

Glad Tidings

"And we bring you good of the promise made unto the fathers..." (Acts 13:32)

Vol. XXXV

November 9, 2025

No. 45

Count Your Blessings

(Jerry Fite)

There are blessings we receive that we tend to take for granted. One such blessing is to have the Word of God preserved for us in our English language. In the history of the English language, this has not always been the case.

John Wycliffe, born in A.D. 1324, was the first to translate the entire Bible into the English language. The tedious work of translating occupied Wycliffe's time for about twenty-two years, and was completed in the year of A.D. 1367. His translation was made from the Latin Vulgate, England's first Bible. Up until this time, the Bible had been known to only those familiar with the Latin language, and the rich who could afford handwritten copies.

You would think all would be pleased with Wycliffe's work. But at the beginning of the reign of Henry V, reading the Bible in the English language was attended with great danger. By law, if you were caught reading the Bible in the English tongue you would forfeit your possessions, and be considered heretics before God. You would also be enemies of the Crown, and traitors to the land. The clergy of the Catholic Church did not want the

common man to have the Word in his own language, and they continued their fight to prevent it for hundreds of years.

With the invention of the printing press in A.D. 1450 by Gutenberg of Mainz, Germany, mass-production of documents were now possible. In 1525, William Tyndale was the first to translate the New Testament into English from the Greek. Because of the Catholic Church's opposition, he had to do his translating work outside of England, partly at Cologne, and partly at Worms. At least fifteen thousand copies were issued and were imported into England secretly, sometimes in sacks of flour.

On October 6, 1536, Tyndale was rewarded for his translating work by first, being strangled, and then burnt at the stake at the hand of the authorities of the Roman Catholic Church. His last words were, "Lord, open the King of England's eyes!"

Hundreds of years would pass with many a person being put to death for reading an English Bible before Tyndale's plea was heard.

In 1536, during the reign of King Henry VIII, Thomas Cromwell influenced King Henry to

grant a royal license for the issue of the Bible in the English language. John Rogers carried it out only to be burnt at the stake along with three hundred other Bible-loving men during the four- and-a-half-years of Queen Mary's evil reign.

We are familiar today with the King James authorized translation of the Bible in 1611. But a struggle occurred to even have it in our language. Many have died in the effort. Some paid great sums of money to read it for an hour a day. Do not take for granted the Word of God being in our English language. Count your blessings.

Have you read your English Bible today? Or, is it still sitting on the shelf still unopened, having only the potential to fill our minds with truth worthy of daily meditation. What a blessing to have a copy at a reasonable price! What a blessing to have the revealed Word of God in a language not foreign to you! What a blessing to read the Scriptures daily at our convenience without the threat of imprisonment or a traitor's death! God, thank you for allowing us to live in our time. Help us to never leave our Bible on the shelf to gain dust again!