

Reading the Bible in English

by Wayne Goff

October 6, 1536, William Tyndale was strangled and burned for translating the Bible into the English language. We should stop to consider how fortunate we are at this time.

First English Bible

“In the fourteenth century, John Wycliffe was the first to make (or at least oversee) an English translation of the Bible, but that was before the invention of the printing press and all copies had to be hand written. Besides, the church had banned the unauthorized translation of the Bible into English in 1408.” [*Christianity Magazine online*].

William Tyndale

William Tyndall studied at both Oxford and Cambridge Universities, and desired to translate the Bible into English for the common people to read. He told a Catholic priest one time, “If God spare my life, ere many years pass, I will cause a boy that driveth the plough shall know more of the Scriptures than thou dost.”

He traveled to London and asked Bishop Tunstall if he would authorize an English translation, but the bishop said no! He then traveled to Europe and completed an English translation, had it printed and smuggled copies back into England. Six thousand copies were made and sold! The bishops of England did everything they could to get rid of the English Bibles, but they failed.

Eventually William Tyndale was located by an Englishman, and was turned over to the authorities. After a year and a half in prison, he was brought to trial for “heresy.” In August, 1536, he was condemned, and on October 6, he was strangled and his body burned at the stake. Only three years later, in 1539, Henry VIII required every parish church in England to make a copy of the English Bible available to its members.

English Bibles Today

I purchased my first King James Version Bible when I was sixteen years old. I told my father that I wanted my own Bible, and he told me to save up the \$10 necessary to get it. When I did so, he ordered the Bible, and when it came in my father gave me the Bible and returned my \$10. He said he just wanted to make sure I really wanted it.

When I graduated from high school, my parents gave me a *treasured* study Bible published in the KJV with the American Standard Version variances in the body of the text in brackets. I still have that Bible and it sits at home beside my recliner. Since that time I have had numerous Bibles which I have worn out through use. It seems that just about the time I get my Bible highlighted to suit me, the cover or its pages begin to fall apart. So I order another Bible and start the process over again. How privileged I have been to have as many Bibles available to me in my lifetime.

Today I have a Bible program on my computer with about thirty different English translations on it. I can read any one of them at a moment’s notice with a click of the mouse button! Can you imagine what William Tyndale and his generation would think of that now?! We are even *more privileged* to have this technology available to us today!

Do You Read Your Bible?

I would venture to say that everyone reading this article has their own personal copy of the Bible. If you do not, then it may be because you are too young to have your own copy. But at the same time, we are **absolutely inundated** with information today! We have to be *very particular* about **what** and **how much** information we take in! Furthermore, not everything published today is true, so you have to be an astute, informed reader. These things being true, I would strongly urge everyone to take the time to read their Bible daily! Do not just study it when you do your Bible class lesson, or listen to a sermon. Read it for your own benefit, and appreciate so much the Divine Providence that brought the Bible to you in your own language today.

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