

The Development of English Versions of the Bible

O., Prologue

A., Hebrew Canon

Ca. 100 A.D.; Hebrew canon chosen; 24 scrolls, 39 books.

B., NT Canon

367; Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria: 27 Books, including Revelation.

C., Jerome, Latin translation, Vulgate

384, NT.

404, whole Bible.

The Vulgate the source of the Rheims-Douay version and of the first English translation.

D. Book of Kells, ca. 800

Vulgate text of the Gospels and illuminations.

I., Anglo-Saxon Period (650-1150)

A., Caedmon, herdsman for abbey at Whitby, ca. 670

Paraphrases of the Bible put into verse.

B., Aldhelm, bishop of Sherborne, 640-709

Version of the Psalms.

C., Venerable Bede, ca. 672-735

Gospel of John.

D., King Alfred, 849-901 [OE Ælfred or Ælfræd, wise elf or elf counsel]

Portions of Exodus, Acts, some Psalms.

E., Aelfric, abbot of Eynsham, 955-1020

Heptateuch.

F., Anglo-Saxon Gospels

Four complete mss, 5 fragmentary mss remain, 11-13th C.

G., Lindisfarne Gospels and Rushworth Gospels

Toward the end of the 7th C., Latin versions written; ca. 1000, A-S glosses (translations) inserted.

H., Anglo-Saxon Psalters

Latin text and interlinear A-S translation.

II., Middle English Period (1150-1500)

A., Ormulum

Metrical paraphrase of Gospels, with interspersed moralizations.

[Orm or Ormin was a 12th C. monk; his title alluded to the common practice of putting in titles of Medieval Latin nonfiction works the word Speculum (Mirror). In his paraphrase he called himself both names, probably because of metrical needs.]

B., Psalter of Richard Rolle (d. 1349)

Prose version with commentary.

C., William of Shoreham (ca. 1270-1350)

Prose Psalter.

D., John Wyclif (ca. 1320-1384)

1., 1st version; Nicholas Hereford largely responsible under Wyclif's supervision.

2., 2nd version; John Purvey, Wyclif's secretary, completed it by 1397.

E., Gutenberg Bible, 1456

The first published book, the Latin Bible.

III., William Tyndale to King James, 1526-1611

A., William Tyndale (ca. 1494-1536)

1526; NT.

1530; Pentateuch.

1531; Jonah

1534-1535; NT revisions; the main source of the authorized versions of NT in English.

B., Miles Coverdale (1488-1569)

1535; ET of Bible. First complete Bible printed in English. Not a direct translation; based on the translations of Tyndale (English) and of Luther and Zwingli (German).

C., Thomas Matthew (John Rogers, friend of Tyndale)

1537; Thomas Matthew Bible: Tyndale's ms translation of Joshua to 2 Chronicles; Tyndale's printed translation of Pentateuch and NT; Coverdale's version of rest of OT and Apocrypha.

D., Richard Taverner

1539; revision of Matthew's Bible. One edition was published in parts so those who could not afford the whole Bible could buy part(s) of it.

E., Great Bible, 1539

In Paris, revision of Matthew's Bible by Coverdale, commissioned by Thomas Cromwell, secretary to Henry VIII and Vicar General. A copy ordered to be placed in every church. The first authorized English version. 14 in. tall; chained in the churches; "Chained Bible."

F., Geneva Bible, 1560

Revision of the Bible undertaken by individuals who fled the persecution of Queen Mary (Bloody Mary) to Geneva. Roman type rather than the old blackface. It was not the unwieldy folio but a size easy to handle. First English version to use numbered verses, each set off as a separate paragraph. Never authorized, but it became the household Bible. The first Study Bible in English, with commentary in the margins. Bible of Shakespeare, John Bunyan, Puritans who settled New England. Between 1560 and 1644 at least 140 editions (printings). Longer in competition with King James Bible than any other English version.

"Breeches Bible." Genesis 3.7: from fig leaves Adam and Eve made themselves "breeches."

The Geneva Bible was the first English Bible to use both chapter and verse divisions. [The NT versification as used in the Geneva and commonly in later Bibles was printed in a Greek New Testament by Robert Estienne in Geneva in 1551 (Bible chapter divisions became based on a system devised ca. 1200 by Stephen Langton, Univ. of Paris). The OT versification was that of a Hebrew Bible of 1440. A Latin Vulgate printed by Estienne in 1555 was the first printed Bible to place the verse numbers in the text rather than in the margins.]

G., Bishops' Bible

1582; Queen Elizabeth ordered that every church have a copy of the Great Bible. Not enough copies available, so Archbishop Parker proposed that the bishops make a version of the English Bible.

1572; new edition with considerable NT revisions.

1602; reprinted.

The Bishops' Bible of 1572 became the basis of the King James Version.

H., Rheims-Douay Version

1582; English translation of the NT from the Latin Vulgate at Rheims, France, by Roman Catholic scholars. Close adherence to the Latin.

1609; OT translation at Douay, France (Genesis to Job).

1610; Psalms to 2 Maccabees, Apocalypse.

This Bible had extensive marginal commentary and notes.

I., King James Version

1604; King James I ordained that a new Bible translation in English be made from original Greek and Hebrew versions. It was to be printed without marginal notes (cf. Geneva Bible). There were to be 54 scholars in six groups (2 from Oxford, 2 from Cambridge, and 2 from Westminster), each responsible for a section of the Bible.

1611; KJV published with a dedication to King James. It was not officially authorized by a convention of Parliament.

About 60% of the English Bible had reached its literary form before 1611.

Carryovers into the NT of the KJV:

Tyndale: ca. 1/3 of the NT was worded exactly as in the Tyndale NT. 2/3 of the NT followed the sentence structure of Tyndale.

Coverdale and the Great Bible.

Taverner.

Geneva Bible.

Bishops' Bible.

Rheims Version.

Famous misprints of the King James Bible

1616; "Wicked Bible."

Ex 20.14, "not" omitted. Therefore adultery was commanded. There followed the first book recall in history.

This Bible was also called the Adulterous Bible, and the Sinners' Bible. The Royal printers, Robert Barker and Martin Lucas, were fined £300 (amounting to ca. £45,000 in 2015) and deprived of their printing license.

1717; "Vinegar Bible."

At the top of the page of Luke containing the Parable of the Vineyard (Lk 20.9ff) was printed the word Vinegar instead of Vineyard.

The Vinegar Bible, published by John Baskett (1665-1742), was fraught with misprints and became known by his detractors as "a Baskett-ful of Errors."

J., Revisions of the King James Version

1769; modernized English; work done by Benjamin Blayney for Clarendon Press.

1881; NT revision.

1885; OT revision.

1895; Apocrypha revision.

1901; American Standard Version with "American English."

1982; New King James Version.

IV. After King James

A., Revised Standard Version

1928; The American Standard Version copyright transferred to the International Council of Religious Education and thus into ownership by the churches of the US and Canada associated in the Council.

1937; the Council authorized a thorough revision of the ASV.

1946; Revised Standard Version, NT.

1952; RSV OT.

1957; RSV Apocrypha.

1971; RSV NT 2nd edition.

B., Translations and Paraphrases, often only NT, since 1611.

- 1653; Henry Hammond.
- 1685; Richard Baxter.
- 1729; Daniel Mace.
- 1768; Edward Harwood.
- 1855; Andrews Norton.
- 1858; Leicester Sawyer.
- 1898-1901; Twentieth Century New Testament.
- 1903; R. F. Weymouth.
- 1913; James Moffatt (NT).
- 1923; Edgar J. Goodspeed (NT).
- 1924; James Moffatt (OT).
- 1927; J. M. Powis Smith *et al.* (OT); bound with Goodspeed to give *The Bible: An American Translation*, 1939.
- 1937; Charles B. Williams (NT).
- 1945; The Berkeley Version; The New Berkeley Version, 1969 (*The Modern Language Bible*).
- 1947-1958; J. B. Phillips (NT); *The Gospels* (1952, 1957); *The Young Church in Action* (1955); *Letters to Young Churches* (1947, 1957); *The Book of Revelation* (1957); *The New Testament in Modern English* (1958). [Paraphrase.]
- 1954; Ronald Knox (Roman Catholic).
- 1961; New English Bible (NT).
- 1962 and later; Jewish Bible Society; OT in contemporary English for Jewish people.
- 1966; The Good News Bible: Today's English Version; NT, 1966-1976; OT, 1976; line drawings by Swiss artist Annie Vallotton. In 2001 the TEV was renamed the Good News Translation.
- 1966; Jerusalem Bible (Roman Catholic).
- 1968-1969; William Barclay, *The New Testament—A New Translation*.
- 1970; New American Bible (Roman Catholic).
- 1970; New English Bible.
- 1971; *The Living Bible* (1972; *The Way*, edition with photographs). [Paraphrase.]
- 1973-1984; New International Version.
- 1985; New Jerusalem Bible (Roman Catholic).
- 1989; New Revised Standard Version.
- 1993-; *The Message*; Eugene H. Peterson. [Paraphrase.]
- 2001; English Standard Version.
- 2011; Common English Bible.

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