400 Years of the King James Bible

"...verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."

1611 — 2011
The Bible was translated from the original languages into English & brought Light into a dark & superstitious world

Tyndale passed the work to Coverdale. It formed the basis of the King James Bible & Victoria passed it to an empire

“That thy trust may be in the LORD, I have made known to thee this day, even to thee. Have not I written to thee excellent things in counsels and knowledge, That I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth...”

Proverbs 22:19-21

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BACK PAGE: The Battle Against the Bible
At her Coronation in 1953 Queen Elizabeth II was presented with a copy of the King James Authorized Bible as millions heard the words spoken to her: “Here is wisdom: This is the Royal Law; These are the lively oracles of God.” Here was the most influential Book ever printed in the English language.

It was the Book that had given shape and colour to the history of the English-speaking peoples all over the world. Out of this Book was borne a Biblical culture that set Britain apart from Europe and laid the foundation of her Protestant Empire. It is a Book that was originally written by Jews—a fact acknowledged by Winston Churchill when he said: “We owe the Jews in the Christian revelation a system of ethics which, even if it were entirely separated from the supernatural, would be incomparably the most precious possession of mankind, worth in fact the fruits of all other wisdom and learning put together.”

The English Bible thus forged a link between Britain and the Jews, for the Book contained a message that led many Englishmen to embrace the doctrine of the restoration of the Jews—and this formed a basis upon which statesmen like Lord Balfour and Lloyd George promoted the concept of a national home, now known as Israel.

This amazing Book not only set the English-speaking world on a Protestant and Puritan path of history in opposition to Catholic Europe, its far-reaching influence also has its effect upon the world of today—especially the Middle East and anglo relations with Europe.

“Let there be Light!”

According to recent reports the English Bible has sold something like six-billion copies—How did this Book find its way into Britain in the first place?

It was the corrupt practices, as well as the dogmas of the Roman Church that moved men like John Wycliffe and John Purvey to produce the so-called Lollard Bible in about 1388 AD. They translated from Jerome’s
4th Century Latin Vulgate, itself a revision of earlier old Latin translations. Before this, says John Foxe (1516-1587 AD) in his Acts and Monuments:

“All the whole world was filled and overwhelmed with error and darkness; and no great marvel: for why? the simple and unlearned people, being far from all knowledge of the Holy Scripture, thought it quite enough for them to know only those things which were delivered them by their pastors and shepherds...”

It was the Lollard Bible that shed early shafts of light in the darkness that had engulfed England during the Middle Ages. One of this group, a man by the name of Walter Brute is reported by Foxe to have written about the Second Coming of Christ and the restoration of the Jews in about 1392. This on the basis of Isaiah chapter 11.

“As touching this second coming speaketh Isaiah, (chap. 11), ‘On that day the root of Jesse, which standeth for a sign or mark to the people, to him shall the heathen make their homage and supplication, and his sepulchre shall be glorious; and in that day shall it come to pass, that the Lord shall the second time put his hand to possess the remnant of his people,’ &c. ‘And he shall lift up a token toward the nations, and he shall assemble the runagate people of Israel that were fled, and those that were dispersed of Judah shall he gather together from the four quarters of the earth. And the zealous emulation of Ephraim shall be broken to pieces, and the enemies of Judah shall come to nought.’”

Walter Brute, like John Wycliffe, was condemned as a heretic by the Church—but the light of God’s word was beginning to appear, even if only faintly.

It was to be another 130 years before William Tyndale and Miles Coverdale would break new ground with their English Bible. They translated the Bible into English directly from the original languages of Hebrew and Greek.

John Foxe relates in his Acts and Monuments the work of William Tyndale, and the effect that it had at that time:

“... this good man was moved (and no doubt stirred up of God) to translate the Scripture into his mother tongue, for the public utility and profit of the simple vulgar people of his country; first setting in hand with the New Testament, which he first translated about A.D. 1525. After that, he took in hand to translate the Old Testament, finishing the five books of Moses, with sundry most learned and godly prologues prefixed before every one, most worthy to be read and read again by all good Christians, as the like also he did upon the New Testament...

“These books of William Tyndale being compiled, published, and sent over into England, it cannot be spoken what a door of light they opened to the eyes of the whole English nation, which before were many years shut up in darkness.”

Tyndale perished while in exile in Vilvorde, Belgium—he was strangled and burnt.

William Tyndale translated and published the New Testament in 1525. Below is a page from this first edition where, in Paul’s epistle to the Romans (chapter 10) we read the words: “Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.”

The Struggle for Authority

For over seventy years after Tyndale the English Bible was beaten out on the anvil of political and military challenges, and it was honed by controversy and criticism.

In 1537 John Rogers produced the “Matthew’s Bible,” but Mary (Bloody Mary) occupied the throne, so he too lost his life. This illustrates how much the English Bible has cost! Thomas Cranmer brought out the Great Bible in 1539—he was burnt at the stake in Oxford in 1555. G.S. Wegener in 6000 Years of the Bible (Hodder and Stoughton, 1963) commented:

“Many English Protestant, men and women, to whom the Bible was a priceless possession, suffered imprisonment and torture. Nearly three hundred of them were burned at the stake in holocausts which made the English indelibly resolve that never again should the Roman Church be allowed to regain political power in the British Isles.”

But Rome does not abandon her goal of being the recognised “universal” Church Authority that easily. Her answer to the developing Protestant Bible was to produce her own version, thus in 1582 the Catholic Rheims New Testament was published, and later as the complete Douai version of the Bible in 1610. But underlying the Roman Catholic position was the basic question of authority which found expression in the Council of Trent (1545-1563). The council condemned the proposition that “the Holy Scriptures contain all things necessary for salvation,” and denied that “the meaning of Scripture is plain, and that it can be understood without commentary.”

The opposition of Rome to the rising influence of Bible-based Protestantism did not stop at the academic level. There were several attempts to overthrow the reigning Protestant monarchs of England and their governments. There was the Ridolfi Plot of 1571 with its plan to assassinate Elizabeth I. Also the Throckmorton Plot of 1583, the Bye Plot of 1586—and of course the Spanish Armada in 1588. Following the reign of Elizabeth there was the Babington Plot to kidnap King James I—and of course the famous Gunpowder Plot in 1605. All this was leading up to the civil war in the time of...
them to be presented to the Privy Council; and lastly, to be ratified by his royal authority; and so this whole Church to be bound unto it and none other..."

The Puritans may have initiated the new translation, but it was the Anglican clergy that took control of it. Archbishop Richard Bancroft was the “chief overseer” of the work and he (with the King’s approval) made the rules that the translators were to follow. These included the use of “old ecclesiastical words” such as church (not congregation or assembly), baptism (not dipping or washing). These rules were designed to bolster the authority of the Anglican Church—thus the complaint of some in the Puritan camp was that the translation favoured “episcopacy” (the government of the Church by bishops, and archbishops etc) and “Prelacy” (government and control by prelates—Church Officials). These complaints and criticisms of the King James Bible are certainly well founded, but with the advent of lexicons, concordances and other aids to Bible study those criticisms have become largely irrelevant. Anyone who now desires to get closer to the sense of the words in the original Hebrew or Greek may do so.

The “Holy” Bible

For all its faults, the King James Authorized Bible survived all the early attempts to discredit it, and dominated religions in the English-speaking world for some three centuries. It was the unchallenged champion of English literature. In spite of its imperfections, this Bible was adequate for the purpose of God which was to be accomplished through the British Empire. It really was a “holy” or special Book, set apart. The impact of the open Bible has been well described by Benson Bobrick in his book Wide as the Waters (2001).

“However much the ruling powers might wish to direct the understanding..."
of their subjects, no state or Church authority could any longer hope to force it in a mold. “Pandora’s box was open,” as one historian put it, “and no power could put back the thoughts on religion that took hold of the minds of men.”

“Before the advent of the vernacular Bible, which was made available to the general public by printing, most people did not know what the Bible actually said. Thereafter, they could read it for themselves and decide, for themselves, what it meant. Their free discussions about the authority of Church and state fostered concepts of constitutional government in England, which in turn were the indispensable prerequisites for the American colonial revolt. Without the vernacular Bible—and the English Bible in particular, through its impact on the reformation of English politics—there could not have been democracy as we know it, or even what today we call the "Free World.”

Bobrick’s book has its own spin on the various issues involved, but it demonstrates that the English Bible—especially the Geneva and the King James—has been responsible for the course of British history, as well as for that of her relatives across the seas.

One reason for the triumph of the King James Bible has been its readability. As one writer pointed out:

“It’s worth noting the emphasis the King James translators placed, not only on the readable text of the King James Bible, but also its sound. Before the King James Bible was published and after the initial translation work was completed, a re-working took place, The Story of English describes this unique process, “they were to go through the text, re-working it so that it would not only read better but sound better, a quality for which it became famous throughout the English-speaking world.”

Again, another has written:

“The best example of very easy prose (about 20 affixes per 100 words) is the King James Version of the Bible…” (Rudolf Flesch, The Art of Plain Talk, pg. 43).

And again in The Story of English (McCrum, Cran and MacNeil, 1986):

“The King James Bible was published in the year Shakespeare began work on his last play, The Tempest. Both the play and the Bible are masterpieces of English, but there is one crucial difference between them. Whereas Shakespeare ransacked the lexicon, the King James Bible employs a bare 8000 words—God’s teaching in homely English for everyman.”

The fact is that no other version of the Bible has ever achieved the task of causing men and women to receive “the engrafted word” as successfully as the King James has (see James 1:21). In this it is a work that is unsurpassed. Verses and phrases from the King James Bible are far more easily—and certainly far more frequently memorized than from any other literature.
**THE IMPACT OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE ON HISTORY**

**HENRY VIII (1509-1547)**
1522 Luther publishes the German translation.
1525 William Tyndale publishes the New Testament in English. Also another edition in 1534.
1535 Coverdale Bible published.
1536 William Tyndale executed. King Henry removes ban on Bible.
1543 All Tyndale’s works and translations ordered to be burnt.
1545 Council of Trent called by the pope. Open Bible condemned.
1546 Coverdale’s Bible ordered to be burnt.

**EDWARD VI (1547-1553)**
Freedom to publish the Bible during the reign of Edward VI.

**QUEEN MARY (1553-1558)**
1553 John Rogers, publisher of the ‘Matthew’s Bible’ burnt at Smithfield, London.
1555 Thomas Cranmer, publisher of the ‘Great Bible’ burnt at Oxford
Many Protestants executed by “Bloody Mary”

**QUEEN ELIZABETH I (1558-1603)**
1569 Northern Rebellion by Catholics
1571 Ridolfi Plot: An international Catholic conspiracy to replace Elizabeth with Mary Queen of Scots.
1582 The Catholic Rheims Bible published.
1583 Another Catholic plot to replace Elizabeth with Mary. It involved a plan to invade England.
1586 The Babington Plot by the Jesuit Ballard to kill Elizabeth.
1588 The Spanish Armada & the invasion of England defeated.

**KING JAMES I (1603-1625)**
1603 The Catholic Bye Plot to kidnap King James.
1603 The Union of Scottish & English crowns
1604 Hampton Court Conference: James ordered new translation of the Bible.
1605 Guy Fawkes & Jesuits involved in the Gunpowder Plot to blow up King James and the Parliament.

**1611 KING JAMES AUTHORIZED VERSION PUBLISHED**
1615 Thomas Brightman publishes book on the Restoration of the Jews.

**KING CHARLES I (1625-1649)**
1638 National Covenant of Scotland “to recover the purity & liberty of the Gospel.”
1643-1650 Joseph Mede works describe the restoration of the Jews and the fall of the Papal Antichrist.
1642 Civil war
1649 Execution of Catholic Charles I

**OLIVER CROMWELL (1649-58)**
1650 Manasseh Ben Israel pleads to Cromwell for the Jews.
1653 Cromwell becomes “Lord Protector.”

**KING CHARLES II (1660-1685)**
1660 The restoration of the monarchy: Charles a secret Catholic until his death.
1666 The Great Fire of London (Blamed on Roman Catholics)
1678 The “Popish Plot” conspiracy to assassinate the king

**KING JAMES II (1685-1688)**
Roman Catholics appointed to powerful positions in Government.

**KING WILLIAM OF ORANGE (1688-1702)**
1688 The “Glorious Revolution” William landed at Brixham in November.
1689 Declaration & Bill of Rights laid basis for Constitutional Monarchy.
1690 Battle of the Boyne: Last stand of the Catholic King James II in Ireland.
1700 Sir Isaac Newton and non-conformists predict restoration of the Jews and fall of Catholic Rome.

**QUEEN ANNE (1702-1714)**
1707 Union of England with Scotland forming Great Britain.

**KING GEORGE I (1714-1727)**
1728 to 1779 Cook’s voyages of discovery: England spreads Bible influence worldwide.

**KING GEORGE II (1727-1760)**
1741 Handel composes the Messiah oratorio.
1745 Jacobite rising attempts to restore Catholic (Stuart) monarchy.
1759 General Wolfe takes Quebec for Protestant Britain.

**KING GEORGE III (1760-1820)**
1776 American Declaration of Independence
1777 Year of the French Revolution & of USA Constitution
1780 The Gordon Riots protesting the Catholic Relief Act.
1789 The Catholic Relief Act (or Papists Act) began emancipation.
1804 British & Foreign Bible Society formed.
1805 The Battle of Trafalgar: British supremacy at sea
1815 Napoleon defeated at Waterloo.
1816 American Bible Society formed.

**KING GEORGE IV (1820-1830)**
1820 Roman Catholic emancipation in Britain (pressure from Ireland)

**KING GEORGE V (1910-1936)**
1914 Irish Home Rule & threat of civil war. World War I breaks out.
1917 Balfour Declaration promises Jewish National Home.
1918 Britain occupies Palestine. World War I ends.
1931 Statute of Westminster established British Commonwealth.

**KING GEORGE VI (1936-1952)**
1939-45 World War II
1948 Britain withdraws from Palestine. STATE OF ISRAEL BORN

**QUEEN VICTORIA (1837-1901)**
1848 Karl Marx, European Revolutions, *Elpis Israel* written.
1870 Vatican proclaims Papal Infallibility.
1881 Revised Version of the Bible published.

**KING EDWARD VII (1901-1910)**
1901-1909 Revised Version of the Bible published.

**KING GEORGE V (1910-1936)**
1914 Irish Home Rule & threat of civil war. World War I breaks out.
1917 Balfour Declaration promises Jewish National Home.
1918 Britain occupies Palestine. World War I ends.
1931 Statute of Westminster established British Commonwealth.

**KING GEORGE VI (1936-1952)**
1939-45 World War II
1948 Britain withdraws from Palestine. STATE OF ISRAEL BORN

**QUEEN ELIZABETH II (1953-2023)**
New translations of the English Bible replace the King James Version. Protestant churches decline, Roman Catholicism advances; Moral standards decline, society is corrupted.
frequently memorized than from any other literature.

David Otis Fuller in the book Which Bible has written as follows:

“To show the unrivalled English language of the King James Bible, I quote from Doctor William Lyon Phelps, Professor of English Literature in Yale University: ‘Priests, atheists, skeptics, devotees, agnostics, and evangelists, are generally agreed that the Authorized Version of the English Bible is the best example of English literature that the world has ever seen... Every one who has a thorough knowledge of the Bible may truly be called educated; and no other learning or culture, no matter how extensive or elegant, can, among Europeans and Americans, form a proper substitute. Western civilization is founded upon the Bible... I thoroughly believe in a university education for both men and women; but I believe a knowledge of the Bible without a college course is more valuable than a college course without the Bible...”

**Archaic Language**

When the New English Bible (NEB) was published in 1970, it is interesting to note that it retained the use of the word “Thee” in the Psalms and prayers to God (such as Daniel’s prayer in chapter 9 and the prayer of Jesus to his Father in John chapter 17). The same was true of the earlier RSV of 1952. The use of the word ‘You’ rather than ‘Thou’ as the form of address for God was first adopted by the Church of England as part of its experimental ‘Series three’ in 1974. There has been some special pleading to justify this change, based on the argument that the English language has changed since 1611, but as others have pointed out the language had already changed by 1611, yet the archaic words were retained. In fact, anyone who is familiar with the broad Yorkshire dialect will recognize that many “archaic” words are still used—‘thou,’ ‘thee’ and ‘art’ are quite normal expressions.

Let us be honest here. Everyone knows what ‘Thee’ and ‘Thou’ means. It isn’t double-Dutch and it isn’t speaking gibberish. Those who grew up in the 1970’s or 80’s may be unfamiliar with the language of the King James Bible, and may feel a little awkward in reading it, or using the forms of speech in prayer—but those who want to can quickly catch on.

The writer and journalist Peter Hitchens wrote in his book The Abolition of Britain (1999):

“The King James version of the Bible, with its majestic but sometimes frightening language, was rejected by modernizers who sought to make it more ‘accessible’, replaced by new versions which nonetheless somehow lacked the old scriptures’ force.

“This force may well have been the reason for the change, for it is hard to see what is meant by ‘accessible’ when large parts of it, including such phrases as ‘by the skin of your teeth’, ‘the parting of the ways’ and ‘the last gasp’ have entered the living language of the entire English-speaking world...

“There are obscure passages in the King James Bible (though they are often just as obscure in the modern versions if not more so... So, if the purpose of all this was to revive the Church and make it more part of the world, then it has not succeeded. Those who urged modernization claimed that their methods and measures would bring back the lost sheep, their complete failure to do so has not made them return to traditional services or rip out their new furniture, or to question in a fundamental way the basis of their reforms. So we must wonder if they have other, over-riding purposes.”

Of course they do! It is the old war against the English Bible and its influence upon the peoples.

**“New Lamps for Old!”**

The cry of Aladdin’s wicked uncle, found in the tales of The Arabian Nights, tells us of a trick whereby an old miraculous lamp was ignorantly exchanged for a nice new shiny but ordinary lamp by the deceived lady of the palace. This old pantomime story reminded generations to guard their lamp. We may wonder where this “parable” originated—but its message is very clear. The cry of “New Lamps for Old,” or “New Bibles for Old” should be greeted with great caution.

The rejection of the King James Bible by the modern world has been accompanied by an unprecedented spiritual decline. Protestant Christianity is dead. As The Times newspaper put it (August 4, 1998) “Britain Gives up on the Reformation.” Moral standards have dropped through the floor with little or no hope of recovery—and Anglicans are going back to the Roman Catholic communion. If not, they give up on religion completely, or turn to Islam, Hinduism or some other heathen philosophy.

Where the Roman Catholic plots of the 1500’s and 1600’s may have failed, other designs against a Protestant Britain and its Bible were soon invented in place of them. By the 19th century the Greek text of Erasmus upon which the King James Bible is based was being discredited in favour of new “discoveries” such as the Codex Sinaiticus and Vaticanus (both published in the 1860’s). Codex Alexandrinus was known to King James, though he did not live to see it. These Greek texts led to the Revised Version of 1884 and were used in an attempt to dislodge the King James Bible. It never really succeeded to take its place however.

In 1910, the year after his coronation, King George V spoke to a meeting at the British and Foreign Bible Society in which he said: “The English Bible is the first of all national treasures, and in its spiritual significance the most valuable thing that this world affords... it came like a broad light in the darkness.”

Now, 400 years since the 1611 version was published, and 486 years since William Tyndale’s New Testament was published, the influence of the English Bible may be seen as having accomplished its role in history. As its place in society has waned and ere the lamp goes out, the impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture remains as a beacon and as “a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn.” The Day is dawning. We see the prophecies being fulfilled before our eyes. God has called out of the Gentiles a people for His Name of Yahweh. Being instructed by the English Bible they have witnessed to the Hope of Israel, which is the true Gospel. And as we see the times of the Gentiles closing, we also see the children of Israel returned to their ancient homeland—and all is now ready for the King of the Jews, the Messiah of Israel, to restore again the kingdom, and reward his servants according to their faith and works. For:

“Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to shame and everlasting contempt. And others, over-riding purposes.” (Daniel 12:2-3). The Question of religious authority will then be settled for ever.

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Nicholas White, David Billington, Don Pearce

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The value of reading the Bible may seem to be a rather old fashioned idea to many in today’s world, with its DVDs, videos, high-definition television and full-colour magazines (including the one before you now). Well, it is old fashioned—very old fashioned in fact—but before dismissing the practice on that account stop and consider why it was people did it in the past, and even paid with their lives for it. What did they get out of it? Did they get anything out of it? Is it just possible that we today may be so dazzled with the technical wizardry that surrounds us that we may be missing something?

Why, for example, did people react with such wonder and awe when the Bible was opened up? Look at the reaction of people as recorded in Nehemiah 8:2-5.

“And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month. And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law. And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose... And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up.”

What was it that gripped those people? What kept them focussed while it was being read “one fourth part of the day” (chapter 9:3)? It would seem reasonable to conclude that their attention was riveted by what the Book said: its message. They were interested in it!

There was a somewhat similar reaction when the Bible was first translated into English. As Barbara Tuchman tells it:

“...the people, at last given open access to the Scriptures in their own tongue, were consumed with excitement and interest. They clustered around the huge folio volumes chained to every pulpit and listened avidly to whoever could read them aloud, as men today listen to the World Series results. In St. Paul’s, where six Bibles had been fastened to “divers pillars, fixed unto the same with chains for all men to read in them that would,” the scenes of enthusiasm appalled the authorities” (Bible & Sword).

The message of the Book was one of hope. Not just hope in the abstract, but the Hope. The Book laid before the people a clear vision—a vision which the people of Nehemiah’s day could see, and one which we today can see if we listen with understanding to what the Book has to tell us. It is the vision of a changed world. One in which “dwelleth righteousness” says the Apostle. In the Apocalypse it is called “the Paradise of God” (Rev.2:7). To find out more about it, unchain your Bible and read it.
The King James Version

The most Majestic work of all English literature, and the most influential Book ever printed in English

By Frank Abel  GRAND VALLEY, ON.

The King James Bible is just one of many versions of the Bible. Like all other English versions, it is a translation from the original languages. By these standards it is ordinary.

The fact that it was translated by a group of the very best scholars that could be found in England at the time; that none of those so chosen were Roman Catholic; that it was done with the full authority of the King and that it was at a time when there were duelling English versions; makes it stand out somewhat from the rest.

When measured by how many people have changed their lives because of it; how long it has remained as the world’s best seller; how many people have read it and know about its main characters; how it has influenced governments; how it is suited to memory work and music; how it appeals to young and old, educated and uneducated, male and female, master and slave; it is without an equal.

In this article we would like to look at some comments that five different writers have made about the King James Bible to give us a better sense of the great respect that some people have for this book.

Resulting from Controversy

Unlike many of the versions of the Bible that have arrived in the last twenty years seemingly with no need and making little impact, the King James version stands tall. Stemming from a meeting in January, 1604 at Hampton Court, James I the new King of England and the supporters of the rival Bishops’ Bible and Geneva Bible, a monumental decision was made that was to involve a new version of the Bible. The royal approval was secured, scholars of Greek and Hebrew were available, the English language was crisp and ready, and the English people themselves were ready to own and to read.

In his book, “The Authorized Version of the Bible and Its Influence,” writer Albert Cook illustrates how the circumstances of the time and resources available for the new translation harmonized so well as to maximize its influence.

“Whereas previously one Bible had been read in Church, and another at home, now all parties and classes turned with one accord to the new version, and adopted it as their very own. It thus became bound up with the life of the nation. Since it stilled all controversy over the best rendering, it gradually came to be accepted as so far absolute that in the minds of myriads there was no distinction between this version and the original texts, and they may almost be said to have believed in the literal inspiration of the very words which composed it.

“It must not be overlooked that the Authorized Version profited by all the controversy regarding previous translations. Practically every word that could be challenged had been challenged. The fate of a doctrine, even the fate of a party, had at times seemed to depend upon a phrase. The whole ground had been fought over so long that great intimacy with
the Bible had resulted. Not only did the mind take cognizance of it, but the emotions seized upon it; much of it was literally learned by heart by great numbers of English people. Thus it grew to be a national possession; and literature which is a national possession, and by its very nature it appeals to the poor and lowly; it is in truth a national classic. No other book has so penetrated and permeated the hearts and speech of the English race as has the Bible. What Homer was to the Greeks, and the Koran to the Arabs, that, or something not unlike it, the Bible has become to the English. 21

History attests to the fact that the King James Bible was not immediately received with enthusiasm and that it took the better part of two generations before it was receiving the national acceptance mentioned by Cook in the foregoing quotation.

One of the very appealing aspects of the King James Version is the delicate but direct way it appeals to those of us who tend to be simple minded in matters involving moral issues. The English equivalent of what the psalmist penned is as follows:

“The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple” (Psalm 119:130).

The meaning of the word ‘simple’ as it is used in the Bible and as it is used today, when referring to people, is about the same. It describes a person as being uncomplicated, undefiled by sophistication, but who may also be somewhat naive in character. Upon receiving the instruction of the Bible and recognizing its wise counsel, many have come to love the Bible, and are very thankful for the fact that it has been translated into English and that we can read it for ourselves.

No crime was committed by giving the Bible to the common person. In fact, the Bible was designed for the average person and not the highly educated as it is stated:

“For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called” (1 Cor 1:26).

A great number of the ‘simple-minded’ ones, through reading and memorizing parts of the Bible, soon came to understand more than their former teachers and thus an entrance of God’s word for them came to mean that they finally learned the Truth and the way of salvation.

Majestic in Style

Giving the Bible to the English in 1611, in their own language, rather than Latin the language of the clergy, was not new, as Wycliffe had done this almost two centuries before. However, since Wycliffe’s time, the printing press had been invented and now that it was more affordable it was much more likely that a Bible could be found in everyone’s home. Also, with the advent of sympathetic rulers, reading the Bible in your own home and teaching it to your children was no longer considered an offense worthy of being burned at the stake.

An additional comment from Cook follows to further substantiate the mighty influence of the King James Version:

“The concreteness and simplicity of the Authorized Version, and its use of the homely vernacular, have steadily appealed to plain people, as distinguished from those who have had more abundant opportunities of education. But the love of the humble for the Bible is largely due to its message of cheer and hope. Huxley has even gone so far as to call the Bible ‘the Magna Carta of the poor and the oppressed.’ Two men, Bunyan and Lincoln, who educated themselves largely by means of the Bible, may serve as examples of many who have become known to posterity for their inestimable services to their race. Both are famous as writers, and the best writing of both is alive with the spirit of the Bible. Of Lincoln it has been said that he built up his entire reading upon his early study of the Bible. He had mastered it absolutely; mastered it as later he mastered only one or two other books, notably Shakespeare; mastered it so that he became almost ‘a man of one book;’ and he left his life as part of the crowning work of the century that just closed.’”

A sample of the words that have generated the majestic style of the Word of God are tastefully pointed out by the psalmist as follows:

“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward” (Psalm 19:7-11).

The words: law, testimony, statutes, commandment, fear, and judgment are all essentially pointing to a similar aspect of God’s word and one may wonder why the same idea is presented so repeatedly in this way. Looking closer to consider the style of these expressions: their breadth; their balance; their suitableness to memorization and thereby to meditation; one gets to view Divine instruction expressed in English at its best.

A sense of joy is experienced by the reader of this Psalm, that is, when the words being read generate in the reader the same feelings that the writer is expressing. Those so impressed are those who consider the Word of God more valuable than gold, even at today’s prices. Likewise, there is a desirable sweetness associated with these expressions that makes the reader want to go back for more.

Mighty in Influence

In his Book, “The Greatest English Classic—A Study of the King James Version of the Bible and its Influence on Life and Literature,” Cleland McAfee makes a similar appraisal. His book was published in 1912 about the time of the celebration of the three hundredth anniversary of the King James Version.

“The first and most notable fact regarding the influence of the Bible on English literature is the remarkable extent of that influence. It is literally everywhere. If every Bible in any considerable city were destroyed, the Book could be restored in all its essential parts from the quotations on the shelves of the city public library. There are works, covering almost all the great literary writers, devoted especially to showing how much the Bible has influenced them.

“The literary effect of the King James Version at first was less than its social effect; but in that very fact lies a striking literary influence. For a long time it formed virtually the whole literature which was readily accessible to ordinary Englishmen. We get our phrases from a thousand books. The common talk of an intelligent man shows the effect of many authors upon his thinking. Our fathers got their phrases from one great book. Their writing and their speaking show the effect of that book.”

There would be little disagreement that in the hundred years since McAfee penned those words, there has been a marked declension in the knowledge of the Bible amongst English speaking people. Some of the factors causing this declension such as materialism and entertainment with their attending godlessness were at work during the lifespan of McAfee, but since the latter half of the twentieth century, they have developed into major distractions, leading many people away from the Bible altogether.

Our focus in this article is however, on the period of history when the positive influences of the King James Version were shaping the English speaking world. In the following paragraph another writer from the nineteenth century, Marie
America was becoming more obscure. The vision of the founding fathers of our Government could be seen as new generations came on the scene, and her following comments illustrate her ability to communicate with one another.

“Almost every man who has by his life-work added to the sum of human achievement... almost every such man has based his life-work largely upon the teachings of the Bible.”

Herbert, gives her assessment of the effects of the King James Version on the American Government.

Influence in America

“Under colonial regime the Bible found a place in every family and school; and from this, more than from any other cause, came our declaration or rights, which not only focalized the holiest aspirations of all preceding ages, but which gave to freedom an impulse that will thrill all the ages of the future. So important was the Inspired Word considered in the maintaining of self-government in our early history that the Congress of 1777, on grounds of political and moral necessity, ordered the printing and circulation among the people of 20,000 copies of the Scriptures. And the Congress of 1781, for the same reasons, ordered for public use 30,000 copies more.”

Writing in the year 1875, a century removed from the time mentioned in the above paragraph, Marie Herbert could see a change in the making and her following comments illustrate her ability to see that as new generations came on the scene, the vision of the founding fathers of America was becoming more obscure.

“So long as the Bible directs the popular conscience, so long will popular liberty with us remain impregnable. But whenever the President Theodore Roosevelt:

“The great debt of the English-speaking peoples everywhere is to the translation of the Bible that we all know—I trust I can say, all here know—in our homes; the Bible as it was put forth in English three centuries ago. No other book of any kind ever written in English—perhaps no other book ever written in any other tongue—has ever so affected the whole life of a people as this Authorized Version of the Scriptures has affected the life of the English-speaking peoples.

“I ask that the Bible be studied for the sake of the breadth it must give to every man who studies it.”

President Woodrow Wilson:

“The King James Bible, gradually replacing the Geneva Bible, was in the vanguard of that movement and it gave the English, more than any other book, a sense of the possibilities of language, and extraordinary range of richness, more approachable than Shakespeare, more populist than Milton, a common text against which life itself could be read.”

In a section of his book, “God’s Secretaries—The Making of the King James Bible,” Adam Nicolson compares the value of newer translations with the King James Version:

“So long as the Bible directs the popular conscience, so long will popular liberty with us remain impregnable”

Formerly when a person read or cited a passage from the King James Version, without otherwise stating its source, many of the listeners would immediately know the Book, the chapter and the verse. Not only that, they would immediately have a grasp of the context and likely a few other references would come to mind where a similar thought was discussed. This wonderful attribute built up over a lifetime enabled people to communicate concerning the thoughts of God with great efficiency and effectiveness. However, when a number of versions are in use simultaneously, although there is the meagre benefit of noting the differences in translation there is a major loss associated with our ability to communicate spiritual ideas.

The Value of the Book

In the twentieth century, the King James Version of the Scriptures has affected the life of the English-speaking people. For generation after generation, it gave the English, and the English in America, a template against which to measure their own utterances. It was in many households the only book and became a spur to literacy. It is surely no coincidence that languages lose aspects of themselves, whole wings of their existence withering, falling off, disappearing into the past. Has it now happened to English? Does English no longer have a faculty of religious language?

“No other book of any kind ever written in English—perhaps no other book ever written in any other tongue—has ever so affected the whole life of a people as this Authorized Version of the Scriptures has affected the life of the English-speaking peoples.

“I ask that the Bible be studied for the sake of the breadth it must give to every man who studies it.”

The twenty-first century especially abounded with new versions of the Bible in English and many of the younger generation now prefer to read from them. The adoption of a variety of new versions in a community where the King James Version has formerly been the single version in use has had a serious impact on our ability to communicate with one another.

“So long as the Bible directs the popular conscience, so long will popular liberty with us remain impregnable.”
The Bible left on a shelf and never read, whether the King James Version or any other can do nothing for the owner. To benefit from the Bible one is intended to read it, or listen to it being read. Seeing it is God’s Word and specially provided for our well being, it is appropriate to bow in prayer for a moment and give God thanks that we are able to read His Word in our native tongue, without fear or oppression, and to seek His blessing of our understanding while reading it. The Word of God is designed to motivate the reader to a way of life that will prolong his days and provide the wisdom to conduct his life and the life of loved ones in health and strength.

“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews 4:12 KJV).

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (James 1:5 KJV).

**The Living Word**

When contemplating the imagery of the verses cited above we are led to see the Bible as being alive, powerful, and like a sword in that it is so sharp as to be able to reveal the motivation of our minds. It is this aspect of the Word of God that must have humbled many a household when they saw their work and thoughts compared to that of their Creator and knew thereby that they had to change.

In contrast to many other English translations of the Bible, the King James version does not contain commentary on the text. While this may seem to have made the Bible less understandable, it also encouraged the reader to work harder at finding the meaning and strangely enough, is one of the reasons why this version is so loved. Areas where translation was awkward the translators have tended to provide an alternative in the margin, and the reader is thereby warned of the difficulty. Some readers having made their own study of the difficulty have placed comments in the margin of their own Bibles for their personal benefit.

Our final quote comes from the pen of writer Barbara Tuchman in her book ‘Bible and Sword.’ Her comments provide a summary of our article expressing why we believe the King James Version to be both majestic in style and our article expressing why we believe the King James Version to be both majestic in style and

Footnotes

1 Albert Stanburrough Cook, *The Authorized Version of the Bible and Its Influence*, General Books, 2009, Pg. 15  
2 Ibid, Pg. 22  
3 Cleland Boyd McAfee, *The Greatest English Classic: A Study of the King James Version of the Bible and Its Influence on Life and Literature*, Harper and Brothers, 1912, Pg. 134  
4 Marie Herbert, *The Bible: Its Influence, Its Relations to Republican Government, And Its Necessity as a Textbook of Ethics in the Public Schools*, 1876, Pg. 26  
5 Ibid, Pg. 27  
6 Adam Nicholson, *God’s Secretaries—The Making of the King James Bible*, 2003, Pg. 236  
7 Barbara W. Tuchman, *Bible and Sword*, Ballantine Books, 1956, Pg. 101

**PROPHECY DAYS IN 2011 (God Willing)**

**KENT PROPHECY DAY APRIL 9, 2011**

**Jerusalem the City of the Great King**

*Jerusalem, trodden down of the Gentiles*

*Roger Long*

*Jerusalem, a burdensome stone for all people*

*Paul Billington*

Venue: East Malling Village Hall, New Road, East Malling, Kent. NR18 0HQ  
Commencing at 4:00 p.m.  
For more info petermoorel23@talktalk.net

**SIGNS OF THE TIMES PROPHECY DAY**

**Benn Hall - Rugby - February 26th, 2011 God willing**

**The Coming of the Lord Draws Nigh!**

“Standing Before the Judge and His Reward” *Roger Long*

“The God of Heaven will Set up a Kingdom” *Jonathan Bowen*

“Milestones Update” *Don Pearce*

For Further information contact Don Pearce:  
Phone 01788-842256  
e-mail Milestonesuk@aol.com

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The Holy Place was the working part of the tabernacle constructed by Moses under God’s direction some 3,500 years ago. Its wooden sides and its open top were covered in thick curtains and animal skins. Its entrance was through a curtain and it would have been pitch black inside were it not for the light from one of the three items within the Holy Place. As well as a “Table of Shewbread” and an “Altar of Incense,” there was a “Candlestick” (AV). A better translation is “Lampstand,” because the light came from pure olive oil, not wax candles.

In the power of its illumination the Priests were able to go about their duties. In several places a parallel is drawn between the physical light given off by a lamp and the spiritual light given off by the Word of God. David said in Psalm 119,

“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (verse 105).

“The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple” (verse 130).

This parallelism runs through the New Testament as well.

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar purchased people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Pet. 2:9).

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts” (2 Peter 1:19).

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John 1:7).

“For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6).

Jesus is described as the Light of the World and as the true Light and the light to lighten the Gentiles.

The Lampstand’s seven golden lamps speak of the perfection of its illumination. Not only from its material—gold—which does not rust or corrode, but seven speaks of completeness. The 7 days of the week form a cycle of time. At the end of God’s 7,000 years of working with this earth, all who live will be immortal, reflecting glory to their God and Father. We find the 7 branched Lampstand in the book of Revelation chapters 1-3 as a symbol of the 7 ecclesias to which the Lord wrote letters.

The Design of the Lampstand

The incredible design is highlighted when we look at the construction of the Lampstand where we perceive that it has been designed by an amazing mind!

Not only does it foreshadow the number of books in the Hebrew Scriptures, but also the total number of books in the Old and New Testaments. And there is more beside!

There are numerous ways in which artists have depicted the Lampstand, but the one shown above has, I believe, captured the correct basic design which is detailed in Exodus 25:31-40 and repeated in chapter 37:17-24.

It was a remarkable feat to shape by hammering (“beaten work”) this ornate Lampstand as one piece, out of one talent (49 kg) of gold. From this piece of gold, the Lampstand, the seven lamps, the tongs for trimming the wicks and the snuffers for extinguishing the flame prior to trimming the wick, were all made. We know that God bestowed His spirit power on the main craftsman, Bezaleel.

“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of
workmanship, To devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, And in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship” (Exodus 31:1-5).

What it Foretells

At the heart of the design were the three elements of an almond flower, described in the Authorized Version as a bowl, a knop and a flower. This would be the calyx (the outer sheath of a flower bud); the fertilised seed pod; and the almond petals. Normally the “knop” or seed pod swells after the flower has faded, but in the design of the Lampstand, the flower and the swollen seed pod with its protective casing are all represented, probably in a stylised form.

Each of the six branches consisted of three of these “bowl-knop-flower” almonds, followed by its oil lamp. The central stem—working from the bottom—had a 3-part almond, two branches, another 3-part almond, two branches, 3-part almond, two branches, and the final 3-part almond surmounted with the oil lamp.

We see that each branch was built up of three 3-part flowers, i.e. nine elements in each branch.

The central stem was built up of four 3-part flowers, i.e. 12 elements in the central stem.

A simple bit of maths tells us that the Lampstand was built up with 6 branches of 9 elements + central stem of 12 elements = 54 + 12 = 66.

The maths was simple, but the answer is a bit mind-blowing. For there are 66 books in the Bible! So before ever Moses had written down the first five books, God had fixed their number! But it goes further than that!

Let’s look at the central stem and the branches coming out on the left-hand side.

3 branches of 9 elements + central stem of 12 elements = 27 + 12 = 39

That’s the number of Old Testament books. The remaining branches on the other side consist of 3 branches of 9 elements = 27

27 elements—the number of the New Testament books!

Furthermore the last 12 books of the Old Testament (Hosea to Malachi) are a group known as the 12 Minor Prophets. These correspond to the 12 elements of the central stem. They support the branches that on the one side foretold the history of Israel and the promises that God made to the fathers of Israel, and on the other side support the New Testament branches that tell us of the life, work, death and resurrection of that promised one and the spread of the gospel and the call of the Gentiles.

But there is still More!

Let’s consider the Hebrew Bible. This consists of 22 books (some
would say 24 but it is a question of which books are amalgamated together. Josephus, the Jewish priest and historian who lived at the time when the Temple was destroyed in AD 70 tells of the number of books in the Hebrew Scriptures.

“For we have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from and contradicting one another, but only twenty-two books, which contain the records of all the past times; which are justly believed to be divine” (Flavius Josephus Against Apion, translated by William Whiston).

This agrees with the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet, and so is an appropriate number for the Word of God. Now these are precisely the same 39 books as we have in our Old Testament, but they have been grouped to form a total of 22 books (see sidebar on pg. 15).

Now if we look again at the construction of the Lampstand, but this time not from the aspect of the total elements, but at the total number of the 3-part flowers we arrive at 22!

6 branches of 3 flowers + central stem of 4 flowers = 18 + 4 = 22

Now the order of the books in the Hebrew Bible differs from the order in our Bibles. Let me stress—they are the same books, but just rearranged. The Hebrew Bible is divided into 3 sections, the Law, the Prophets and the Writings (See chart). If we picture the Lampstand with its central 4-flower stem and the 9 flowers to the right and 9 to the left and then look at the books of the Hebrew Bible we can see a correspondence. If we put together the Law and the Prophets sections, then from Genesis to the Samuel/Kings book there are 9 books. There are 4 books left in the Prophets section, and there are 9 books in the Writings division.

So if we think of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the book of the 12 Minor Prophets as the four flowers of the central stem then the rest of the Law and the Prophets are the 9 flowers of the three branches to one side and the Writings (Psalms to the book of Ezra/Nehemiah/Chronicles) are the 9 flowers to the other side.

So whether we think of the completed Bible or just the Hebrew Bible, the Lampstand is a wonderful representation, of God’s Spirit Word. It illuminates the lives of all who serve in the tabernacle to be built not of wood, curtains and skins, or in the case of the Temple with stones; but of ever-living individuals who will reflect the glory of God in their lives in the Kingdom Age and beyond.

Another Gem!

There is yet another gem hidden in these things. The Hebrew Bible ends with those majestic words.

“Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of heaven given me; and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? The Lord his God be with him, and let him go up” (2 Chronicles 36:23).

The 1st Book of Chronicles starts with Adam and runs through to Jacob, just listing names. It continues listing names to David, but with fascinating little snippets of information enriching the account. It then gives us detailed lives of David, Solomon and the Kings of Israel and Judah, ending with the fall of Babylon and the captivity. Then this footnote concerning the wonderful decree of Cyrus closes the Hebrew Bible. Doubtless Daniel was able to show the new King the details of his name and exploits in conquering Babylon clearly set out in the prophecies of Isaiah some 150 years before. But why wasn’t this sweep of history from Adam followed by the details of the return in Ezra and Nehemiah? Why put these books before Chronicles? Surely God was indicating that, wonderful though the return was, this wasn’t the house in Jerusalem that was ultimately being planned by God. Now bearing in mind the Hebrew title of the Book of Chronicles is Dibre hayyamim—the book (words) of the days. This comes from the frequent refrain the book of the days of so and so, the King of Judah/Israel. We move on some 550 years from Cyrus’ decree and we read the opening lines of the start of the New Testament. The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham (Matthew 1:1). This is the one ordained of God to build Him an house in Jerusalem!

The Canon of Scripture

So we see the canon of scripture was fixed by God. From the beginning God planned 22 books for the Hebrew Bible. And, expanding those books into the 39 individual writings and adding a further 27 New Testament books, would give us the fully revealed Word of God in 66 books.

How we should treasure this source of illumination! God is LIGHT and in the pages of His Word that light is revealed. But our Bibles are full of black print! The process of revealing that light comes from a lifetime of reading those words and making them live in our lives. To build characters which reflect in their thinking, the mind of God. Our supreme example is that of our Lord Jesus; the Word made flesh.

“This was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (John 1:9).

The Lampstand was as it were the scaffolding that held up the seven lamps. But they had no light in themselves. The light came from the olive oil that was within them. This had to be gathered and beaten in a mortar.

“And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always” (Exodus 27:20).

This initial bruising of the olive yielded the purest olive oil which would burn without any smoke. The Israelites were involved in the gathering and the preparation of the oil which would be given to the priests regularly, so that the lamps might be daily refilled. But again there would be no light without the lighting of the wick. The wick absorbs and conducts the oil through it to the burning end, giving a steady light for those working in the Holy Place.

Similarly the pages of our Bibles are the scaffolding that contains the oil. But it needs our eyes and our ears to be the conduits of those words into our minds and, by our mouths, our hands and our feet, the revealing of that word of light in our words, actions and places we visit. It needs regular attention!

“In the tabernacle of the congregation without the vail, which is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall order it from evening to morning before the Lord: it shall be a statute for ever unto their generations on the behalf of the children of Israel” (Exodus 27:21).

Daily the lamps were filled and the wicks trimmed in order that the light might shine. May we do likewise, day by day preparing the oil of God’s word and walking patiently in its light.
The history of the English printed Bible is a checkered one; for centuries it was fiercely defended as the word of God and men like William Tyndale, and many others, lost their lives attempting to bring the Bible to the common people. However coincidental with the developing sciences of the 17th and 18th centuries regarding the origins of humanity, there also became strong voices in the realm of Biblical criticism, where the divine origins of the Bible came into question. This grew in the 19th Century until the present day and despite its high volumes in sales the Bible has been relegated to a book of great literature but having no relevance to the majority of modern society. In addition, despite its market value, many have challenged the accuracy of the Authorized Version, questioning the reliability of the resources used 400 years ago.

Since World War II all kinds of translations have flooded the market; many of the more modern translations have sought to take advantage of the many manuscripts that have become available since the completion of the Authorized Version, others are mere paraphrases reflecting in some cases the theological bias of the translators.

How sure can we be that the Bible is reliable?

What evidence is available to provide confidence that the Bible is indeed the Word of God and, despite the many criticisms, is a thoroughly trustworthy document? In this brief article we will examine some of the evidence.

The Manuscripts

The original Hebrew and Greek manuscripts that recorded the God breathed word have long disappeared. Nevertheless there is an overwhelming wealth of material available to support the reliability of the Bible. Literally thousands of manuscripts, either in part or whole, have been preserved, authenticating the Bible that we read today; these manuscripts shed considerable light on the textual accuracy of the Bible.

There are over 5600 Greek manuscripts of the New Testament dating back to the 2nd Century AD; less than 100 years from the original source. Furthermore there is an additional 19,000 copies in other languages. Similar statistics are available for the Old Testament. In the 1700’s a man named Benjamin Kennicott published 615 Old Testament manuscripts and later some 731 manuscripts were published by one Giovani de Rossi. Another 10,000 manuscripts were discovered in Cairo Geniza in 1890, and in 1947 there was the remarkable discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the caves of Qumran.

A number of manuscripts stand out which provide strong support for the reliability of the Authorized Version; we will restrict our curiosity to three in particular: The Septuagint (LXX), the Masoretic Text, and the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The Septuagint (LXX)

The original Hebrew and Greek manuscripts that recorded the God breathed word have long disappeared. Nevertheless there is an overwhelming wealth of material available to support the reliability of the Bible. Literally thousands of manuscripts, either in part or whole, have been preserved, authenticating the Bible that we read today; these manuscripts shed considerable light on the textual accuracy of the Bible.

The Septuagint version of the Old Testament scriptures is believed to have been written during the 3rd and 4th Centuries BC. The name means “seventy” in Latin, owing its origin to the 72 scholars that were appointed to produce the translation in Alexandria, Egypt. The need for a Greek translation was evident due to the fact that many Jews could no longer speak Hebrew; another strong influence in its production was the desire by the Greek rulers of Egypt to establish a strong Greek culture. By the 1st Century AD the Septuagint was in common use.

A number of manuscripts dating back to the 1st and 2nd Centuries BC are available, but the most famous and relatively complete manuscripts are the Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus dating back to the 4th Century AD, and the Codex Alexandrinus of the 5th Century AD. The Codex Sinaiticus was found under rather remarkable circumstances; the German archaeologist Constantin von Tischendorf visiting the Monastery of Saint Catherine at Sinai in 1844 is reputed to have discovered them in a waste paper basket waiting to be thrown on the fire. Through
his efforts the manuscripts were eventually retrieved. Both the Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus represent the oldest surviving manuscripts of the Old Testament. At the time that the Authorized Version was being produced these manuscripts were unavailable; however the Sinaiticus and the Vaticanus were both used in producing later versions.

The Masoretic Text

The word Masorah signifies tradition and is applied to the Masoretes who were rabbis and who made it their special work of handing down copies of the Hebrew Bible. Their responsibility was to correct some of the faults of the Old Testament that had crept in during the Babylonian captivity; this they did, not by altering the text itself, but by incorporating marginal notes which were to be read in place of what was actually written. Their work progressed from the 5th to the 10th Centuries AD, during which time the

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Masoretes introduced a system of points or signs for vowel notation and added it to the text. Up to this point in time the Hebrew alphabet was made up strictly of consonants and the meaning of a word was determined by the context. The addition of the vowel points ensured a proper interpretation and reading of Hebrew Scripture.

The Masoretes were meticulous in their work, treating the texts with reverence. Every page was laid out according to an approved pattern; the number of lines per page as well as the exact formation of the letters was strictly adhered to. They counted the number of times each letter of the alphabet occurred in each book, ensuring that it corresponded with the new copy; they calculated the middle letter of the Pentateuch and the middle letter of the Hebrew Bible as a means of checks and balances. If there were more than two errors on a page then the whole page was discarded. Every precaution was taken to ensure that the accuracy of the text was preserved.

The antiquity of the Masoretic Text dates back as far as the 9th and 10th Centuries. The Aleppo Codex (named for being located in Aleppo, Syria) is considered the oldest Hebrew manuscript, dating back to the 10th Century AD; unfortunately it is incomplete, whereas the Leningrad Codex (9th Century) is the earliest complete manuscript of the Hebrew Bible. A comment by Sir Fredrick Kenyon, a former Director of the British Museum and an authority on this subject, wrote in his book Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts, the following comment:

“There is good reason, therefore, to believe that we have in the Masoretic text substantially the text of the synod of Jammia, or in round figures about AD100. It is for the period before that date that the evidence of the Hebrew manuscripts fails us.”

In making this comment Sir Fredrick was led to ask the question,

“Does this Hebrew text which we call Masoretic… faithfully represent the Hebrew text as originally written by the authors of the Old Testament books?”

The answer to this question was provided by FF Bruce, Professor of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis at the University of Manchester, England, in his book The Books and the Parchments where he wrote:

“The Qumran discoveries have enabled us to answer this question in the affirmative with much greater assurance than was possible before 1948.”

We will comment on the Qumran discoveries next.

The Dead Sea Scrolls

The Dead Sea Scrolls have been described as one of the most remarkable discoveries of the twentieth century. In the West Bank of Israel, approximately one mile west of the Dead Sea, a series of caves in the area of Qumran held a treasure trove of documents unknown to the world, silently hidden away for nearly two millennia. A young Bedouin boy, looking for his lost goat, had no idea of the religious and historical significance of his find when he threw a rock into one of the caves and heard the shattering of pottery.

From this initial discovery in 1947 eleven caves were examined over a nine year period resulting in approximately 900 documents being found, consisting of tens of thousands of fragments. Of these documents some 500 books have been reconstructed, albeit many in poor condition; of these about 100 are books of the Old Testament in Hebrew, yielding some of the oldest Biblical texts ever discovered. With the

Christian priest named Jerome to produce a new Latin translation of the Bible. By the 4th Century it became evident to the Roman Church that a consistent translation was required. In AD 382 Pope Damasus commissioned an Illyrian Christian priest named Jerome to produce a new Latin translation; this he did from the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts available to him. The translation became known as the Latin Vulgate and was officially accepted by the Roman Catholic Church.

The Latin version of the Bible continued to be in use for several centuries; unfortunately Latin was mainly understood by the educated in Western Europe and the common people had to rely on the priests to read and interpret the Scriptures. In England the Norman French and Anglo-Saxon languages gradually merged together resulting in a common English language; this resulted in several changes taking place in England in the middle of the 14th Century. The English language became the official language in the courts of law, and around this period a man named John Wycliffe translated the first English Bible from the Latin Vulgate. After that more translations were produced including such names as Tyndale, Coverdale, the Matthews Bible, the Great Bible, the Geneva Bible and the Bishops’ Bible.

By far the most influential of all these translations was William Tyndale’s contribution. Although the man was silenced in 1536 by strangling, then burning, his life’s work could not be quenched; his translation became the first English version of the Bible to be translated from Hebrew and Greek texts available at that time and the first to take advantage of the printing press.

The first “authorized” English version was actually the Great Bible, authorized by Henry VIII of England. Named because of its large size, the first edition appeared in 1539. However this eventually gave way in the Anglican Church to the Bishops’ Bible in 1568; this latter version was
to be the forerunner of the Authorized Version. The criteria for producing the Authorized Version was laid down in 15 rules, one of which was that the following translations—Tyndale’s, Matthew’s, Coverdale’s, Whitchurch’s, Geneva—were to be used when they agreed better with the Text than the Bishops’ Bible. Thus the Bishops’ Bible became the base text for the Authorized Version along with those mentioned where applicable.

The Authorized Version of 1611 was more or less an updated translation of the Bishops’ Bible and others that had gone before; within a few years of the translation being completed a number of manuscripts were made public and against which the textual reliability of the Authorized Version could be compared.

Comparing the Documents

Earlier it was noted that the wealth of documents, both Old and New Testaments, which are available, is staggering in support of the reliability of the Biblical text; a large number of the New Testament manuscripts, in particular, date back to the Second Century, within 100 to 150 years of the original document. By comparison the classical manuscripts upon which we rely heavily for our historical information are quite limited numerically and the gap between the earliest surviving copies and the now non-existent original manuscripts is often approximately 1000 years. Take for example the Greek historian Herodotus who lived in the 5th Century BC. His work provided considerable details of the Persian Wars as well as geographical and social information of his time. Yet the earliest available copies of his writings go no further back than 900 AD, indicating a gap of 1300 years, and there are only a mere 8 copies available. The well known philosopher Plato also lived in the early 4th Century BC; the earliest copies of his works date back to 900 AD, showing a gap of 1200 years; in addition there are only 7 copies available. The works of Tacitus covering the history of the Roman Empire lived in the 1st Century AD and yet there are only 20 available copies of his work dating back to 1100 AD, a gap of 1000 years.

It should be emphasized that prior to the 15th Century, when the printing press was introduced, all documents were meticulously hand copied. Skeptics have been quick to point out that many errors can occur through this tedious process, casting a cloud of suspicion over the reliability of the Bible. However few would question the authenticity of the classical writings despite the scarcity of early copies and the large gaps existing between the available copies and the lost originals. In reality the sacred manuscripts have far more supportive evidence than the classical manuscripts and to date there has been no serious damaging evidence for Biblical reliability.

There is another source of evidence to support the reliability of the Biblical text and that is the early Church writings. The Church Fathers, as they are known, were influential church leaders contemporary with, or lived shortly after, the Apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ; men like Polycarp (AD 59-155), Justin Martyr (AD 100-167) and Irenaeus (AD 130-200). Their writings cover the period of the Second and Third Centuries and provide invaluable material supporting the New Testament documents. Research conducted by the British Museum found that over 80,000 quotations or references are available in these writings to the New Testament, making it possible, as one writer has suggested, to compile the whole of the New Testament with the
exception of a few verses. All of this provides scholars with the necessary resources for examining and determining where discrepancies have crept into the text and how serious those discrepancies are.

Again commenting upon this, Sir Fredrick Kenyon from the book earlier quoted wrote:

“The number of manuscripts of the New Testament, or early translations from it in the oldest writers of the Church, is so large that it is practically certain that the true reading of every doubtful passage is preserved in some one or other of these ancient authorities. This can be said of no other ancient book in the world.”

In this article we have considered briefly the various sources that can be used to verify the reliability of the Biblical text and noted the broad spectrum of the various sources available to us. What conclusions can we draw from the evidence available to us, especially when we consider the English Bible in the light of other manuscripts that have come to light since it was first written?

First we have the Authorized Version itself which was produced in England in 1611; it was a compilation of translations already in existence. Next we have the Septuagint Bible, a Greek Old Testament translated from the Hebrew text around the 3rd Century BC, of which the earliest complete manuscript dates back to the 4th Century AD. Then we have the earliest complete Hebrew manuscript available to us, the Codex Leningrad, originating in the 9th Century. And finally the Dead Sea Scrolls which have been identified as being written as early as the first century BC. We have four resources from four completely different backgrounds and periods. In addition we need to remind ourselves of the numerous manuscripts available for the New Testament, dating back to the Second Century; not to speak of the many Hebrew Old Testament manuscripts. What does all this tell us? How do these documents compare? We may summarize the numerous findings as follows:

• By comparing the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint we find that they are remarkably similar and have dispelled unfounded theories that the Biblical text has been corrupted by time and conspiracy. Indeed, the manuscripts that have become available since the 16th Century have been more than helpful in supporting the accuracy of the text.

• A comparison between the standard Hebrew Old Testament texts used today and the Dead Sea Scrolls shows that 95% of the text is word for word identical. Any variations are minor and involve grammatical errors, spelling differences or missing words.

• The New Testament Scriptures, as we have them today, were in the hands of the Fathers of the church at a very early date, and the evidence clearly suggests that quite early, the New Testament was used in places as widely scattered as France, Italy, Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine and Egypt.

• The small interval of time between the original New Testament and the earliest manuscripts provides confidence that the integrity of the New Testament is well established, and that according to conservative estimates is 98% pure.

• Textual criticism is the method of comparing the numerous manuscripts for error and the best reading. At the time when the Authorized Version was produced textual criticism was virtually non-existent. This method takes into account the fact that all these manuscripts were hand copied, resulting in some form of errors creeping in. By comparing the manuscripts carefully any errors would be revealed and highlighted. In identifying the textual variants it has been found that no practical effect on translation has been found.

The Providential Hand of God

What impact should all this academic information have on us; does it have any relevance to our personal lives? I believe it does!

In the book of the prophet Jeremiah we read of God instructing Jeremiah to take “a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken to thee against Israel” (Jeremiah 36:2). The prophet dictated the words to the scribe Baruch and when they were presented to the king, the king took a knife and cut up the book and burnt it in the fire (verse 23). Later God instructed Jeremiah to take another roll and write out the words again (verse 28). Today, despite such human interference, the words of Jeremiah are available for all to read.

This has been the story of the Bible; zealous individuals have sought to preserve God’s word and evil men have been equally diligent in attempting to destroy it. But we are reminded of the words of the Almighty in the book of Isaiah:

“So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it” (Isaiah 55:11).

How true these words are. Despite all human effort to stop the progress of the word of God its presence in our midst today is a strong reminder that all the time God has been at work preserving His word. It is a firm token that we are not dealing with an ordinary book; we are dealing with the Word of God. Documents separated by centuries of time are available today to corroborate the reliability of the Bible, miraculously preserved against all odds.

The apostle Peter wrote that we have a more sure word of prophecy (2 Peter 1:19). Its sureness rests in the fact that, not only can God’s word not fail; but also because God has ensured its preservation by the very people who have willingly ignored it and sought to destroy it. Let us not be guilty of doing the same thing.

Note: In 2010 the Christian Booksellers Association published its list of best selling Bible translations for 2009 based on both dollar and unit sales; the Authorized Version was listed in the top three.
### Historical Context

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<td>1st Cent.</td>
<td>A.D. 64 Nero’s persecution of Christians, A.D. 95 Domitian’s persecution of Christians. Anti-Christian persecutions continued.—“They that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held…” Revelation 6:9</td>
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<td>2nd Cent.</td>
<td>A.D. 312 Constantine becomes Emperor of the Roman (Catholic) State.</td>
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<td>4th Cent.</td>
<td>A.D. 800 Charlemagne’s Germanic Holy Roman Empire</td>
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<td>5th Cent.</td>
<td>A.D. 870 Pauclicans were exiled from Armenia to Constantinople &amp; Thrace. Books ordered burnt.</td>
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<td>6th Cent.</td>
<td>A.D. 1299 Massacres in S.France &amp; N. Italy</td>
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<td>7th Cent.</td>
<td>A.D. 1529 First printed Bible</td>
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<td>8th Cent.</td>
<td>Council of Trent commences Counter-Reformation 1545 - 1563</td>
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<td>9th Cent.</td>
<td>Spinosa (1632-1677) and French philosophers (Voltaire &amp; Rousseau) promote atheistic humanism</td>
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<td>10th Cent.</td>
<td>A.D. 1789 French Revolution Spread of Humanistic Socialism</td>
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<td>11th Cent.</td>
<td>A.D. 1844 Codex Sinaiticus discovered</td>
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<td>12th Cent.</td>
<td>A.D. 1861-90 4th Cent. Vatican MSS (B) first.</td>
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<td>13th Cent.</td>
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<td>A.D. 1523 Brethren at Zurich Switzerland</td>
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<td>15th Cent.</td>
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<td>16th Cent.</td>
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<td>17th Cent.</td>
<td>A.D. 1545 Coverdale</td>
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<td>18th Cent.</td>
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<td>19th Cent.</td>
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<td>20th Cent.</td>
<td>A.D. 1572 Luther’s Bible</td>
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### Reformed Text

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<td>15th Cent.</td>
<td>A.D. 45-90 Original Greek MSS penned and copies circulated.</td>
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<td>16th Cent.</td>
<td>A.D. 100 Earliest known fragment.</td>
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<td>17th Cent.</td>
<td>Old Latin versions throughout Empire.</td>
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<td>18th Cent.</td>
<td>Syrian &amp; Gk MSS at Antioch.</td>
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<tr>
<td>20th Cent.</td>
<td>A.D. 270 Pauclicans at Antioch using Syrian &amp; Greek MSS. Texts in circulation at this time include the Old Latin (Italic), Syrian &amp; Greek MSS. Many destroyed in 303.</td>
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So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

Isaiah 55:11

Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock.

Jeremiah 31:10

‘Listen, O isles... and hearken, ye people, from far’

Isaiah 49:1
How the English Bible taught Britain to separate from the pope of Rome & restore the Jewish nation

By Paul Billington  BRANTFORD, ON.

The English Bible and more particularly the King James Authorized Bible, has been the most influential Book ever printed in the English language. That influence not only developed the culture of the English-speaking world, but it gave shape and colour to the entire history of its peoples. The impact of this Book not only brought about the separation of England from the ecclesiastical authority of Rome, it also inspired statesmen with the Biblical vision of the Jewish people being restored as a nation in their ancient homeland.

Restoration

The purpose of God to “restore again the kingdom to Israel” under the reign of Messiah (Acts 1:6), is a work that has a practical aspect—and this is especially so in a world that has demonstrated a centuries-long hostility to the Jewish people. God has declared His purpose, that of raising back to national life—and then to spiritual life—a people that had been politically as well as spiritually dead for almost 2000 years. How, and on what practical basis, would this be achieved?

Scripture reveals that the work of restoring Israel involves a two-stage process. If we examine the details given in a passage such as Jeremiah 3:14-17 (“and I will bring you to Zion: and I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding”). or chapter 23:3-5, we shall see that there is first a return of Jews to the Holy Land first, and that this return is then followed by instruction. Other parts of the word give the same pattern. The first stage—that of a Jewish presence in the Land—is a practical and necessary step providing as it were, the raw materials out of which the second stage—the spiritual restoration of the nation—may be implemented, and the long-promised kingdom established.

Our concern here is to consider one particular feature of this first stage in the process of Israel’s restoration.

Two historical events stand out as being primary impulses developing the favourable circumstances for the Return. One event was the French Revolution which brought liberty and emancipation for the Jews. The other event was the translation of the Bible into English—for it was the influence of this Book that led the British Government to view with favour the establishment of a Jewish National Home in Palestine. It also led to the American support for Israel that we have witnessed in more recent years.

Translation Required

Jeremiah chapter 31 concerns the latter days (note the connection between chapter 30:24 and chapter 31:1). The subject matter of this 31st chapter is, clearly, the restoration of Israel.

Now it is in this context, and for this time, that we read in verse...
seven, “... shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O LORD, save thy people, the remnant of Israel.” This is a cheerful shout among the chief (head) or principal nations where a message is to be published. The word “publish” shama means “to cause to hear” (Young), to hear with understanding, or intelligently. This cheerful message—or “good news” concerns the salvation of the remnant of Israel.

Again in verse 10 we read:

“Hear the word of the LORD, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock.”

Here is a message, addressed to Gentile nations who are to “hear the word of the LORD.” To these nations, the Hebrew Scriptures (as well as the Greek New Testament) would be “an unknown tongue” or language: so Paul says in a different context “except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken?”

If these Gentile nations are to hear the word of the LORD, then as a practical necessity, translation of the Scriptures is required—c/p Psalm 19:3-4 with Romans 10:18. The nations then, are here called upon to hear the word of the LORD—but it is to be “declared” (Strong # 5046, brought to light or manifested) in:

“The Isles Afar Off”

The phrase is not specific (see Genesis 10:5). These “isles” are, according to Gesenius, habitable land as opposed to water, the sea or rivers. He says that it denotes “maritime land, whether the sea coast of a continent, or an island.” The Companion Bible suggests “maritime countries.” The sense is clear enough—the word of the LORD was to be declared or brought to light in remote maritime lands, or lands beyond the sea.

Whereas the lands indicated in this passage may appear to be somewhat vague, the message to be declared is not. “He that scattered Israel will gather him” is an unambiguous statement. So the regathering of Israel is the substance of the message that is to be brought to light, manifested or declared in far off maritime lands in the latter days. Now what is the point of bringing this message to light in these far off lands unless it has some relevance there? And how could it be declared there unless it was first translated?

Let there be Light

When the word of God is sent forth it does not return to Him void. This is what we learn from Isaiah 55:11.

“... it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.”

This principle is applicable to the case before us—that of the word of the LORD being brought to light in far off maritime lands. It would accomplish a work and a purpose.

One work, of course, is that it would enlighten some people in those far off parts with the message of salvation in Christ—See Isaiah 49:1-6; 42:6. This has been an exceedingly important work as it was in ancient times also. For some three centuries before the time of Christ the Greek translation of the Old Testament—the so-called Septuagint—prepared an environment in the ancient world for the true gospel taught by the apostles. This, we believe, is confirmed by Paul in Romans 10:11-18 (and especially verse 18 “... But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world”). Not that the Septuagint was a perfect translation (it has many flaws), but it was adequate for God’s purpose at that time.

The influential English Bible has accomplished a similar work, the results of which are seen today in a people called out of the Gentiles for God’s name (Acts 15:14), and who witness to his Truth in the modern world. This important work however, is not the focus of our attention in this article. Only very few have been enlightened with the true gospel of salvation.

The purpose to be accomplished by the word of God, according to Isaiah 55, is the establishment of the kingdom of God—as may be seen from verses 12 and 13. This work involves restoring again the nation of Israel in preparation for the Scriptural kingdom of God. It is in the first and preliminary stage of this work—the return of Jews to Palestine—that we find that the influence of the English Bible has fulfilled such a remarkable role. In the words of historian Barbara Tuchman in her preface to Bible and Sword: “It is a curious irony that the Jews retrieved their home partly through the operation of the religion they gave the Gentiles.”

Maritime Lands Specified

We have seen that Jeremiah addressed Gentile maritime lands of the latter days, and that God’s purpose to regather Israel would be declared and brought to light in these far off parts. History demonstrates that this has in fact happened—and the influence of this message prompted, first the British Isles and then other English-speaking nations, to become instrumental in bringing about the Jewish return. Not only so but as we shall see shortly, these nations have provided a degree of necessary protection for the developing Jewish presence in their ancient homeland.

From Jeremiah’s prophecy alone we would not be able to identify “the isles afar off” with any certainty. Yet, in the light of history, it would be difficult to find a more fitting candidate for the object of these words than those nations who have been influenced by the English Bible and have contributed in various ways to Israel’s latter day presence and survival in the Holy Land.

That this is the correct identification, is confirmed by Isaiah 60:9 where we read: “Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to being thy sons from far...” We have explained the Tarshish-Britain relationship on previous occasions (see Vol. 20 issue No. 3), and will not repeat that here. We would draw attention however to the expectation of others in regards to these things long before Jews began returning. For example, George Stanley Faber writing in 1806 said:
...the Jews will begin to be restored by the great maritime power of the age... The isles of the sea, and the ships of Tarshish, must begin the great work of the restoration of the Jews.”

Faber then quotes at length Isaiah 60:4-16. He follows the Scriptural quotation with this comment:

“Since then some great maritime power is destined to begin the work of restoring the Jews in direct opposition and defiance to the beast, the false prophet, and the kings of the Latin earth, we may naturally conclude that they will not all return to Palestine together. Accordingly we are expressly informed by Zechariah, that they will be brought back in two great distinct bodies. ‘The Lord also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David, and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not magnify themselves against Judah.’ If Judah then is to be saved first, and if the isles and the ships of Tarshish are to bring, his sons from far first, it is evident that the division, which Zechariah terms Judah, will be restored by the maritime power before the other division, which he terms the house of David and Jerusalem...” (A Dissertation on the Prophecies Vol. II.).

During World War One (1914-1918) Britain began this work of restoring Jews to Palestine in opposition to, and in defiance of Catholic Europe. The history of the 20th Century has fulfilled the requirements of these expectations based on prophecy.

Now, how were Gentile powers influenced and moulded so that they would be willing to undertake such a task as this? The answer is found in the influence of the English Bible upon British history, and upon that wider group of English-speaking countries throughout the world.

A Controversial Book

The Bible has always been—and still is today—a highly controversial Book. It is in fact a sword of the Spirit. In Isaiah 49:1-2 we read:

“Listen, O isles, unto me; and hearken, ye people, from far; The Lord hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath he made mention of my name. And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft; in his quiver hath he hid me...”

These words are unquestionably those of the spirit of Christ speaking in the prophet (see 1 Peter 1:10-11; Luke 1:31; Matt. 10:34; Eph. 6:17; Rev. 1:16). The sense of the prophecy of Isaiah 49 is that when the word of Christ would go forth as “a light to the Gentiles,” it would be as a sword—and this is what happened when the New Testament, and then the complete Scripture, was translated into the language of Gentile peoples. The result was a controversy that produced what is known in history as the Reformation. Many different lands were involved, but it was in the British Isles that the most far-reaching effects were seen.

A spineless and insipid presentation of God’s word does not alter the course of history, build empires—or even convert ordinary men and women. It never has and never will. We do well to remember this, “for the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword...” says Hebrews 4:12. This is why it overcame the mighty Roman empire—it is why it has had such an impact upon the English-speaking world. In other instances, where it has not had the same result, we see that it was compromised and rendered “of none effect” (Mark 7:13; 1 Cor. 1:17).

Matthew 10:34 are both unpleasant and true. He said:

“Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.”

Whenever the word of God has gone forth among men it has brought about controversy, and often bloodshed. It did so in the time of the prophets of Israel, it did so in the lifetime of Jesus himself, and it did so when the apostles of Christ preached the word among both Jews and Gentiles. The translation of the Bible into the English language produced the same result—argument and an ideological clash. The underlying cause for this outcome is often bound up with the issue of authority, especially religious authority (as in the case of Jesus and the religious rulers of his day), the prophets (c/p Elijah and Ahab, 1 Kings 21:7, or the princes in the time of Jeremiah who sought his life), or the power of the Roman pontiff in the

The Spreading influence

The words of Jesus recorded in

For more detail compare chart on page 7

The Course of History

In order for a Gentile state to undertake the work of restoring Jews to their homeland in the Middle East, it would be necessary for the hand of God to be providentially active—as it was in raising up Cyrus in order to bring about the return from the Babylonian exile—see Isaiah 44:26 through to 45:6 also Ezra 1.

In order to restore Jerusalem and return the exiles, it was first necessary that the Medo-Persians conquer mighty Babylon. Similarly, in preparing the way for the latter day restoration of Jews to Palestine, it was necessary that Britain not only become sympathetic to the Jewish cause, but that she contend with those who ruled the Land of promise, or who would oppose the divine purpose. In the practical context of things, this meant that Britain would have to become willing to oppose Catholic Europe—the age-long persecutor of Jewry—and, when the time arrived for it, expel the Osman Turk from the Holy Land. Our chart (centre) illustrates the remarkable influence of the Bible upon British history, shaping that nation—and then her empire—in a way that would prepare it for the work. Once the restoration of Jews had been accomplished to the required extent—and in order that events may move towards the second stage of restoration—Britain and then her allies, would be found in decline and retreat. The Jewish national home was not to be a subject of the British crown—but rather, after being instructed and refined—it would become subject to the rightful heir of David’s throne (Luke 1:32-33), the Lord Jesus Christ returned.

Now let us consider the sections on our chart in more detail:

The Bible on British History

The Bible has always been—and still is today—a highly controversial Book. It is in fact a sword of the Spirit. In Isaiah 49:1-2 we read:

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Reformation returned to the geographic origins of Christianity in Palestine. It thereby gradually diminished the authority of Rome. The year 1611 saw the publication of the King James version, and with that the “adoption” of the Bible was complete. The family and tribal history of one nation became the “national epic” of another.

As the word of the Lord was brought to light in these “isles afar off” men began to become aware of God’s declared intention to regather his people Israel. For example, Thomas Brightman wrote a book about the restoration of the Jews in 1615. He wrote: “What! shall they return to Jerusalem again? There is nothing more certain: the prophets do everywhere confirme it and beate upon it.”

John Prideaux of Oxford whose work was published in 1648, reported that some looked for the restoration of the Jews “after the end of the Turkish kingdom, to commence in precisely 350 years” (which is an interesting observation from our position today!). A contemporary of Prideaux was Joseph Mede whose work was translated into English from Latin in 1649. He wrote: “For so long ago, it was foretold to Daniel, that the king of the saints should rule through the whole world (chapter 7) and withall, that glorious promise of restoring Israel, should be fulfilled (chapter 12).”

In Powell’s Concordance (1673) the return and re-establishment of the Jews is set forth with abundant references to the prophetic Scriptures. So one could go on multiplying instances—but the point is that as Bible knowledge spread, so people were made aware of the purpose of God to restore His ancient people.

A Protestant Constitution

Another result of the Bible’s influence was the growth of anti-Catholic sentiment. The preface and “translators remarks to the Reader” in the King James version, 1611, provides a glimpse of this. The reference to “that man of sin” and the “fourth Beast being slain,” the king of the saints should rule through the whole world (chapter 7) and withall, that the “adoption” of the Bible was complete. The family and tribal history of one nation became the “national epic” of another.

The King James Authorized Version of the Bible comes off the press in 1611. It was to influence the English-speaking world for 400 years.
In this atmosphere the country moved further away from Catholicism. Events brought the monarchy into collision with parliament when the former was perceived to be collaborating with, or in sympathy with papists. Civil war, the execution of Charles I, the growth of Puritanism and Scottish Presbyterianism brought Oliver Cromwell to power as “Lord Protector.” An attempt to restore the monarchy revived the former problems with Charles II. Later, the ruling Whig Party deserted the monarchy only. The act reads as follows:

“Whereas it hath been found by experience that it is inconsistent with the safety and welfare of this Protestant Kingdom to be governed by a Popish Prince or by any King or Queen marrying a Papist... Every person who is or shall be reconciled to, or shall have communion with, the See or Church of Rome, or shall marry a Papist, shall be excluded and be for ever incapable to inherit, possess, or enjoy the Crown or Government of this Realm and Ireland; and in every such case the people of these Realms shall be and are hereby released of their allegiance.”

**A Protestant Empire**

By 1700 Britain was busy establishing colonies throughout the world. Cook’s voyages of discovery opened up new opportunities—and with an eye to trade and commerce rather than acquiring an empire—Britain’s interests spread across the face of the globe. So did the English language—and so did the influence of the English Bible! An important area of development was North America where the Puritan influence was particularly strong. Michael Pragai says:

“To understand America one has first to understand Puritanism, which in turn has its origins in the legends, images, morals, legal codes and prophecies of the Hebrew Bible. America’s roots are embedded, as it were, in the fertile soil of the Bible, and from there they derive their life-sustaining vital fluids. When the Puritans adopted the Bible, especially the Old Testament, it became their principal spiritual authority.”

By 1800, the English-speaking world had developed a spiritual and cultural outlook which was favourable to the Jews but deeply suspicious of Catholicism and of Europe. The influence of the English Bible had produced this state of things, but it is important to realize that the Reforma—on that point of sight—was not. The Puritans adopted the Bible, especially the Old Testament, for its spiritual authority.”

An artist’s depiction (above) shows William of Orange arriving at Brixham harbour November 5th 1688. A statue of William at Brixham Harbour (left) commemorates his arrival and declaration that: “The liberties of England and the Protestant Religion I Will Maintain.”

From the time of the Napoleonic wars and Trafalgar (1805) this is clear. The Crimean war (1854) kept Russia out of Turkey and the Middle East. The path that had been marked out for Britain—that maritime power of the latter days—had become unavoidable. On the back cover of Barbara Tuchman’s *Bible and Sword* we read:

“From early times the British people have been drawn to the Holy Land through two major influences: the translation of the Bible into English and, later, imperial need to control the road to India and access to the oil of the Middle East.”

These two major influences also combined to cause Britain to contain Europe—the home of anti-Semitism.

**The Time of the End: The Jews Return**

Britain’s entry into Egypt at the beginning of the 19th Century qualified her for the temporary, yet Scriptural title of “king of the south” (Daniel 11:40). That Britain fulfilled that role during the period termed “the time of the end” is, simply, a matter of historical fact.

The phrase, “the time of the end” is Daniel’s description for a period which dates from the French Revolution, and which in the book of Revelation is covered by the seventh trumpet (Rev. 10:7; 11:14-15). This last trumpet sign concerns the period of resurrection—the resurrection of the Jewish nation as well as ultimately, the resurrection...
of God’s saints. This is a long period of time from our mortal perspective and involves over 200 years. It began with Jewish emancipation and was contemporary with the resurrection of the Apocalyptic witnesses (Rev. 11). It included the “resurrection” of the true gospel. It will yet include that resurrection to which Daniel refers in chapter 12:1-3 which he says will take place “at that time,” that is “the time of the end.”

Now Daniel tells us that during this period “the king of the south” will push at one—who “shall magnify himself above all” (11:37; 2 Thess. 2:4). As we understand Thessalonians chapter 2 to be referring to “a falling away” from the Christian faith in the 1st Century, and fulfilled in the rise of the Roman Church with its papal figurehead—and as Paul is basing his remarks on the prophecy of Daniel 11 —this “king of the south” who pushes (or more correctly contends) against him, must be anti-Catholic.

That is one side of the picture; the western or Catholic side. Daniel’s “king” who Paul says becomes manifest as the result of a Christian apostasy, had an eastern or Byzantine aspect as well—and when Constantine moved the seat of his “Christian” empire to Constantinople, that became the focus of the military and civil dictatorship. In 1453 the Moslem Turks gained control of this seat, from which they ruled as the Desolator of the Holy Land.

It was a remarkable set of circumstances therefore, which brought together Catholic and Moslem interests in World War I. Germany, Austria, Hungary and Turkey (termed the Central Powers) became allies—see map above. Britain and her English speaking colonial empire literally contended with these central Powers of Europe, so fulfilling Daniel’s prophecy.

In these events we can see that various threads of history now combined to form a line with which to bring into being a national Jewish Home. The influence of the English Bible had cast Britain in her Protestant mould and had impressed many with the concept of a mission—that of bringing Israel’s sons from far after an absence of almost 2000 years. Michael Pragai says: “Generation after generation of Englishmen studied the Book. As it was often the only book in the house, it was read over and over again. Its sayings became household words. Its stories, heroes, kings and prophets were as familiar as neighbors. Many chapters were known by heart; whole verses and passages were cited in everyday speech. In 1914, Lloyd George recorded in his first meeting with Dr Weizmann, who later became the first President of Israel, that place-names crept into the conversation which were “more familiar to me than those on the Western front.” The biographer of Lord Balfour observed that his interest in the idea of Zionism flowed from his early childhood study of the Old Testament. John Ruskin related that he had read the entire Bible “every syllable through, hard names and all, aloud, from Genesis to Apocalypse, about once a year... and (at the end) began Genesis the next day!” He goes on to say that this was “the most precious and on the whole the one essential part of my education.”

Thus it was, that while the English-speaking nations contained Catholic Europe and the successors of Byzantium (in Turkey and Russia), the Jews began to return to their ancient homeland, under their protection.

Decline and Retreat

Britain retained sufficient power, and for long enough, to accomplish the purpose that was assigned to her. We believe that the major influence in all of this was the Bible. It was the Bible that moulded both Britain and her closest allies to prepare them for their role in history.

After laying the foundation, as it were, for the modern State of Israel—Britain’s decline as a world power was rapid. Yet, even in the Second World War she was seen—perhaps unintentionally—containing a fiercely anti-Semitic Europe. Looked at from the perspective of the Middle East and the developing Jewish homeland, the Allies were protecting the defenseless infant settlement. This latter day “king of the south” from its foothold in Egypt frustrated the design of Rommel at el-Alamein. Had Rommel succeeded in North Africa and moved into Egypt and Palestine, one can only imagine the fate of the Jews and their homeland. There can be no doubt of these facts: The British king of the south was “contending” with him, just as Daniel had foreseen.

Since World War II—and since the influence of the Bible has been undermined—Britain has been in decline and retreat. The first statement in Daniel 11:40 has been fulfilled—we now move on to the next, which describes the whirlwind invasion by “the king of the north.”

Since the end of World War II it has been the United States which has borne the burden of protecting Israel—again, the influence of the English Bible having prepared her for that role. Europe, having licked its wounds and received from a naive United States incomputable aid and protection, now builds up its strength in preparation for her part in the future development of things.

We now approach the time when the Lord Jesus Christ will return to earth and take control of things himself. In that day there will be a humbling of all nations—and that will include Britain and her allies.

“For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up; and he shall be brought low... And upon all the ships of Tarshish, and upon all pleasant pictures. And the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day”—Isaiah 2:12-17.

Today, the isles have ceased to hear the word of the Lord; they have rejected the counsel of the Most High and shut their eyes to the Light. When the king of the north ascends like a storm and comes “against him,” there will be a very great humbling. Britain will be a land of neither hope or glory in that day, but one of despair and utter shame for their unfaithfulness to the lively oracles of God.

The humbling of the English-speaking world is necessary—it is essential in order that the Lord may reveal his mercy. When Christ comes to judge the earth, all nations must serve and obey him as the King of Israel. This will be a matter of national survival and existence—Isaiah 60:12.
“Remember, remember the fifth of November.
Gunpowder, Treason and Plot.
I see no reason why Gunpowder Treason
Should ever be forgot.”

It is fascinating to go back 400 years to explore two parallel roads in history—that of King James in producing a new translation of the Bible into English and the parallel road of the opposition by the Roman Church to such a happening. The panel (opposite) reproduces the original preface that James’ translators wrote, which speaks of the “unwillingness” on the part of the Roman Church to see the scriptures available in English for all to read.

It seems too great a coincidence that just at the time the King announced his plans for a new translation of the Bible; a man was hatching audacious plans to remove not only the King and his sons, but the whole top-tier of Britain’s aristocracy. The plot that Catesby hatched, just a few miles from where I live, was to blow up the Houses of Parliament, killing the king and his two young sons together with the cream of the aristocracy sitting in parliament and to kidnap the King’s nine year-old daughter Elizabeth and to set her on the throne and educate her as a Roman Catholic.

The story is one of intrigue. The plotters were assisted by the Jesuits as the Pope sought to put down the English rebellion against his authority. We need to trace the struggles that lay behind the Reformation and the Counter Reformation; it was a very turbulent period in England’s history and what follows is a very selective

THE TRANSLATORS TO THE READER
Preface to the King James Version 1611
THE UNWILLINGNESS OF OUR CHIEF ADVERSARIES, THAT THE SCRIPTURES SHOULD BE DIVULGED IN THE MOTHER TONGUE, ETC.

Now the Church of Rome would seem at the length to bear a motherly affection towards her children, and to allow them the Scriptures in their mother tongue: but indeed it is a gift, not deserving to be called a gift, an unprofitable gift: they must first get a licence in writing before they may use them, and to get that, they must approve themselves to their Confessor, that is, to be such as are, if not frozen in the dregs, yet soured with the leaven of their superstition. Howbeit, it seemed too much to Clement the Eighth that there should be any Licence granted to have them in the vulgar tongue, and therefore he overruled and frustrateth the grant of Pius the Fourth. So much are they afraid of the light of the Scripture, that they will not trust the people with it, no not as it is set forth by their own sworn men, no not with the Licence of their own Bishops and Inquisitors. Yea, so unwilling they are to communicate the Scriptures to the people’s understanding in any sort, that they are not ashamed to confess, that we forced them to translate it into English against their wills. This seemeth to argue a bad cause, or a bad conscience, or both. Sure we are, that it is not he that hath good gold, that is afraid to bring it to the touchstone, but he that hath the counterfeit; neither is it the true man that shunneth the light, but the malefactor, lest his deeds should be reproved: neither is it the plaindealing Merchant that is unwilling to have the weights, or the meteyard brought in place, but he that useth deceit. But we will let them alone for this fault, and return to translation.

By Don Pearce RUGBY, U.K.

Catholic terrorist: Guy Fawkes

By Don Pearce RUGBY, U.K.

The Gunpowder Plot of 1605

THE BIBLE MAGAZINE Vol. 24 ISSUE No.1
James

Following his succession after Queen Elizabeth I’s death in March 1603, King James journeyed to London for his accession and was presented with what has become known as The Millenary Petition (so named from the 1,000 supporting signatures). In it the Puritan wing of the Church asked for various favours to be granted in order to make the Church of England practises more scriptural in their view. In response, James called for a conference to be held on January 14th 1604 at Hampton Court to discuss these religious differences between the Puritans and the Bishops within the Church of England. The magnificent Hampton Court Palace, situated some 12 miles SW of London, was chosen because the plague was still rampant in the City; some 30,000 perished there in London in 1603. Hampton is still standing and well worth visiting.

It was during this Conference, with little progress between the Bishops and the Puritans that the king asked the Puritan’s spokesman, Dr John Reynolds, whether there was anything more he wanted to say. He requested that a new translation of the Bible be made to replace the existing 1568 Bishop’s Bible which he considered was riddled with mistakes in translation.

This struck a chord with the new King who was himself a scholar and had produced his own translations of parts of the Psalms. The seed having been sown, James proceeded to make preparations for a new translation of the Bible, so that by July of 1604 he had not only set out a framework for its terms of reference but had chosen the scholars to do this work.

So although the Hampton Court Conference had failed in its original purpose, it set the scene for what would be The King James Version, or Authorized Version, first published 400 years ago in 1611. The Counter Revolution

Let’s trace the Roman Catholic side. They had hoped that the newly appointed king, James I would lighten their burden. Henry VIII’s Reformation some 70 years earlier had made being a follower of the Pope a risky thing. Henry VIII had been succeeded by his 9 year old son, Edward IV, who died of a terminal illness aged 15. The crown then passed to Mary I, Henry VIII’s daughter by Catherine of Aragon, who had been brought up as a Roman Catholic and who brought relief to her fellow believers. Her brief 6-year reign was packed with bloodshed—hence her nickname “Bloody Mary.” Some 300 Protestants were burnt as heretics; her persecutions occupy the longest chapter in Foxe’s Book of Martyrs written in 1563 shortly after her death. To the relief of the Protestants, Mary died childless and so the throne reverted to her half sister Elizabeth, daughter of Anne Boleyn, whose accession in 1558 marked a return to a Protestant upon the throne. In 1570 Pope Pius V issued his papal bull Regnas in Excelsis (below) excommunicating Elizabeth and calling upon Roman Catholics to disobey her rule. The title of the bull is taken from its opening words and its paragraphs aptly illustrate the words of Scripture concerning this false religious power that exalts itself above all others. In a further effort to remove Elizabeth in order to put her cousin, Mary Queen of Scots on the throne, Philip II of Spain (widower of the Queen Mary I) organised the Spanish Armada which was sanctioned by Pope Sextus V as a crusade. 151 ships set sail against England in 1588 but only 67 of them would return. Broken by the English and Dutch navies, battered by contrary winds, together with disastrous navigational errors, the invasion was thwarted. Queen Elizabeth

Regnas in Excelsis (Papal Bull of Pius V against Elizabeth)

Pius, servant of the servants of God, for the perpetual remembrance of the fact.

He Who reigneth on high, to Whom all power had been given, alike upon earth and in heaven, has intrusted one alone, that is to say, to Peter, prince of the Apostles, the care of governing, the Catholic Church, One, Holy, out of which there is no salvation. He has constituted it alone over all the nations, and over all the kingdoms, that it should root out, destroy, overturn, plant, and edify, in order that it should continue in the unity of the Holy Ghost, and that it should deliver to the Saviour, safe and free from all danger, the faithful people, bound together in the bond of mutual charity.

We, being, by the great goodness of God, called to hold the helm of the Church, devote ourselves unceasingly to our charge, and omit no labor to preserve intact the unity, and the Catholic religion, which its Author has left exposed to tempest, in order to try the faith of His people and correct us for our faults. But the numbers of the impious has usurped so much power, that there is no place in the world which they have not endeavored to corrupt with their perverse doctrines. Among others, Elizabeth, the servant of crime, and pretended Queen of England, has offered them an asylum in which they find shelter. This same Elizabeth, after seizing the throne, has usurped throughout England the authority of supreme head of the Church. She has monstrously exercised that power and that jurisdiction, and she has again cast into the pretended Queen of England, has offered them an asylum in which they find shelter. We declare her deprived of the pretended right to that kingdom, and of all domain, dignity and privilege. We declare the subjects, the nobility and people of that kingdom, free from their oaths, and from all debt of sujstation, of fidelity, and of respect; and by the authority of these presents, we deprive the said Elizabeth of the right to her pretended kingdom. By this prescription we further forbid all nobles, people, subjects, and others, to venture to obey the orders, advice, or laws of the said Elizabeth. As to those who shall act otherwise than as we have here authorized and order, we include them in the same sentence of anathema.

Pope Pius V
struck medals with the inscription, *Flavit Deus et Dissipati Sunt*, God blew and they were scattered.

This was the time when the Jesuits—founded in 1534—were gaining power. From the safety of the Continent, they trained English followers to be sent here to bring the downfall of Elizabeth. There were several plots which were foiled, and anti-Catholic laws passed. Heavy recusancy fines for not attending Church (of England) services were imposed; what started as a shilling a month fine rose to £20 a month—in today’s terms some £4,000 a month! With the coming of James to the throne there were indications that he would be more tolerant of Catholic worship, provided they submitted to his rule. He suspended the recusancy fines. However a plot to kidnap James in the Summer of 1603—the Bye Plot (or “Surprise” Treason) —was discovered and the ringleaders arrested and tried.

In the light of the many current intrigues, James declared in February 1604 ‘his utter detestation of their superstitious religion’ and later in the month ordered that all Jesuits and seminary priests should leave the country before the opening of Parliament in March 1604.

It was against this background that another plot—later to be known as *The Gunpowder Plot*—was hatched.

One source reckoned that it was the seventeenth plot since 1583 to remove the monarch!

**Sir Robert Catesby dreams up his Plot**

Catesby was a handsome, 6ft tall man, with a considerable fortune and was the squire of the small Midlands village of Ashby St Ledgers. His father had married Anne Throckmorton of Coughton Court, the seat of an influential Roman Catholic family. Although Robert had been brought up a Roman Catholic, in 1593 he had married a Protestant wife, Catherine the daughter of Thomas Leigh from nearby Stoneleigh Abbey. He accepted the Protestant faith, but following his wife’s early death had been persuaded, it is said, by the Jesuits, to return to his Roman faith.

In 1601 he took part in *the Essex Rebellion*. He and about 200 swordsmen joined the Earl of Essex’s march to London seeking to kill those on Queen Elizabeth’s Council who were unfavourable. Catesby was wounded and imprisoned in the Tower of London. Queen Elizabeth spared this personable young man from execution, imposing a fine worth over £6 million in today’s terms. Catesby was forced to sell his Oxfordshire home in Chastleton and move in with his widowed mother at Ashby St Ledgers. His energies seemed bent on restoring papal rule. He financed several Jesuit missions and in 1602 was the leader behind a mission to Philip of Spain to ascertain what support they could expect from Spain in their planned rebellion. Queen Elizabeth died in 1603 and James succeeded. How long Catesby took to “hatch” his master stroke against the new king we have no knowledge. Just a month after the January 1604 Hampton Conference, Catesby sent for his cousin Tom Wintour to visit him, but being ill he was not able to come. A meeting was then arranged in London in May where were also Catesby’s friend, Jack Wright and Guy Fawkes. Catesby was now ready to share his thoughts with his close friends.

**His Plot**

It was a masterstroke; it would change at instant the whole political system. At the opening of a new parliamentary session, the King, his Lords, Bishops, Members of Parliament and high officials would assemble for the ceremony in the then Houses of Parliament. Gunpowder was being widely used at this time as an explosive, and Catesby’s plan was to put sufficient gunpowder under the Hall and blow them all up! This audacious scheme had some drawbacks. There would be quite a few Roman Catholics who would be in the assembly. He also learnt that the two young sons of the King would be present. The killing of Roman Catholics was a troubling problem, but the King’s children was solvable—the King’s daughter Elizabeth, then aged 8 was being brought up at Coombe Abbey near Coventry, close to Ashby St Ledgers. With the planned death of the King and his sons, she could be kidnapped, made Queen and handed over to a Roman Catholic family to be brought up in Catesby’s re-found faith. England would then return to the papal fold and their troubles would be over! As he explained, “The nature of the disease required so sharp a remedy.” A 5th conspirator was engaged, Wright’s brother-in-law, Thomas Percy. Toward the end of May the five conspirators met again and “prayer book in hand” took an oath of secrecy. “With the taking of this oath of secrecy, the Gunpowder Plot proper was set in motion” in May 1604. Following this they went “into the next room and heard Mass and received the Blessed Sacrament” at the hands of the Jesuit priest, Father John Gerard.

**The troubling Problem**

The fact that other believers would perish continued to trouble the conspirators, and Catesby sought guidance from another Jesuit priest, Father Garnet. “In a case where it was lawful to kill a person or persons, was it necessary to regard the innocents that were present lest they should also perish?” The answer was that it was fine so long as the gain of the victory outweighed the number of innocents killed.

Back home at Ashby St Ledgers and at nearby Dunchurch the plotters meet to put their audacious plans into action. Many horses had to be purchased—under the guise of preparing for use on the Continent, and other people had to be brought into the plot, especially ones with money—the exercise was not going to be cheap! The main task was securing access to the rooms
under the Parliament. To this end a house adjacent to Parliament was rented, and in December 1604 they began the work of tunnelling through what they estimated to be about 8 feet (2.5 m) of rock. It proved much harder than they anticipated; the noise had to be kept low and their movements in and out the property restricted so as not to draw attention to themselves. By March they were only half way there. Meanwhile a stock of firewood and gunpowder was being accumulated and stored across the river in a property rented by Catesby. One day a strange rushing sound stopped them in their tracks and Guy Fawkes was sent to investigate. He found they were not tunnelling under the Parliamentary Hall but under a coal cellar—it was the sound of coal being moved that they had heard. Furthermore the cellar was under the Hall and it was being emptied because the tenant was vacating it. They quickly arranged to take over the tenancy, greatly relieved that no more tunnelling was needed. So in March 1605 they were able to begin the task of moving their wood and gunpowder stocks. Estimates of the amount of gunpowder that they had obtained varies, but it seems about 1 tonne was purchased, occupying 36 barrels. Once in place they covered it in firewood, confident that their “firewood store” (used in great quantity in those days), would not arouse suspicion. The task completed, the conspirators dispersed. In October the conspirators who now numbered thirteen—the escalating cost of the exercise meant that more wealthy people had to be brought in to fund their needs—met to lay their final plans. Parliament was due to assemble early on the morning of November 5th. On that fateful morning, Guy Fawkes was to set off a slow fuse to give himself time to escape across the Thames where a ship would be waiting to take him to the Continent to organise support there. Upon the news of the success of the Plot those conspirators still in the city would head out of London and meet the rest of them at Dunchurch, before proceeding to capture young Elizabeth at Stoneleigh. Around the country were Roman Catholic families ready to join in the revolution.

The Monteagle Warning

The troubling thought of many innocent lives being lost still bore heavily upon some of the conspirators. So much so that an anonymous letter (see above) was sent on the night of October 26th to Lord Monteagle. It implored him to devise some excuse to miss the opening of Parliament to avoid “the terrible blow” that Parliament would receive. “For though there be no appearance of any stir yet I say they shall receive a terrible blow this parliament and yet they shall not see who hurts them.” As Monteagle was brother-in-law to Francis Tresham one of the last of the conspirators to join the Plot, it is thought by many that he was the author. Puzzled by its contents, Lord Monteagle immediately took it to Lord Salisbury, but as the King was in the country hunting, the matter was put on one side until his return on October 31st. Salisbury informed the king who seemed to have understood correctly the designs of the plotters. News spread of a plot to kill the king, much to the consternation of the plotters. Guy Fawkes was confident that they would not find his store of gunpowder. After all there was nothing in the letter that indicated what the “terrible blow” was or how it would be delivered. Indeed it was not until the afternoon of November 4th that a search was made...
under the buildings. They discovered the firewood, and upon questioning Fawkes were told that it belonged to Thomas Percy for whom he worked.

The Plot Discovered

It was not until late that night that certain of the earlier search party decided to investigate further. They arrived just as Guy Fawkes was entering the cellar to wait for the morning and the assembly of Parliament, before lighting the fuse. He was immediately seized and in his pockets was found a watch, matches and touchwood (wood or fungus material used as tinder to light fires). He used one of his aliases, calling himself John Johnson. Searching by the light of lanterns they began pulling away the firewood, revealing the barrels of gunpowder!

At 4 a.m. in the morning Fawkes was taken to the king’s bedchamber for preliminary questioning. The news soon spread and by 5 a.m. Thomas Wintour had been told of his arrest. He and four other conspirators remaining in London fled to Dunchurch, others fled to safe houses. Catesby tarried to see developments, but by 11 a.m. he too left, riding with a relay of horses straight to Ashby St Ledgers, where he found his mother was dining with Robert Wintour. Fearing to tell his mother of the disaster, he sent a servant to fetch Robert from his meal and revealed the “terrible” news that the Plot had been discovered, before riding the few miles to Dunchurch.

Waiting at the Lion Inn where the conspirators had frequently met when they were making their plans, under the guise of arranging hunting parties, were Sir Everard Digby plus a large number of others who had joined the rebellion without being privy to the details. Catesby revealed to them on that dark November night that “All is lost.” Catesby sent his servant Bates to ride through the night to Coughton Court to warn those assembled there of the danger they were in. At the time part of it was rented to Sir Everard Digby and Bates had to break the news to Lady Digby that her husband was on the run.

The Conspirators Rounded Up

Guy Fawkes stuck to his alias and at first little was revealed. It was through questioning the servants of Sir Ambrose Rookwood that the names of some of the conspirators were soon discovered—Catesby, Rookwood, Keyes, Thomas Wintour, the Wrights and Grant. Under torture, Fawkes eventually confessed, and the names of the rest of those involved were revealed.

One by one they were rounded up; some were killed in the process, Catesby among them. Following their trials in London, one cold 30th January day 1605, Digby, Robert Wintour, Grant and Bates were executed. The following day it was the turn of Thomas Wintour, Rookwood, Keyes and Guy Fawkes.

Celebrations

In Jan 1605 at the first sitting of Parliament after the Plot, a “Thanksgiving Act” was passed for there to be celebrations on the 5th November to commemorate the failure of this deed. It is still celebrated today, though few understand just what lies behind the event. Fireworks are let off and a bonfire lit. In my younger days a “guy”—a stuffed figure of a person would be made, representing Guy Fawkes—and placed on the top of the bonfire.

In 2005 a TV company built a replica of the Houses of Parliament to see what kind of devastation would have occurred if Fawkes had not been found. Their conclusions were that nobody would have survived within 100 m. of the blast—all within would have been killed instantly. It is amazing what power the addition of one match and a fuse could have unleashed, but it was not in God’s purpose. With James still safe on the throne that great work of producing a new translation could proceed, and the great light of the Reformation could continue.

Sources. The Gunpowder Plot Alan Haynes; God’s Secret Agents Alice Hogg; The Gunpowder Plot. Terror and faith in 1605 Antonia Fraser; Brief History of Ashby St Ledgers. Albert Treen 1900. Wikipedia. There is considerable variation in the details provided by these sources, including dates. I have had to make choices, but I don’t think these variations materially alter this article. These books are predominantly written by those sympathetic to the Roman Catholics.
The text of the Apocalypse in the King James Authorized Version (or Common Version) is here compared with that of 19th Century Biblical critics.

By John Thomas

I have found no benefit in the labors of the “recent editors” who have undertaken to mend the Greek text. They seem to think nothing of “taking away from the words of the book of this prophecy;” and of “adding” thereto—ch. 22:18, 19. We have examples of this editorial recklessness in the chapter before us (Rev. chap. 14). The first occurs in a note upon το ονόμα, “the name” in verse 1. “All the recent editors for το ονόμα, have το δύντω και το δύνωμα. I recommend,” says the revising editor of the Baptist New Version, “that this reading be followed and translated: his name and the name.” But I have not followed the recommendation, because the proposed alteration is superfluous, and implies two names, the name of the Father and the name of the Lamb. But the name of the Father is also the name of the Lamb; and therefore the phrase, “the name,” is doubtless correct, and certainly all sufficient.

Again, in Verse 2, on the words, “I heard the voice of harpers,” etc., a note runs thus, “instead of φονήν ἢκον ὡς, all the recent editions have η φονήν της κλόους ὡς. I recommend that this reading be adopted and translated: the voice which I heard (was) as.” Now this would imply...
that the voice of the harpers was as “the sound of
great thunder”—a noise not very creditable
to their music! The recent editors err in supposing
that φωνην, used four times in the second verse,
refers to the same voice or sound. This is not the
fact. The sound of many waters, and the sound
of loud thunder, are the sounds of acclamation
and war; while the voice of the harpers is the
song of personal redemption, and future glory,
when the war is over. I have therefore
disregarded the decision of “the recent editors;”
and maintained the distinction between the
thundering and the harping, by dividing the
second verse, and translating the phone of
thunder “sound,” and the phone of the singing
harpers, “voice,” in the sense of music and song.

Again, “all the recent editors” do not like the
word δολος, in verse 5, but substitute the
word ψενδος, lie. A man that is guileless does
not lie; but a man may not lie, and yet be full of
deceit. The change may be more favorable to
their morality; but I doubt not altogether
unnecessary.

Again, “all the recent editors” cancel the
words, ενωπιον τον θρονον τον θεον. “I
recommend,” says the reviser, “that this reading
be adopted, and that the words, ‘before the throne
of God,’ be omitted” from the fifth verse, so that
with this editorial mutilation it would read, “and
in their mouth was found no lie; for they are
faultless.” But, where do they stand in this
faultless condition? The recent editors have
canceled the answer; I therefore restore it, and
insert it in my translation; as, before, or “in the
presence of the throne of the Deity,” as
represented in ch. 4:4.

In the sixth verse, I have left the word aiωνιον untranslated. I have transferred it
merely. The “aionian good news” will be the
subject of exposition, when it will be seen that
“everlasting” is not the word best suited to
express its quality. We may find a better word
when we see distinctly what the thing is; or
“aionian” being understood in its true sense may
be suffered to remain.

Again, in verse 15, it reads, δι αυτης ουκ εν
ωρα τον θερισαι “because for thee hath arrived
the hour of the reaping.” The “recent editors”
omit the word σοι, for thee, though the order is
addressed to a certain party. The hour of the
reaping hath arrived. But by whom? Their
recencies have struck out the answer in
suppressing the words “for thee.” I have restored
them; and the answer is “for thee, upon the
cloud.” And here we may dismiss “all the recent
editors” as more of a pest than a blessing to the
original Greek text of the revealing Spirit.
Nothing has really changed in 400 years!

key to an understanding of the scriptures.
their hostility to the things Jewish—the central
political events which point to the nearness of
appropriate to devote much of this review of
subsequent overthrow of the Gogian force, give
interval between the call to Judgement at the
influence over the affairs of Europe.
Vatican’s power so it can be in a position of great
We have long anticipated the re-growth of the
war with the Lamb but is overcome by the Lamb.
time of the Lamb’s return, for this Beast makes
Church’s interpretation is authentic!

Pope Benedict: Bible cannot be taken Literally

On Nov 11th the Pope issued an encyclical entitled Verbum Domini (“The Word of the Lord”). This can be downloaded in several languages. The English version filled some 80 odd pages and is certainly not light reading! It has three main divisions.
The Word of God
The Word and the Church
The Word and the World

Of greatest interest was a chapter in the first part entitled The Interpretation Of Sacred Scripture In The Church.
The inset box lists a few of the 17 sections
under this heading. It is clear from the first heading that the Pope is reiterating the long established Roman Catholic teaching, that the Bible has to be interpreted by the Church. Using the scripture that—to quote—“No prophecy of scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God” (2 Pet 1:20-21), the Pope claims that the Holy Spirit “who gives life to the Church, enables us to interpret the Scriptures authoritatively. The Bible is the Church’s book and its essential place in the Church’s life gives rise to its genuine interpretation.”

Under the 3rd heading is stressed the fact that it is the Church alone which can guide the reader. “The Church’s living magisterium (authority D.P.), which is charged with “giving an authentic interpretation of the word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of tradition”, intervened in a prudent and balanced way regarding the correct response to the introduction of new methods of historical analysis” (Ibid).

So whatever non Roman Catholics would teach from scripture is of no value, only the Church’s interpretation is authentic!

Again under the Literal sense and Spiritual sense section, one can see how the literal passages concerning Israel’s restoration are interpreted as applying to the Church.

“In a word, while acknowledging the validity and necessity, as well as the limits, of the historical-critical method, we learn from the Fathers that exegesis (explanation, interpretation D.P.) is truly faithful to the proper intention of biblical texts when it goes not only to the heart of their formulation to find the reality of faith there expressed, but also seeks to link this reality to the experience of faith in our present world” (Ibid).

In other words we interpret the Bible to fit our world. As for Fundamentalist interpretation of the scriptures, the Pope wrote: “The Pontifical Biblical Commission, in its
document The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church, has laid down some important guidelines. Here I would like especially to deal with approaches which fail to respect the authenticity of the sacred text, but promote subjective and arbitrary interpretations. The “literalism” championed by the fundamentalist approach actually represents a betrayal of both the literal and the spiritual sense, and opens the way to various forms of manipulation, as, for example, by disseminating anti-ecclesial interpretations of the Scriptures... it tends to treat the biblical text as if it had been dictated word for word by the Spirit... It fails to recognize that the word of God has been formulated in language and expression conditioned by various periods”... Christianity, on the other hand, perceives in the words the Word himself, the Logos who displays his mystery through this complexity and the reality of human history.”

What the Pope is claiming is that only the Church has the guidance of Christ and therefore is able to interpret the meaning of what was written in scripture! Of course Bible “fundamentalists” understand that this is a false claim and that the Lord Jesus himself caused an angel to describe this system to the apostle John, as a great whore!

“Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and he shewed me a great city, decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS

The Interpretation Of Sacred Scripture In The Church

- The Church as the primary setting for biblical hermeneutics
- “The soul of sacred theology”
- The development of biblical studies and the Church’s magisterium
- The Council’s biblical hermeneutic: a directive to be appropriated
- The danger of dualism and a secularized hermeneutic
- Faith and reason in the approach to Scripture
- Literal sense and spiritual sense
- The fundamentalist interpretation of sacred Scripture
OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus” (Revelation 17:2-6).

So this view that we take, because it is “anti-ecclesial”, i.e. against church teaching, it is but a “subjective and arbitrary interpretation”!

This encyclical followed hard on two other important developments—the establishment of a “Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization” and a Synod to consider the “Catholic Church in the Middle East.” We will now look at these in the light of the above encyclical, but first we need some background.

Why has Pope Benedict chosen a European Strategy?

This interesting article was written by a guest writer for Reuters (Nov. 17th 2010).

“We always knew that Benedict XVI is a European pope, but lately he’s been proving this more and more clearly. In this phase of his five-year papacy, the old continent is clearly his priority. For the past two years, the European destinations have taken precedence over all his travel (France, Czech Republic, Malta, Cyprus, Portugal, and United Kingdom). Twelve of his 18 international trips have also been devoted to Europe. As for the visits due next year, they will all be in Europe: Croatia, Spain and Germany (his third visit there as pope).

“The diagnosis that the bishops bring to Rome on the state of the European churches has led to a strategy that can be seen more and more clearly. After his visit to Spain, this seems confirmed by the clear priority given to the Iberian Peninsula. In fact, Spain, Italy and Poland are emerging as the three pillars which underpin this implicit strategy by the Holy See.

“This strategy does not aim to reconquer old ground, because the past will not return. The aim is to survive and face up to the decline of European Christianity now seen in Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, Austria and the Netherlands. The former bastions of Catholicism there may still be very much alive but they are in the minority.

“So there is a tactical withdrawal underway to focus on these countries where the Catholic Church still is a major force in society. There, the Holy See wants to reassure, consolidate, preserve and revitalise the role it can play. Benedict has understood that while the global epicenter of Catholicism shifts every day to the southern hemisphere, that vast region can never replace the weight of history and culture. Given that fact, he believes, Christianity has not spoken its last word in Europe.”

To help in this strategy the Pope chose carefully the latest group to be elevated to the rank of Cardinal.

Benedict shapes the Future: Curia and Cardinals

“Although the universal Church is clearly no longer European, Pope Benedict XVI has taken deliberate steps to ensure that hierarchs from the old continent will continue governing it for years to come. Since being elected Pope in April 2005, he has given a disproportionate number of Europeans top positions at the Vatican and red hats in the College of Cardinals.

“In the past five years, Benedict has named some 60 people to the posts of prefect or president, secretary and under-secretary at the major departments of the Roman Curia. Forty-five of them (including 28 Italians) have been Europeans, while only three (including one who is already retired) have been Latin Americans. Six were chosen from North America, four from Africa and two from Asia. Next month, Benedict will hold the third consistory of his pontificate and create 11 new European cardinals who are under the age of 80 and eligible to vote in the eventual conclave to elect his successor. Eight of them are Italians.

“Of the 20 new cardinal-electors an extraordinary proportion—13 in number—currently work or have worked in the Roman Curia.

“One cannot recall in the last decades of the 1900’s such an impetuous affirmation of the ‘Roman Party’,” wrote the legendary Vatican watcher, Giancarlo Zizola... (The Tablet 30-10-10). So here was a clear demonstration that this Pope firmly has his eyes on rebuilding the Church in Europe. This is the perceived battleground for now. If we have any doubts that the ultimate goal is to re-establish the Church’s position in Europe as it was under the Holy Roman Empire, when Pope and Emperors ruled Europe, consider this next Item.

The Change of the Coat-of-Arms

Without any prior announcement Benedict unfurled the latest twist in Vatican symbology. For centuries, papal coats-of-arms featured the 3 tiered jewelled papal crown or ‘Trirignum.’ This was dropped by Pope Paul VI in a symbolic gesture at the 2nd Vatican Council. Benedict’s coat of arms has instead a 3 tiered mitre.

However, Inside the Vatican (12-10-10) reported a change.

“On Sunday, the cloth unfurled under his window in the Apostolic Palace as he prayed the Angelus contained the tiara.

“The actual crown itself, the Papal Tiara, also known as the Triple Tiara, the Trirignum or the ‘Triregno,’ is the three-tiered papal crown worn by Popes from Pope Clement V up to and including Pope Paul VI, who was crowned in 1963.

“The crown has not been worn by any of Pope Paul’s successors, but it has not been abolished and it remains the symbol of the papacy and the Holy See, featured in the coat-of-arms of the Vatican and on many papal coats-of-arms.

What does it mean that the Pope seems to have decided to restore the tiara?”

What does it mean? Well the restoration of the Trirignum has been the subject of a web petition. To quote from it.

“Most of us were deeply saddened at the abandonment of the tiara in 1964. This venerable and crowning with the papal triregnum so full of rich symbolism calling to mind the very kingship of Jesus Christ would be a much more blessed opportunity to pay tribute to our patrimony. We the undersigned faithful humbly beg you Holy Father to restore the venerable tradition of the triregnum to the papal ceremomial. The patriarchs of the Orthodox east do not refrain from their own traditions & insignia of their patriarchal office and authority therefore all the more fitting is it that you holy father the vicar of Christ, the patriarch of all the west, the bishop of Rome should wear that ancient symbol of your office the triregnum. For as Mgr Nabuco states in his ‘Ius Pontificalium’: ‘Being exempt from all human authority, The Apostolic Lord: (The Pope) is crowned with a Tiara and uses it vested with the Sacred Vestments as a sign of his supreme dignity in temporal as well as in spiritual matters.’

So it is a sign of temporal as well as spiritual supremacy. We remember that the Vatican lost its Papal Territories under the Vial judgements of Revelation 16; we can now see the drive for the Harlot Woman to regain her power. What interesting signs we see!

Scripture is clear, if the Woman is to ride the European Beast, then Europe must come under the sway of the Papacy once more. We saw the Pope’s drive to concentrate on Europe. To assist the Pope’s aim of re-evangelising Europe he has set up a new Council.

Pope takes Vatican’s biggest Step to Revive Christianity

Known as the “Pontifical Council for Promotion of the New Evangelization,” its aim is to help in the revival of the Church in Europe and other areas of the world where she is losing ground.

“In an official decree, Benedict said the new office would work with bishops to promote...
The Neocatechumenal Way is a lay evangelising movement for encouraging existing or lapsed Roman Catholics. Consisting of small groups, it aims to be a mobile force to revive Church teachings.

“The Neocatechumenal Way is looming as a key chess piece in Benedict XVI’s plan to re-evangelise Europe, after receiving the movement’s initiators on 13 November. “Álvaro de Juana, the spokesman of that Catholic lay group in Spain, told Zenit that one of the subjects addressed in Saturday’s audience with the Pope was the new evangelineisation of Europe, a topic to which this ecclesial organisation has always attached great importance.

“The initiators of the Way explained to the Holy Father the work that the group’s followers have been carrying out for some years in cities of Holland, Germany and France—where at times the presence of the Church is scarce—through the missio ad gentes” (Zenit.org 24-11-10).

Missio ad gentes or Mission to the Gentiles also looks to re-establish the Church in areas where Protestantism has grown. They work actively among the young and were responsible for ensuring good attendances at the World Youth Days; the last one was held in Australia in 2008 and the next is planned for Madrid, Spain.

“Another topic addressed in the Papal audience was the forthcoming World Youth Day in Madrid next year. Argiello explained to the Pope that more than 200,000 young people of Neocatechumenal Way from all over the world will undertake itineraries along the length and breadth of Europe, in which they will evangelise and hold missions for ten days. After taking part in the youth day ceremonies in Madrid, they will attend a vocational meeting with the Way’s initiators, in which it is hoped that thousands of young people will show their willingness to be consecrated to Christ” (Ibid).

The Pope is rallying his armies! If we wonder what kind of a gospel is going to be preached, we have an insight from the conclusions of a 2-week synod held in Rome during October.

**Catholic Church: Christ nullified God’s Promises to the Jews**

The theme of the synod was “The Catholic Church in the Middle East: Communion and Witness.” Its conclusions were startling, as the above headline shows!

“A Catholic synod called at the Vatican to address the rising persecution of Christians in the Middle East wrapped up on Saturday with a joint statement that focused a lot of attention on demanding Israel end its “occupation” of Arab lands.

“The gathering was meant to address the various acts of persecution, intimidation and discrimination that are resulting in a severe dwindling of Christian communities across the region. “But the bulk of the two-week meeting was spent discussing how Israel is the root cause of all the Middle East’s woes, including those faced by its Christians.

“The final statement reflected that position. It listed the “occupation” of Arab lands, the building of Israel’s security barrier, military checkpoints, the jailing of terrorists (defined in the statement as “political prisoners”) and the general disruption of Palestinian life as some of the main reasons behind the exodus of Palestinian Christians and Muslim attacks on the Jewish state.

“Cyril Salim Bustros, the Lebanon-born Greek archbishop of Our Lady of the Annunciation in Boston, Massachussets was responsible for delivering the final statement. “In clarifying remarks, he stated that “the Holy Scriptures cannot be used to justify the return of Jews to Israel and the displacement of the Palestinians, to justify the occupation by Israel of Palestinian lands.”

“He then escalated the situation by declaring that the original promises made by God to the children of Israel “were nullified by Christ. There is no longer a chosen people.”

“Bustros rejected the idea of Israel as “the Jewish state,” and insisted that eventually all the so-called “Palestinian refugees” must return to the land, a sure recipe for the demographic destruction of the world’s only Jewish nation-state.

“The Catholic Church has for years been trying to repair its image as an institution steeped in anti-Semitism. But Bustros’ remarks make fairly clear that the Vatican remains as dedicated as ever to replacement theology—that teaching that says God has tossed aside the Jews, despite is irrevocable promises to them, and that “the Church” has instead inherited those promises (Israel Today 2-10-10).

**Lebanon-born Greek archbishop... in Boston declared that the original promises made by God to the children of Israel “were nullified by Christ. There is no longer a chosen people.”**

As The Trumpet (25-10-10) put it: “This particular gathering of Catholic bishops in Rome was in fact a watershed event in the Pope’s program for evangelizing the world. For Benedict, the fulcrum around which his global project revolves is, as it has always been with the Vatican down through the ages, the city of Jerusalem. To this end, the Vatican is ramping up its involvement in the Middle East peace process.”

The influential Catholic editor of Inside the Vatican Robert Moynihan commented on the proceeding in almost breathless phrases.

“If there is a place in the world today where ideas and plans are being hammered out to create the conditions for a possible peace, and not wars, in the Middle East, it is here. In Italy, in Rome, in Vatican City, in the Paul VI audience hall, in the Synod and even in the streets and trattorias of Rome.”

“The Vatican — so attacked, so reviled, so vilified — has erected a ‘school of peace’ in the heart of Rome, in the heart of the world, in these October days” (Inside the Vatican 20-10-10).

The nations speaking peace, but we know they are planning war on the nation of Israel. It calls to mind the words of the Apostle Paul:

“For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape” (1 Thess. 5:3).

The Jewish nature of the State of Israel is something which goes against the concept that the Church is now the inheritor of the promises made by God to the Jews. The Jews are supposed to now be irrelevant — except they be converted to Catholicism! Jews controlling Jerusalem is an anathema!

So not surprisingly, the Synod also focused attention on Jerusalem.

**Vatican body urges UN to end Israeli Occupation**

“In a final statement of their two-week synod, the bishops and patriarchs of the region’s Catholic churches said the citizens of the Middle East “call upon the international community, particularly the United Nations, conscientiously to work to find a peaceful, just and definitive solution in the region, through the application of the Security Council’s resolutions and taking the necessary legal steps to put an end to the occupation of the different Arab territories.”

“The Holy City of Jerusalem will be able to acquire its proper status, which respects its particular character, its holiness and the religious patrimony of the three religions: Jewish, Christian and Muslim. We hope that the two-State-solution might become a reality and not a dream only” (Agence France-Presse 23-10-10).

Making Jerusalem an international city under the control of the UN rather than Israel is a long held dream of the Vatican. It should be pointed out that this is the position of 16 Christians coming from the Moslems not the Jews. There is freedom of worship for all religions in Jerusalem under Israeli control, which certainly was not the case when under Jordanian control.

**Resumption Of Talks Between The Holy See And The PLO**

Not surprisingly the Palestinian Authority has welcomed the Synod’s findings.

“The Palestinian Authority, meanwhile, praised the synod and echoed Bustros’ remarks.

“Israel cannot use the biblical concept of a promised land or chosen people to justify new settlements in Jerusalem or Israeli territorial
claims.’ Saeb Erakat, a spokesman for Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas and a chief Palestinian negotiator, said in a statement Sunday.

“Erakat said the synod sent ‘a clear message to the government of Israel that it may not claim that Jerusalem is an exclusively Israeli city.’

“(In) coming weeks we will engage in discussions with the Vatican on ways to further consolidate our fantastic relations,” Erakat said.

“The Pope first publicly endorsed a two-state solution to the Middle East crisis during a visit to the region in May 2009. At the time, he assured Palestinians of the Vatican’s support of a sovereign Palestinian homeland” (CNN 24-10-10).

“Fantastic relations,” that’s an interesting phrase. The fact that the late PLO leader, Yasser Arafat, met the Pope ten times gives an indication of the way the Vatican is using the Palestinian cause to further its own agenda. The Vatican is currently seeking to strengthen its ties with the PLO—they share a common enemy—Israel.

“Talks between the Holy See and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) resumed this morning at the Headquarters of the Palestinian president, Mahmoud Abbas, in Ramallah, following the Basic Agreement signed in 2000. The talks aimed at a comprehensive international agreement regulating and promoting the presence and activities of the Catholic Church in the Palestinian Territories, so strengthening the special relations between the Holy See and the PLO.

“Both sides agreed on establishing a working group to elaborate the aforementioned comprehensive agreement” (Vatican Information Service 9-12-10).

It will be interesting to see if these talks fare better than those between the Vatican and Israel—this week’s talks got nowhere!

Recognition of a Palestinian State

With the Middle East Peace talks having ended in failure, the Palestinian Authority is pondering setting up a state without the agreement of Israel, appealing to the UN for support. America would have the power to veto such a move, but it would not be easy to see the UN strongly supporting such a move. The influence of the Vatican at the UN is considerable. Already three South American countries—Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay—have recognised such a state, whilst as yet there is no state to recognise! It surely is not a coincidence that these are strongly Roman Catholic countries? The EU seems to be indicating its support too!

We finish our brief survey with a look at the developments in the European Beast. We are looking for a strong Germany to emerge to dominate Europe and work with the Papacy. We have a German Pope and we perhaps have the making of a new German Leader.

The fabulous Guttenbergs, Strolling to the Chancellery

This was the headline across the front cover of the popular German magazine Der Spiegel (18-10-10). Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg is the charismatic German Defence Minister. According to the polls he is the most popular politician in Germany! Of aristocratic background, his correct title is Reichsfreiherr Baron of the Holy Roman Empire! His wife, Stephanie, Countess of Bismarck, Schönhausen, is the great-great-granddaughter of the “Iron Chancellor,” Otto von Bismarck, who was the architect of the 2nd German Reich in 1871. He is devout Roman Catholic, who is happy to publicly show his faith. His father, Enoch, is a music conductor and recently conducted before the Pope, causing Robert Moynihan, editor of Inside the Vatican to speculate:

“There is a real chance, and soon, for Guttenberg to become the next Chancellor of Germany after Angela Merkel... the fact is that this concert for the German Pope was this week’s talks got nowhere!”

Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg to succeed Angela Merkel?

Germany Endorses a Plan to Abolish Conscription

Guttenberg has succeeded in doing the unthinkable—abolishing (strictly speaking suspending)—conscription. For 50 years this has been a “sacred cow;” Guttenberg’s predecessor was forced to resign over proposing such a move! Faced with the need to make savings and coupled with Germany’s desire to be able to project herself as a world player, able to send her troops around the world; the military needed updating. What is emerging is a slimmer, but more professional force. Guttenberg has shown his skill in bringing his coalition partners to back him—involving a considerable about-turn by most of them.

“Senior officials in Germany’s coalition government have agreed to suspend military conscription as of July 1, 2011, marking a historic change for the country, where conscription was re-introduced 50 years ago” (Press Trust of India 11-12-10).

German Defense Minister seeks more European Military Cooperation

Guttenberg is also pressing for greater military cooperation in Europe. This has been talked about for many years, with little result. It will be interesting to see if amid the pressing need for all European countries to save money, this dynamic young man will get things moving!

“German Defense Minister Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg said he is willing for Germany’s military to share some of its duties with other armies in Europe.

“In an opinion piece written for the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung daily on Thursday, Guttenberg said there could be a ‘sharing of roles and duties’ among European countries.

“Guttenberg said some military duties are essential for each nation and would ‘remain within the national competence.’ However the ‘scarcity of resources in all nations’ means that the pooling of skills and equipment to support European partners is important” (Deutsche Welle 9-12-10).

Germany has emerged the clear leader in Europe. With a thriving economy she has used her power to mould Europe to her wishes. Here are just a few of the recent headlines.

**Ireland’s crisis puts Germany in the Eurozone Driving Seat** (Guardian 15-11-10).

**The Irish Bailout and Germany’s Opportunity** (Stratfor 22-11-10)

**Europe dances to Germany’s tune** (The Centre for European Reform 3-11-10).

**German Designs for Europe’s Economic Future** (Stratfor 4-11-10).

**Merkel Defends Germany’s Leadership** (Stratfor 16-11-10).

As Stratfor (10-12-10) put it, “It’s about making sure Berlin is large and in charge on the Continent.” We see both the Vatican and Germany growing into the positions foreordained in the pages of Scripture. Our hearts beat faster; surely the coming of the Master is near. What a wonderful God we worship: -

“Who is a God like unto thee, that pardonneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us, he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old” (Micah 7:18-10).
By Ken Loveridge  PRINCE GEORGE, B.C.

A translation is defined as: The action or process of turning from one language into another; also, the product of this: a version in a different language. (O.E.D.) The books we refer to as the Old Testament scriptures having been written primarily in Hebrew, and the New Testament books in Greek, most people are faced with the choice of which translation to use, in order to get closest to the meaning of the original. Paul tells us that the scriptures are inspired in their original form: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16). Turning from one language to another means that no translation of an original inspired writing can claim to also be inspired.

James VI, of England, was not the first king to see the benefits accruing to his subjects of a translation of the Hebrew scriptures which they could read and understand in their own common tongue. Almost two thousand years before his day, Ptolemy Philadelphus, the Macedonian king of Egypt, started the process which would see the Hebrew scripture writings translated into the Greek language. Believing that the work was accomplished through the efforts of a group of seventy Jewish rabbis, the translated version became known as the Septuagint.

Ptolemy Philadelphus, not a Jew himself, wanted the writings translated to become part of his famous library of Alexandria, but the Septuagint was eagerly accepted by the Jews scattered about the Mediterranean basin. Many of the Hellenized Jews did not speak or understand Hebrew, so their scriptures were restored to them.

From the early days of the Christian church in the Roman empire, there were Latin translations available. Many of Paul’s New Testament letters originated in Rome, although they were written in Greek. It was not until about 400 AD, however, that a Latin version commissioned by the pope of the day, Damasus, was produced by Jerome. The pope wanted a standard version to promote the universal doctrine of the “catholic” or universal church. To compose his work, Jerome used some existing Latin texts, his own translation of some of the Hebrew Old Testament books, using the Septuagint as a guide, Latin revisions of the Gospels from Greek manuscripts, and an old Latin New Testament, which he revised. His Bible became known as the Latin Vulgate because he used the common—or vulgar—language of his times. For the most part, the Vulgate was not a translation from the original languages. For nearly a thousand years, this version was the parent of almost every other translation attempted into other languages. The Anglo-Saxon fragments, among others were taken from it. Knowledge of Greek and Hebrew was practically non-existent at the time.

How the books of the Bible came to Britain are the stuff of legend. Early in the 10th century BC, Hiram king of Tyre provided many of the workers and much of the material for Solomon’s building program. Not long after, it’s believed that the Phoenicians were trading with the “tin islands” of Britannica. Ezekiel tells us that Tyre was trading with Tarshish for tin. Evidence of early international trade with parts of Cornwall around St. Michael’s Mount help to confirm these stories. Linked to St. Michael’s Mount by a causeway at low tide is the village of Marazion, which claims to be Britain’s oldest town. Marazion is said by some to mean “Bitter for Zion.” Whether or not Jewish refugees escaped to Britain after the Roman destruction under Titus, or earlier, when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the city, we do know that Britain was invaded by the Roman armies under Julius Caesar in 55 BC. Did the Hebrew scriptures arrive in some form with British or Phoenician merchants and traders, with Jewish refugees, or with Roman soldiers? We do not know.

Under Roman rule, the Britons adopted Roman customs, laws and religion. In 312 AD, the emperor Constantine declared Christianity to be the state religion. Britain would have been affected as well as the rest of the empire. A hundred years later the country was left to defend itself as the Romans retreated. More than a thousand years passed before the need was felt to have a translation of the scriptures in a common language the people could read for themselves. During this period, many different language groups invaded the island, and the development of the English language took place. Angles, Saxons and Jutes contributed to the mix. The Venerable Bede of Jarrow, translated the Gospel of John into Anglo-Saxon (Old English) about 700 AD. Others translated the Psalms a century later, while King Alfred is identified as the translator of the Ten Commandments and some fragments of Exodus sometime in the 9th century. These were translated from the Latin, as nothing else was likely to be available. The Church controlled access to the Bible as most people were uneducated, and had no access to the books which the clergy kept to themselves.

Until the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls in the late 1940’s, the earliest known copies of the Bible were translations which had been made into Greek and Latin. Working with the most common version available, John Wycliffe and his fellows began the work of translation into the English vernacular in the 1370’s, and apparently completed the entire Bible about 1382. Latin was the language of the Church, and was not commonly understood—it had turned the scriptures into a sealed book. Wycliffe was associated with the Lollards, a dissident and rebellious group within the Catholic Church. They believed that the common people had the right to read the scriptures for themselves. Unfortunately, the new Bible had to be written out by hand. These verses are his work.

2 Tymothe 3:16  For al scripture inspirid of God is profitable to teche, to repreue, to chastice, to lerne in riytwisnes, that the man of God be parfit, lerud to al good werk.

Genesis 1:1  In the bigynnyng God made of nouyt heuene and erthe.

2 Forsothe the erthe was idel and voide, and derknessis weren on the face of depthe; and the Spiryt of the Lord was borun on the warris.

3 And God seide, Liyt be maad, and liyt was maad.
Turks, in 1453, had unleashed a torrent of works into Europe written in the classical languages, Greek in particular. Printing presses everywhere sprang up to reproduce these works, and to help satisfy the appetite for classical learning which quickly developed. The study of the classical works soon led to the critical examination of works such as the Latin Vulgate, which had been the dominant version for so many centuries. People such as Erasmus in the 16th century, regarded it as a corrupt text, and set out to replace it with a better version of the Greek and Hebrew originals. He first produced a Latin New Testament, but soon after, his Greek New Testament appeared. He presented it as the new standard for Bible students and teachers. He did not want people to use a translated version of the scriptures for serious study of the word.

William Tyndale was born in Gloucestershire about 1484, and attended both Oxford and Cambridge. He came under the influence of Erasmus, Professor of Greek, and began his translation of the Bible into English from the original languages. Erasmus had spent his life in authenticating the original Greek New Testament, but Tyndale pursued his goal of making the scriptures available to everyman. He was pursued and persecuted for his work, and finally fled to the continent. During his lifetime he is thought to have circulated some 30,000 printed copies of his work. He was burnt at the stake in 1536. Tyndale’s Bible was the first in English to be translated from the original languages.

The Coverdale Bible, which followed in 1535, was not a translation from Hebrew and Greek, but rather a revision from Latin and Dutch versions. Matthew’s Bible of 1537 was the continuation of Tyndale’s work under another name, and the first royalty authorized version to be made available. It was printed until 1557. Henry VIII in the preamble warns the readers “that all manner of books of the old and new testaments, in English, of the crafty, false and untrue translation of Tyndale, shall be forbidden to be kept or used in this realm, or other the King’s dominion.” This was the direct ancestor, through the Great Bible and the Bishops’ Bible, of the Authorized Version of 1611. Taverner’s Bible of 1539 were pirated copies of the work of Coverdale, and received no great amount of circulation. It was, however, the first complete Bible published on English soil.

The Great Bible of 1539, a revised edition of Tyndale’s work edited by Cranmer, was the first placed “by authority” of Queen Elizabeth, in the parish churches of England. It was the standard Bible of England from 1539 to 1566, and the 1540 edition was personally authorized by Henry VIII. No new versions were issued until after the Marian persecutions.

Following the death of Edward VI, Mary I came to the throne of England in July of 1553. The grand-daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, Mary was a staunch Catholic, and she restored England to Roman Catholicism, burning 284 religious dissenters at the stake. Many, who were able to flee her influence, went to the republic of Geneva in Switzerland. The major project of the Protestant scholars was the production of a Bible. The first full edition appeared in 1560, and was the first English version in which all of the Old Testament was translated directly from the Hebrew. It was also the first to be printed in Roman type; the first in which chapters were divided into verses; and the first study Bible to be made available directly to the general public. A Bible was needed which could be accepted in common by the rival religions and political parties of England. James sought above all to extinguish the popular but obnoxious Geneva Bible, and to replace it with a scholarly work. Hebrew and Greek studies had made great progress since the time of Erasmus and Tyndale, and he felt that the time was now appropriate for a new translation. The best scholars of Oxford and Cambridge were to be put to work and the Terms of Reference were put in place. The translators had access to more resources than any before them, along with the support of the King. The translation produced was not an immediate success, but eventually overcame the popularity of the Geneva Bible and has been the basis for comparison for all other translations over the last four hundred years. The Act of Supremacy in 1559 re-established the Church of England’s independence from Rome. The Bishops’ Bible was produced in 1568 and revised in 1572. It was this edition which became the base text for the King James version of 1611. The bishops of the Church of England were offended by the Calvinism of the Geneva Bible, and they were also unhappy with the quality of the translation in the Great Bible. This version did not replace the Geneva as a domestic Bible to be read at home, but was intended for use as a pulpit Bible in church.

James VI of Scotland inherited the throne of England as James I in 1603 when he united the kingdoms of Scotland. James was a writer and advocated his belief in the divine right of kings in his books. Soon after his accession, in 1604, a conference at Hampton Court was assembled to reply to the Millenary Petition from the Puritan section of the Church asking for relief from the Church ritual, and to discuss the need for a new translation. The petition was dismissed, and James focussed his attention on the new translation. The King was quoted as saying: “That he did not consider any translation into English that had been hitherto made to be satisfactory; but that the worst of all versions was the Genevan, some of the notes of which were partial, untrue, seditious, and savoured too much of dangerous and traitorous conceits.” One of the first rules made by the Company of translators of the Authorized Version was, that there should be no marginal notes except such as were necessary for the explanation of Hebrew and Greek words. The Genevan Bible at this time was the favourite Bible of the people, with the largest circulation, going through sixty editions before 1644. The Bishops’ Bible was the antithesis of the Genevan, with the full support of the Church, but it was perhaps the poorest of the translations. It didn’t satisfy the scholars, and it wasn’t suited to the general public.

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New translations of the Bible almost always stir an interest, one would think that some new revelation had been received from the Almighty! But those of us who survived the post-war inundation of revisions and “translations” must be forgiven for having become rather bored by it all. We all know—or should know—about that marketing and sales technique which presents a product as being “new” and “improved.” The impact only lasts for a limited time and soon wears off. Who now gets excited about the “New” English Bible (N.E.B.)? Even the “New” International Version (N.I.V.) is no longer new, and even the “New” King James Version is beginning to fade out of popular fashion as the E.S.V. (English Standard Version) and others take on. None of them can be expected to last for 3 or 400 years!

So now we have in “contemporary language” The Message which certainly has an appeal for those who look for fresh angles.

The True Message?

But is this new addition in the Bible book store the true message—the message of the Truth? Does it present us with the Spirit of Truth? Or is this the spirit of the (contemporary) world?

Jesus tells us that the world cannot receive the Spirit of Truth (John 14:17). The word “spirit” of course means power, and certainly the real Truth of the Gospel carries a very powerful message when it is understood. But there are other spirits, other powerful messages that we must recognize and treat with caution.

The apostle John tells us that there is such a thing as the “spirit of error” (1 John 4:6) and the apostle Paul uses the same word when he writes (2 Thessalonians 2:11) “God shall send them strong delusion”—a working or error. Enthusiasm and youthful zeal is not of itself any guarantee of Truth—it is too easy to get carried away by a tide of excitement, being persuaded that the Holy Spirit is at work, when in fact it is the spirit of the flesh and only too natural.

That a new version of the Bible claims to communicate its message in “contemporary language” should of itself give us reason to be cautious. 1 John 4:5 tells us:

“They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.”

Now just look how that passage is rendered by The Message: “They talk the world’s language and the world eats it up.” So talking the world’s language is hardly a recommendation is it! John continues to say this:

“We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error” (1 John 4:6).

So the apostles are the ones to whom we should listen. We need their “great plainness of speech” (2 Corinthians 3:12). This is what they say to us:

“That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ... This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:3-5).

That is surely clear enough. We must learn the Truth from the writings of the apostles; not from someone else’s paraphrase or interpretation. A translation is just that: a translation, and there are good reasons for believing that God can arrange for a satisfactory one which adequately expresses the true sense. Furthermore we have concordances, lexicons and dictionaries to help us with doubtful words.

Be not Deceived

An easy-to-read modern style is no substitute for accuracy in translation. It is true that the King James version of 1611 contains many passages that reflect the doctrinal errors of the orthodox churches, but these are well known to those who are instructed in the Truth. We know from the apostle Peter that Scriptures can be, and have been “wrested” (twisted) by some—2 Peter 3:16 and this even in the original languages whilst the apostles were still living. So there is no reason to think that the Bible in “contemporary language” is free of corruption.

The Message may render a few passages more agreeable to true doctrine, and may sometimes get the sense across, but we must not be carried away or deceived by that. For example John 10:30, “I and my Father are one” (KJV) is rendered “I and the Father are one heart and mind” (The Message TM). Again Matthew 28:19, KJV “... baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost” is rendered by TM as “baptism in the three-fold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” This irks Trinitarians of course, one of whom commented: “The Message gives an Anti-Trinitarian, Jesus only spin to this verse....” These examples may please some of us, but we should not be deceived into thinking that the rest of The Message is squeaky-clean. It is not!

What Kingdom?

Most people are familiar with the Lord’s prayer from Matthew 6:9-13 (KJV).

“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.”

But when we compare this in TM we may wonder what happened to the kingdom that Jesus told his followers to pray for. It reads:


This is in harmony with Roman Catholic texts. So instead of the kingdom, the world is merely to be set right! Not only that, but the gospel of the kingdom which the apostle calls “the Hope of Israel” (Acts 28:20) is replaced by...
Paul says “I’m on Israel’s side,” which is not the same thing at all. And in Romans 8:24 where Paul says (in Greek) that we are saved by the Hope, we are left with no hope—it’s totally deleted from the text!

What a hopeless message!

The Kingdom within You

One group have really warmed up to this message. They have taken the words of John Baptist in order to ignite a fire within, imagining it to be the power of the Holy Spirit. Their foundation passage is Matthew 3:11-12 (TM).

“I’m baptizing you here in the river, turning your old life in for a kingdom life. The real action comes next: The main character in this drama—compared to him I’m a mere stagehand—will ignite the kingdom life within you, a fire within you, the Holy Spirit within you, changing you from the inside out. He’s going to clean house—make a clean sweep of your lives. He’ll place everything true in its proper place before God; everything false he’ll put out with the trash to be burned” (my emphasis).

According to this, the kingdom life within you, is a fire within you—i.e. “the Holy Spirit within you.” A writer says: “Through His Spirit, we must fan the flames He has started... Our vision is to fan the flames and for them to collectively burn as an unstoppable fire for God...”

So in the background of this spirit-blaze, and no doubt fuelling the fire, is the belief and teaching that the Holy Spirit is active within believers today. That is a wrong message. The teaching of the New Testament which says that the gifts of the Spirit were to “be done away” (1 Cor. 13:10) is brushed aside as incompletes being cancelled (TM). The argument is that although some of the spirit-gifts ceased “now abideth faith, hope, charity (love), these three; but the greatest of these is love” (1 Cor. 13:13 c/p KJV). But this use of the passage confuses the gifts of the Spirit with the fruits of the Spirit. The Spirit is the Truth says 1 John 5:6, and the fruit of the Truth working in a person’s character produces hope (Gal. 5:5) and “faith which worketh love” (verse 6). These are fruits generated by the Truth (Gal. 5:22-23) and cannot be confused with the gifts that were operational in the First Century.

A person has as much of the Spirit in him as he has the Truth in him, for “the Spirit is Truth” (1 John 5:6 KJV). When he is “led by the Spirit of God” (Romans 8:14) he is led by the Truth—and Jesus has said that God’s word is the Truth (John 17:17). So we have as much of God’s Spirit in us as we have the word of God in us—and no more.

Jesus uses other terms in explaining this. He told his disciples that “the comforter, which is the Holy Spirit” would be sent (John 14:26), and that this Comforter (or assistant) is the Spirit of Truth (verse 17). And again in John 6:63 Jesus said that “the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” So the clear teaching is that the word is Spirit, and the Spirit is the Truth. This is the language of the Bible—a language that opens our understanding of spiritual things.

John Baptist’s Fire

In using Matthew 3:11 to fire people up with the message, we must understand what John was saying. To help us here let us compare the passage as it appears in the antiquated King James Version of 1611.

“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

John is placing before his listeners two options: baptism with Spirit, or a fiery judgment. Look what John says to the religious leaders:

“But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance ... And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire” (Matthew 3:7,8,10).

That fiery judgment came in A.D. 70 when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and its temple. John’s words were a testimony—a witness—against their wickedness. They were nearing the end of an age when the whole Jewish system would be swept away. Today, we are at the end of the Gentile age and our message, like John’s, should witness against the religious corruption that is in the world now. For those who respond in repentance there is good news, but for the vast majority—unquenchable fire!

Baptism into Holy Spirit begins (and only begins) when we immerse our minds into the words of the Spirit. The transformation of the mind is a process that takes time—it cannot be developed through a rush of enthusiasm via some preaching campaign, or by the application of a new translation such as The Message. Only after we have attained to spiritual mindedness will we be fit for Holy Spirit nature.

Sober Truth

The Truth is not a bubbly effervescent emotional “experience.” It is not “a spreading fire out of control,” as some express it. The fire that John spoke of was one of judgment—it is like the one that Ezekiel 20:47 speaks of referring to Israel’s correction; this is the language of witness, a testimony against that which is evil (compare John 7:7), urging repentance. Ezekiel is referring to Israel’s future discipline when they pass under the rod.

It was John Thomas who wrote in 1852, “The world will never behold a critically trustworthy version of the Bible till the Lord comes.” After surveying The Message we are convinced that John Thomas was absolutely right!
• The first attacks were corruptions & forgeries of New Testament texts, 2 Thess 2:2.
• A.D. 303 Emperor Diocletian orders all Christian books to be BURNT.
• Believers (eg. Paulicans) known to have preserved & handed down hand-written copies.
• A.D. 312 Constantine persecutes Donatists & ordered texts from Eusebius. In 382 Damasus ordered Jerome’s Latin Vulgate establishing the Roman Catholic text.
• A.D. 870 Paulicans are exiled from Armenia to Constantinople & Thrace: Their books are ordered BURNT.
• A.D. 1223 Council of Toulouse France prohibits the Bible to laymen (Albigenses & Waldenses).
• A.D. 1229 Catholic Church places the Bible on the index of forbidden books (Council of Valencia).
• A.D. 1525-1534 William Tyndale translates & publishes the New Testament in English. Copies are BANNED, seized & BURNT.
• 1543 All Bibles bearing Tyndale’s name ordered to be BURNT under Catholic Church supervision.
• A.D. 1545 Council of Trent condemns the proposition that “the Holy Scriptures contain all things necessary for salvation.”
• A.D. 1610 The Catholic “Douay” version is compiled by Jesuits.
• A.D. 1611 King James version.
• 18th & 19th Centuries: Textual critics introduce doubt upon the inspiration of Scripture.
• A.D. 1869 Pope declared Infallible.
• A.D. 1898 Pope condemns Bible Societies (such as the British & Foreign Bible Society).
• Critics claim Bible text evolved.
• 1957: Stocks of Bibles belonging to the British & Foreign Bible Society confiscated & BURNT in Madrid.
• Media campaign against Bible.
• Archaeological evidence suppressed.

THE BATTLE AGAINST THE BIBLE & ITS MIRACULOUS SURVIVAL