

11_Miles Coverdale and the Rise of King James

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

We left off last week with the death of Tyndale.

There we go.

They'll move out eventually or move to a seat.

They're being trampled as they leave.

If they thought that strangling and burning Tyndale was going to end the spread of the English Bible, they were wrong.

If anything, it just opened up the floodgates.

The people were hearing sermons.

They weren't just hearing sermons about Scripture and from Scripture, but also about the freedom in Christ and human dignity, and about the right to challenge authority.

This was world-changing.

Others were ready to step into the gap left by Tyndale.

Today we're going to take a look at Miles Coverdale as we start this transition.

Be aware, we've only got a few more classes in this.

We're really going to wrap it up with the King James, what it did, what's good about it, and what needed to be corrected about it, and the like.

The reason we only have a couple more classes is next week is Thanksgiving weekend, so there's not a class.

There's just a sermon.

There are new classes.

In December, we go until Christmas Day is no class.

We also have no class on New Year's Day.

It just falls that time.

This might be a good time to also push Christmas Eve, we will have a service.

On Christmas Day and on New Year's Day, we will have a service.

On both of those days, Christmas and New Year's, there will be no classes.

There will be one service at 11 o'clock.

It will last one hour.

There won't be sermon.

There will be a little devotional talk, but it will basically be songs, communion, and praise.

All right?

So put that in your schedule or schedule, whatever one you have.

All right, Miles Coverdale.

Not a handsome guy.

You cannot find a good picture of him.

Because he just wasn't good looking, but he was a very brave man.

Now, King Henry VIII, he wanted the Bible in England and English.

But because Tyndale wrote a book against his divorce, he didn't want Tyndale's name on it.

So Coverdale got permission to be the printer of the Bible and to distribute the Bible.

But since King Henry didn't want Tyndale's name on it, it was called the Matthew Bible.

It was by Coverdale, his friend John Rogers, and Matthew to quote, honor the one who cannot be named.

It was really Tyndale's Bible.

A note here.

You had to have a license to print a book in Britain.

You might be surprised to know you still need a license to print the book in Britain.

And in most places in the world today, you have to have a license to print the book.

You can't just do it on your own.

In Britain in particular, a crown on a product indicates that the producer has a royal warrant to make that item and distribute it among the people.

Seriously, you can go into your bathroom and count the crowns.

They're on your toilet paper.

They're on your toothbrush.

They're on your toothpaste.

They're on your shampoo.

You have to have a royal warrant.

Now, it's not quite as strictly enforced as it used to be, but it is still very strictly enforced in most instances.

And if you put a crown on when you didn't get a crown, you go to prison.

It's pretty rough.

They also have in Britain, even to this day, the Official Secrets Act.

Anybody ever heard of that?

Really?

Okay.

Now, there are rules that strictly limit what you're allowed to print and what you're allowed to put on television.

For example, growing up, I never saw a religious program.

I mean, how do I phrase this?

Let's say you're a church and you want a commercial.

You couldn't.

It was illegal.

If you were the Church of England or the Church of Scotland, you could do a five-minute devotional late at night.

And they told you when it was your turn to do it.

But no independent church was ever allowed to have a program or the like.

You can't do it.

You can't broadcast it on radio.

In fact, radio stations, when I was growing up, were BBC One and BBC Two and BBC Four.

Not really sure what happened to BBC Three, frankly.

And if you wanted to listen to progressive rock music, the wild and crazy rock people, you had to listen to Pirate Radio, which was on ships.

They would bring a ship right outside the maritime limit and broadcast back into Britain.

And that's how you heard people like Rolling Stones and groups that you didn't normally get to hear at first in the British, even though they were British.

So with all that said, that sounds odd to you, but most countries in this world, you still aren't allowed to print what you want.

You still aren't allowed to broadcast what you want.

We're one of the very few places.

Well, Canada.

You might think, well, Canada.

Have you heard of the political commentator, Mark Stein?

He's English.

He's brilliant.

Absolutely brilliant.

Very conservative, so if you don't like conservatives, you're not going to like Mark Stein.

But he was resident in Canada when he wrote a newspaper article opposing same-sex marriage.

It was not mean.

It was not crude.

It was an argument.

And he was immediately sued by the government and threatened with years in jail.

It took almost eight years to settle that suit.

That's in Canada.

So be aware, we're one of the few countries on the planet that gets to print whatever we want to print.

And we're also one of the least likely to read it.

Americans tend not to read.

Think about all the bookstores that used to be there.

And they're not there now.

You know, life sometimes makes me cringe.

Well, the license that Coverdale and Rogers got was for one Bible for every church in England.

They were expressly ordered not to print or supply Bibles for personal use.

Henry was afraid that if people got their own Bibles, they would start questioning the authority of the church.

And the authority of the church was under the authority of the king.

So the established order had to be maintained.

So people couldn't own the Bibles.

Only a church owned the Bible.

But to be honest, there were some people that got their own Bibles.

And it doesn't seem that Henry actually sent his men after them.

So that it seemed to be a law that was just kind of on the books.

By 1539 to 1541, what became known as the Great Bible entered English churches.

People went to churches and they could read it there.

Or they could hear it if their minister was able and willing to read from the English Bible.

King Henry couldn't live forever.

He died in 1547.

And a good king came on board.

King Edward VI.

You don't know much about him because he didn't live long.

And that's the crying shame.

He was a good king.

One of his first acts was to lift all bans on printing the Bible.

Anybody could print it?

Anybody could distribute it?

Knock yourself out.

For the first time, 1547, English presses could print and sell scriptures freely.

Think of how long that was since the time it was written.

It's the time you could have it.

The devil was not going to let that go unchallenged.

So six years into his reign, King Edward VI died.

He was replaced by his daughter, a harsh, mean, ultra-conservative woman who happened to be Catholic.

Catholicism did not make her harsh and mean.

But in history, she is known as Bloody Mary.

And she's known that for a reason.

More than 300 Protestant reformers would be burned to death on her watch.

For the next five years, she imprisoned, burned, and harassed anybody who was a Protestant.

And her father started a Protestant church.

Civil war had broken.

If you ever watched Game of Thrones, I never have.

Because people say, well, why don't you watch it?

I'm saying, I lived it.

You know, you live in Bretton.

You go into churches and there will be military flags all up and down.

And there will be graves in the walls and on the floors of the knights who died fighting for this church.

The story is told of a wee boy taking a church for the first time, sitting in there, seeing all the flags.

And he goes, mommy, what's this for?

She goes, well, those are the flags of those who died in the service.

And he gets a little bit concerned.

And he goes, is that morning service or evening service?

But church and war is so closely linked.

And Bretton, that's one of the reasons churches has died in Bretton.

Only about 5% of British people go to church.

It's really, it's a dying thing.

So again, she sent her armies after the Protestants to hunt them down.

Coverdale and his friend John Fox had to run.

And so they got to Geneva, which was a city state being run as a Protestant kingdom by John Calvin, he of Calvinism.

He ran it and he had an army to protect it.

It was a city of refuge as long as you didn't cross Calvin.

He was as intolerant toward Catholicism and dissent as Queen Mary was toward Protestantism and dissent.

So you had to make sure you didn't cross whoever your territory you were in.

However there, Coverdale and his friends were able to produce one of the most remarkable Bibles ever.

In 1560, they produced the Geneva Bible.

Now, what's remarkable about it is they took Tyndale's work.

They retranslated it.

Remember, Tyndale did all the time.

So that was, that was fine.

They made it as readable as possible.

But here's the kicker.

They added tens of thousands of textual notes to explain how to pronounce this or what that term meant.

Or to understand this, you'll need to look at that passage, cross-reference type notes.

It was amazing.

It was the world's first study Bible in any language, the Geneva Bible.

And it was in English.

And it was designed for church and for home use that said so on the fly leaf.

It became the homeschool textbook.

The only homeschool textbook.

Now in America, you had something similar back in the 1800s and early 1900s called the McGuffey readers.

Some of you are nodding.

McGuffey readers were morality tales, Bible stories, scripture portions and taught kids how to read and how to be a good citizen and how to be a good person.

And those were the textbooks in America for a long time before we got too smart to need all of that.

And it was thrown out.

Well, the Geneva Bible became the wellspring of independent churches, free churches and new ideas about government and the dignity of human beings.

And where your loyalty should be.

King of kings.

And that created nightmares in Europe among the princes, among the knights, among the kings.

It was the beginning of the end of serfdom.

Why aren't we peasants and kings like we used to be?

Because of that.

This taught us, what did American reformers say in the Declaration of Independence?

Who gets credit for the idea of liberty?

God does.

In the Constitution, who gets credit for the rights of man?

God does.

You every now and then hear somebody say, you know, the government gives us the second amendment for the right to bear arms or something.

Or the first amendment for the right for free speech.

According to the Constitution, the government can't give you that.

God gave you that.

And the Constitution says the government can't take it.

They got all that idea from here.

Whether you agree with all the amendments or not, that's not the issue.

The issue is, freedom came from here.

This infuriated Queen Mary.

She went on a killing spree.

That's why she's known as Bloody Mary to this day.

After consulting with her lords and clergy, she realized, however, that she couldn't stop the flow of Scripture.

So she had to control it.

Notice that that's what governments do.

If they can't stop it, they want to be in charge of it.

And control it.

So she had to create her own Bible.

And they created the Bishops Bible.

She had two rules.

One, it's the only version allowed in Britain.

Two, it can only be used by church leaders.

All explanatory notes, all those notes in the Geneva Bible had to be taken out.

Because she wanted it to be hard for the common person to understand.

So no notes, no cross references, nothing stripped away.

It was a giant step backward.

But there was a plus side.

The Catholic Church finally has an English Bible.

The first time the year was 1582.

Tyndale had only been dead for 46 years.

He won.

Who would have seen it coming?

Well, God, of course.

But the Bishops Bible never caught on, by the way.

It wasn't easy to read.

The language wasn't beautiful.

It was halting and harsh to read.

In a version of the Bible, you have to make it readable to your target audience.

The most accurate version that I know of, in the English language today, is the New American Standard Bible.

It comes from the American Standard Version.

The ASV became the NASB, New American Standard Bible.

Why isn't it more popular?

Because it's hard to read.

It's choppy.

They translated it well, but they didn't translate it for reading purposes.

And so it failed.

That's why other versions, like the NIV, keep honing themselves.

Keep redoing the translation.

The NIV that I have, for example, is the latest major revision.

It's 2011.

And by the way, they did a good job on that one.

They made some very necessary changes on this.

That said, the playwrights and poets of the time had to use a version of English.

None of them used the Bishops Bible version.

They used Tyndale's.

Shakespeare, Chaucer, Spencer, Dunne.

Dunne is D-O-N-N-E, if you're looking them up.

If you studied English literature in school, you know how language changed dramatically in the 1500s, 1600s.

It's because Tyndale's Bible was out there, standardizing things.

By the way, some people asked me last week about a book I mentioned.

Bill Bryson is a professor of English who writes some of the only books that make me laugh out loud.

B-R-Y-S-O-N.

And he has two books on English, which I know you might think, how dull will that be?

You will laugh and go, wow, I didn't know that on every page.

He's that good.

It's rare.

And you can buy each.

I looked on Amazon this morning.

There are lots of used copies for a penny, plus shipping and handling.

The first one's called Mother Tongue.

And the second is called Made in America, about the American version of English.

They're more fun than you think, Christmas present.

It's the only one I'm giving you.

Some of the changes changed theology that Tyndale did.

And it tickles me because many churches today still don't get what Tyndale did.

In English, back in those days, there were two words for you.

In most languages there are.

For example, in French, if you are above me, more important than me, or a stranger to me, I would say, but if your friend or child, I would say too, because they're too used.

And most of you know that, right?

Spanish has it.

A lot of them have it.

Right.

English did too.

The formal lofty was you and your.

The familiar friendly said within the family was the and dying.

And most Americans think that's opposite.

And so in churches today, when, and there are some conservative churches where if you're talking in a prayer and you say you and yours, people.

Well, you should say the and dying.

No, that's one more familiar.

That's the friendly.

In the family language.

Tyndale used that to talk about God.

And it changed the way we thought about God.

He used the common farmers language.

You remember, I said last week, English was a Hick language.

He used the Hick language to translate it so that the Hicks, the common people, the vulgar people could talk about and to God.

In doing that, he did exactly what Jesus did in the Lord's prayer when he started it by saying our father.

Go look in the Old Testament.

See how many prayers start by calling God father.

Times up.

None.

Jesus changed everything.

So did Tyndale with his wordings.

Meanwhile, in a political world, and I don't want your eyes to cross, but we got to do this.

If the devil cannot make the Catholics win or the Protestants win, what he can do is make the Protestants fight each other.

And they did.

Protestants began to fight each other over their interpretations of Scripture.

While the Catholics were saying, and still do, see, we told you, you need the church.

Because without the church and just using the Bible in your own common sense, without the leadership of the church, look at how you're dividing.

But they didn't just fight each other with words and Luther and Zwingli, their followers, developed armies and attacked each other over the doctrine of the Lord's Supper.

Calvinism came to Scotland.

And my heart still breaks over it.

John Knox is the one who brought it.

A former galley slave who freed himself, made his way to Geneva, found a version of Christianity that was harsh, dark and joyless, and then brought it to Scotland.

And his team then stripped religion of all of its beauty.

They attacked churches, ripped out anything beautiful, anything comfortable, had to go, anything ornate, had to go.

So did plays, so did music.

It was a version of ISIS, but a Christian version.

To the point where I have stood in the palace of Holy Red on the spot where John Knox's men came up a secret back stairwell to stab to death a counselor to the Queen of Scotland because he was a Catholic.

The next day was Sunday and John Knox, I've walked down to the church at St.

Giles where he stood up and called that a wonderful act of God and praised the men who did it.

It became a very bad place to be.

Mary, Queen of Scots, Catholic as well.

This is not Bloody Mary.

All right, here we go.

Scotland and England were two independent nations at the time.

Mary, Queen of England is Bloody Mary.

The Scottish King's about to die.

It's a big history there.

You don't need to get it.

When he does, the Queen really came from France.

She'd come over to Mary and become Queen of Scotland, but didn't know she wouldn't have a King.

He died when he was young.

It's all confusing.

Down here, Mary dies and she's replaced by Elizabeth.

Elizabeth, the first Elizabeth, not the one we've got now.

She's Elizabeth the second.

This is Elizabeth the first who is Elizabeth the first of Scotland.

See, it's confusing because Queen Elizabeth of England was not Queen of Scotland at the time.

So our numbers are different when we talk about the same kings or queens.

We only do that to confuse you.

Anyway, Mary, Queen of Scots came in and her husband was supposed to be Protestant, but he died.

She was Catholic and back then what she was born in is pretty much what she stayed in.

So she was hounded out of her royal throne driven by her nobles backed by nox and the Calvinist.

Her son, King James, would be made King.

Shortly after that, Queen Elizabeth dies, but not before she sees her cousin Queen Mary of Scotland as a threat.

Mary ran from Scotland to get protection by Queen Elizabeth and lived there for many years until Elizabeth thought, I think she might be a threat and had her beheaded.

Queen Elizabeth, she's an interesting person and I really do mean that.

She's fascinating.

Here's the situation.

All this is going on.

The kings are trying to stay kings, but people are killing them.

And they realize we've got to get control over the church, whether it's Protestant or Catholic.

Elizabeth didn't care.

She seems to have had zero interest.

By the way, I am an 11.

I know I'm wandering all over the place, Barry, but I'm going to be in point 11 there.

The Bible in use when King James came to the throne in 1603 was a Geneva Bible.

All those extra notes.

Bishop's Bible, the Great Bible, they had failed.

They just didn't catch on.

The Geneva Bible lived on in people's hearts and homes.

The Bishop's Bible and Great Bible lived on in the seminaries and universities.

John Knox pressured King James, a fellow Scott, to make the Geneva Bible the official and only Bible of Great Britain.

What John Knox did know that King James hated the Geneva Bible.

For reasons that will become apparent in the next few weeks.

He wanted it destroyed and replaced.

And that's where our story takes us next.

Because there's no question that no Bible has had greater impact upon history than the King James Bible.

When we speak of the English-speaking people.

Queen Elizabeth reigned for 45 years.

She expanded the British Empire worldwide.

She broke the backs of the Spanish Armada, destroying the fleets that the Pope had sent to retake Britain.

A lot of you don't know that.

But the wars with France and Spain that were constant were because the Pope was sending armies against England to take it back for the papacy.

For the Catholics.

She broke the backs of the Portuguese.

She kept the French back down in their few colonies.
They never did get very many because of her.
She nominally was a Protestant.
So she welcomed back the refugees that had fled to Geneva and elsewhere.
Again, she wasn't really interested in religion.
It was just a tool to advance government.
Very much like Constantine's attitude.
The Pope was her enemy.
Continued to try to take over.
But she kept a hard line.
Killing Queen Mary of Scotland.
And later, six years after that, she died.
And the line, everybody got together.
Where's the line go?
And it all went where they didn't want it to go.
To that young king in Scotland, King James.
We have to invite a barbarian, Scott, to come down to England to take the throne.
Yeah, they did.
So he takes the throne, but it took a few years to do it.
The Protestants wanted the Catholics banned.
The Catholics wanted the Protestants banned.
Sections of the nation that were Catholic were hiding in their castles and glens waiting for civil war.
Several took place.
Like I said, this is Game of Thrones for real people.
It's hard to walk in any of these glens without a battle took place here.
A battle took place here and are almost all based upon religion.
The official church, the Church of England, Henry VIII, was starting to divide.
Because a lot of them were reading the Bible and saying, it still looks like Catholicism.
We want a pure faith.
They kept saying we want a pure faith, so they called themselves Puritans.
Ding, ding, ding.
Americans ought to know that about Thanksgiving week.

Because Puritans came over here and learned how to eat turkey, which none of that's really true, but that's right.

We had a traditional Thanksgiving last year where we invited all of our friends over and ate their food and killed them and took their land.

The Puritans wanted overhauls to their brand new church, the Church of England.

Elizabeth had declared she wanted control that the priests were to wear certain vestments.

You were to kneel to take communion, you were to cross yourself at prayer, and you were to pray out of an official prayer book.

All of that was looked upon as, quote, soft potpourri by the Puritans.

Now, if you don't know what a prayer book is, I've got a couple here.

Both of these are from the Church of England, the Episcopal Church.

This is the old style, not 1500 style.

It's written in English you can understand.

And this is a newer edition that they make for families to use at home.

I actually like prayer books, but not the way they had to use them.

The only prayers that could be offered had to be offered out of here.

I like prayer books because I'm not a natural communicator with God.

Sometimes what I'm feeling, I have a hard time finding words for.

I have found these to be immensely helpful to help me find words.

So if you'd like to have a look at them, they're there.

But I lived 40 years of my life, well, 30 years of my life without a prayer book.

When I was 30, I got a Scottish prayer book for the Church of Scotland.

But you can have a look.

Don't have to.

Elizabeth and later James knew that they had powerful enemies that controlled Geneva and other sub-onclaves in Europe.

They also knew that thrones were not held forever.

A lot of people had died recently.

So what's James going to do?

James ruled in Scotland before moving south.

His kingdom was Presbyterian.

England is Episcopalian.

Do you know the difference?

Elders over individual congregations in Scotland, bishops won over many churches in England.

So the Church in Scotland thought, alright, our guy is going to be in charge of everything.

We're going to win.

What they didn't know is King James hated Presbyterianism.

He kept it quiet because he wanted to live.

But he had to do something.

So, in fact, he even said in a private letter, we still own no bishop, no king.

In other words, if I don't have bishops to enforce my rule, I'll lose my throne.

So he had some other plans.

He was afraid in that letter that if we allowed churches to run their own affairs, eventually that would give rise to egalitarianism.

You know what that means?

The equality of all men and women.

And republicanism, which meant freedom and government.

He couldn't allow that.

So he had to find a way to shut it down.

The Scots had been very open with James.

They had told him, your king only as long as God wants you to be.

And that, when a Scott threatens you, the history indicates they're going to get you.

So that's not a threat.

I don't threaten people.

So what's he going to do?

As he makes his way down into England, he has in the back of his head, no way am I going to let the Puritans get in charge.

But I've got to make them think I like them.

So King James, who is in charge of the Bibles, was not a nice man.

He was very cricket.

There's a whole lot about his life that's unsavory.

But he was a great politician.

It's amazing how that combination occurs.

Anyway, one of the things he was going to have to fight was that Geneva Bible.

So he wrote a paper in 1598.

It was actually in the form of a sonnet called the Basilicaen Doron.

You don't need to know that.

There's a lot of stuff in my head that doesn't need to be there.

He wrote this, God gives not kings the style of gods in vain.

For on his throne, his scepter, do they sway?

And as their subjects ought them to obey, so king should fear and serve their god again.

So you see, you treat your king like a god because God put him there to sit on that throne and remind you of God, and therefore your access to God is through your king.

Ah, Anglicans, the Church of England, loved this.

Puritans and the Scots did not.

In fact, his opponents brought him a Geneva Bible and showed him notes in the book of Daniel that said, see, Daniel disobeyed his king and pleased God by so doing.

And he's going, get the notes out of there.

He probably didn't say it with clenched teeth.

And he probably said it in Latin because he still spoke Latin in the court at that time instead of English.

James believed kings rule the nations.

Period.

And they are the representatives of God.

And they wouldn't be kings unless God wanted them to be.

If you are a king, it meant God wanted you to be.

Period.

He was on his way from Scotland to England to take the throne.

Why is it every time I say Scotland, it steps coming back all the way.

Scotland to England to take the throne.

And he was met on the road by a large number of Puritans who gave him a petition.

It was called the Molinary Petition, signed by over a thousand ministers of the Church of England.

It said, quote, To the number of more than a thousand of your majesty's subjects and ministers, all groaning as under a common burden of human rights and ceremonies.

In other words, these traditions, this vestments and crossing yourself and kneeling for communion and do with one joint consent humble ourselves at your majesty's feet to be eased and relieved in this behalf.

Our humble suit then to your majesty is that of these offenses following, some may be removed, some amended, some qualified.

Here's what they were upset at.

They asked that they no longer be required to make the sign of the cross, because that was potpourri and superstition.

That they no longer be required to kneel at communion.

That they no longer wear vestments so that only special people can say prayer.

Only special people can baptize, for example.

No longer be required to bow every time they say the name of Jesus.

That was considered to be, again, potpourri and a like.

How about this one?

No longer be required to use a pagan symbol of a wedding ring.

Isn't it interesting?

We now, we think that's fine.

They also, by the way, would have been aghast at anybody who celebrated Christmas.

Because that was looked upon as Catholic too, which meant it was pagan.

And my response to all that is, well, it used to be, but it's ours now.

So, same with the wedding ring.

I'm happy to wear my wedding ring.

One, it keeps me alive, because my wife owns a firearm.

But it also, it indicates somebody had me, somebody took me, you know, and I take that, oh, you third grade girls.

Anyway, I'm over it, I'm really over it.

They also ask relief, and here's the kicker as we end up today.

They wanted a relief from inappropriate tithes.

Now, once you think about this, I was in Lubbock, Texas this week.

There are thousands of little towns in Texas.

You drive in these one street towns, everything's closed.

The little stores are closed, the little shoe places are closed.

There's a gas station, you know, but then you hit the public square, and there's the courthouse.

And Texas knows how to build a courthouse.

And every little town that has nothing has a beautiful courthouse.

You drive around it.

You know what I'm talking about, right?

You go into any of these small towns, even in Tennessee, what's the biggest, most ornate place, the government?

Well, back then, it would have been the bishop's house.

You drive in, whoa.

How'd they get that house?

Tithes.

They put taxes on the people.

And you had to give, not just tax to the king, but to the bishop, because the bishops were looked upon as part of the government.

They could do that.

They are part of the king's government, and God's will.

So the Puritans were saying, we want relief from those tithes.

Oh, the bishops were not happy about this.

By the way, in Scotland to this very day, if you want in any village the finest house, ask them to show you the mans.

M-A-N-S-E.

That's the preacher's house.

Now, most of them don't live in them anymore, but those from the 1600s, 1700s, and 1800s are still there.

And now the richest person lives in the old mans.

It's the biggest, finest house in the village.

Many places in my home island, the Isle of Skye, are little two- and three-room homes, white-thatched homes.

You know, white-wash-thatched homes.

But all of a sudden, there'll be a six-bedroom, six-bath thing there.

That was the preacher's house.

Back when we had a church here.

The Puritans were saying, relieve us of this.

The bishops, once they heard of this, sent their own delegation to James.

One of those bishops would be tasked, given a job.

Your job is to make James turn against the Puritans.

His name is Richard Bancroft, and you need to know about him.

But we'll take up his tale next week.

Well, in two weeks.

Next week, no class, remember?