



Reproduction of Scriptural Copies

The reproduction of Scriptural copies is important as we do not have the original manuscripts.

The First Copy: The First Copy was copied by hand until the printing press was available in 1454. The scribe (copier) counted every word and every letter in a Scriptural portion before he copied it and after. If the number did not agree, the manuscript was destroyed. They used a certain kind of ink and wrote on special skins of animals. Each word was pronounced by the scribe aloud while he copied. Every time the term “God” appeared, he would clean the quill and dip in fresh ink. Before recording the name of Jehovah, the scribe would wash his entire body with water. The work was then checked upon completion and if one incorrect letter was found, the manuscript was destroyed.

The Second Copy: The progress of the handwritten copies:

The Septuagint: About 250 BC. At that time, more Jews spoke Greek than Hebrew because of the worldwide influence of Alexander the Great. So the Hebrew Old Testament was translated into the Greek and was called the Septuagint.

The Latin Vulgate: About 250 AD. Due to Roman influence, an “Old Latin” Bible was in circulation. From this in 401 AD came the “Latin Vulgate.” From the Latin Vulgate came the Roman Catholic Douay Version.

English: These translations came, for the most part, from the Greek Septuagint and Greek New Testament. Catholic influence, however, translated their versions from the Latin Vulgate. The first English attempt was in 700 AD by Aldhelm, a translation of the Psalms. At the same time, Bede translated a portion of the Gospel of John. The first complete English translation of the New Testament occurred in 1380 with the Old Testament translated in 1382. Both were translated by John Wycliffe. 170 copies exist today. Persecution was severe at this time from many religious authorities because they did not think that the Scriptures should be in the hands of the common people!

The Third Copy: The progress of the printing press copies. Post 1454. In 1454, Gutenberg printed a Latin Psalter. In 1456, an entire Latin Vulgate Bible was printed called “The Gutenberg Bible.” (Not in English). But William Tyndale in 1525 was the first to print and publish a complete New Testament in the English language. In five years, 15,000 were in print.

Tyndale was banished from England and later strangled to death then burned at the stake for printing this New Testament. But a year after he died, the whole Bible was printed and authorized by the King of England.

The Chained Bible: In 1537, an entire Bible was published by John Rogers and copies were chained to stands to keep them from being destroyed. John Rogers was burned at the stake in 1555 by Queen Mary I (Mary Tudor, a.k.a. “Bloody Mary”).

Other English Bible completed:

The Great Bible: 1539

The Geneva Bible: 1560

The Bishop’s Bible: 1568

The Douay Version: 1610



The King James Version: 1611

The English Revised Version: 1885

The American Standard Version: 1901

The Bible has also been translated into 1100 other tongues and dialects. For the past 1,000 years, the history of our Bible has been connected with much bloodshed. Read about the cruel reign in England, for instance of Queen Mary I, often called “Bloody Mary.” During her brief reign of four years, 300 Christians were burned at the stake, hundreds more banished from the country, and much blood was shed.