

12_Richard Bancroft and the Decision to Translate

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

It is so difficult for us to get our heads around it, but it was understood by everybody, all creatures great and small, that God decides who the king is, and that you have nothing to say about it.

And whatever happens, whoever is king, it's because God wants them to be king.

And more than that, that the ruling classes, the earls, the lords, the dukes, teutonic knights, whoever they are, were also chosen by God, and you had no right to ever question them or to go against what your betters told you to do.

If you questioned them, it was a threat to the very fabric of society.

You were a traitor.

You were a bomb thrower, dangerous individual.

The Puritans were those who wanted a thorough house cleaning of the newly formed Church of England.

That'll be slide three, if we can go there.

Slide three, if we could.

Thank you.

Puritans did not want to overthrow a king.

They wanted to clean out the Church of England.

They were not satisfied with what had happened before, which is basically replacing Rome and its prelates, bishops, and priests with English rulers, princes, and priests.

In fact, most of you probably know, I would assume, do you know who the head of the Church of England is?

The queen.

Now today it's more of a nominal head.

She really doesn't get much say in the day-to-day affairs.

If you were to say who's a real power, it'd be the Archbishop of Canterbury.

For example, Prince Charles, one of the reasons why she's not stepping down and he's not stepping up is because he's divorced, and a divorced person cannot be the head of the Church of England.

Unless some major law changes, that he's never going to be king.

Maybe a good thing.

The more you know about Charles, he's not a criminal, he's not an idiot, but he's different.

Anyway, the established Church, the government, the bodies, the nobles, everything, all society was built upon the rulers of place there by God.

So if the Puritans are saying, but the bishops are acting just like the Roman Catholic bishops, and our worship looks too much like the Roman Catholics, not like Scripture, that threatens society.

One of the fiercest opponents of the Puritans was a bishop named Richard Bancroft.

I never find Americans who know this name, but you really ought to, because without Richard Bancroft you would not have the King James version.

He is going to play a big part of this.

Richard Bancroft preached at St.

Paul's Cathedral in London, and he made that his platform from which to attack the Puritans as false teachers.

Remember back then you didn't have the internet?

And printing presses, while you had them, people did not subscribe to anything called newspapers because they didn't have them, and periodicals did not exist.

So the only way to get an audience was to go to the biggest, most powerful gathering place that was St.

Paul's Cathedral.

And so there's where he attacked the Puritans.

He said they are false teachers who threaten to destroy the very fabric of church and nation.

He taught that God ordained the kings and ordained the bishops to rule the church, and that was the end of it.

He led the charge for secular authorities to go hunt down the Puritans.

Many of them would be placed in prison.

In fact, 60 years later, they were still being hunted and being put into prison.

One of them in prison would write a book called Pilgrim's Progress, John Bunyan.

But the Puritans were going to have a hard time of it.

When Bancroft, Bishop Bancroft, learned that King James VI of Scotland was going to replace Elizabeth and become King James I of Great Britain, he was very alarmed.

King James was the king over country where Presbyterianism was the norm.

Instead of one bishop ruling a large section of the territory, let's say counties, and having taxation power over them and absolute power over their lives, they had individual congregations that were allowed to call their own ministers, and within them rise up men to be presbyters, elders.

The word presbyterian comes from their churches that believe every church should have their own right to make their own elders.

So Bancroft was terrified that King could bring Presbyterianism down to England.

So he had to develop a strategy.

He read everything King James had ever written, and King James liked to write.

Some of it was actually not bad to read, but you need to get it in modern English because King James did not know how to spell, and because he was king, nobody could tell him.

But he wrote a book King James did on the divine right of kings, and he wrote a book, in fact, he wrote that book for his sons because King James knew history, and most Scottish kings did not live long enough to teach their sons how to be kings.

So he wrote the book to be given to his sons one day to teach them how to be kings, and in it he talks about the king must be king over all, the church over all society.

He must not be questioned in these things.

Ah, well, Bancroft made sure that book was published in England within days of Queen Elizabeth's death.

And he decided, I'm going to use this book to get my way inside the inner circle of King James's advisors, and by doing so protect the Episcopal church because he could use that divine right of kings.

We need rulers over all the church.

Don't let little churches make up their own mind.

Well, how is he going to do this?

By convincing King James that the monarchy could only be sustained.

You could only stay king if the bishops were behind you.

You'd better get the bishops behind you.

The bishops were the only thing Bancroft said standing between the king and the complete breakdown of the social order, the rise of republicanism, that doesn't mean GOP.

It means that weird concept that people have rights given to them by God rather than rights given to them by the government.

Let them get that idea.

He said, there will be riots in the streets and the king will fall if you don't keep the bishops because the bishops are the one who sustained your rule.

He wrote extensively to James.

We have a lot of his letters and they are hard to read because there's so much flattering.

Flatter, flatter, flatter, flatter.

You're a ruler just like Constantine by your wisdom, light comes to your people, yada, yada, yada.

You are like the first Christian emperor, Constantine, and the best of all who have followed.

The king's real enemies, he says, were papist Catholics and Puritans, the extremists, come to the middle and we are the middle.

We are the reasonable people and it still annoys me when I hear every reasonable person believes because as soon as they say that, you know what they mean is I believe it to be reasonable, you must too.

But that's what Bancroft was doing.

He said, all of these people want to destroy your authority.

We the bishops are on your side.

So he led bishops in preaching sermons that used the scriptures in a way that would make our heads spin.

Here's an example.

Numbers 10, 2 through 3.

Take the two trumpets of silver and thou shalt have them to assemble the congregation.

He said the very clear message of this passage to any honest person, as soon as anybody says that, watch out, is that the church and state are the two trumpets and you need the church and state to gather the assembly.

Now is that what you got out of it?

I think you wanted Moses to make two trumpets that you blow through and tootle to bring people in.

But evidently, I'm not a right thinking person.

Or how about another one?

From the song of Solomon, people, when you get government ruling ideas from the song of Solomon, mad props, I am so proud of you.

That's hard to do.

Solomon had a vineyard in Baal-Haman and he gave the vineyard underkeepers again, quote, the clear meaning of this is that the vineyard is the church and the ones to whom it is entrusted are the bishops and kings.

Do you get that?

That's interesting.

But is this not a cautionary tale that we don't read back into it what we want to find there?

It's so hard, it's so hard to avoid doing that.

Do you know what, there's a term for that.

If you want to look it up, it's called scholasticism, where you go to the scripture and read back into it what you already believe.

And so everybody falls into it.

Well, Bancroft went to work on James to getting to back off of his early agreements with the Puritans.

Remember the Puritans gave him this big signed letter, please give us our rights.

And James had said yes.

The bishops started working on James.

Before you get here, we don't think our tithes are inappropriate.

Remember that was one of them, in the inappropriate tithes of the bishops.

If you end those, the bishops are no longer the fattest richest people in the nation.

They wanted to be the fattest richest people in the nation.

So James agreed, he said, you know, you can still tax the people, you're right.

And then James said, I want a conference where the bishops and the Puritans can all come together and work out their differences.

This is known in history as the Hampton Court Conference.

That's it right back there, the Hampton Court.

We would have a lot to do with why we have a King James version, a lot.

So that's why we're going to spend some time on it today and next week.

Lord Welling.

By the way, I normally don't say Lord Welling like I heard growing up people said all the time and I substituted a phrase without a couple of weeks ago.

I said next year, if I'm still here, I didn't mean we're thinking of moving.

I had a couple of people come up to me and we heard you're building a house.

Where is it?

And we said, Thompson Station.

They went, are you still?

Yeah, we're still coming here.

We're allowed to cross the Diocese in line, evidently, and make it up.

No, I meant Lord Welling and the phrase concerns some people and other people were quite concerned that I might still be here.

So anyway, the point being, he said, we're going to do this new conference to sort out the differences.

Now the bishops were alarmed.

You're treating the Puritans as equals in this.

We are the established order.

We are those ordained by God.

And it also raised the hopes of the Puritans.

They can seat at the big table.

We get to finally be treated like we deserve.

Neither side got what they wanted.

He frustrated both sides.

It led to long divisions and eventually the English Civil War, but that's beyond our story.

At the time the conference took place, January 12th, 1604, James had made sure it was weighted toward the bishops.

How heavy?

Nineteen bishops were allowed to attend.

Only four Puritans were allowed to come.

So 19 verses four, there were no rogues or Robert's rule of orders, whatever it is.

There weren't any of that.

So it was a shouting match a lot of times and 19 wins against four, especially when 19 are sitting there on throne-like chairs with fine garments and the Puritans are there with their plain stuff and plain chairs.

These four Puritans had not been hand-picked by the Puritans themselves.

They were hand-picked by the bishops and King, as either of the four will listen to.

So who do you think they picked?

The weakest, the ones they knew they could step on.

Well, King James started the conference with an hour-long speech in which he asserted his right and his alone to make all policy and matters of religion, and that sounds so odd to us, doesn't it?

But please remember, that's still true in much of the world.

However, he also admitted that any organization can become corrupt over time and policy should be examined.

While they examined those, he said, one you may not, and you may never question, is the divine right of kings over all matters, secular and religious.

I'm not going to go into the discussions at the conference, because they're not going to be of interest to most of us because they have nothing to do with the translation of Scripture.

They deal more with the wording of the Book of Common Prayer, but they demanded the use of the Geneva Bible, the Geneva Bible, the Puritans did.

Why?

Because the Geneva Bible has, this is so important, you're going to hear it a hundred times, it has the footnotes that explain things like freedom and rights and obey God rather than the king, and things like this.

And the bishop said, no Geneva Bible, no, we don't like it, we're not going to allow it to be used here.

The Geneva Bible had been published by the Calvinist in Geneva, Switzerland, in the walled armed city of Geneva, Switzerland, with John Calvin, and had been brought to Scotland many times, and then down into England, John Knox, many of you have heard the name of John Knox, he brought it to Scotland, and we talked a bit about him last week, or two weeks ago.

King James rejected the Geneva Bible.

He said it is the worst of all English translations, he didn't want anything to do with it.

So it was a stalemate.

It looked like the conference would end with no wins for the Puritans at all, and that would cause James a problem, and he was a politician, he also understood some things had been killed before.

So wanting to give them something, he said, I will let you get a new translation, a new translation, one that would be authorized by the king.

If you go into any British bookstore and ask for King James Bible, most likely they will not know what you're talking about.

You ask for an authorized Bible, because it's known as the authorized Bible of 1611, it's not known as King James.

So he said I will authorize one that could be made, one that could be used by all churches so that all churches can agree.

Politically, the Geneva Bible had to go.

There were some other versions, by the way, that had risen about that time.

There was the Douay Reims version, created by Roman Catholic scholars, driven from England by Elizabeth, who had come just before James.

Still it was made by Catholics, and it had only the New Testament completed, the Old Testament would be completed two years later, but they rejected it.

It's been done by Catholics for Catholics, we don't want anything to do with it.

Besides, the Douay Reims version had been translated by the Latin Vulgate and not the Greek, therefore it was a translation of a translation of a translation of a translation not using the Greek, they didn't want it.

By the way, the reason it was used that way was that was the only way the Catholic Church would allow it to be published as their Bible, because to them the only Bible was the Vulgate.

You couldn't go back and translate the old manuscripts, you can only translate this one.

They kept it as their Bible for a long time.

James ordered that the best learned from both universities, England only had two at the time, Oxford and Cambridge, be brought together to work on a new translation.

Here is the quote, a translation to be made of the whole Bible, as consonant as can be to the original Hebrew and Greek, and this to be set out and printed without marginal notes, and only to be used in all churches of England in times of divine service.

So he wasn't letting you have a Bible.

It was the church that would have the Bible, no marginal notes, that was to avoid all the fights that the Geneva Bible had allowed to start, and the bishops were called to work six months later.

Now remember how volatile the world was at this time, the world of England.

Scotland was a mess, but we can't even start talking about it yet.

After Mary and Elizabeth, people were ready for war at any time.

Remember Mary was a Catholic, killed Protestants brutally, drove them out to the country, succeeded by Elizabeth, who didn't care much about religion, but decided to persecute the Catholics and benefit the Protestants, so a different group was harassed and burned and hung.

Then comes James, who comes from a Presbyterian country into an Episcopal country, what's going to happen now?

They were ready for war to break out at any time, and again I brought up two weeks ago, but again, if you can't get to Britain, Google inside of different churches and look for the graves.

You're walking on graves, and they have knights engraved on them who died for this church.

Look at the military banners, and these are units that fought for this religion, and it is amazing.

Next week we'll start talking about you can walk through the ruins of many churches because of the wars.

When one side came through, they destroyed that church.

Anyway, moving on, they also believed that the Catholics were getting ready to invade them.

That was a good belief, by the way, because they were.

The Catholics were, they'd pinned their hopes on Spain again.

Do you remember they tried during Elizabeth, the Armada?

That didn't work.

They still were trying to get France and Spain involved in an invasion.

France isn't really brought up very often here, but it should be because France had a very powerful ancient ally, Scotland.

The Scots and the French are called the Old Alliance, the Old Alliance.

In fact, in Scotland, English common law to this day is not used.

It is Napoleonic law.

That's why you can have guilty, not guilty, and not proven.

You may have heard of that.

We have different systems.

In Scotland, they can put you in prison as long as they want to, before they question you or whatever.

They tend not to abuse that, but they can because English common law says you have 36 hours or 48 hours.

The Napoleonic law does it, and so it's a different system.

They were afraid of all of this, and then James announced the marriage of his heir and son Charles to the child of the Spanish king and queen.

Pulpits exploded in anger.

She as the daughter of Catholics was called Jezebel before they ever met her or knew her.

Sermons were preached against the sins of the Israelites, marrying foreigners, because as long as you're going to take the scripture out of context, roll with it.

Englishmen were often hunted down and beaten, fined, or worse for being Catholic, and then eight of them, at least, tried to blow up the house of lords in the gunpowder plot, and they were caught.

That did not go well for Catholics.

I imagine it was somewhat like a Muslim must feel today.

When there is a stabbing on the campus of the Ohio State University, I would imagine they are praying and begging, don't let it be a Muslim, because when it is, they're all tainted with it.

The Catholics, after the gunpowder plot, all eight of those guys were caught and executed in January 1606.

Another Englishman, a Jesuit, was executed in front of St.

Paul's Cathedral in March on the grounds that he knew of the plot.

He was hung, drawn, and quartered.

I will not describe that.

It is an incredibly brutal way of dragging out the most intense pain as possible for many hours.

If you saw the end of Braveheart, you got an idea.

But it went a lot longer than Braveheart did.

I have an English friend, and he and I used to joke with each other that my favorite movie was the first part of Braveheart, and his favorite movie was the last part of Braveheart.

But only if you know the story, do you get that?

While all this is going on, scholars are being gathered for no pay, at least from the government.

There were some rich guys that paid their guys for translating, and there were some charity there, but the government didn't pay for the translation of the King James Version.

Bencroft was in charge of the group, Anti-Piratin, and he set out some rules.

So we're going to look at the rules for the rest of today and part of next week.

So you can see the rules and see why people who say the King James Version of the Bible is a pious Bible need to look at the rules, because there were some rules laid out.

One, the ordinary Bible read in the church, commonly called the Bishops Bible, is to be followed and as little altered as the truth of the original will permit.

Now that's a handicap starting.

Change it as little as possible.

But what if you find something major?

Well, let's give them that this might be honest.

And then this one, the names of the prophets and holy writers with the other names of the text to be retained as nigh as may be accordingly as they were vulgarly used.

And again, vulgar doesn't mean nasty mean.

It means the way people use them.

And that's why we say Jesus instead of, you know, Yeshua.

And we don't say, well, I'll get to the God name next week.

We don't say Solomon.

We say Solomon because that's the way we've always used it.

Don't change it.

I don't have a problem with that.

I think that that was a fine rule.

Then the old ecclesiastical words to be kept.

Ding, ding, ding, ding.

The word church not to be translated as congregation.

We're going to go over a list of the reasons that King James Version hurt the church.

This is one of them.

Back then the word church did not mean like, I go to that church in the sense of, you know, what church are you a member of?

The church of Christ.

The word church meant chapel.

It meant a building.

In particular, it absolutely meant a building.

You were not the church.

You went to a church to receive the sacraments whereby you could be saved.

We know that in Scripture, buildings are not holy.

In Scripture, people are.

And people are the church.

Whoever two or more of you are gathered, remember?

This was done because James did not approve of you worshiping outside of the established church.

Therefore, Richard Bancroft made sure you don't translate that congregation or assembly.

Well, what does the word ecclesia mean?

Congregation or assembly.

So you weren't allowed to write it true.

Hmm.

There are more.

Word has diverse, diverse, we would say, significance, different meanings.

That to be kept, which have been most commonly used by the most of the ancient fathers, being agreeable to the propriety of the place and the analogy of the faith.

All right.

That means you can't change any of the wording if the fathers of the church want it this way.

And you have to make it more Christian.

We'll talk about this in two weeks, I think.

The note's already written.

We're all grown-ups here.

Paul used some pretty hard language.

He used the S word for animal waste.

We don't.

In our Bibles, it'll say things like rubbish.

Now, why?

Why would it clean up?

Paul in Galatians gets so fed up with the people that keep wanting to circumcise everybody that he says he wishes the knife would slip and they'd castrate themselves.

We don't say that.

We wish that they would cut themselves off from the assembly.

That's not.

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We over-Christian things and the reason is this rule.

To make sure it sounds Christian.

Think of that.

This is why we adopted Victorian morality and assumed it was Jesus' morality.

Don't dance.

Don't play cards.

Don't get overexcited.

Don't shout in a worship service.

Don't lie because we followed this rule.

To make sure it all sits under the control of the church fathers.

Did you know that?

There are a lot of passages in Scripture.

For example, Jesus saying, In the storm, peace be still.

No.

He says, shut up and stop.

To the storm.

But we don't think it's polite to say shut up.

So we have Jesus saying peace and put an exclamation point.

Or in Mark chapter 1, when he tosses out a demon, Be quiet, he said sternly.

He said shut up.

Cease.

Cut it.

Zip it.

Anyway, the division of chapters to be altered either not at all or as little as may be if necessity so require.

Chapters were kind of new at the time.

And they said, don't move them around.

And that's fine.

But a lot of the chapter breaks are really in bad places.

But just be it.

In fact, if you want to do an experiment, and I've talked to you about how to read the Bible using the Gospels first and like, but if you really just want to have a fun experiment, and it really is fun, buy a Bible with no chapter or verse markings.

It reads so much better.

It is not choppy.

You don't use one-liners and bumper stickers to guide you through the day.

You have an overall story.

You don't get a lot of the laws we make up because we grab one verse here and one verse there.

You get a story.

So do that.

And those are available.

You can get them.

No marginal notes at all.

We already talked about this, but only for the explanation of the Greek or Hebrew words.

By the way, they ended up not allowing those.

You cannot without some circumlocution be briefly and fitly expressed in the text.

What they mean is that there are some words which are just hard to translate with the word.

And you have to use a whole sentence.

They're saying, you know, put a little note out to the side.

What they did do was that they used italics for words that they had to add to the text to explain the text.

So when you read King James and you come across italics, those words were not in the Hebrew or Greek.

They were added to make it readable.

I don't know if you knew that, but now you do.

Such quotations of places to be marginally set down shall serve for the fit reference of one scripture to another.

You are allowed to say, for example, Matthew 1, 22, 23 to put a little note saying Isaiah 7, 13, 14.

You're allowed to direct them to other scriptures.

Every particular man of each company to take the same chapter or chapters, and having translated or amended them several times or by himself, where he thinks it's good, all to meet together, confer what they've done and agree for the parts of what shall stand.

It's actually a very good rule.

What that means is, get your, you know, separate, separate, separate, separate, separate, separate, they don't all translate everything.

You take Job chapters 1 through 10, you take this, and then after you're done with your group and your group agrees, then you bring it to the whole group and then the whole group works on it.

One of the versions of the Bible that we have today where that was followed to the letter is the new Revised Standard Version.

They did a fine job of it.

The old Revised Standard Version followed the same path.

And a new Revised Standard Version is a fine version, by the way.

Better than the old one, by the way.

They did improve it.

As any one company had dispatched any one book in this manner, they shall send it to the rest to be considered of seriously and judiciously, for His Majesty is very careful in this point.

So watch yourself to King's watching.

And the King knew Hebrew and Greek.

That was part of his education.

Next, if any company upon the review of the book so sent, doubt or differ upon any place to send them word thereof, note the place with all send the reasons to, which if they consent not.

If you see a problem with their work, bring it up.

That's your job to correct each other's work.

Have you ever been in a writer's circle where you correct each other's work?

There's always one who relishes that job.

Why did you call him Tim?

Seems more of a bob to me.

You get those people.

And you had those in this group as well.

Alistair McGrath wrote a book called *In the Beginning* about this.

He doesn't cover a lot of the battles, but there are other books that you can get from him as you read in the bibliography about the making of the King James.

If you like the history of it, it'll make your eyes cross, but it's interesting to me.

When the place of special obscurity the passage we're debating is doubted of letters to be directed by authority to send to any learned man in the land for his judgment of such a place.

If we can't figure it out, we got to find somebody and write them and ask them what they think.

But did you notice where?

It's geographical limitation in the land.

England.

You don't want the Scots in on this.

Their Presbyterian pagan people.

Skirtwear and Heather jumping.

And you don't want the Welsh in it because the Welsh don't even speak English at this point.

And you don't want anybody in Europe because they looked down upon the Europeans.

English people still do in common parlance.

It is.

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I guess you have to be there.

Letters to be sent from every bishop to the rest of his clergy taking them of this translation in hand to move and chart.

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Oh, our time's over.

Phew.

Let me just look here.

I've got too many more notes to go.

So, we are.

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Let me just do this.

Can I do this real fast?

The letters to be sent out from the bishop saying this is received from the church therefore it comes from God you may not question the Bible.

Period.

And that's kind of sad.

A few more rules about the order in which translations would be referred to.

If you read the authorized version and you're not clear you are then allowed to go read the Geneva Bible, which I found surprising.

Then the Tyndale then the Matthews then the Coverdale then the Witt Church and then back to the Geneva.

That was their way of settling disputes.

They didn't have commentaries.

It's very important here as we close.

This new translation was to settle the arguments among the people.

Establish who was in charge the king and the bishops and to make the Bible in a language which would then form the language from now on.

This is how English will now be spoken.

This is how English will now be spelt as we say in Bretton this is how things are.

In other words, it's not going to be just a Bible.

This is going to be the English identity.

And in fact one of the rules was we don't use all those old foreign Hebrew, Greek things that we have to or Martin Luther's translation in German.

We use English translations and refer only to the original languages of justification.

That's not a good way to make a translation.

But I get ahead of myself.

Looking forward to next week.

I preach too long.

I talk too long.

I'm a consistent man.

So I am.

Cheerio, run away.