

05_First Versions of the Bible

How We Got the Bible (2016), Patrick Mead, Fourth Avenue

We're going to get into what I consider my favorite part of the whole story in this next five or six weeks.

We did the hard work.

We did the hard work of the Deuteronomist and the revisions and the redactors.

We did that.

Now we're going to talk, and even last week we talked about how they decided on these books that they finally decided on.

Now we're going to start talking about some personalities and some politics.

Some of these are adventure stories.

Some of these are mysteries and thrillers where people have to hide from the authorities and have last-minute, split-second escapes.

It's fun from here on out.

Every year, especially coming upon this next season, Christmas season, I get people ask me, they'll say, I want to buy a Bible for myself or for my child or for this person.

What Bible should I get?

And back when there were a lot of Christian bookstores, most of them have gone bankrupt in recent years, but if you would go into a family Bible bookstores, Andriyan, or something such as this, there'd be a whole wall of different versions.

And you'd have different kinds within, even in the NIV slot, for example.

You would have the archaeology or the soldiers or the wife, or you'd have so many different kinds.

And then you look at all of the different versions.

Some are confused at this and say, if it's the Word of God, shouldn't there just be one?

No.

And here's why.

Language means something different to different people.

Therefore to communicate the will of God to people, you have to speak in a language that they understand.

For example, the NIV, knowing this for a long time, had the reader's version of the NIV, which was down at about a sixth or seventh grade level.

Why?

Because there are a lot of full creed.

The majority of Americans never read an entire book after leaving high school.

That just breaks my heart.

I had five last week.

That only worked Sundays, so what else are you going to do?

I've got another book I'm almost finished with, but when I'm done coloring it, I have another one lined up.

So I'm good, I'm good.

So what do you do with the people whose language, that same word, means something different to them?

Well, you need to find a way to communicate the will of God to them.

Well, what happens, reading levels are different.

What happens, if needs are different, well, the will of God is able to be interpreted and translated into various forms.

The King James-only people, we're going to talk about the King James-only people in about a month or so when we get to that part of the story.

The King James Bible has been an immense gift to the world about the standardation of English, the propagation of the Scripture in English, and this, that, and the other, but it is not even close to a perfect version.

It has serious problems.

So, you've all heard, well, King James is good enough for St.

Paul, it's good enough for me.

I'm hoping that has never been said seriously.

The translators and scholars have a saying, it's up here on the screen, the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures are the Scriptures, all else is translation, but do you understand what that means?

When you translate, you change.

If anybody here knows sign language, you know that.

You cannot do word for word sign language.

You have to do concept.

We also do that with translating from English to French or from French to German or from Arabic to Latin.

You have to go with concepts.

So that's one part that it means, but something else it means.

The Hebrew and Greek Scriptures are the Scriptures, all else are translations.

Do we have any of the original writings of the prophets or apostles?

No, we don't.

And it is very unlikely that we ever will because they were written on perishable materials.

That means the Scriptures we have are translations of translations of copies.

Now if that terrifies you, know a couple of things.

One, they took this pretty seriously.

Several of you have brought up to me, the University of Kentucky, big finding on a charred scroll.

Have you seen that?

The link, several of you have sent that to me.

Just know this.

If there's an interesting link, I've had it a hundred times already.

So it'll come in and they'll say, ooh, did you see this?

Here's a charred lump of a fourth century piece of Scripture.

If you try to open it, you're going to shatter it.

It's going to crumble away to nothing.

So they use the same kind of technology they use for MRIs and PET scans to go into it, go all around the different angles of it, then to computer map it and see where the indentations of the original writer were.

And as they get it all out, it turns out that it's the book of .

.

.

at least the portion we have, the Scriptures out of the book of Leviticus, and they are nearly word for word what we have in our Bible.

So don't panic about any of this, but just be aware, I believe that Jesus is the Word of God, because that's what the Bible says.

Jesus is the Word of God.

The Bible is our narrative that points us to the Word of God.

Once you understand this, we're good.

But Bibles are precious.

Not so much to us, because we even have you versions of our Bibles, where we have all of them in one little place on our phones, unless you have a flip phone.

In which case, just to catch you up, Dewey lost, Truman won.

It was an amazing race.

Anyway, story came from this group of guys.

I'm pretty sure you're allowed to say their names now, but I won't, because they haven't told me.

For years and years, they went beyond the Iron Curtain when it was illegal and spread gospel literature and Bibles.

All of them were imprisoned.

A couple that I talked to were imprisoned, one for a total of seven years, three different times.

They kept sending him back because he kept converting his jailers.

One of those, I remember.

But as they would try to smuggle in the literature, all translated in Vienna, one time the train stopped in Czechoslovakia, and soldiers boarded it.

And this one man was there, and he had his Bible, and he knows if I'm caught with it, I'm going right back into prison.

I can get another one when I get out.

And so he just reached his hand out and dropped it on the railroad tracks.

Well, years later, I would tell you how many, but I forget.

Years later, he receives this old beat up parcel from down in Czechoslovakia.

He opens it up, and there's his Bible.

Quite a bit worse for where, but there it is, with a letter saying, we found this, and we apologize and we hope you forgive us that we didn't send it back, but we wanted to copy it first.

Now, there are no copiers.

They had to handwrite their Bible, and as soon as they were finished, it took them years.

They got this back to him.

Now, think about that.

For most of the history of the church, hand copying a manu script, that's why it's called that, manu, manual script, was the only way to possess a portion of Scripture.

If you wanted a portion, that was it.

Early believers collected Scripture extensively, and they wrote about it if they were literate, to the point where, as I've told you, less than 20 verses of the New Testament don't show up in early Christian letters to each other.

So they had it, but as books were copied and copied and copied, some changes crept in, and they crept in pretty fast because people weren't as literate as they thought they were sometimes, and language wasn't as standardized as it is now.

I forget what early American satirist once said, a man that can only think of one way to spell a word is too narrow-minded.

Language was not, Webster comes along and standardizes some of it, but it's not the way to spell English.

The Oxford English Dictionary is the way to spell English, and that's not the American way.

You see what I mean?

Back then, you had a dozen ways to spell different words, and so changes crept in quickly, and then by the time of Augustine, who most of you would call Augustine because that's the way your teacher's pronounced it.

He was complaining that there were extraordinary numbers of copies of Scripture out there, but they're not of the highest quality, and they disagreed with each other on some important points.

So this is a problem.

This is a problem for the church and for the greater society.

By that time, Christianity had become the official religion of Rome.

By the way, I'm going to do this again.

I'll probably say it again.

I'll say Constantine became a Christian, maybe, but he didn't until he was on his deathbed.

He lived his life as a pagan.

He had only made Christianity the official religion because he wanted to use it to consolidate his power, because you couldn't kill it.

He was going to use it.

As the Empire flagged and the Roman Empire is tiring and starting its long precipitous fall into nothingness, it was very important that it be replaced by a single unified force.

That was the church, the church and the Holy Roman Empire.

You can't really read that from where you are, because if you love Jesus, you'd sit closer, but I'm just kidding, just kidding.

In 313, the Edict of Milan legalizing it, then he reunited the Empire and he perceived the church as a way to unite the Empire.

He radically changed the church.

Think about it.

In fact, there are even charts that show emperor, pope.

You have the senators, you have the prelates and cardinals.

Then you have the lower functionaries, you have the priest.

They set it up to organize it, to run like the government would run.

In fact, he even called councils, like the Council of Nicaea, not to make sure everybody was on the same page because we want to be on the right page, but just be on the same page.

He didn't care what they thought about the Trinity.

He didn't care what they thought about the deity of Jesus.

Just everybody agree because they need you unified.

Well, Constantine, wanting unity, and Augustine saying, we, our Bibles are becoming corrupt, led to Pope Damasus to call, he said, I've got to call the greatest living scholar of our day to bring the text back to the original condition.

Well, there was no question who that would be.

They gave it to Sophronius, Eusebius, Hieronymus, known to us, and I thank God he is, as Jerome.

So we don't have to say all of that.

Jerome.

You've heard of Jerome?

Yeah.

You haven't?

Really?

One of the doctors of the Catholic Church, one of the most important men when it comes to why we have our Bibles, Jerome.

By this time, the late 300s, people couldn't read Greek and Hebrew anymore.

They were speaking Latin, and experts could read some, but the people had moved on.

The language, it happens to language.

It does to English.

I did examples of that a few weeks ago, because Latin was the common language Pope Damasus told Jerome to translate scripture into Latin, a first Latin Bible, but he didn't call it a Latin Bible.

They called it the Vulgate, because it was vulgar for yourself.

Vulgar was not a bad word.

Vulgar meant common.

This is the language everybody speaks.

This is what common people can read.

So the common people's version of the Bible, the Vulgate Bible.

So let's look at Jerome.

He was born around 345 AD in Dalmatia, which is now a vacation spot.

Croatia and all that area, Montenegro, all that area is in there, and it was hard for me to get a picture without people in bathing suits and yachts, so this is the best I could do.

And besides, I didn't want to come in and check my search history, and I have some explaining to do, but Dalmatia is a beautiful area.

I would very much like to visit it, I never have, but very beautiful area.

When he was 12, he was already smarter than anybody in his region, and his parents said, we've got to do something with him.

They sent him off to Rome, where he mastered Latin grammar, Greek, Latin literature, then went on to excel in rhetoric, which was speech and public debate, and then logic, which was thought.

He was the master of all of these, but he was only a nominal Christian, he is a Christian, but he loved to read secular literature.

Back in this time, it was considered immoral to read secular literature, other than newspapers, but they didn't have newspapers.

Other than government edicts, if you read a poem by Cicero, or Ovid, or any of these, you were considered, that's kind of racy.

So Jerome had a dream, had a nightmare.

He had a terrible fever, and in his nightmarish feverish state, he dreamed he was called up before the throne of God, and God said, tell me your current state.

He said, I am a Christian, and God said, no, you're not.

You're a Ciceronian, you're a person who reads Cicero.

By the way, this attitude among Christians continued until the modern age.

One of the very first people to write a novel and not be ashamed was Sir Walter Scott.

Most people, when they wrote novels, wrote them under assumed names, because it was considered shameful to write novels or to read novels.

That was scandalous.

And even after him, women couldn't do it unless they took men's names, like George Elliott.

It was the only way to do it.

So you and I, we have a hard time with this, but just get this.

If you're like the lady on the plane with me last year who pulled out a stack, people, us, them, neighbors, I don't know, a bunch of that kind of stuff, four or five of them, and she studied them.

I mean, she didn't just look at them, she studied them the whole way.

I'm thinking, you would have been burned as a witch, because Christians don't do that.

And then she pulled out soap opera digest.

She's reading gossip about people that don't exist.

I just want to send up a flare.

I'm done, but we're in an airplane.

They frowned on that.

So anyway, this rattled him, that God would call him a Ciceroanian and not a Christian, so he swore he would spend the rest of his life studying scripture only.

And he went into the Syrian desert.

People we have lost so much ancient scripture in the last 10 years.

So much has been blown up and destroyed by ISIS, Al Qaeda, and by our bombs.

Never to be gotten again, but he went into Syria.

There in Syria, he studied everything.

One of the hermits that he lived with for a while was a converted Jew who taught him Hebrew and like everything else, he mastered it, got it.

He only left the desert when there was nothing else to read.

He had read all the manuscripts and studied them.

So he went to Rome.

Immediately in Rome, people realized what they had, and they made him the personal translator and secretary to Pope Damasus.

So when Augustine and others demanded a better translation of scripture be made, all eyes looked to Jerome.

He was humbled by this, and he was somewhat fearful of the task laid before him, and so he should be.

Why do I say that?

I have the only job that God put a warning label on.

But not many of you be teachers, but they will receive the greater condemnation.

And you would be wrong if you thought that doesn't make me wake up and sweat sometimes and shiver.

I'm never okay on Saturday night.

A lot of people will say, you know, on the Saturday, well, people are off on the weekends.

Once you come over and just eat with us on Saturday, I almost never hang with anybody on the Saturday.

Because I keep thinking, come, Lord Jesus, don't let me get up there again.

It's public speaking bothers me, and I know it's hard for you to believe, but it does.

Wheres me out.

It terrifies me, but people say, you make it look so easy.

This is a panic attack.

You're making fun of the mentally ill.

I have difficulty with this.

Jerome was terrified that the task laid before him because he said, I know I will be tempted to make the words say what I want them to say.

Is this not true about all of us?

True about me?

Have you ever used a different version because that one backed you up a bit better?

Oh, look who's going to say, I have.

But Jerome was worried about this, and he also knew something else.

You ever do anything like this?

You're going to be attacked by Christians.

Yes, you are.

And so he wrote this.

I'm going to read it in case you can't see it back here.

You urged me to revise the old Latin version because there was a cobbled together one at the time.

It was a mess.

The labor is one of love, but at the same time both perilous and presumptuous.

Is there a man learned or unlearned who will not when he takes the volume in his hand and perceives that what he reads does not suit his settled taste.

Break out immediately in the violent language and call me a forager and a profane person for having had the audacity to add anything to the ancient books or to make any changes or corrections therein.

Yeah, he was smart.

Going to happen.

Let me give you a couple of examples of this.

When the NIV came out, scholars in the church as a Christ wrote books attacking it.

It's a false Bible.

It's not a Bible at all.

And you can still find people doing that.

The word of God in modern versions was one book we all had to read in our little church.

It was it was harsh.

Here's one of the reasons.

John 3 16.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

And churches of Christ have made a big deal over the word should.

If you believe in him, you shouldn't perish, but you might.

Because you haven't been baptized and sing right.

Taking Lord's upper right into the elder's right and all the other things right.

The NIV comes out for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believes in him would not perish.

Oh, there were one of our proof texts.

We didn't like that.

We got angry.

People, let me introduce you to the lovely history of the English language.

Don't panic.

Just one word.

The word should is an imperative.

The word shall is an imperative.

For example, when the King James says thou shalt not commit adultery, it didn't mean just do not commit adultery.

It means that will not happen.

Adultery will not happen.

If I say I will come to your house in English, that means something different than I shall come to your house.

I will come to your house means if it's up to me, I'll come to your house.

I shall means I'm coming.

It's an imperative.

So the King James used an imperative.

Whoever believes in him is going to be saved.

Will we use American English on it?

Should means the way it's supposed to happen, but maybe not.

You see what happened?

We read ours back into it.

So the NIV just used as our language will not perish.

And that took away a proof text.

How about another one?

In Scripture, there are a lot of times where it says men, man, men, man, man, man, man, mankind, men, man, and the women often can wonder, where are we?

Well, you're right there.

Here's the problem.

In most languages today, if everybody in here was female, except for me, they would refer to this group by male pronouns because it's sexist.

And one guy in the mix makes it all male.

Well the NIV, knowing this, back in the late 80s, released a version saying anytime that a word meant everybody, put everybody, or men and women, or sons and daughters, to make sure we understood it means everybody.

Americans went berserk.

It was so bad the NIV had to stop the publication, pull it back and not do it for nearly 15 years.

They did it in Britain, but not in America because Americans wouldn't put up with it saying you're changing the Scripture.

So they're facing a Jerome issue.

We need to be able to put it in words that mean what they weren't mean to the people of the day.

You get the drift?

Jerome knew he was going to get this male, and he did.

Jerome's life is a fascinating one.

He'd live in Constantinople and Jerusalem.

He would attract a large amount of women, don't judge, hang on, because those women were tired of the way they were being used by men.

They had a lascivious and a wanton life, he put it.

What that meant was that men were using them and throwing them away, and people raped their servants and they raped people.

So they would follow him because he taught them, you behave like this, this is the way God wants.

Now why would they follow him and not another religious leader?

Sorry, but a lot of the other religious leaders were sexual predators.

And we're going to refer to a couple of books about that next week if you would like to look up some of the history of the early church.

One Pope Boniface would even go so far as to say committing adultery with a woman is of no more consequence than washing one's hands.

Oh, nice to have him head of the church.

Anyway, Jerome was strict, and so the women around him were felt protected.

I'll never forget, I was about maybe 40 when I went back to school long story.

I was just wanting to study a couple things, and West Virginia University let me take a couple classes and they came to me and they said, do you know you have credits everywhere you've never used?

And I went, well, I don't need them, I've got my higher degrees.

They said, but if you take two more credits, we'll give you a bachelor's too.

And I went, okay.

So I went back and got a bachelor's after I already had doctorates, it's kind of fun.

I decided I've always wanted to learn Spanish, so I'll learn Spanish.

So I would go in here.

I'm the old guy, 40 years old, ancient, almost dead, you know, the kids were looking at the defibrillator back at me, that sort of thing.

But all the pretty girls would come sit around me.

This has not been my experience in life.

And I told them what can be, I said, I'm not sure why, but the pretty girls come and sit around me and she said, let's cause you're safe.

Thanks.

I was hoping she would say it's because they see you for the studmuffin you really are, but no, no reality.

So they came to him and he helped them live an aesthetic life.

He went too far though.

He demanded that they do not have pleasure here, not have pleasure there.

And he got in big trouble when a very popular young lady died within four months of following his instructions and what she's allowed to eat and not eat and how she had to suffer and pray.

He was, in other words, a very genius man, but very flawed man and who isn't flawed.

He also listened to Jewish authorities a bit too much because he was struggling.

All of these Latin versions he's, he's putting back together.

It's very important.

He didn't have originals either.

He's grabbing all these Latin ones, but whenever they couldn't agree, he would go back and try to find Hebrew and Greek scriptures with the Jewish people of the day convinced him not to go to the Septuagint.

Why?

Cause they thought the Septuagint was too much about Jesus and their text, they had weeded out some of that, including the Apocrypha.

So he listened to them.

That's why his version of the Bible didn't have the Apocrypha until the Pope told him to put it back in.

Modern scholarship, by the way, has cast some doubt about how well he really knew Hebrew.

It's not because he wasn't a good scholar.

It could have been he had a bad teacher.

Regardless of that, Augustine didn't like Jerome because he didn't take the Septuagint as the inspired word of God.

He went to the old, rather the newer Jewish version of the Old Testament.

Still, his version, the Vulgate version has been the standard for hundreds of years actually.

For believers in Europe, it was the only Bible until the 1500s, 1200 years, the only one you could get.

A lot of that was because of the Catholic Church.

They didn't want any other version.

It is still the official Bible of the Roman Catholic Church, the Latin Vulgate of Jerome.

Well, Jerome was, of course, attacked by those who wanted different wordings here, there, or the other.

And he could be harsh and sarcastic and reply.

For example, he said, if they dislike water drawn from the clear spring, let them drink of the muddy streamlet.

You can see he looks like a fun guy.

Knowing he would be attacked for his version of kings, which disagreed with the version of chronicles, which they do.

But by that time, people had been trying to harmonize them.

He wrote a, quote, helmeted preface.

In other words, I'm writing this preface in English, I guess, in American, to the book, wearing my helmet, because I knew I'm going to get hit for this.

I've had those kind of sermons where I've told Cammie, stay in the car, keep it running.

This may not go well.

He also referred to his critics as barking critics.

He wouldn't go so far as to call them dogs.

So he just said they were barking.

The Vulgate version was spread all over Christendom.

We have more than 10,000 copies of it today.

That's more than any other ancient book other than the Bible.

Cammie did check early Greek manuscripts, but he primarily relied upon late Latin ones, and therefore it's not a good version.

It's not a really good version of scripture.

And whenever he did go back, he did tend to check later versions of the Greek, because that's all that he had.

So I hate to feel like, or act like I'm criticizing the man, but I'm not.

I'm saying he did the best with what he could, but the best that he had was not the best.

Think of it this way.

I grew up, my father was converted in America, and when he was converted, he went far, far, far to the right, and the only version we were allowed to have in our home was the American standard version of 1901.

It has always been known as an incredibly accurate version, so has the new American standard version, which is much, much improved, but the American standard version of 1901 after a while, we began to realize was a brilliant, accurate translation of a bad text.

We needed a better text.

That's why they dropped it and did the new American version, which, the new American standard version, which my father has still not accepted.

That's okay.

He knows Jesus, he's going to get into heaven.

He's not going to like it the first two weeks, but he'll get used to it.

He's going to be walking around saying, how'd they get in?

Anyway, and again, he and I are going to dance in heaven, and I'm going to find I was wrong on a bunch of stuff too.

If you're right about Jesus, we're going to make it, right?

That's what we work on.

Anyway, he was a creature of his time, and so he found meaning in things that we would not have found meaning in.

For example, Hebrew has 22 letters, therefore, he eliminated himself to 22 books in the Old Testament.

It's our 29.

They numbered them differently, but his point was, that's why we can't have the apocrypha because Hebrew only has 22 letters.

You and I would look at him and go, what?

But that's the way people thought back then, allegories and numbers and hidden secrets and hidden meanings and things.

Well, Rome told and put the apocrypha back in, so he did.

Rome aggressively policed the scriptures after Jerome.

If you can't see it, well, that's a Bible that is chained to a pulpit.

That was the norm until the 1700s.

Your Bible was too precious for the common person to touch it or read it.

And that has kind of been a relic that you still see.

If you go into European churches in particular, there'll be a large Bible up front, and that's not for you.

That's for the pastor or shepherd or the bishop or somebody like that.

We had two in churches of Christ, in Scotland, not in the more modern churches, but in the older churches, you will have, like in Carcati or in Slomanin, you have two pulpits, and one has a big open Bible to the Old Testament and one to the New Testament, and you had a reading from each in each service.

There was time so that through, by the end of a year, you'd read through the whole Bible publicly.

Well, I was done mainly because people didn't have Bibles at home, and this is the way to hear the word.

By the way, nobody liked Leviticus Month, but it happened.

Thank you for getting that.

One person has read Leviticus in the room.

The common people lost the ability to read that because they quit using Latin.

Rome fell.

Other languages took over.

Now the Bible that Jerome had published so that the people could read it, they couldn't read, but the Catholic Church wouldn't let it be touched, saying, no, we've approved it, therefore this is the last Bible any human can have, Latin.

And so it was until, well, that starts next week, the adventure stories.

They were afraid that the people would misuse it, so you weren't allowed to have it.

This grows out of Catholic teaching in so many ways until very recently.

And if you're Catholic, you can chime in here if you'd like.

When it came time for the Communion, they didn't pass trays, did they?

And you didn't come to tables.

Only those that were members and good standing could come line up in front of the priest.

You didn't get the juice, the wine, because that's the blood of Christ and that's too sacred for you to touch.

The priest would drink that for you.

It's a good gig, I guess.

But then if when it came to the wafer, and again, I do not mean to be disrespectful because to a Catholic, this is the most holy of holy things possible, it has become, after the prayer of the priest, the actual body of Christ Sunday afternoon.

I was here before two o'clock to help the practice and such go for the reconciliation service.

So walk through here.

I want you to be very careful.

You understand what I'm saying?

This whole place was full of crumbs.

Now why?

Because we have kids.

Did I mind it?

No.

At all.

But as I'm vacuuming up their goldfish crackers and all the other kind of stuff, I even had to set it up on the bench and vacuum some benches.

But we got them all done and we want the kids here, so please, this is not a criticism.

You got that?

Everybody?

Not your head.

All right.

So I was going back through, I saw a couple pieces of communion bread too.

That would scandalize the Catholics.

You've thrown the body of Christ to be trodden to the foot of man, so you couldn't touch it.

You go up and you're making a hung out and they put it on there.

In recent years, they will now allow you to receive it like this.

And that's very, very new.

And I think that's because of bacteriological studies, but regardless, that same feeling is why they would change the book.

These are too sacred for you to be in possession of these things.

So still some people more than a thousand years later would try.

The earliest, excuse me, I'm losing my voice today.

This is not a good day to lose it.

Pray for us on our trip.

The earliest English version of scripture is actually not even a version of scripture.

It's a series of stories by a monk called Kaidman.

There's even a group I'm told called Kaidman's Call, which is a, I don't listen to Christian music because I grew up where that was sinful and still hard for me.

So I listened to better music like ACDC and no, no, I'm kidding.

I wouldn't do that as far as you know.

And then this was in, this is a thousand years later.

I'm sorry, not a thousand years later.

What am I thinking?

This is in the 600s.

It was 340 or 50 years later.

That was the first other version and it was just a series of stories, not really a translation.

A generation later, an English monk named Ad Holm, Ad Holm, rather, no, it's not right.

Aldham, there you go, Aldham, 709, as when he died, translated the Psalms into Anglo-Saxon.

That's a precursor to, to English, but you can't read it.

Remember, I put it up one day, just so you could see that.

Then the venerable bead, these are jolly looking people, aren't they?

Especially him, Bita venerabilis, the venerable bead.

He's also the first one to write a history of the British people, but he is said to have finished the translation of the book of John, but we don't have it.

Nobody has it.

So don't know if we'll ever find it.

One of the last purely English kings, Alfred, now please understand, the English kings are not English anymore.

You wear that, they're German and Dutch.

A lot of people don't know that.

Queen Elizabeth does have a little bit of Scottish in her, but she didn't have any Anglo-Saxon or British. She is, she has Saxon and her husband, Prince Philip, he is absolutely German and let you know it in a heartbeat.

And so it's, it's a weird how that works, but King Alfred was one of the last pure English slash Anglo-Saxon slash British kings.

He is said to have also instituted religious reforms and one of the things he wanted was the Psalms to be translated.

Psalms sections also into the common tongue.

We don't have any of those 50 years after King Alfred was an abbot named Elfrich and he translated some portions in English.

We don't have those either.

So these are kind of sputters and dying in time.

The churches in Britain were somewhat separate from Rome.

It was a long way from Rome to Britain at the time.

And to get there was a harrowing journey.

You may not survive it, even if you brought an army with you.

And if you got sick or got a cut and got infected, you're gone.

And so the British had their own group, the Celtic church, how can I do this without making your eyes roll back in your head?

When we say British, we don't mean English.

Today the only real British people in Britain are the Welsh.

That language that we call Welsh was really the ancient British tongue.

They were shoved back into there.

There were bits of them shoved down the Cornwall as well, but they pretty much, they're all gone.

The Celts are to the north, the Celts and the Picts and the Jutes and that's us.

And the Anglo-Saxons, those came from the continent and invaded.

And then they pushed them, King Arthur would have spoken Welsh if he'd been real, which he wasn't.

But let's just pretend.

Anglo-Saxons come in, all right?

As the Anglo-Saxons come in, they push the British to the mountain fastnesses of Wales.

Some of them do go north to the southwest of Scotland, Kingdom of Strathclyde.

The rest of us are all Celts.

Why am I saying all of this?

Because that meant it was even harder for Rome to have any influence on us.

We were up in the fastnesses.

So the Celtic Church, you can get a doctorate in Celtic Christianity.

The University of Liverpool is one of them.

University of Wales at Lampeter.

There are several where you can do this, where you learn of the rich tradition of the Celtic and the Irish Church before Rome got control of it.

They were called the Kaldi, which is, it comes from Kaledi, I'm sorry, a Celtic word for the friends of God.

They were the friends of God Church.

They believed in worshiping outdoors.

They didn't believe in building cathedrals.

They believed in serving the common people as an act of Christ.

St.

Patrick would have been a Kaldi.

But after this time, Rome eventually gets its power up in that area.

And at the Synod at Whitby in 664, they declare they're in charge of the British Church.

After that time, no more English was ever attempted.

It was shut down.

By the way, English then becomes English because the French got it.

Seriously.

Then in 666, the Norman invasion, Normans got it and they mixed Anglo-Saxon and French and it eventually becomes English.

So all that to say, none of these people spoke Latin, none of them have a clue what the Bible says.

I'm not going to ask anybody to embarrass themselves, raising their hands.

I'm just going to say, most of the Catholics I knew growing up were scandalized that I could read the Bible because their priests told them not to.

And I can still remember, I was still a boy in the late 60s, I think it was, when the priests began giving permission for people to read the Bible, but only for like 15 minutes a day.

There was a limit to it.

That was about the same time you could start eating meat on Friday.

They changed some rules.

Isn't it amazing now that we walk into the store or virtually on Amazon, there it is in our language, and that when the University of Kentucky MRIs a charred lunk, we have the Bible.

How that happened when people died to get the Bible to you is a story we're going to do the next several weeks.