



Ever seen the show “How it’s made”? Sometimes seeing how its made gives a whole new appreciation to the thing. It might even make you hungry!

In **382 AD**, **Jerome** translated the New Testament from its original Greek into Latin. This translation became known as the “Latin Vulgate”. Jerome put a note next to the Apocrypha Books, stating that he did not know whether they were inspired Scripture, or Jewish historical writings which accompanied the Old Testament.

The first handwritten English language Bible manuscripts were produced in the **1380's AD** by **John Wycliffe**, an Oxford professor, scholar, and theologian. Wycliffe, was well-known throughout Europe for his opposition to the teaching of the organized Church, which he believed to be contrary to the Bible. Wycliffe produced dozens of English language manuscript copies of the scriptures. They were translated out of the Latin Vulgate, which was the only source text available to Wycliffe. The Pope was so infuriated by his teachings and his translation of the Bible into English that 44 years after Wycliffe had died, he ordered the bones to be dug-up, crushed, and scattered in the river.

One of Wycliffe’s followers, **John Hus** actively promoted Wycliffe’s ideas: that people should be permitted to read the Bible in their own language, and they should oppose the tyranny of the Roman church that threatened anyone possessing a non-Latin Bible with execution. Hus was burned at the stake in **1415**, with Wycliffe’s manuscript Bibles used as kindling for the fire.

Almost 100 years later, in **1517**, **Martin Luther** nailed his famous 95 Theses of Contention (a list of 95 issues of heretical theology and crimes of the Roman Catholic Church) into the church door at Wittenberg. Martin Luther went on to be the first person to translate and publish the Bible into their own native language.

In **1525-1526** the Tyndale New Testament became the first printed edition of the scripture in the English language. Tyndale was forced to flee England, because of his Bible.

Tyndale’s English translations were burned as soon as the bishop could confiscate them, but copies trickled through and ended up in the bedroom of **King Henry VIII**. The more the King and Bishop resisted its distribution, the more fascinated the public at large became. The church declared it contained thousands of errors as they torched hundreds of New Testaments confiscated by the clergy. Later, the Catholic Church would consult these same texts in

translating their own revision of the Scriptures from Latin to English. History would show that there were no errors in the Tyndale text, only contradictions to the teachings of the Catholic Church. One risked death by burning if caught in mere possession of Tyndale's forbidden books.

Having God's Word available to the public in the language of the common man, English, was furiously opposed by the only official church of the day, the Catholic Church. If people were able to read the Bible in their own tongue, the church's income and power would be weakened. Catholic practices like selling indulgences (the forgiveness of sins) or selling the release of loved ones from purgatory would be questioned because they are not teachings found in the Scriptures. Salvation through faith, not works or donations, would be understood. The need for priests would vanish through the priesthood of all believers. The availability of the scriptures in English was the biggest threat imaginable to established and dominant church.

Today, there are only two known copies left of Tyndale's 1525-26 First Edition. Tyndale was incarcerated for 500 days before he was strangled and burned at the stake in **1536**. Tyndale's last words were, *"Oh Lord, open the King of England's eyes"*. This prayer would be answered just three years later in **1539**, when King Henry VIII finally allowed, and even funded, the printing of an English Bible known as the "Great Bible". But before that could happen...

Myles Coverdale carried the English Bible project forward and even accelerated it. Coverdale finished translating the Old Testament, and in **1535** he printed the first complete Bible in the English language, making use of Luther's German text and the Latin as sources. Thus, the first complete English Bible was printed on October 4, 1535, and is known as the Coverdale Bible.

Around the same time, King Henry VIII of England requested that the Pope permit him to divorce his wife and marry his mistress. The Pope refused. King Henry responded by marrying his mistress, thumbing his nose at the Pope by renouncing Roman Catholicism as the official church of the land. This took England out from under Rome's religious control. The King declared himself as the reigning head of State and the head of the new Anglican Church or the Church of England. The King further defied the wishes of Rome by funding the printing of the scriptures in English... the first legal English Bible... just for spite.

In **1560**, The **Geneva Bible** was the first Bible to add numbered verses to the chapters, so that referencing specific passages would be easier. The Geneva holds the honor of being the first Bible taken to America, and the Bible of the Puritans and Pilgrims.

In **1582**, the Church of Rome surrendered their fight for "Latin only" and decided that if the Bible was to be available in English, they would at least have an official Roman Catholic English translation, known as the Rheims New Testament (also spelled Rhemes).

When King James VI of Scotland became King James I of England, the Protestant clergy approached him in **1604** and announced their desire for a new translation to replace the Bishop's Bible first printed in **1568**. They knew that the Geneva Version had won the hearts of the people because of its excellent scholarship, accuracy, and exhaustive commentary. However, they did not want the controversial marginal notes (proclaiming the Pope an Anti-Christ, etc.)

Essentially, the leaders of the church desired a Bible for the people, with scriptural references only for word clarification or cross-references.

This would later be known as the **King James Version**. It was the result of the combined effort of about fifty scholars. They took into consideration: The Tyndale New Testament, The Coverdale Bible, The Matthews Bible, The Great Bible, The Geneva Bible, and even the Rheims New Testament. Up until the **1880's** every Protestant Bible (not just Catholic Bibles) had 80 books, not 66. The 14 books that would later be omitted are known as the Apocrypha. The Vulgate would continue to include the Apocrypha as a part of the Scriptures, but it would be omitted in Jewish and Protestant versions of the Bible.

It is important to understand that while the Apocrypha is ancient, it was never included in the Hebrew Cannon, although Jews esteemed the books and read them. Manuscripts or fragments of some of the books have been found among the Dead Sea scrolls.

Another reason for rejecting the Apocrypha as Scripture is that it contains teachings that are not found in the rest of Scripture. “Sola Scriptura”, a Latin phrase coined during the Reformation demands that Scripture interpret Scripture. In other words, **SCRIPTURE IN THE WHOLE MUST SUPPORT SCRIPTURE IN PART**. The best way to determine the authenticity and authority of an ancient book is to first see how it was regarded by the people of the time, then check it against other accepted works to see if the work is in tune with other accepted truth. “Sola Scriptura is not a denial of other authorities governing Christian life and devotion. Rather, it simply demands that all other authorities are subordinate to, and are to be corrected by, the written word of God.” **Wikipedia*

Today many Bible versions and translations include the apocryphal books. Although not considered inspired, they contain information that may enrich the understanding of Jewish culture and thought during the period between the Old and New Testaments.

In the **1971**, the **New American Standard Version Bible** (often referred to as the **N.A.S.V.** or **N.A.S.B.** or **N.A.S.**) was published. This New American Standard Bible is considered by nearly all evangelical Christian scholars and translators today, to be the most accurate, word-for-word translation of the original Greek and Hebrew scriptures into the modern English language that has ever been produced. Some, however, have taken issue with it because it is so direct and literal a translation (focused on accuracy), that it does not flow as easily in conversational English.

For this reason, in **1973**, the **New International Version (N.I.V.)** was produced, which was offered as a “dynamic equivalent” translation into modern English. The N.I.V. was designed not for “word-for-word” accuracy, but rather, for “phrase-for-phrase” accuracy.

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English Bible History Timeline:

1,400 BC: The first written Word of God: The Ten Commandments delivered to Moses.

500 BC: Completion of All Original Hebrew Manuscripts which make up the 39 Books of the Old Testament.

200 BC: Completion of the Septuagint Greek Manuscripts which contain the 39 Old Testament Books and 14 Apocrypha Books.

1st Century AD: Completion of All Original Greek Manuscripts which make up the 27 Books of the New Testament.

315 AD: Athenasius, the Bishop of Alexandria, identifies the 27 books of the New Testament which are today recognized as the canon of scripture.

382 AD: Jerome's Latin Vulgate Manuscripts Produced which contain All 80 Books (39 Old Test. + 14 Apocrypha + 27 New Test).

500 AD: Scriptures Translated into more than 500 Languages.

600 AD: LATIN was the Only Language Allowed for Scripture.

995 AD: Anglo-Saxon (Early Roots of English Language) Translations of The New Testament Produced.

1384 AD: Wycliffe is the First Person to Produce a (Hand-Written) manuscript Copy of the Complete Bible; All 80 Books.

1455 AD: Gutenberg Invents the Printing Press; Books may now be mass-produced instead of individually hand-written. The first book ever printed is Gutenberg's Bible in Latin.

1516 AD: Erasmus Produces a Greek/Latin Parallel New Testament.

1522 AD: Martin Luther's German New Testament.

1526 AD: William Tyndale's New Testament; The First New Testament printed in the English Language.

1535 AD: Myles Coverdale's Bible; The First Complete Bible printed in the English Language (80 Books: O.T. & N.T. & Apocrypha).

1537 AD: Tyndale-Matthews Bible; The Second Complete Bible printed in English. Done by John "Thomas Matthew" Rogers (80 Books).

1539 AD: The "Great Bible" Printed; the first English Language Bible authorized for public use (80 Books).

1560 AD: The Geneva Bible Printed; The first English Language Bible to add numbered verses to each chapter (80 Books).

1609 AD: The Douay Old Testament is added to the Rheims New Testament (of 1582) making the first complete English Catholic Bible; translated from the Latin Vulgate (80 Books).

1611 AD: The King James Bible Printed; originally with all 80 Books. The Apocrypha was officially removed in 1885 Leaving Only 66 Books.

1782 AD: Robert Aitken's Bible; The First English Language Bible (KJV) Printed in America.

1833 AD: Noah Webster's Bible; after producing his famous dictionary, Webster printed his own revision of the King James Bible.

1841 AD: English Hexapla New Testament; an early textual comparison showing the Greek and 6 famous English translations in parallel columns.

1885 AD: The "English Revised Version" Bible; the first major English revision of the KJV.

1901 AD: The "American Standard Version"; the first major American Revision of the KJV.

1971 AD: The "New American Standard Bible" (NASB) is Published as a "Modern and Accurate Word for Word English Translation" of the Bible.

1973 AD: The "New International Version" (NIV) is published as a "Modern and Accurate Phrase for Phrase English Translation" of the Bible.

1982 AD: The "New King James Version" (NKJV) is published as a "Modern English Version Maintaining the Original Style of the King James."

2002 AD: The English Standard Version (ESV) is published as a translation to bridge the gap between the accuracy of the NASB and the readability of the NIV.

** English Bible History Timeline used with permission by author/editor: John L. Jeffcoat III*

If all this Bible- '*how it's made*' stuff was on a test, it would be overwhelming. Remembering all of it would be like designing and making your own ice-cream sandwich or ice cream cone machine. Doable, but SO complex!

Good news- I didn't share all of this with you for some bible test. I did it because I hope seeing all of this gives you an appreciation for '*how it's made*', how remarkable our Bible really is!

When we hold a bible, we have so much to be thankful for.

Are you hungry? Then dig in!! It's WHY it was made!!!



- 2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17
- 1 JOHN 5:13
- MATTHEW 4:4