

The English Bible

Bede (c.672/673 – May 27, 735)

Translated John's Gospel (ch.1 – 6:9)

Bede translating John's Gospel into
Saxon

Painting by J D Penrose



Alfred the Great (849-889) translated 10 Commandments.

The Lindisfarne Gospels (c.715)

Written in Latin

Probably the work of Eadfrith, who became Bishop of Lindisfarne in 698 and died 721.

First English translation of the Gospels (10th century)

In the 10th century the Lindisfarne gospels were translated into Old English by Aldred who was the provost at Chester-le-Street.

The Lindisfarne Gospels are in the British Library



Lindisfarne Gospels

Matthew vi.

(9) Suae ðonne iuih gie bidde fader urer ðu arð ðu bist in heofnum in heofnas;
sie gehalgad noma ðin;

(sic ergo uos orabitis + Pater noster qui es in caelis; sanctificetur nomen
tuum;)

(10) to-cymeð ric ðin. sie willo ðin suae is in heofne in eorðo.

(adueniat regnum tuum fiat uoluntas tua sicut in caelo et in terra.)

(7) hlaf userne oferwistlic sel ús to dæg.

(panem nostrum super-substantiale[m] dá nobis hodie.)

(12) forgef us scylda usra suae uoe forgefon scyldgum usum.

(et demitte nobis debita nostra sicut nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris.)

(13) ne inlæd usih in costunge ah gefrig usich from yfle

(et ne inducas nos in temptationem sed libera nos a malo.)

Two English versions of the Psalms made during reign of Edward III

1. West Midland Psalter (c.1340-1350)

MS. 17376 (British Museum)

Written c.1340-1350

Wrongly attributed to William de Schorham

Contains the complete version of the book of Psalms, followed by eleven canticles and the Athanasian Creed.

The West Midland Psalter is found in two other manuscripts.

MS. 17376 (British Museum)

Psalm 1

(1) Blesced be þe man þat ede nout in þe counseil of wicked, ne stode nout in þe waie of sineres, ne sat nout in fals iugement.

(2) Ac hijs wylle was in þe wylle of oure Lord, and he schalþenche in hijs lawe boþe daye and nyt.

2. Richard Rolle (c.1349) - The hermit of Hampole

Translated Peter Lombard's Latin *Commentary on the Psalms*.

The translation included the Psalms.

Copies made throughout England.

Written for a nun.

Southern copies changed to remove hermit's strong northern dialect and the stiff and literal style.

Richard Rolle (c.1349)

"MS. Reg. 18 B. 21"

- (1) Blisful man þe whilk oway ged noght in þe counsaile of wicked, and in þe way of synful stode noght, & in þe chaire of pestilens he noght sate.
- (2) Bot in laghe of lord þe will of him; and [in] his lawe we shall þinke day and nyght.

1. Blessed is þat man þat hap not gone in þe counsell of wicked men, and in þe weye of sinfull men hap not stonde, and in þe chaire of pestilence sat not.
2. But in þe lawe of our lorde will of him; and in his laghe is þe he sall thynke day & nyght.

John Wycliffe (c.1329-1384) translated Bible from Latin Vulgate into English. Completed 1382. Nicholas de Herford assisted in the translation.

The original translation was not easy to read. A much better revised edition was issued in 1388 by Wycliffe's followers

Bible had to be handwritten. Printing not yet invented in the West.



Wycliffe Bible

1382 edition

Psalm 1

- (1) Blisful the man, that went not awei in the counseil of vnpitouse, and in the wei off sinful stod not; and in the chaer of pestilence sat not.
- (2) But in the lawe of the Lord his wil; and in the lawe of hym he shal sweteli thenke dai and nyt.

Later edition

- (1) Blessid the man, that bode not in the councel of wickid men; and stood not in the weie of synneris, and sat not in the chaier of pestilence.
- (2) But his wille in the lawe of the Lord; and he schal bithenke in the lawe of hym dai and nyt.

1408 Oxford convocation under Archbishop Arundel

"...that no man hereafter by his own authority translate any text of the Scripture into English or any other tongue, by way of a book, booklet, or tract; and that no man read any such book, booklet, or tract, now lately composed in the time of John Wycliffe or since, or hereafter to be set forth in part or in whole, publicly or privately, upon pain of greater excommunication, until the said translation be approved by the ordinary of the place, or, if the case so require, by the council provincial. He that shall do contrary to this shall likewise be punished as a favourer of heresy and error."

Encyclopaedia Britannica 1911

Printing

1. Manuscripts (until mid 15th century)

Hand written translations taken from the Latin Vulgate

2. Printed Bibles (from mid 15th century)

Translations taken from the Greek and Hebrew texts

Hebrew Bible published 1488

Erasmus first published Greek New Testament 1516

In Germany the Scriptures were printed in 1466
reprinted 17 times before Luther's translation in 1521.

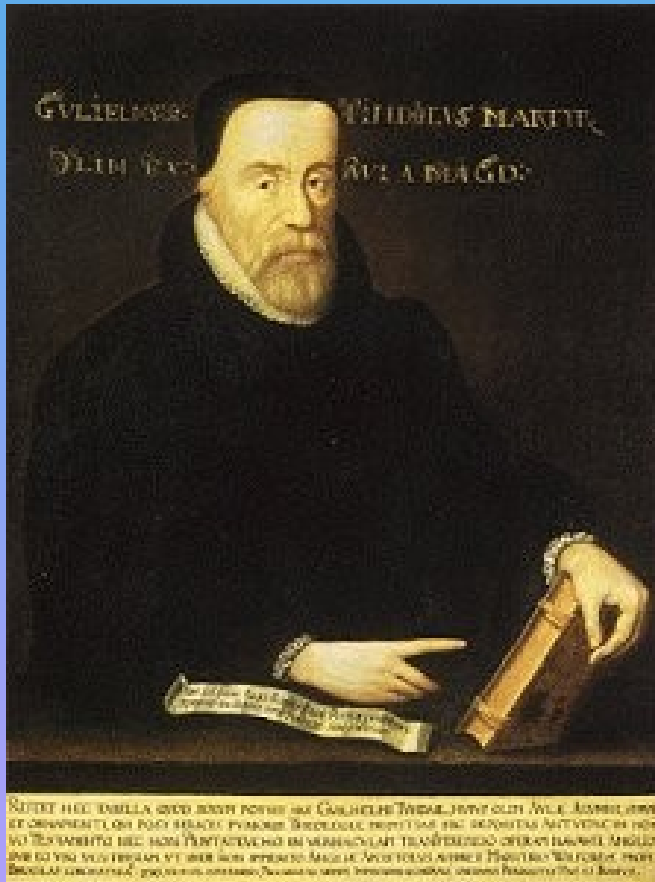
By the early 16th century the Bible had been translated into the vernacular in
France,
Spain,
Italy,
Bohemia and
Holland

There was no portion of the English Bible printed before Tyndale's Bible (1525).

There was no complete English Bible printed before 1535,

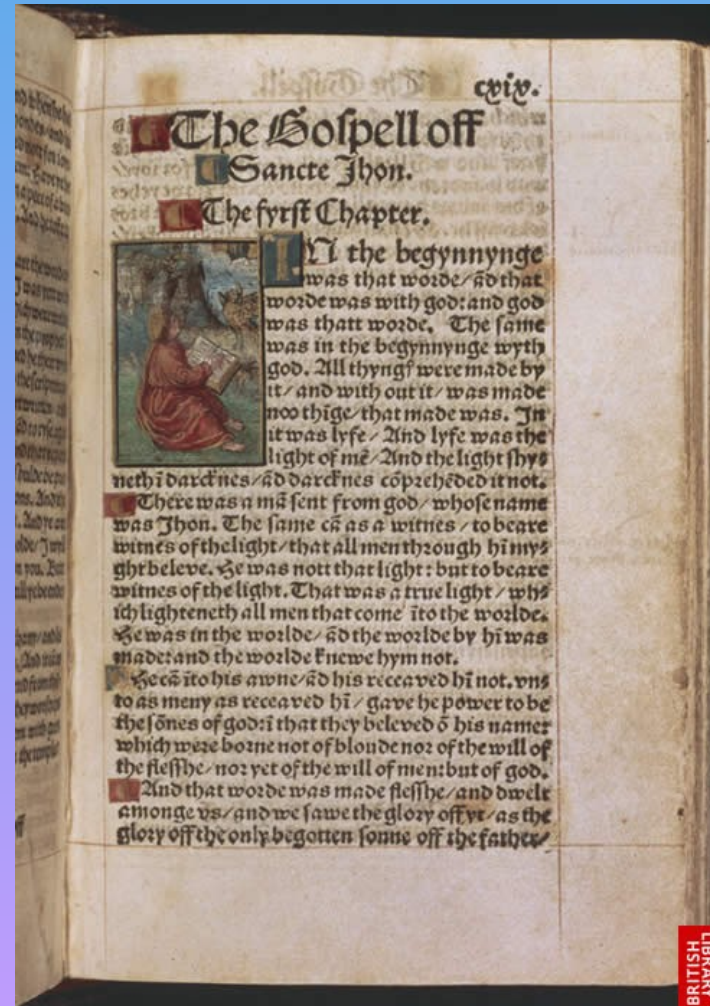
The Bible was not printed in England until 1538.

William Tyndale (c.1494-1536)



Like Luther, Tyndale also placed Hebrews, James, Jude and Revelation last.

Published English New Testament (1525) Revised (1534)



William Tyndale (c.1484 - 1536)

Born c.1484 at Melksham Court, Stinchcomb, Gloucestershire.

Studied at Oxford, Magdalen Hall.

Studied Greek – recently introduced into University teaching

Privately studied Bible

MA July 1515

Ordained priest.

Entered Cambridge where Erasmus lectured on Greek.

1521 returned to Gloucester

Became tutor in the house of John Walsh at Little Sodbury Manor House

Tyndale was often in disputes with the local clergy in Gloucester:

A Roman Catholic priest who disputed with Tyndale but was unable to answer his learning said to Tyndale:

‘We were better to be without God’s laws than the Pope’s’

Tyndale answered with these famous words:

‘I defy the Pope and all his laws; and if God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy who drives the plough to know more of the Scripture than thou doest.’

Tyndale believed that the only way to establish the lay person in the truth of the gospel was by giving the people the scriptures in their mother tongue.

Tyndale left Gloucester due to animosity of the clergy towards his teaching.

Sought to translate New Testament

July/August 1523 Tyndale went to London.

Sought employment with the Bishop of London, Cuthbert Tunstall.

Tunstall refused.

Eventually Tyndale realised

"not only that there was no rowme in my lorde of londons palace to translate the new testament, but also that there was no place to do it in all englonde."

(Preface to Genesis)

1524 Tyndale arrived in Hamburg

Tyndale visited Wittenberg – probably completed his New Testament, learnt German and was able to improve his knowledge of Hebrew.

William Roye, a Franciscan friar of Greenwich, who renounced the vows of his order, joined Tyndale and became his assistant.

1525 Tyndale and Roye went to Cologne.

Tyndale requested 6000 copies of his New Testament. Quentel and Bryckman agreed to print 3000.

Johann Cochläus, opponent of the Reformation, heard that two men skilful in languages had done business with a printing firm.

He discovered that 3000 copies were being printed.

Cochläus informed Hermann Rincke who obtained an order forbidding the printing.

Tyndale and Roye fled up the Rhine to Worms with the sheets that had been printed already.

Peter Schaeffer a printer in Worms agreed to print the English New Testament.

Spring 1526

New Testament brought to England from Worms as contraband

Taken by route of the Rhine, across sea, brought to London on the Thames.

In the Summer of 1526 the Elector of Saxony was at the Diet of Spires with his chancellor, Spalatin.

Spalatin kept a diary

August 11th 1526

‘Our prince having heard a sermon at the residence of the Landgrave of Hesse, returned to his house.’

Spalatin then writes about issues discussed - the war with the Turks, and the literary troubles of Erasmus. Then he writes that

Hermann Busche...

‘...told us that at Worms 6000 copies of the New Testament in English had been printed. It had been translated by an Englishman who was residing there with two of his countrymen (Roye and possibly Friar Jerome) and who was so learned in seven languages – Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, English, and French that whichever he spake you would think his native tongue.’

‘The English indeed have so great a thirst for the Gospel, although the King opposes and dislikes it, that they say they would buy a New Testament, even if each copy cost 100,000 pieces of money.’

1529 the manuscript translation of Deuteronomy is mentioned as having perished with his other books and papers in a shipwreck which he suffered on the coast of Holland, on his way to Hamburg.

1530 *Pentateuch* printed in Marburg by Hans Luft;

Reissued 1534 with a new preface and certain corrections and emendations in Genesis, and

again in London in 1551.

1531 Published *Book of Jonah*

November 1534 Tyndale published revised New Testament

Tyndale in prison in the castle of Vilvorde 1535 – made further revisions.

His execution took place on the 6th of October 1536,

In later years, between 1536 and 1550, numerous editions of Tyndale's New Testament were printed.

Coverdale Bible 1535

Miles Coverdale

Augustinian Friar

Bishop of Exeter (1551 – 1553)

1529 at Hamburg with Tyndale

4 October 1535 Coverdale's Bible printed

Matthew's Bible 1537

Thomas Matthew was probably an alias for John Rogers

Friend and co-worker with Tyndale

Not a new translation but a compilation of Tyndale's and Coverdale's.

Pentateuch and New Testament – Tyndale's

Joshua to Chronicles – probably also Tyndale's

Ezra to Malachi – Coverdale's

Apocryphal books – Coverdale's

Cramner petitioned the King and the Matthew's Bible was printed with the King's license.

The English Bible from then on developed from the Matthew's Bible

Plan for an Authorised Version of the Bible

Archbishop Cranmer wrote to Cromwell on the 4th of August 1537 concerning the Matthew's Bible

"...that the same may be sold and read of every person ... until such time that we, the bishops, shall set forth a better translation, which I think will not be till a day after doomsday."

As early as 1530, Henry VIII issued a commission of inquiry respecting the expediency and necessity of having "in the English tongue both the New Testament and the Old".

On the 19th of December 1534 Henry VIII was petitioned "that His Majesty would vouchsafe to decree, that the Scriptures should be translated into the vulgar tongue ... and ... delivered to the people according to their learning"

Coverdale was given charge of the enterprise resulting in a new translation based on the Matthew's Bible.

The Great Bible 1539

Henry VIII issued a license for the Great Bible to be printed in Paris.

Coverdale and Grafton went to France to superintend the work.

17 December 1538 work banned by the Inquisitor General for France.

Coverdale and Grafton managed to rescue the printed sheets.

Work was completed in London.



Bible of the largest size consequently it was called the Great Bible.

7 editions between 1539-1541

The 2nd edition known as Cranmer's Bible in which he wrote a long preface, the words are written

"This is the Byble apoynted to the vse of the churches"

Restrictions on the use of the Bible

1. An act of Parliament in 1543 prohibited the use of Tyndale's Bible.
2. Notes and marginal commentaries in other copies were to be removed
3. "no woman (unless she be a noble or gentle woman), no artificers, apprentices, journeymen, servingmen, under the degree of yeomen ... husbandmen or labourers" should read or use any part of the Bible under pain of fines and imprisonment.

Division into verses

The Hebrew Old Testament had divisions into verses

The first New Testament to do this was the Stephanus Greek-Latin New Testament (4th ed., 1551).

Geneva Bible (1557)

During the reign of Mary Tudor reformers like Cranmer and Rogers were burnt at the stake. Coverdale, William Whittingham and others sought refuge in Calvin and Beza's Geneva.

Here they worked on a revision of the Bible.

The New Testament was issued in June 1557 – mainly the work of William Whittingham.

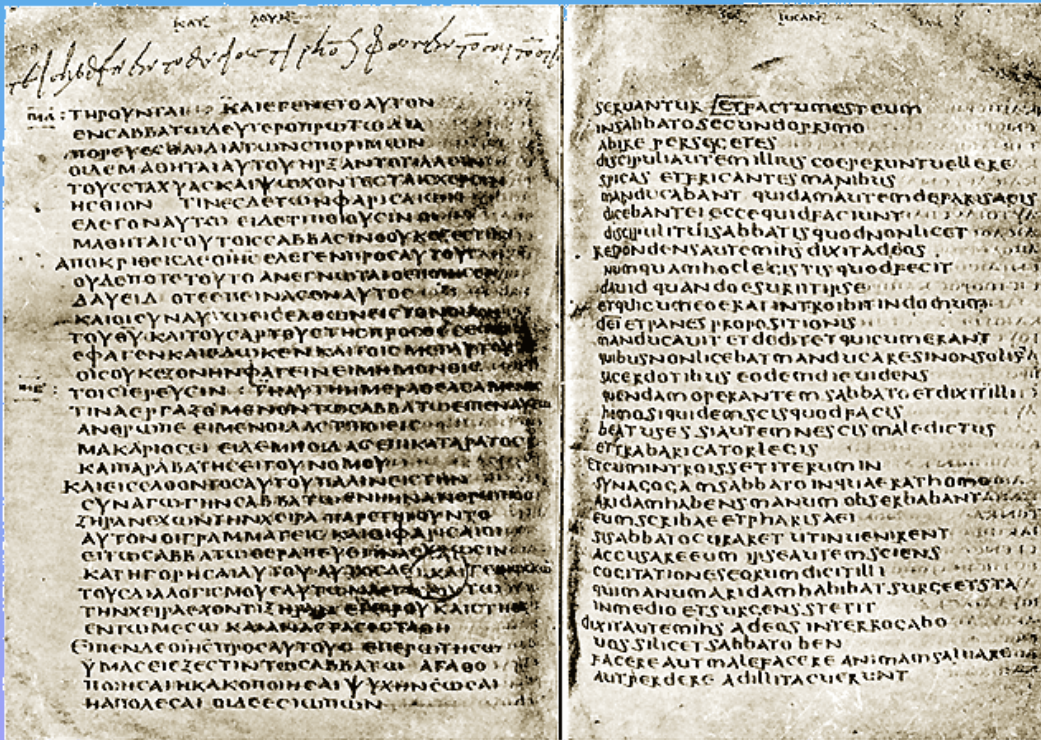
It contained an introduction by Calvin.

Popular in England.

Divided into verses and sections.



Theodore Beza (1519-1605)



Beza came to possess the
5th or 6th century Codex
Bezae

It contains the four Gospels
in this order: Matthew John
Luke and Mark 3 John and
the Acts (only Luke is
complete).

Beza gave the codex to
Cambridge University in
1581 where it still remains.

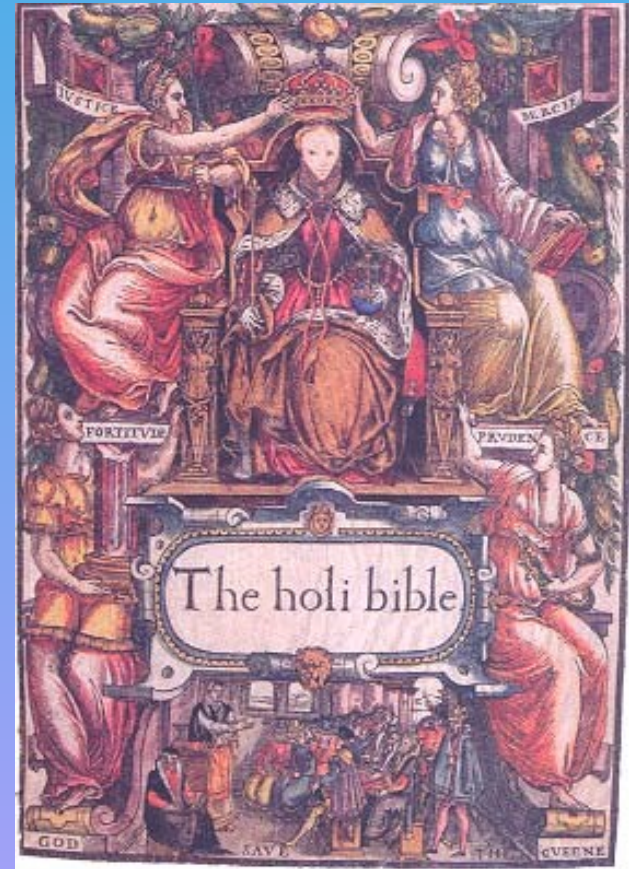
Beza published a revised edition of the Erasmus' Greek text (Textus Receptus)
Beza's 1598 edition of the TR was the primary source for the KJV's Greek text.
The Old Testament is based upon the Masoretic Text.
The KJV New Testament retained over 80% of Tyndale's translation (1534).

Bishop's Bible 1568 and 1572

The popularity of the Geneva Bible with its Calvinistic notes did not go down well with the Bishops of the Church of England. Calvinism promoted Presbyterianism – government by elders not bishops.

Great Bible (1539) was not good enough. Much of the Old Testament was translated from the Latin Vulgate not the Hebrew.

Matthew Parker Archbishop of Canterbury was responsible for supervising the translation but the standard is not consistent.



King James Version 1611

Hampton Court Conference held January 1604 – King, moderate Puritans and Anglican Bishops.

Puritan demands rejected but decision made to produce new edition of the Bible.

The King James Version was published in 1611.

Primary sources

Greek (Textus Receptus) – Beza's edition (1598) and the Stephen's text (1550)

Hebrew – Masoretic Text

King James Version 1611



Lanceleot Andrewes (1555-1626) -
bishop of Winchester.

Learnt 18 languages.

One of the best known translators of the
King James Version.

Oversaw translation of Genesis through
2 Kings.

His works: *A Manual for the Sick*;
Tortura Torti; *The Wonderful Combat*
Between Christ and Satan, Opened in
Seven Sermons