

THE ENGLISH BIBLE

see “A Concise History of the English Bible,” online at
<http://www.americanbible.org/library/history.dsp>

I. EARLY EFFORTS (Before Printing)

- A. To the Norman Conquest (1066): Partial Translations in Old English (Anglo-Saxon)
 - 1. England Evangelized with the Vulgate by Augustine AD 597
 - 2. Caedmon, 7th cent: Old English Metrical Paraphrases
 - 3. Aldhelm (d. 709): Psalms; Bede (d. 735): Gospel of John
 - 4. King Alfred (849-901): Parts of Exodus, Acts; the Psalms
 - 5. Aldred, a Priest (c. 950): Interlinear English Glosses in the Lindisfarne Gospels
 - 6. **Wessex Gospels**; Abbot Aelfric: Parts of OT (10th cent)
 - 7. Norman Conquest (1066) Changed Anglo-Saxon to Anglo-Norman

- B. Early Middle English (Anglo-Norman) Portions of Scripture
 - 1. *Ormulum*: early 13th cent Poetical Gospels by Augustinian Monk, Orm
 - 2. 13th cent Metrical Paraphrases: Genesis, Exodus, Psalms
 - 3. Early 14th c Psalms: William of Shoreham (Kent)/Richard Rolle of Hampole (Yorkshire)
 - 4. In Late 14th cent, Portions of NT for Monks & Nuns

- C. The **Wycliffe Bible** (1384)
 - 1. The First Complete Bible in English
 - 2. John Wycliffe (ca. 1330-1384): Oxford Theologian
 - a. Involved in Ecclesiastical/Social Issues of Politics (1378, put on trial)
 - b. Believed Bible Law over Canon Law; Therefore Common Man should have Bible in Vernacular
 - c. Teachings Denounced as Heretical (1382, his followers denounced as “Lollards”)
 - 3. Translated From the Latin Vulgate; 2 Versions; both hand-copied
 - a. Earlier Version (1380-1384)
 - 1) Most of OT was the Work of **Nicholas of Hereford**
 - a) Original(?) MS ends at Baruch 3:20
 - b) Early Copy has note at Bar 3:20: “here ends translation of Nicholas of Hereford”
 - 2) Extremely Literal with Many Latinisms
 - b. Later Version (1384-ca. 1388): After Wycliffe's death
 - 1) Largely the Work of **John Purvey**
 - 2) Prologue Explains Translation Principles
 - 3) More English Idiom; Less Literal
 - 4) Had Much Popular Appeal
 - c. Standard Printed Edition by Forshall and Madden, Oxford, 1850
 - 4. Wycliffe Bible Condemned; Copies Burned
 - a. “Constitutions of Oxford;” from a synod against Lollardy, 1408: Forbade Translating, Reading Vernacular Bible without Bishop's Approval
 - b. Nevertheless Enjoyed Wide Use and Circulation

II. ENGLISH BIBLES OF THE 16th CENTURY

A. Impetus for the Many Bible Translations of the 16th Century

1. Renaissance: The Revival of Classical Learning; Factors:
 - a. Printing Press (1453-56) Made Texts Widely Available
 - 1) Hebrew Bible Published 1488 at Soncino
 - 2) Greek NT 1st Published 1516 by Erasmus
 - b. Turkish Capture of Constantinople (Byzantium), 1453
 - 1) Greek Scholars fled West with Knowledge & MSS
 - 2) Study of Classical & NT Greek in West Increased
2. The Protestant Reformation
 - a. Sparked by Luther's 95 Theses, 31 Oct 1517
 - b. Led to Protestant Bibles in Vernaculars of W. Europe
 - c. Luther Produced German NT in 1522

B. Tyndale's Bible (1526)

1. **William Tyndale** (1494-1536)
 - a. Educated at Oxford & Cambridge; Learned Greek
 - b. Believed Bible Should Be Given to Common Man
 - c. Denied Permission in England, Moved to Continent 1524
2. Entire NT Translated Directly from Greek, 1525; First Printed English NT
 - a. Printing Halted in Cologne after first 80 pages (in *quarto*)
 - b. Published in Worms (in *octavo*), **1526**
 - c. Revised Edition **1534**
 - 1) Basis for AV (KJV), RV, RSV, etc.
 - 2) Non-polemical marginal notes
 - d. Another Revision Published 1535
 - e. Influence of Luther's NT: order of books, marginal notes in Cologne
3. Tyndale Began Translating OT from Hebrew
 - a. Pentateuch Published 1530
 - b. Jonah Published 1531; Historical Books Begun
 - c. Free Translation; Caustic Anti-Papal Marginal Notes
4. Tyndale Kidnapped in Antwerp; Condemned, Strangled, Burned at Stake 6 Oct 1536

C. Coverdale's Bible (1535)

1. By **Myles Coverdale** (1488-1569)
 - a. Revised Tyndale's NT, Pentateuch, Jonah
 - b. Translated, Revised from Latin & German Versions
2. First Complete Printed Bible in English
3. 1st with Chapter Summaries instead of Chapter Headings of Vulgate
4. First to Separate Apocrypha into Appendix to OT
5. Permitted by Henry VIII (dedicated to him), perhaps influenced by Anne Boleyn
6. 1537 Reprint Under Royal License; other reprints in 1550, 1553

D. Matthew's Bible (1537)

1. "Thomas Matthew" a Pen-name for **John Rodgers** (later burned by Mary in 1555)
 - a. Used Tyndale's NT, Pentateuch, Jonah
 - b. Published Tyndale's Historical Books to 2 Chr
 - c. Supplemented by Coverdale's OT & Apocrypha
2. 1st English Bible under Royal License (Henry VIII)
3. Revised about 1539 by **Richard Taverner: Taverner's Bible** (mainly lexical changes)

E. **The Great Bible** (1539)

1. Sanctioned by Bishops of England
 - a. Large Bible to be Set up in Each Parish Church
 - b. Great Bible “Appointed to the Use of the Churches”
2. Revision of Matthew's Bible by Coverdale
3. 6 Further Editions 1540-1541; with Preface by **Archbishop Cramner**
4. All English Bibles Except Great Bible Proscribed 1546
5. Source of the Psalms in Book of Common Prayer

F. **The Geneva Bible** (1560); Dedicated to Queen Elizabeth

1. Produced in Geneva under Influence of Calvin, Beza
 - a. **Mary Tudor** Executed Reformers Cramner & Rodgers
 - b. Coverdale, Others Fled to Continent (esp. Geneva)
2. NT Published by William Whittingham in 1557
 - a. Verse Divisions
 - b. Words not in Original Printed in Italics
3. Superior & Very Popular; Shakespeare's Bible

G. **Bishops' Bible** (1568)

1. Response to Popularity of Geneva Bible
2. Revision of Great Bible by Bishops of England
3. Official for Church of England, but Overshadowed by Geneva Bible

III. **SEVENTEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH BIBLES**A. The **King James Version** or **Authorized Version (KJV, AV; 1611)**

1. Translated Under Patronage/Organization of James I
 - Initiated by Hampton Court Conference, Jan. 1604
2. 47 scholars in 6 panels (3 for OT; 2 for NT; 1 for Apoc)
3. Translation from Original Hebrew, Greek
 - a. 47 Translators on 6 Panels: 3 OT, 2 NT, 1 Apoc
 - b. Reviewed by 12 Men, 2 from Each Panel
 - c. Rules Followed by Translators
 - 1) Bishop's Bible to be Followed as Basis
 - 2) Names to Correspond with Common Usage
 - 3) Old Ecclesiastical Words to be Retained
 - 4) Marginal Notes Only to Explain Heb/Greek Words
 - 5) Words Not in Original Appear in Italics
4. Published 1611
 - a. Contained Dedication to King James
 - b. Explanatory Preface: “The Translators to the Reader”
 - 1) Role of James
 - 2) Not a Final Translation; Consultation of Other Versions
 - 3) Marginal Notes on Word Meanings Explained
 - 4) Variety of English Synonyms Used for Same Original Language Word
 - 5) Note on Ecclesiastical Words: Not Puritan or “Papist”
5. Extensive Punctuation to Guide the Reader
6. Good Style & Prose Rhythms Made KJV Good for Reading
7. Included the Apocrypha
8. Spellings Revised Through the Years

B. The Roman Catholic English Bible

1. **Rheims-Douai Bible** (1582-1610)
 - a. Principles
 - 1) Based on Latin Vulgate
 - 2) Response to “False Translations” by Protestants
 - b. Work of the English College (Catholic Exiles)
 - Founded by Wm Allen at Douai (Flanders), moved to Rheims (1578), back to Douai (1593)
 - c. **Rheims Bible**: NT Published at Rheims, 1582
 - The Work of Gregory Martin; Revised by William Allen and Richard Bristow
 - d. **Douai Bible**: OT Published at Douai, 1609-1610
2. Challoner's Revision (1749-50)
 - a. by Bishop Richard Challoner (1691-1781)
 - b. **Rheims-Douai-Challoner** Version Used in USA

IV. LATE 19th-EARLY 20th CENTURY ENGLISH VERSIONS

A. Revised Version (RV; 1881-1885)

1. Inferiority of Byzantine Text (used for KJV) Became Known
 - a. MSS Discoveries Subsequent to KJV
 - b. Several Private Revisions of KJV Made
2. Official Decision to Revise AV Made in 1870
 - a. NT Published 1881
 - b. OT Published 1885
3. Influenced by Greek Textual Work of Wescott, Hort
4. In the USA: **American Standard Version (ASV; 1901)**
 - a. Began as Part of Same Effort; American Revisers were Freer than English
 - b. Uses “Jehovah” (instead of LORD) for OT Divine Name
 - c. Revised Separately as the Revised Standard Version and New American Standard Bible (below)
5. Same English Word Used for Occurrences of Heb/Greek Words

B. Early 20th Century Versions

1. The **Twentieth Century New Testament** (1902)
2. **Weymouth New Testament** (1903): Richard F. Weymouth
3. **Centenary New Testament** (1924): Helen Barrett Montgomery

C. Roman Catholic Versions from the Latin Vulgate

1. **Confraternity New Testament** (1941): Used Critical Greek Texts
2. **Knox Bible** (1944-1949)
 - a. By Roland A. Knox; Consulted Original Languages
 - b. Translated by Equivalent Effect

D. Versions by Individual Translators

1. **Moffatt Bible** (1913-1924): James Moffatt, English
 - a. *A New Translation of the Bible* (1928)
 - b. Modern Idiom, Principle of Equivalent Effect
2. **Smith-Goodspeed Bible** (1923-1927): Edgar J. Goodspeed, American
3. Simplified Bibles
 - a. *The Bible in Basic English* (1940-1949): S. J. Hooke
 - b. “Plain English” New Testament (1952): Charles K. Williams
4. **Phillips New Testament** (1958)
 - a. J. B. Phillips; Meaning for Meaning, Tends toward Paraphrase
 - b. *Letters to Young Churches*, Paul's Epistles (1947)
5. **Barclay New Testament** (1969)
6. **The Living Bible (LB; 1967-1971): Kenneth N. Taylor**; A Paraphrase

V. CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH VERSIONS

- A. **The Revised Standard Version (RSV; 1946-1952); (Revised NT 1971)**
1. Thorough Revision of ASV by 32 American Scholars
 2. NT Published 1946; Whole Bible 1952
 3. Language Generally Modernized; Points of Translation:
 - a. Thee, Thou, etc. Dropped Except in Regard to God
 - b. Quotation Marks Used in RSV
 - c. Printing Poetical Passages as Verse
 - d. Synonyms Used for Same Original Language Word
 - e. Italics Not Used for Words Not in Original
 - f. LORD used for Divine Name instead of Jehovah
 - g. Some Input from Dead Sea Scrolls (Is 3:24; 14:4, 30; 21:8; 33:8; 45:2; 49:24; 51:19)
 4. Met by Criticism
 - a. By Most for Deviation from KJV Wording
 - b. By Some for Being too Conservative
 - c. For Treatment of Messianic OT Passages (Isa 7:14)
 5. A Well Done, Scholarly, and Widely Accepted Version
 6. Revised as **The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV; 1990)**: see below
- B. Miscellaneous Recent Versions
1. **The New World Translation** (1960): Jehovah's Witnesses
 2. **The Berkeley Version** (1959)/Modern Language Bible (1969)
 3. **The Amplified Bible (AB; 1958-1965)**: Expanded Text
- C. Roman Catholic Versions Based on Original Languages
1. **The Jerusalem Bible (JB; 1966)**
 - a. By Dominicans of the *Ecole Biblique et Archéologique* in Jerusalem
 - b. "Yahweh" Used for LORD in the OT
 - c. Critically Superior Work; Ecumenical Outlook
 2. **New American Bible (NAB; 1970)**: Result of Confraternity NT
- D. **The Good News Bible (GNB; 1966-1976-1979)**
1. NT: *Good News for Modern Man* 1966, Whole Bible 1976, Apoc 1979
 2. Uses "Dynamic Equivalence;" Idiom is "Not Timeless"
 3. Popularly Produced; Includes Line Drawings
- E. **New English Bible (NEB; 1970)**
1. Completely New Translation; Not a Revision
 2. Aims for "Timeless" English Idiom; Produced in Britain
 3. NT Based on Eclectic Greek Text
 4. **Revised English Bible (REB)**
- F. **New American Standard Bible (NASB; 1963-1971)**
1. Lockman Foundation; Editorial Board not Named until Updated Edition
 2. Revision of ASV, Retains Precision of Rendering
 3. A Favorite for Study
 4. Updated Edition (1995)
 - a. Changed some readings (not always for the better)
 - b. Footnotes (on variants, etc.) reduced

- G. **King James II Version (1971)**
1. Revision of KJV by Jay Green; Published by Associated Bible Publishers
 2. Retains Byzantine Text
 3. Not to be Preferred over KJV
- H. **New International Version (NIV; 1973-1978)**
1. New Translation by New York/International Bible Society
 - a. OT Text: "latest editions of Biblia Hebraica
 - b. NT Text: Eclectic Text
 - c. Footnotes Provide Alternate Readings, Explanations
 - d. Conservative Approach; New Translation, but Traditional Wording
 2. Translators all Evangelical; NIV has Become the Premier Evangelical Version
 3. Published by Zondervan Bible Publishers
 4. **New International Reader's Version (1995):** simple English, shorter words/sentences
- I. **New King James Bible (NKJB; 1979-1982)**
1. Initiated by Sam Moore, president of Thomas Nelson (publisher)
 2. Intended as Revision of KJV; to Modernize Language with Compromising Text
 3. NT Text used: Revised Textus Receptus
 4. Word-for-word Translation by Evangelical Scholars
 5. Does Not Include Apocrypha (as did 1611 KJV)
- J. **New Revised Standard Version (NRSV; 1990)**
1. A Complete Revision of the RSV
 - a. RSV NT 2nd Edition Published in 1971
 - b. But new MSS became available & Need was felt to revise entire Bible
 2. Essentially a Literal Translation; "as literal as possible, as free as necessary"
 3. Inclusive (Gender) Language Used
 4. OT text: BHS; NT text: UBS critical Greek text
- K. **Contemporary English Version (CEV; 1995)**
1. Product of the American Bible Society
 2. OT text: BHS; NT text: UBS critical Greek text
 3. Dynamic Equivalence and Gender Inclusive Pronouns for Everyday Speech
 4. Emphasis on translation that can be
 - a. Read aloud easily
 - b. Heard without misunderstanding
 - c. Listened to with enjoyment and appreciation