

In part 1 we were considering the creation of the King James Bible. This session continues where Session 9 left off.

## SELECTION OF SCHOLARS AND THEIR GROUPING

### CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

The assembly of scholars for the King James Bible translation was thorough, with stringent criteria. The translators were not just linguists, but seasoned theologians, proficient in ancient languages relevant to biblical texts, like Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek, and Latin. Their deep understanding of biblical theology and ecclesiastical history was crucial for a translation that captured the original texts' linguistic nuances and theological context accurately.

### GROUPING INTO COMMITTEES

The translators, once selected, were divided into six committees, each assigned a specific Bible portion:

- The first Westminster group managed the Pentateuch and historical books up to 2 Kings.
- The second Westminster group handled the Epistles.
- One Cambridge group worked on Chronicles to Ecclesiastes.
- Another Cambridge group took care of the Apocrypha.
- One Oxford committee focused on the Gospels, Acts, and Revelation.
- The last Oxford group dealt with Isaiah to Malachi.

This method ensured meticulous examination and specialization in each section.

### NOTABLE SCHOLARS

Several scholars significantly contributed to the translation process. Lancelot Andrewes, known for his Hebrew and Greek expertise, played a key role in translating the Pentateuch. John Harding, a Hebrew scholar, led the Oxford group translating the Prophets. William Bedwell, a pioneer in Arabic studies, offered a broader contextual understanding of the texts. Their collective efforts under King James I's patronage were pivotal in shaping Christianity, especially scripture interpretation in the English-speaking world. The King James Bible became a cornerstone of English literature and a significant religious text influencing generations of Christians globally.

## TRANSLATION METHODOLOGY

### APPROACH TO TRANSLATION

The methodology adopted by the translators of the King James Bible was comprehensive and methodical, reflecting a commitment to accuracy and fidelity to the source texts. The approach was rooted in comparative analysis and cross-referencing. Each committee diligently compared the Hebrew and Greek texts with existing English translations, such as the Bishops' Bible, the Geneva Bible, and others. They also referenced Latin versions, notably the Vulgate, and consulted commentaries and scholarly works to understand various interpretations and readings.

The translators employed a principle of literal translation where possible, striving to maintain the essence and style of the original languages. In any translation, the bridge from one language to another, and one culture to another, requires some dynamic equivalence, but word-for-word was the goal of the translators.

### HANDLING OF DISCREPANCIES

In dealing with discrepancies and textual challenges, the committees exercised scholarly rigor and theological discernment. When faced with variations in manuscripts or differing interpretations, they engaged in thorough discussions, examining the textual context, linguistic factors, and theological implications. Cross-references to other parts of the scriptures were often used to resolve ambiguities, ensuring consistency and coherence across the translation.

The scholars also considered the historical and cultural context of the original texts. This involved studying ancient customs, geographical settings, and historical events to accurately interpret and translate passages that might otherwise be misunderstood or misrepresented in a different cultural and temporal context.

## CONSENSUS BUILDING

The translation process was dependent on consensus, both within committees and across all groups. Each committee worked independently, consulting each other to agree on specific passages. The collaborative approach allowed for a thorough review and refinement of the translation.

After a committee finished its part, other groups reviewed the work to ensure uniformity and consistency across the Bible. Disagreements were resolved through discussion, consultation, and re-examination of original texts.

The final consensus stage involved a general meeting of all committee representatives for a meticulous review of the entire translation. This final stage ensured a unified King James Bible, reflecting the collective wisdom of the scholars involved.

This meticulous process resulted in a translation that was linguistically, theologically robust, and exemplary of English language's literary and poetic abilities. This balance between scholarly precision and literary elegance contributed to the King James Bible's enduring impact on Christianity and English literature.

## LINGUISTIC CONSIDERATIONS AND SOURCE TEXTS

### PRIMARY SOURCE TEXTS

The King James Bible translation used primary Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic texts. The Masoretic Text, the authoritative Hebrew scripture, was the main source for the Old Testament. The New Testament was translated from the Textus Receptus, a widely accepted collection of Greek New Testament manuscripts.

## LINGUISTIC CHALLENGES

Translating ancient idioms and contexts into understandable English was a major challenge during the translation process. Translators had to balance preserving the original meaning with English comprehensibility. Additionally, they had to handle terms and concepts with no direct English equivalents, often creating new words or phrases and enriching the English language. They also had to interpret ancient words whose meanings had evolved or were uncertain. To tackle these challenges, translators relied on their linguistic skills, lexicons, and extensive consultations. They strived to understand the original texts' cultural and historical context, ensuring the King James Bible was not just a literal, but a culturally and contextually informed translation. This monumental work is a landmark in religious, theological, and translation studies, and the history of the English language.

## THE ROLE OF KING JAMES I IN THE TRANSLATION PROCESS

### DIRECT INVOLVEMENT

King James I instigated the translation of the Bible in his name in 1604, aiming to unify religious practice within the Church of England and the English-speaking Protestant community. Though not actively involved in the translation, his guidelines were key; he insisted on using the best texts and ensuring accessibility to the common people without compromising church dignity. Despite his academic background in theology and languages, there's no evidence of his influence on translation choices.

## RESOLUTION OF DISPUTES

Historical records don't detail King James intervening in specific translation disputes. The process was collaborative among the translators' committees, with no evidence of King James' direct involvement. However, his directives and the environment he fostered guided the translators, especially on contentious points. Aware of his preferences for a non-controversial version, this influenced the translators' handling of sensitive issues, aiming for a widely acceptable translation within English Protestantism.

## PUBLICATION AND INITIAL RECEPTION

### PRINTING AND DISTRIBUTION

The first edition of the King James Bible was published in 1611, a significant undertaking in terms of printing and distribution for that era. The task of printing was entrusted to Robert Barker, the King's Printer, a position that carried the exclusive privilege of printing the Bible in England. The printing process in the early 17th century was labor-intensive and time-consuming, involving manual typesetting and the use of printing presses that were operated by hand.

The typesetting of the King James Bible was particularly challenging due to its length and complexity. Each page had to be carefully composed with movable type, and the process was prone to errors, which were corrected in subsequent printings. The paper and ink used were of high quality, as befitting a book of its importance, and the bindings were typically robust, meant to endure frequent use.

The distribution of the King James Bible was primarily through church channels, as the Bible was initially intended for use in church services. Copies were distributed to churches throughout England, ensuring that the new translation was accessible for public worship. Over time, the Bible also became available for purchase by individuals, though the cost would have been prohibitive for many during this period.

### EARLY REACTIONS

The King James Bible's initial reception varied. Anglican clergy generally accepted it as a unifying force within the Church of England, gradually adopting its use in public worship. Puritans, despite reservations about certain translation choices, embraced the Bible for its scholarly rigor and majestic language. The Roman Catholic community was largely critical, viewing it as doctrinally unsound. The Catholic church does not widely use the KJV.

## THE KING JAMES BIBLE IN LITERATURE AND CULTURE

The King James Version of the Bible, since its publication in 1611, has exerted a profound influence on English language, literature, and religious practices. Its impact is far-reaching, shaping not only the realm of spirituality but also the cultural and linguistic fabric of the English-speaking world.

1. **Linguistic Impact:** The KJV is renowned for its majestic and poetic language, which has significantly shaped modern English. Phrases like "salt of the earth," "a drop in the bucket," and "fight the good fight" have entered common usage, demonstrating the translation's enduring linguistic legacy. Its rhythmic and memorable prose has influenced the stylistic choices of countless authors and public speakers over centuries.
2. **Literary Resonance:** The KJV has left an indelible mark on English literature, influencing a wide array of writers across different periods and genres. Authors such as John Milton, William Blake, Herman Melville, and even more contemporary writers have drawn from its language and themes. The biblical narratives, characters, and moral dilemmas presented in the KJV have provided rich material for literary exploration and adaptation.
3. **Educational and Intellectual Influence:** For many years, the KJV was not just a religious text but also a primary educational tool. It played a key role in teaching reading and writing, thus deeply embedding its phrases and vocabulary in the collective consciousness.

## THE KING'S PERSONAL LIFE

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## KING JAMES' PERSONAL THEOLOGY

King James I, a scholarly monarch with a strong interest in religion, believed in the divine right of kings, asserting that a monarch's authority comes directly from God. This influenced his governance and views on church-state relations. He leaned towards moderate Protestantism, supporting the Church of England's structure but not Puritanism's radical elements. King James sought unity and stability within the Church.

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## KING JAMES' SCIENTIFIC AND SCHOLARLY PURSUITS

King James I, known for his intellectual curiosity, was a patron of the arts and sciences during the Renaissance. He contributed to literature and political theory, authoring works including "Basilikon Doron," advice to his son Prince Henry, and "The True Law of Free Monarchies," outlining his governance philosophy. He also wrote "Daemonologie" in 1597, reflecting the era's perceptions of witchcraft.

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## CONTROVERSIES REGARDING KING JAMES' SEXUALITY

King James I's sexuality has been debated by historians, with some suggesting he may have been homosexual or bisexual due to his close relationships with male courtiers. However, the concept of sexual orientation was different in the 17th century, and these relationships were also influenced by the political and social structures of the time. James was married and had children with Anne of Denmark. Speculation about his sexuality could be an attempt to discredit the King James Bible. His contributions to theology, literature, and governance form a significant part of his legacy.

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## CONCLUSION

Few monarchs have influenced theological history as King James I. His commissioning of the Bible translation aimed to solidify his authority and unify the Church of England. The King James Bible, however, greatly affected religious thought, practice, and the linguistic and cultural development of the English-speaking world, impacting literature, art, education, and everyday speech.