but also repulsed by the Calvinistic bent of the Geneva Bible, a team of Anglican scholars led by the Archbishop of Canterbury (Matthew Parker) produced a new translation in 1568.
- The truth is that the Bishop's Bible was not strictly from the original languages and in many cases, essentially reproduces the Great Bible. It would be revised in 1572 to come more in line with the translation found in the Geneva Bible. The Bishop's Bible never achieved the same popularity as the Geneva Bible.





# The Word Became... English

- The Douai-Rheims Bible
  - With the NT published in 1582 at the English college of Rheims and the OT published in 1609-1610 at the college at Douai, the Douai-Rheims (or Douay-Rheims) translation was the first Catholic translation of the Bible into English—of course, it was based on the Latin Vulgate and not Greek or Hebrew.





# The Authorized Version of 1611

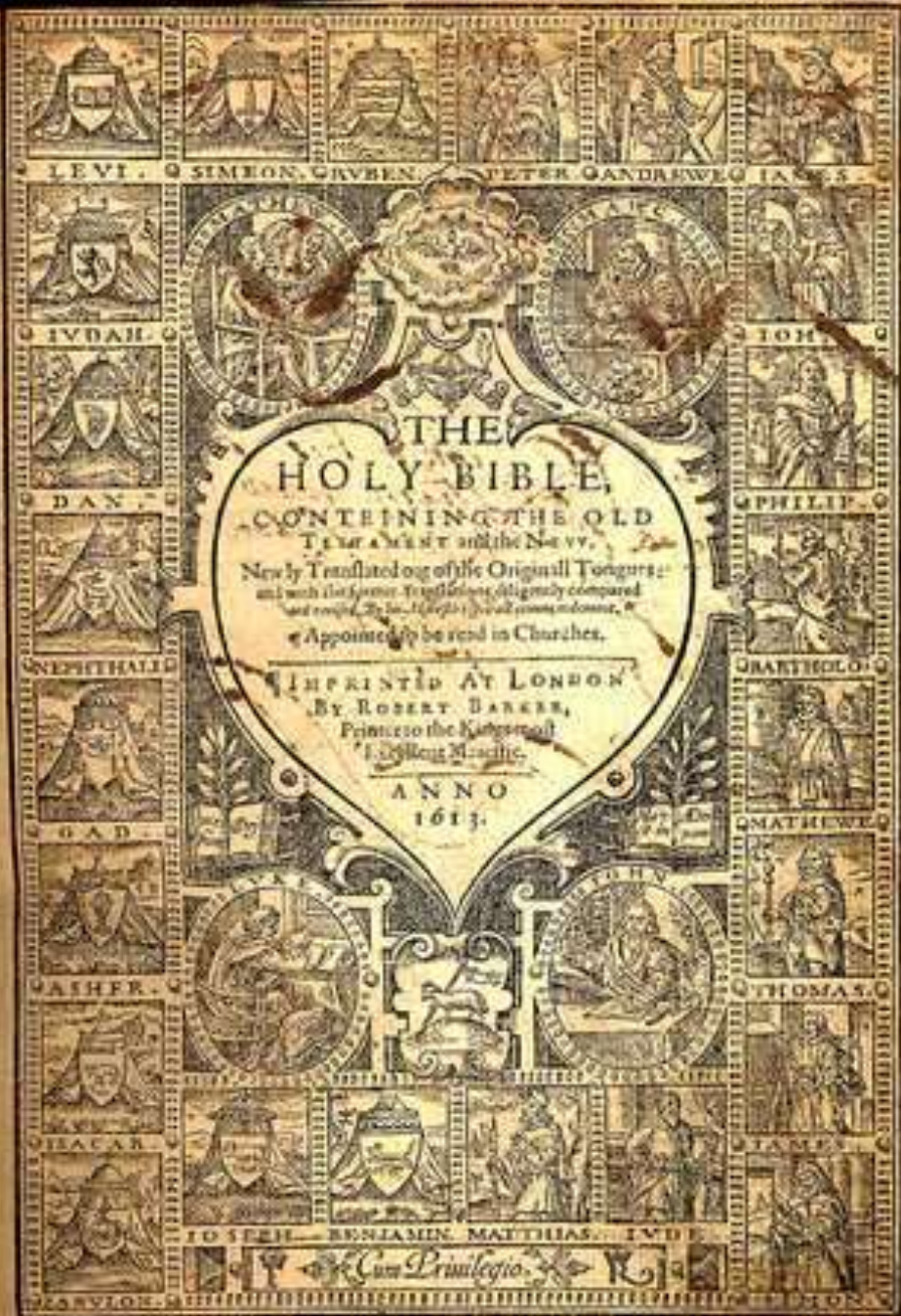
- In 1604, King James I initiated the Hampton Court Conference to bring together representatives of diverse religious beliefs to discuss the issue of religious tolerance. It was there that John Reynolds (Rainolds) of Oxford suggested to the king a revised English translation. King James liked the idea but stipulated that there be no commentary notes except those which were necessary for translation.
  - Tasked with revising the Bishops' Bible, about 48 scholars were selected for the project and formally began work by 1607 (perhaps slightly before). In 1611, the King James Version of the Bible was printed and dedicated to King James. The Bible was the product of both revision and translation, as the translators also used what most scholars believe to be Theodore Beza's fifth edition of the Greek NT in their work. Nevertheless, the translation ended up maintaining a great deal (80% or more) of Tyndale's wording.



# The Authorized Version of 1611

- Though it immediately replaced the Bishops' Bible in the churches, it fought stiff competition from the Geneva Bible for quite some time. Eventually, however, it became the Bible of the English-speaking church, despite revisions to correct the numerous printing mistakes
- The 1631 revision, for example, left the word “not” out of the seventh commandment (“You shall not commit adultery”) for which the printer was fined, earning it the ignominious label, the “Wicked Bible.”





THE  
HOLY BIBLE,  
CONTAINING THE OLD  
TESTAMENT and the New.

Newly Translated out of the Originall Tongues:  
and with the former Translations diligently compared  
and revised. By His Majesty's speciall Commandement,  
Appointed to be read in Churches.

PRINTED AT LONDON  
By ROBERT BARRER,  
Printer to the Kings most  
Excellent Majesty.

ANNO  
1611.

Cum Privilegio.



TO THE MOST  
HIGH AND MIGHTIE  
PRINCE, IAMES BY THE GRACE  
OF GOD KING OF GREAT BRITAIN,  
France and Ireland, Defender of  
the Faith, &c.

THE TRANSLATORS OF THE  
BIBLE, with Grace, Mercie, and Peace, through  
IESVS CHRIST OUR LORD.

**G**REAT and manifold were the blessings (most dread So-  
ueraigne) which Almighty GOD, the Father of all  
Mercies, bestowed upon vs the people of ENGLAND,  
when first he sent your Maiesties Royal persons to rule and  
reigne over vs. For whereas it was the expectation of ma-  
ny, who wished not well unto our SION, that upon the set-  
ting of that bright Occidentall Starre, *Queene ELIZA-  
BETH* of most happie memorie, some thicke and palpable clouds of darknesse  
would so haue overshadowed this Land, that men should haue bene in doubt  
which way they were to walke, and that it should hardly be knowne, who was to  
direct the vnsledd State: the appearance of your MAIESTY, as of the Sunne in  
his strength, instantly dispell'd those supposed and feigned mists, and gaue vnto  
all that were well affected, exceeding cause of comfort, especially when we beheld  
the gouernment established in your HIGHNESSE, and your hopeful Seed, by  
an vndoubted Title, and this also accompanied with Peace and tranquillitie, at  
home and abroad.

But amongst all our Ioyes, there was no oie that more filled our hearts then the  
blessed continuance of the Preaching of Gods sacred Word amongst vs, which  
is that inestimable treasure, which exceedeth all the riches of the earth, because  
the fruit thereof extendeth it selfe, not onely to the time spent in this transitory  
world, but directeth and disposeth men vnto that Eternal happinesse which is  
aboue in Heauen.



# The Word Became... English

- The Revised Version | American Standard Version

- In conjunction with the 1881 publication of Wescott and Hort's Greek NT came a new frontier for Bible translation that broke from the Textus Receptus. The first such effort was the "Revised Version" (NT in 1881, OT in 1885, Apocrypha in 1894) or the "American Standard Version" (1901) as its near identical was called in the US.

- While initially popular and seeking to preserve as much language of the Authorize Version as possible, the RV/ASV failed to displace it, largely because of the clunky and wooden nature of the translation. It simply lacked literary quality and was cumbersome to read.
- Additionally, as the first departure from the Authorized Version in English, the effort was met with strong opposition from those committed solely to the tradition embodied in the Authorized Version.



# The Word Became... English

- The Revised Standard Version
  - In 1937, a second, much more successful effort to provide a fresh English translation was undertaken. Seeking to maintain as much of the Authorized Version as possible while updating the language and creating smoother English, the committee published the Revised Standard Version of the NT in 1946 to great acclaim and extreme opposition, including some preachers publicly burning the edition.
- The Old Testament (and thus, the whole translational effort) was completed and published in 1952. The RSV has seen multiple revisions including a Catholic (1965) and an Orthodox version (1973), as well as the gender-sensitive New Revised Standard Version (1989).



# The Word Became... English

- The New American Standard Version

- In reaction to some of the looser translations published since the ASV, in 1963 the Lockman Foundation published the literalistic New American Standard Bible with a revision in 1995. While the translation is frequently awkward and stilted, it is often particularly appreciated by those studying the original languages because of how closely it aligns with the underlying original texts.



# The Word Became... English

- The Good News Translation and Contemporary English Version
  - While the New English Bible attempted something similar, the Good News Bible (originally Today's English Version and then, The Good News Bible) was the first prominent effort to publish a “dynamic equivalence” translation based on the translational philosophy of linguist Eugene Nida. The work saw its publication in 1966.
  - Known as a “simplified” version of the Bible, The Contemporary English Version picked up for the next generation where the Good News Bible left off. Published in 1995, the CEV received some criticism for using too many “Americanisms” for a Bible translation. When compared to earlier versions, these objections were ultimately unfounded.
    - Nevertheless, the CEV does seem to be quite loose in some places for a “dynamic equivalence” translation.
      - Ps. 127:1 | ESV – “Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain.”
      - Ps 127:1 | CEV – “Without the help of the LORD it is useless to build a home or to guard a city.”



# The Word Became... English

- The New International Version
  - 1978 saw the publication of what would become, and remain, the most popular Bible translation in the Evangelical church in North America, and the best-selling English translation in the world. A team of scholars set out to provide a smooth, rigorous English translation from the earliest manuscripts, including some of the findings at Qumran.
  - The NIV received a minor revision in 1984, and a significant overhaul in the 2011 version. Sandwiched in between was the NIV's entanglement in theological controversy over gender-inclusive language.
    - Receiving a great deal of criticism from American conservatives, the gender-inclusive edition was published in Europe in 1997 as “New International Version Inclusive Language Edition” but not in the US. Later, the distinctive “Today’s New International Version” or TNIV was released in the US with gender-inclusive language.
    - The primary discussion surrounding the NIV has to do with to what degree it is a dynamic or formal equivalence translation.



# The Word Became... English

- The English Standard Version

- Discontent with the drift away from the more rigid translational principles embodied in the RSV as well as the gender-inclusive language beginning to appear, Lane Dennis, president of Crossway, prompted a group of scholars to assemble and create a new translation on the foundation of the Revised Standard Version. They sought to create what they called an “essentially literal” translation that preserved gender expressions of the original language.

- With translational work beginning in the late 1990’s, in 2001 the ESV was published and eventually earned widespread recognition—particularly among Reformed evangelicals—as having achieved a landmark balance between word-for-word equivalence while still maintaining literary excellence.

- According to Leland Ryken, a member of the translation committee, only about 6% of the RSV was ultimately changed, leaving the ESV about 94% identical to the RSV.

- In 2013, Gideon’s International announced that it would be transitioning to the ESV away from the NKJV as their Bible of placement in hotels, hospitals etc.