

The BIBLE (Part 7) Translation:

Lesson 18- Spiritual Discipleship and Growth

Intro: The crowning product of English scholarship is without a doubt the Authorized King James Version of the Bible. A Bible that has been proved through its powerful witness through many generations.

Yet, the average Christian today has been taught that the Authorized King James Bible is obsolete because it is over 400 years old and contains many archaic words and phrases that are too difficult to understand.

The “more informed” Christian has also been taught that the Authorized King James Version contains mistakes and a faulty translation because it was not translated from the oldest manuscripts.

The King James Debate is a burning issue today.

We accept the Authorized King James Bible, as the pure, preserved, infallible Word of God in the English language.

But why?!?

1. A Brief History of the Authorized King James Version:

The Authorized King James Version came about in the providence of God through a series of events in England.

A. Wycliffe’s Bible: John Wycliffe (1330-1384 A.D.) translated the first complete English Bible in 1382-1395 A.D. This was translated from the corrupt Latin Vulgate, but it created a hunger in the hearts of Englishmen for the Word of God and sowed the seeds of the English Reformation some 130 years later.

B. Tyndale’s Bible: William Tyndale (1494-1536 A.D.) translated the English Bible from the original tongues. His New Testament was translated from the Greek text which later came to be known as The Received Text or “Textus Receptus.”

C. The Reign of King Henry VIII: Henry ruled England from (1509-1547 A.D.) and in 1534 broke with the Church of Rome, thereby beginning the English Reformation.

D. The Reign of Queen Elizabeth 1: Protestantism was established in England during the reign of Elizabeth 1 (1558-1603 A.D.)

1. The Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots: Mary Stuart (1542-87 A.D.) was a cousin of Elizabeth, heir to the English throne, and a staunch Catholic who plotted against the Queen.

2. The Defeat of the Spanish Armada: King Philip II of Spain sent an Armada of 136 ships against England in 1588 A.D. with the purpose of restoring Catholicism in the nation. The Armada was defeated by a make-shift English fleet, and later decimated by a storm.

E. The Reign of King James I: James was the son of Mary, Queen of Scots. He was proclaimed King James VI of Scotland as an infant, and raised by the Scottish nobility as Protestant. He ruled England from 1603-1625 A.D.

In 1604 two events took place which eventually led to the translation of what was to be called the Authorized King James Version.

1. The Millenary Petition: This was a petition signed by 1000, Puritan clergymen calling for changes within the Church of England.

2. The Hampton Court Conference: This was proclaimed by King James in response to the millenary Petition. It was called to settle some of the differences between the Episcopalian and Puritan parties within the Church of England.

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Though the conference went decidedly against the Puritans, a suggestion by Dr. John Reynolds, “that a translation be made of the whole Bible, as consonant as can be to the original Hebrew and Greek; and this to be set out and printed, without any marginal notes, and only to be used in all churches of England, in time of divine service”. This caught the attention of the King. Why? Because the Puritans favored the Geneva Bible, while the Episcopalians preferred the Bishop’s Bible. (Both were pre-text Bibles that differed mainly in certain marginal notes.

On July 22, 1604, King James announced he had approved ____ selected men to translate a New Bible, and the work of translation began in 16__.

2. The Translation of the Authorized King James Version:

The Authorized, King James Version was the fruit of a number of earlier English Bibles which were basically revisions of the work of William Tyndale.

A. The Rules of Translation: Fifteen rules that procedure were drawn up by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

B. The Method of Translation: Of the 54 men chosen for the work, only 47 are positively identified.

1. The men were divided into six companies. Two at Westminster, two at Cambridge, two at Oxford. Each of the companies was assigned a particular portion of the Bible to translate.
2. Each member of the company was to make his own translation first.
3. The members of each company then met to compare one another’s work, reading the passages out loud while comparing written notes.

4. When each group completed a Book, it was sent to the other five groups for their independent assessment.

5. When the complete Bible was translated, it came before a select committee of 12 men, two from each company. In 1609 A.D., this group met daily in London at Stationer’s Hall.

6. Finally, the entire work was assembled and “polished” by a publication committee of two men before being sent to the Royal printer.

By this method, each passage in the translation was scrutinized a minimum of _____ times!

C. The Translators of the Authorized King James Version:

For the most part, the men who translated the King James Version were obscure churchmen of scholars.

Among the translators there were sharp differences of opinion over church polity, but the one binding conviction each shared was that they were dealing with God’s sacred Truth, and that the scriptures were the inspired, inerrant, and authoritative Word of God.

Every translator was a brilliant scholar in his own right.

One translator was Sir Lancelot Andrews, the Bishop of Winchester. He was noted for his godliness, gravity, dignity, integrity and ability. He spent five hours each day in prayer and devotions. He was fluent in Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic, and was fully conversant in 15 modern languages. He was a strong Protestant and an outstanding preacher. He was a leader of the High Church, Episcopalian faction with the Church of England.

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Another translator and leading spokesman for the Puritan faction was Dr. John Reynolds. He entered Oxford University at the age of 13, graduated at age 17, and began lecturing in Greek at age 23. He possessed an almost miraculous memory, and was called the “Living Library.” He was also noted for his holiness of life, gravity, integrity, and skill in languages.

Closing: The reason we can say confidently that the King James Bible is the Word of God, is because of how clear it is that the hand of God was at work. Through prevention and providence God worked in the lives of people to bring the English Bible into view. Even bringing a storm to wipe out a superior Spanish Armada. God’s hand was at work and it is still at work through the working of the Holy Spirit in our hearts as we read His Word.