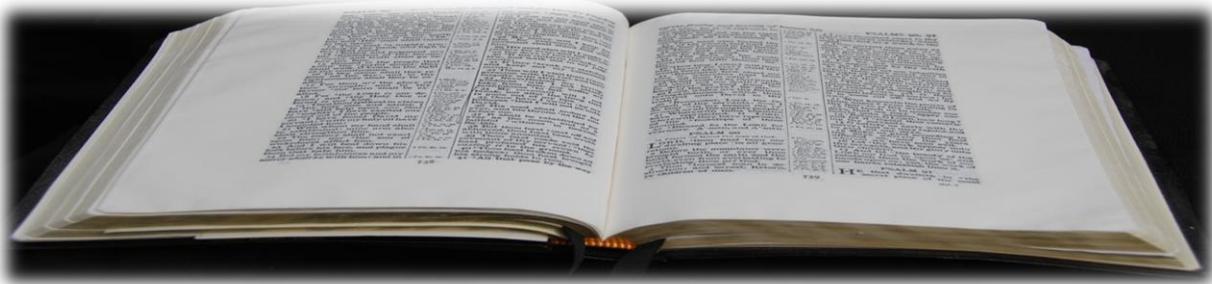


The Story of the People's Bible



It should not surprise you that the story of the people's Bible can be found within the pages of Scripture. In Isaiah chapter 42 we see that the People's Bible itself was God keeping His promise.

Isaiah chapter 42 verse 4

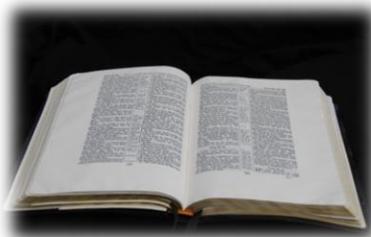
He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law.

Here we see that the prophet Isaiah some two thousand years before the People's Bible was published, states that he inhabitants of the Isles would receive His Law. Something important to note here is that the text refers to the Isles in their entirety and not just a part of them. Isaiah is telling us that the receiving of His Law would be a national event.

If it was a national event, then it would have to be authorized by the King. For this to happen the Isles would need to be united under one sovereign and be governed by one law that all its subjects adhered to. (The Isles were united in 1606)

Many over the years have attempted to dispute the identity of the Isles as spoken of by the prophet Isaiah. I trust that you will, as I have, become irrefutably convinced that the **only** Isles historically or prophetically that he could possibly be speaking about are these British Isles in which we dwell.

The Story of the People's Bible



If the Isles identified by Isaiah are not the British Isles, then there are questions that must be answered. What Isles are they? What are they called? And why have we never heard of them before now?

Isaiah says "*The Isles (the British Isles) shall wait for his law.*" In order to grasp the importance of having His Law and to understand how precious a gift the People's Bible is; we need to take a trip back in time to see how life was without it.

Now that in 2011 the four hundredth anniversary of the King James Version has been passed, it is difficult for those of us who have grown up with it to imagine life without our Bible. However, if we can take a moment and consider that the Word of God gives Light, then without it was a world of darkness. That darkness, like that experienced in the days of Moses could really be felt. It was a spiritual darkness that enveloped the whole land.

There was very little by the way of Christian communication that was in English. All the religious books and services were in Latin and the vast majority of the population was poor and illiterate, to them there was no light. What passed for spiritual teaching was the tales of the friars. These papist friars were shameless in the tales they told and their yarns, like a fisherman's catch, grew bigger every time that they were spun.

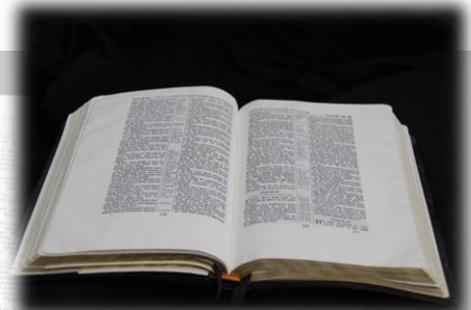
Is it any wonder that historians refer to this era of our history as the "dark ages"?

After these friars spun their yarns they proceeded to fill their collection bags, taking in some cases, all that that the poor people had and leaving them very confused. All that the people in this age had to fuel their minds was images. It was images and not words that stirred their imaginations. It was also these images that provided, what people thought to be, conduits between earth and heaven.

The Story of the People's Bible

Turning back to our Bible we find an explanation in Isaiah chapter 42 and verse 8 *"I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images."* In this chapter we not only see the prophecy of Isaiah to the inhabitants of the Isles regarding receiving His Law, but he highlights also the state of apostasy that the Isles would be in when His Word would break through the darkness and His Law would be received. The reference in this verse to God not sharing His glory and His praise to graven images is an indicator that the Isles would be as indeed they were, in the grip of priest-craft and that the country was awash with Rome's graven images.

He depicts exactly the state of the land preceding the presentation of the Bible to the people. The Bible is by far, the greatest treasure that the English speaking people were ever given.



Before it was revealed, the poor in health as well as those who were in some sort of mental distress were just as likely to resort to witches or wizards, to fortune tellers and astrologers as they were to turn to their parish clergy. In reality, it was almost impossible for them to tell the difference between what they called "church magic" (Roman Catholicism) and the occult. As far as the people were concerned, if a priest could turn a wafer into God by muttering some unrecognizable words over it then what was the difference when a witch also muttered equally unrecognizable words over a stick to make it a wand?

Until the Light was revealed it was darkness that prevailed. The only Bible that was then available was the 404 A.D. translation by Jerome, which was referred to as the Latin Vulgate or the Vernacular. As the centuries of painstaking manuscript copying passed, various other writings were incorporated in to it. As the book was laboriously copied, those who were copying it allowed increasingly more errors to creep in. As a work, the Vulgate buttressed Catholic doctrine so well that it was far from being a perfect translation. To make matters even worse was that the

The Story of the People's Bible

people were both poor and illiterate which meant that obtaining copies of the Vulgate and understanding it was out of their reach and they remained in darkness. And so it was so at least until it pleased God to raise up a man called



John Wycliffe in Yorkshire, the very centre of England. Wycliffe who has been referred to as the "MORNING STAR OF THE REFORMATION" was born around 1320 A.D. By the year 1382 he had given the people of England a copy of the Scripture in their own mother tongue. Wycliffe was a noted scholar and teacher at Oxford. However his fame spread beyond the walls of the University as

Wycliffe was to become one of the most well known figures of the fourteenth century. He translated the Latin Vulgate into English. This was no easy task and he was faced with opposition from the enemies of the Truth. (The Papacy) As Wycliffe began the translation encountered another problem; most of the people were illiterate and therefore could not read.

Romans chapter 8 verse 31 is a great encouragement as we are reminded "*What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*" Wycliffe was

assisted in his work and got around this problem as God raised up a group of supporters and they called "the Lollards". Most of these Lollards were Wycliffe's own students; such was the respect he commanded. The Lollards took portions of Wycliffe's translation and read it aloud in market squares where the common people of England heard it gladly.



Wycliffe completed his work in 1382 and he was called to his rest in the closing hours of 1384. (31st December 1384) While Wycliffe's endeavors were coming to

The Story of the People's Bible

an end, the Protestant Reformation was only beginning. A new day had dawned and the words of Isaiah chapter 9 verse 2 had been fulfilled: - *"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light"*.

Rome of course was not about to just sit there while all this was taking place. In 1401 A.D. they re-enacted an old law called "De Heretico Comburndo". As a result of this the heresy trials started and anyone found guilty of preaching any other doctrine that was not approved by the Papacy was sentenced to death. Anyone found guilty were handed over to the King's officers until the day appointed when they would be taken to high ground and publically burned alive.

This new statute was used to fan the flames of persecution on those who embraced the Protestant Reformation. This was especially seen in England during the reign of Mary Tudor, who of course is better known as Bloody Mary. Mary's reign was short, (1553 – 1558) miserable and bloody. When she died in 1558 the church bells rang across the land as the people of England rejoiced that Mary was dead and as a result there was blessing tied to the back of a hearse because she was succeeded by Elizabeth I. When Elizabeth came to the throne she stated "It is my sincere purpose to restore the Protestant religion to the Nation". She meant it. Her reign however was fraught with much danger as Rome was not about to relinquish control of the British Isles and in particular England which it referred to as "Mary's Dowry". Elizabeth set about the task of restoring Protestantism in England by lifting the ban on the translating of the Scripture. She also encouraged the distribution and public reading of the Bible.

By this stage of course there were numerous translations and in fact there were so many translations that they caused both serious division among the scholars and confusion among the people. It had become abundantly clear that what was needed was one translation that everyone could embrace. One single translation that would bring stability to the Faith and unity to the Protestant people.

The Story of the People's Bible

Elizabeth had reigned for forty five years and in that time, by God's grace, she kept her promise of restoring Protestantism in England and to its people. But one thing was still needed, a Bible. A Bible that everyone would recognize. It was realized that what was needed was an "Authorised Version".



In 1603 after the death of Elizabeth, England witnessed a new King upon the throne. He, like Elizabeth was a Protestant. James as he was called was brought up in Scotland by Presbyterians. He was James VI of Scotland and as he assented to the throne of England he did so as James I.

By now Bible translations had passed through two turbulent, bloody centuries and the knowledge of the Scripture had grown among both the clergy and people alike. When James came to the throne his "in tray" was full. Within just weeks he was bombarded with requests for church reform. Most of these requests came from the Puritans. In order to answer these requests James called a conference and this became known as the "Hampton Court Conference" of 1604. The purpose of this meeting was to right the wrongs in the church. When it started however, it soon became clear that it was just a contest between puritan and Anglican scholars. During this time, James appeared to be siding with the Anglican scholars and the dislike he had for the Puritans was manifested when he called them "the three headed dog that guarded the gates of Hell". This point of view was to the delight and applause of the Anglicans.

The Puritans were led by John Reynolds (also spelt Rainolds) and the Anglicans by Lord Richard Bancroft. They were getting nowhere even after hours of debate. As the Conference was coming to a close, John Reynolds asked the question that God was going to use to change the world. Needless to say it shocked everyone in the room. John Reynolds asked "May your Majesty be pleased that the Bible be new translated, (since) such as are extant, (are) not answering the original (text)?"

The Story of the People's Bible

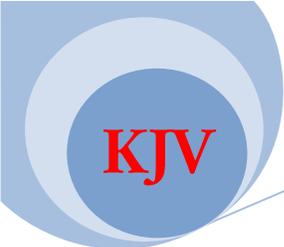
While this request took everyone by surprise, it was Bancroft who was first to pour scorn on it saying "What do we need another Bible for? We have more than enough already". He was getting at the Geneva Bible, which they (Anglicans) did not like, but the Puritans loved. After some moments of pondering the idea the King began to warm to the request and within an hour it was deemed to be a splendid idea. Even Bancroft is recorded as stating in a letter to a friend "I move you in his majesty's name that, ... no time may be overstepped by you for the better furtherance of this holy work... You will scarcely conceive how earnest his majesty is to have this work begun!"

Now as with any translation it had to be anchored in both the past and the present. In the past because it has a duty to represent as accurately as possible the message of the original author. The present because it must its principles must be timeless.

Now this task was by no means straight forward when you consider what it entailed. The Bible is more than just a book, it is a library. Within it is Poetry, Chronicles, Law, Philosophy, Biography, Letters and of course Prophecy and all this makes up our Holy Bible.

All those involved in the task approached it with a deep sense of reverence as these men believed that the Scripture was God breathed. The translation took from 1604 until 1611. For the translators, every day began in hours of prayer. There were fifty three men chosen to undertake the task of translation and by the time they had finished that number was down to forty seven. They were divided into six teams and each team was responsible for translating a particular section.

Once completed, the new translation was presented to James I who "Authorized" it with a Royal License in 1611.

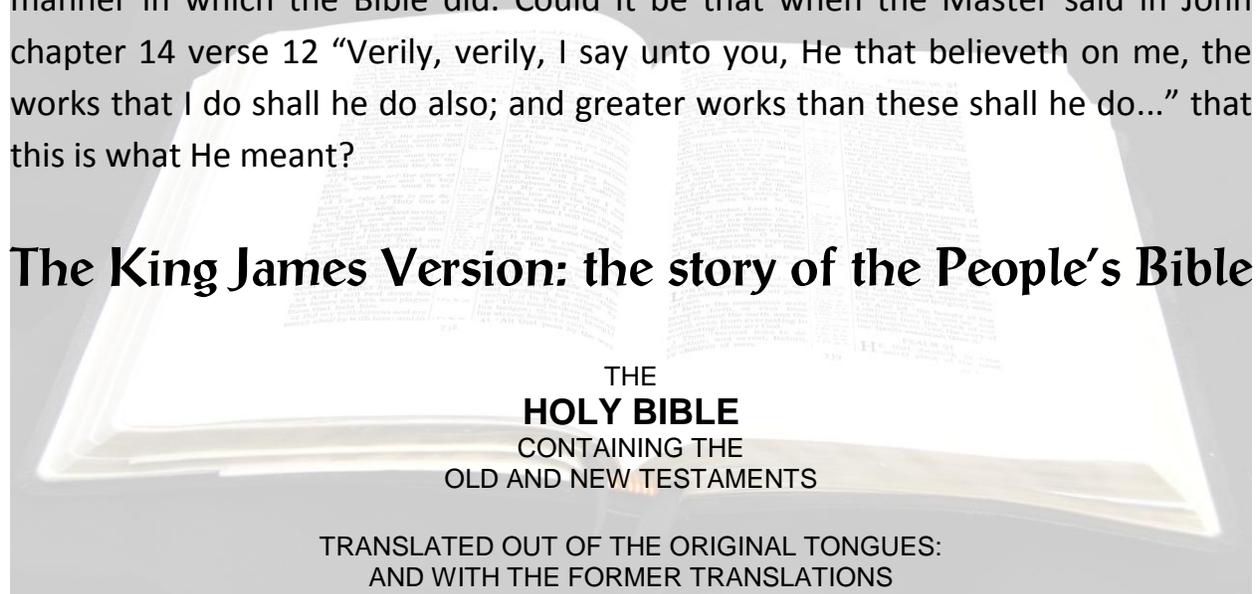


The Story of the People's Bible

Everyone should read the speech made to the King when he was presented with this 1611 translation. It can be found in the Epistle Dedicatory of the King James Bible. King James was so moved by it that he included it in the License. This means that every time it is printed, this message has to be included and this has been the case for over four hundred years.

In closing it is worth noting that this story of The People's Bible would not be complete without a mention of the Bible Society formed in 1804 and used to carry the message of the Bible all over the world. Nothing changed the world in the manner in which the Bible did. Could it be that when the Master said in John chapter 14 verse 12 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do..." that this is what He meant?

The King James Version: the story of the People's Bible



THE
HOLY BIBLE
CONTAINING THE
OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

TRANSLATED OUT OF THE ORIGINAL TONGUES:
AND WITH THE FORMER TRANSLATIONS
DILIGENTLY COMPARED AND REVISED
BY HIS MAJESTY'S SPECIAL COMMAND

APPOINTED TO BE READ IN CHURCHES

The King James Bible was "Authorized" to be translated as God's Word for the English-speaking people of the world. God bless you as you study His authorized and preserved words in English, the King James Bible.

But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you. 1 Peter chapter 1verse 25