

Wycliffe, Wycliffe's translation of the Bible was handwritten and understandably limited in circulation

William Tyndale's Bible was met with great enthusiasm by the English Christians and it was circulated widely. It is said almost 70 per cent of the Tyndale's translation became the basis for the next few English versions of the Bible such as the Geneva Bible, the Bishop's Bible and the King James Version of the Bible.

Tyndale paid an unimaginable price for making the Bible accessible to common people. He was strangled and burned on October 6th, 1536.



Today as we read our Bible, we should be mindful of all these people in the past who risked their lives to make it possible for us to obtain a copy of the Bible which we can read in our own languages.

During the reign of Queen Mary I (1516-1558) in England, the queen who was a devout Catholic made it her important priority to revert England back to Roman Catholicism. She was a granddaughter of Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand. Her mother, Catherine of Aragon, was also a pious lady of the Roman Catholic faith. John Foxe records in his book, "The Book of Martyrs" some 300 protestants were burned alive during her reign. She was known as "Bloody Mary" among the Protestants in England.



Many of the Protestants fled to Geneva, Switzerland where the English Protestants formed a unique community. They published the famous Geneva Bible which became very popular among the English Protestants. Geneva Bible was the Bible which the Puritans brought to America on Mayflower in 1620. The Geneva Bible was quoted by Shakespeare and used by John Milton and John Bunyan. The Geneva Bible was the first Bible to have chapters and verses, and also the Bible had extensive cross references, illustrations, and footnotes.

Accurate translations of the Bible was made possible because of the hard and dedicated work by the Masoretes (Hebrew scribes who tediously hand copied the Scriptures.) This Hebrew text which became the basis of most of the modern translations is called “Masoretic text.”



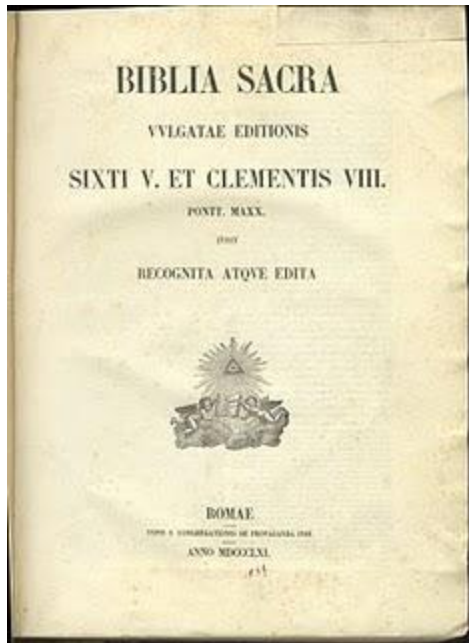
After the conquest of Alexander the Great, the Hellenistic culture prevailed in the Mediterranean world. The Koine Greek which was used by the common Greeks at the time of Alexander the

Great (336-323 BC) became widespread. The Jews began to speak Greek and the need to translate the Mosoretic text into Greek became necessary. In a city called Alexandria near Cairo, the seventy Hebrew scholars assembled and began the translation job. They completed the work around 200 years before the birth of Jesus Christ. This Greek Old Testament is commonly called the Septuagint, which means in Greek, seventy, and often abbreviated by LXX.

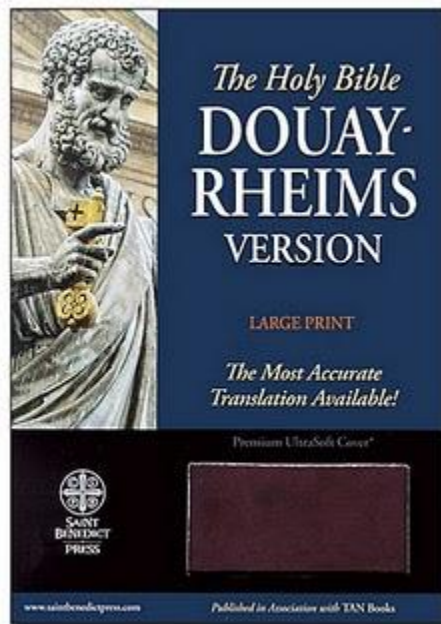
Another important text for the New Testament was the so-called “received text”. A Dutch scholar named Erasmus (1466-1536) diligently compared several Greek texts and came up with what he thought was the most reliable text for the Greek New Testament.



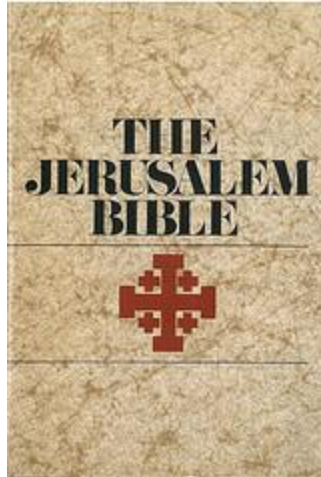
The Roman Catholic church commissioned a scholarly monk named St. Jerome (347-420) to translate the Bible into Latin. His translation is commonly known as “the Latin Vulgate” which means it is written in common and popular Latin.



The English translation of the Latin Vulgate is called Douay-Rheims.



The Roman Catholic scholars translated the entire Bible from the ancient reliable texts and came up with Jerusalem Bible.

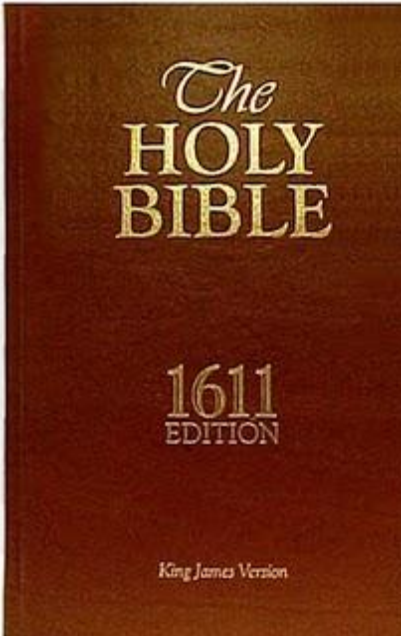


After the reign of Bloody Mary, her half sister, Queen Elizabeth I reigned in England from 1558 to 1603. During her reign literature flourished and religious liberty restored and is called the Golden Age of English Literature and Drama.



Queen Mary I was married to King Phillip of Spain, a devout Roman Catholic who considered her half sister-in-law, Elizabeth, to be a heretic. King Phillip decided to force England to become Roman Catholic once again and planned to invade England in 1588 by sending a fleet of close to 200 ships. The ships were supposed to go to the Netherland to pick up the army led by Duke Parma so that the combined forces will land in England to take over. However, the English navy's clever tactics, storms, and diseases killed off over 30,000 invading soldiers. The invincible Spanish Armada perished in the North Sea in a most spectacular manner.

In 1611 King James of England ordered the official translation of the English Bible.



We need to read the Bible today with greater appreciation for the sacrifices made by courageous Christians of the former generations. We need to study the Word, read it, meditate on it as the Bible says:

(1) Ephesians 6:17

Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

(2) Hebrews 4:12

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

(3) Matthew 4:4

It is written: Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.

(4) 2 Timothy 3:16

All Scripture is God breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

(5) 2 Timothy 2:15

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

(6) 1 Peter 1:23-25

For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. For, "All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever."

(7) Isaiah 55:11

So is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

(8) Deuteronomy 6:6-9

These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you

lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the door frames of your houses and on your gates.

(9) Joshua 1:8

Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.

(10) Psalm 119:9

How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word.

(11) Psalm 119:11

I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

(12) Psalm 119:105

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

(13) Psalm 1:2-3

But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.

(14) Ezekiel 37:4-5

Then he said to me, "Prophesy to these bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath enter you and you will come to life.

(15) Ezekiel 36:27

I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.