



Session #57

Topic

The Translation of the Bible

Teacher

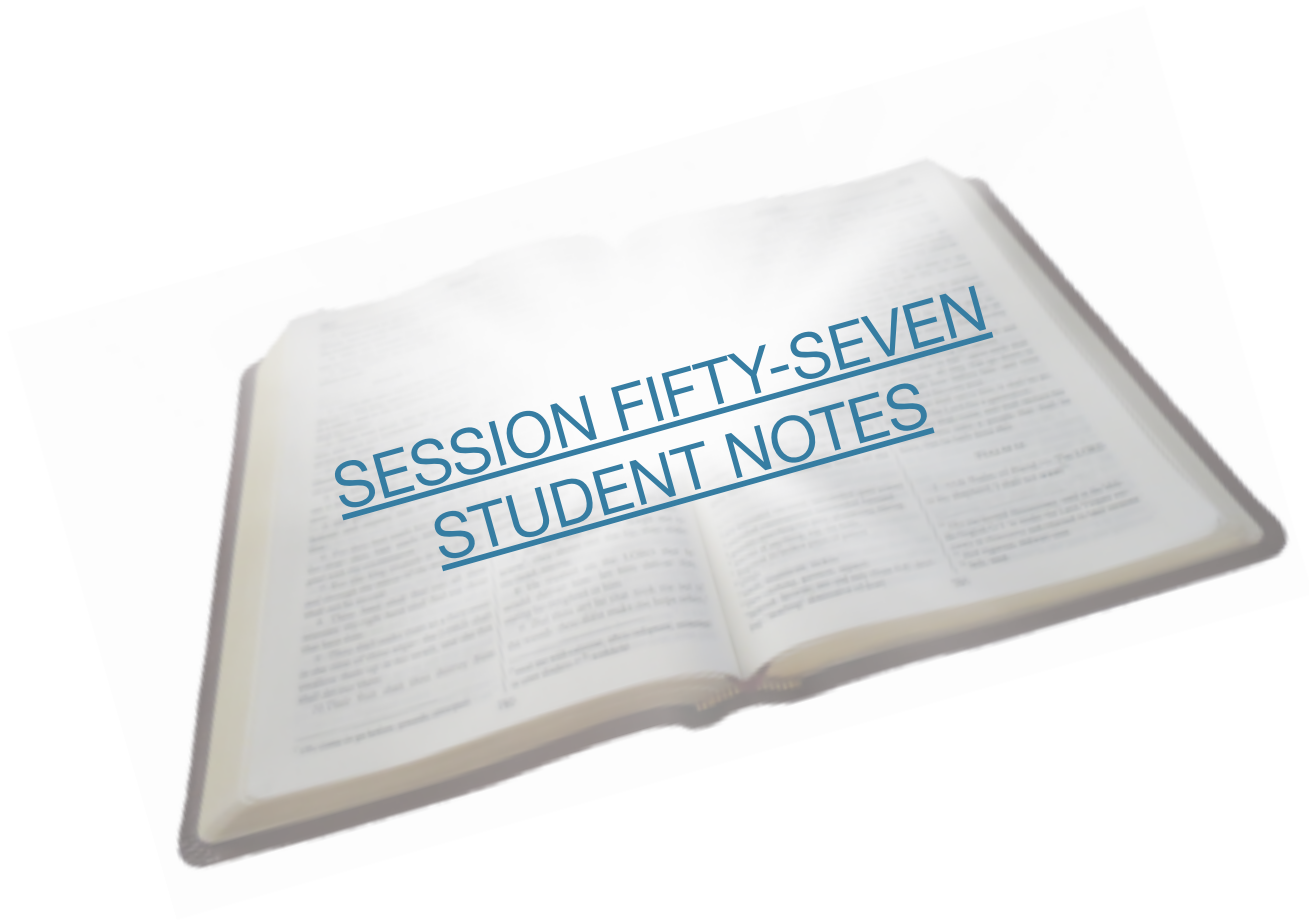
Ps. Neil Smith

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THE TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE

- The crowning product of English scholarship is unquestionably the Authorised, King James Version of the Bible...
- It is a Bible conceived by the work of William Tyndale, came through the womb of the English Reformation, perfected with the words of the great English language and has proved through its powerful witness in succeeding generations.
- Nevertheless, the average Christian today has been led to believe the King James Bible is obsolete and contains many archaic words and phrases.
- The “more informed” Christian has also been told that it contains mistakes and faulty translations because of the fact that it was translated from a few late manuscripts.
- Why do we accept the King James Bible?
- This lesson concerns itself with the answer to that question.

I. A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE AUTHORISED, KING JAMES VERSION

- The Authorised, King James Version came about in the providence of God through a series of events in England.
 1. **W_____ BIBLE**
 - John Wycliffe (1302-1384 A.D.) translated the first complete English Bible in 1380-82 A.D.
 - This was translated from the corrupt Latin Vulgate, but it created a hunger in the hearts of Englishmen for the Word of God and sowed the seeds of the English Reformation some 130 years later.
 2. **T_____ BIBLE**
 - William Tyndale (1494-1536 A.D.) translated the first English Bible from the original tongues.
 - His New Testament was translated from the Greek text prepared by Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536 A.D.) in 1516-35 A.D., which later came to be known as The Received Text, or, “Textus Receptus.”
 3. **THE REIGN OF KING HENRY VIII**
 - Henry ruled England from 1509-1547 A.D., and in 1534 A.D. broke with the ‘Church’ of Rome — thereby beginning the English Reformation.
 4. **THE REIGN OF QUEEN ELIZABETH I**
 - Protestantism was established in England during the reign of Elizabeth I (1558-1603 A.D.), in no small way through:
 - i. The Execution Of Mary, Queen Of Scots
 - Mary Stuart (1542-87 A.D.) was a cousin of Elizabeth, heir to the English throne, and a staunch Catholic who plotted against the Queen.
 - ii. The Defeat Of The Spanish Armada.
 - King Philip II of Spain sent an Armada of 136 ships against England in 1588 A.D. with the purpose of restoring Catholicism in the nation.
 - The Armada was defeated by a make-shift English fleet, and later decimated by storms.
 5. **THE REIGN OF KING JAMES I**
 - James was the son of Mary, Queen of Scots.
 - He was proclaimed King James VI of Scotland as an infant, and raised by the Scottish nobility as a Protestant.



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- He ruled England from 1603-1625 A.D.
- In 1604 A.D., two events took place which eventually led to the translation of what was to be called the Authorised, King James Version:
 - i. The Millenary Petition.
 - This was a petition signed by 1,000 Puritan (Presbyterian) clergymen calling for changes within the 'Church' of England.
 - ii. The Hampton Court Conference.
 - This was proclaimed by King James in response to the Millenary Petition.
 - It was called to settle some of the differences between the Episcopalian and Puritan parties within the 'Church' of England.
- On July 22, 1604, King James announced he had approved 54 selected men to translate a new Bible, and the work of translation began in 1607.

II. **THE TRANSLATION OF THE AUTHORISED, KING JAMES VERSION**

- The Authorised, King James Version was the fruit of a number of earlier English Bibles which were basically revisions of the work of William Tyndale.

1. THE R_____ OF TRANSLATION

- F_____ rules of procedure were drawn up by the Archbishop of Canterbury.
- Some Baptists have been quick to criticise the King James Version over its failure to translate Greek words such as βαπτίζω — “baptidzo” and εκκλησια — “ecclesia,” claiming it to be a Protestant Bible with Protestant b_____ towards infant sprinkling and a “universal church.”
- This “failure” came about, it is claimed, because of the third rule, which prescribed that old, established ecclesiastical words were to be retained.
- The fact is that the words “baptise” and “church” were, and still are, English words.
- They need explanation — but the New Testament is well able to do that.

2. THE M_____ OF TRANSLATION

- Of the 54 men chosen for the work, only 47 are positively identified.
- i. The men were divided into six companies — two at Westminster, two at Cambridge, two at Oxford. Each of the companies was assigned a particular portion of the Bible to translate.
- ii. Each member of the company was to make his own translation first.
- iii. The members of each company then met to compare one another's work, reading the passages out loud while comparing written notes.
- iv. When each group completed a Book, it was sent to the other five groups for their independent assessment.
- v. When the complete Bible was translated, it came before a select committee of 12 men, two from each company. In 1609 A.D., this group met daily in London at Stationer's Hall.
- vi. Finally, the entire work was assembled and “polished” by a publication committee of two men before being sent to the Royal printer.
- By this method, each passage in the translation was scrutinised a minimum of 14 times!



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III. **THE TRANSLATORS OF THE AUTHORISED, KING JAMES VERSION**

- For the most part, the men who translated the King James Version were obscure churchmen or scholars.
 - Among the translators there were sharp differences of opinion over church polity, but the one binding c_____ each shared was that they were dealing with God's s_____ Truth, and that the scriptures were the inspired, inerrant, and authoritative Word of God.
 - Every translator was a brilliant scholar in his own right.
1. Sir Lancelot Andrews
 - One eminent translator was Sir Lancelot Andrews, the Bishop of Winchester.
 - He was noted for his godliness, gravity, dignity, integrity and ability.
 - He spent five hours each day in prayer and devotions.
 - He was fluent in Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Chaldee, Syriac, and Arabic, and was fully conversant in 15 modern languages.
 - He was a strong Protestant and an outstanding preacher.
 - He was a leader of the "High Church" Episcopalian faction within the 'Church' of England.
 2. Dr. John Reynolds
 - Another translator and leading spokesman for the Puritan faction was Dr. John Reynolds.
 - He entered Oxford University at the age of 13, graduated at age 17, and began lecturing in Greek there at age 23.
 - He possessed an almost miraculous memory, and was called the "Living Library."
 - He was also noted for his holiness of life, gravity, integrity, and skill in languages.

IV. **THE TEXTUAL BASIS OF THE AUTHORISED, KING JAMES VERSION**

- The Authorised Version was much more than just a revision of the Bishop's Bible.
- It was "translated out of the original tongues" (Hebrew and Greek), yet cast in the basic language of Tyndale.
- The translators were given access to numerous versions and works, and to the best scholarship available.

1. THE OLD TESTAMENT TEXT

- A. The Hebrew M_____ Text
 - There were four printed Hebrew Bibles available, dated 1488 A.D., 1491 A.D., 1494 A.D., and 1517 A.D.
- B. Previous Translations Diligently Compared:
 - a. Tyndale's Old Testament translations
 - b. The Matthew's Bible
 - c. The Geneva Bible
 - d. The Bishop's Bible
 - e. The Complutensian Polyglot
 - f. The Antwerp Polyglot
 - g. The Targums
 - h. The Peshitta

2. THE NEW TESTAMENT TEXT

- A. R_____ Greek Text:
 - The third edition of Stephanus — 1550 A.D.



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B. Previous Translations Diligently Compared:

- a. Tyndale's New Testament
- b. The Matthew's Bible
- c. The Geneva Bible
- d. The Bishop's Bible
- e. The Olivetan Bible (French)
- f. The Diodati Bible (Italian)
- g. Luther's Bible (German)
- h. The Waldensian Bible (Old Italic)
- i. The Peshitta (Syriac)
- j. The Rheims-Douay New Testament
- k. Spanish translations — Enzinas, Perez de Pineda, Reina-Valera
- l. Tremellius' Latin Version
- m. Beza's Latin Version

V. THE LANGUAGE OF THE AUTHORISED, KING JAMES VERSION

- The Authorised Version is the purified end-product of a number of other English translations belonging to the turbulent early years of the English Reformation.
1. THE USE OF PREVIOUS ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS
 - In deference to the comfort of the people, the translators of the Authorised Version retained as much of the wording and style of p_____ English Bibles as possible.
 - The criterion was that such words and style were accurate translations of the "original tongues".
 - Consequently, the Authorised Version retains between 80-90% of the language of Tyndale's Bible.
 - About 4% comes from Wycliffe's translation, and 3% from other existing translations, including the Rheims-Douay New Testament.
 2. THE LANGUAGE OF THE AUTHORISED VERSION IS SUPERIOR
 - The Authorised Version was translated (providentially) at a time when the English language was at its z_____.
 - **QUOTE**
The English of the Authorised Version is the finest specimen of our prose literature at a time when English prose wore its stateliest and most majestic form.
 3. THE USE OF ITALICS
 - The translators used an italicised word to indicate it was not f_____ in the Greek or Hebrew text, but that it had been s_____ by the translators to facilitate the r_____ of the English.
 - This is a demonstration of:
 - A. The Translators' View Of I_____
 - They would not dare add to the sacred words of God. i.e., they believed in verbal inspiration.
 - B. The H_____ Of The Translators
 - By using italics, they were informing the reader of what had been done.
 - Nothing was secret.
 - C. The A_____ Of The Translators
 - Good translating requires such meticulous d_____.



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- Compare the Authorised Version with that “accurate, faithful, and scholarly” work, the New American Standard Bible (NASB) in **2 Samuel 21:19** to see which group of translators we might best trust.
2 Samuel 21:19
And there was again a battle in Gob with the Philistines, where Elhanan the son of Jaareoregim, a Bethlehemite, slew *the brother of Goliath the Gittite, the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam.*
- By omitting necessary italics, the NASB declares that Elhanan killed Goliath!
- An interesting aside, which confounds those who criticise the use of italicised words, is seen in a comparison of Psalm 16:8 (where the words “he is” are italicised — indicating they are not in the ‘original’ Hebrew) with **Acts 2:25**, which quotes **Ps 16:8** but where the same words are NOT italicised — indicating they are in the ‘original’ Greek!!

4. THE USE OF PUNCTUATION

- Another criticism of the Authorised Version is that it o_____ punctuation, especially commas.
- However, this Bible was made for p_____ r_____, (“Faith cometh by hearing”) and its use of punctuation facilitates this.
- The King James Version was also designed for use in private study, for the first editions contained over 9,000 cross-references.

