

Article Title— “KJV... The History Of It”

Article Category— English Bible Versions

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Mary Queen of Scots, mother of James VI of Scotland, was deposed by Elizabeth I of England in 1567 and then executed in 1587 after 19 years in prison. James' father, Lord Darnley, was murdered in 1567. James was just 13 months old in 1567 when he became King of Scotland. He was to become King James I of England at the age of 37. Ann, of Denmark, was to become his queen. They were to have nine children together.

Few historical figures have been as brilliant and as highly educated. Like the also-highly-educated apostle Paul, James was multilingual—fluent in Greek, Latin, French, English and his native Scots. He was somewhat fluent in Spanish and Italian, too. William Shakespeare was one of his subjects. Learning and writing thrived under his reign.

James' rise to the English throne resulted, partly, from his having formed the foundation for what was to become known as the British Empire. To accomplish that, he united the warring tribes of Scotland and then joined the crowns of Scotland and England in 1603. He was the first to call England "Great Britain." Reformation leader John Knox read James' coronation sermon. The KJV (a.k.a. AV – Authorized Version of) the Bible was first published in 1611.

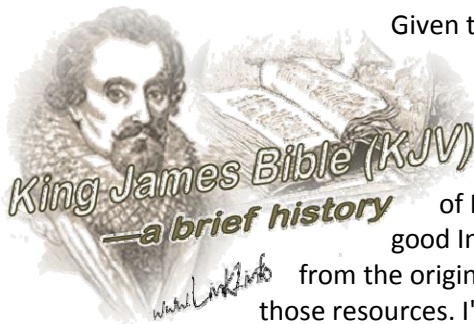
James was born during the time of the Reformation. He held the Roman Catholic Church in contempt. He was fully aware of the popery's atrocities. Roman clerics tried to kill him more than once. In 1536, the popery had burned William Tyndale to death for distributing the Bible. The popery was extremely angry with James, too, for his authorization of a Bible in the English language. Roman Catholic Ambassador, Nicolo Molin, said this about King James: "...He is a Protestant...The king tries to extend his Protestant religion to the whole island. The King is a bitter enemy of our religion (Roman Catholic)...He frequently speaks of it in terms of contempt. He is all the harsher because of this last conspiracy (The Gun Powder Plot[^]) against his life...He understood that the Jesuits had a hand in it."

James wrote this in Basilicon Doron: "I am no papist as I said before...Now faith...is the free gift of God (as Paul sayeth). It must be nourished by prayer, which is no thing else but a friendly talking to God. Use oft to pray when ye are quiet, especially in your bed..."

Roman Catholic Bibles were in Latin. Except for those who were skilled with Latin, even fully literate laymen couldn't read them. James was captive to and driven by a strong desire to make the Bible available to people in their native languages. He reasoned that if the common people could read God's word for themselves they'd no longer have to be systematically oppressed by an observably gluttonous, disgustingly corrupt, control-hungry, money-hungry, murderous clergy. So he set out to change things.

Imagine the logistics of such an undertaking! Who to hire? The translators had to be fluent in English and in ancient Hebrew (for Old Testament scriptures) and/or 1st-Century Greek (for New Testament manuscripts). If you had to round up 1,500 or so people with those qualifications today, where would you find them? Might a few of them be fully proficient, most of them just somewhat proficient and a few more of them barely proficient? Would you make Supervisors, Managers and Directors of those who're fully proficient? Wouldn't that leave only the somewhat proficient and barely proficient to do all the day-to-day translations? It's a good thing for us that King James I was a really smart guy, because that's precisely the scenario he wrestled with.

Given that scenario, he had to know there'd be at least a few inevitable errors in translation. That's why any serious student of God's word must become familiar with – and get comfortable using – some other resources for full comprehension of what was originally written in the most important book ever in the history of mankind. A good resource to start with would be the global platinum standard publication for the original meanings of Hebrew and Greek words and phrases, Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible. A good Interlinear Bible is another must-have, must-use tool—featuring literal English translations from the original Hebrew and Greek manuscripts. There are easily-accessible online sites for both of those resources. I'll be happy to email you hot links to the sites I use. Just ask. A must-read for those who



I was a successful Bible teacher for a LOT of years—big sanctuary classes.

I knew what my denomination believed and that's what I taught.

Yes, I should've checked it out to make sure it was true.

So why didn't I do that? Well, maybe I didn't do that for the same reason that you haven't really checked out what your denomination teaches.

"In religion and politics, people's beliefs and convictions are in almost every case gotten at second hand, and without examination." —Samuel Clemens




really, really want to know is New Age Bible Versions, by G. A. Riplinger: ISBN 0-9635845; Library of Congress Card Number 93-92561.

Important: In the KJV, whenever a word or phrase appears either in *italics* or square brackets [...] that is to indicate that it does not appear in ANY legitimate original manuscript; the KJV translators added it. Malicious? No. They were just trying to be helpful.

Someone asks, "But don't we pay our preachers and theologians to do all that for us?" Wisdom might respond, "King James reasoned that if the common people could read God's word for themselves, neither they, nor the original messages of God's written word would necessarily be held captive by ANY organized religion or its beholden representatives. Power corrupts..."

There are errors in translation. They were inevitable. King James knew that. He also knew that God has given us the spirit of sound minds...and that a sound mind is a terrible thing to waste. Still, though, the vast majority of literate lay Christians and surprisingly overwhelming numbers of their clergy continue in the naive mindset that "We pay experts to do our Bible research and critical thinking for us."


Of what possible value is a fully literate believer who pays others to get onto the playing field while he/she sits in the bleachers as a spectator? Are they the same people who'd pay someone else to work out for them at the gym every day...hoping to get the muscles and the body tone and stamina, themselves? "Pew potato?"

—T. C. Newsome 

^ One of several failed plots to assassinate James I would, however unfairly, taint all English Catholics with treason for centuries to come. Who were the conspirators and what did they hope to achieve? Follow this hot link for answers: http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/civil_war_revolution/gunpowder_robinson_01.shtml

PS: To participate in Bible discussions about articles like this one – or to just read and enjoy them – join us at TC's Friends Club. Here's the hot link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/136708110091989/>

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