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Between the “completion” of the Old Testament (that is, the “Tanakh”, or the Hebrew Scriptures), and the writing of the Greek New Testament, was a period of several hundred years. Some historians refer to this period as the “400 Silent Years”, when God allegedly did not speak to His people. But in fact during this time, God did speak, His people did hear Him, and inspired books and writings that speak with the same wisdom, beauty, and authority, indeed, the same voice, as the other books of the two Testaments, were transmitted to us through imperfect human vessels. And although these books and writings actually appear in countless Bibles, many Christians, and most others who have read the Bible, are unaware of them, and know nothing about their profundity or their provenance. These books and writings truly are the “lost books” of the Bible. They constitute, in essence, a “Third Testament” of Holy Writ. The books and writings that I refer to are the Biblical Apocrypha.

DOORS LOCKED AND UNLOCKED

...and I shall give to thee tables (or tablets) of stone, and the law, and commandments, which I have written, that thou teach them...

From within a cloud or a burning bush, from the midst of the Holy of Holies in the Temple in Jerusalem or above the summit of Mount Sinai in the desert, to prophets, priests, and patriarchs alike, YAHWEH, the Great “I AM”, “the God of revelation and grace”, spoke to His people in words they could all understand.

Moses came down from Mt. Sinai with the ten commandments, written in stone by the finger of God, in a language that the entire nation of Israel could read.

David composed his poems of praise and petition, promises and pleadings, to the Lord God of hosts, in the everyday language of his people.

Solomon penned his proverbs of wise fatherly counsel, and his songs of passionate love, in Hebrew, the language of many of his sons, and at least some of his lovers...

...then Jesus spake to the people...

By the sea or on a hilltop, in the Temple or at the well, to individuals and to multitudes alike, when Jesus walked the earth, he spoke to people in words they could understand.

Paul’s letters were written in Greek, the everyday language of those to whom they were sent. Thirty years later, the same would be true of the Gospels.

But in England 2300 years after David and Solomon, and 1300 years after Jesus and Paul, the Word of God was written almost exclusively in Latin¹, an unknown language to 99% of that society. Indeed, Latin was only understood by some of the clergy, some of the well-off, and the few who were university-educated. This did not trouble the Church princes, who long before had transformed the “Divine Commission” – to preach the Word and save souls – into the more temporal undertaking of the all-consuming drive to wield authority over every aspect of life, and in the process, to accumulate ever-greater wealth.

John Wycliffe, an Oxford University professor and theologian, was one of those few

¹ Following King Edward I’s expulsion edict of 1290, decreeing the banishment of all Jews from England, the Jewish people were absent from its soil until the mid-17th century. However Hebrew Old Testaments, commentaries, and other scholarly writings concerning the Hebrew Scriptures, were studied when the Old Testament of the “Wycliffe Bible”, including the books of the Apocrypha, was written and revised, as were Greek sources when its New Testament was written and revised.

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who had read the Latin Bible. Although a scholar living a life of privilege, he felt a strong empathy for the poor and the uneducated, those multitudes in feudal servitude, whose lives were “nasty, brutish, and short”. He challenged the princes of the Church to face their hypocrisy and widespread corruption – and to repent. He railed that the Church was no longer worthy to be The Keeper of the Word of Truth. And he proposed a truly revolutionary idea:

“The Scriptures,” Wycliffe stated, “are the property of the people, and one which no party should be allowed to wrest from them. Christ and his apostles converted much people by uncovering of Scripture, and this in the tongue which was most known to them. Why then may not the modern disciples of Christ gather up the fragments of the same bread? The faith of Christ ought therefore to be recounted to the people in both languages, Latin and English.”

Indeed, John Wycliffe earnestly believed that all of the Scriptures should be available to all of the people all of the time in their native tongue.

He believed that with the Word of God literally in hand, each individual could have a personal relationship with God, and work out his or her own salvation, with no need for any human or institutional intermediary.

And so John Wycliffe and his followers, most notably John Purvey, his secretary and close friend, and for a limited time, Nicholas Hereford², translated Jerome’s Vulgate, the

“Latin Bible”, including the books of the Apocrypha, into the first English Bible. (They also utilized original language texts; more on this below.) Their literal, respectful translation was hand-printed around 1382. Historians refer to this as the “Early Version” of the “Wycliffe Bible”.

The Church princes, long before having anointed themselves as sole arbitrator (indeed “soul” arbitrator!) between God and man, condemned this monumental achievement as heretical – and worse:

“This pestilent and wretched John Wycliffe, that son of the old serpent ...endeavour[ing] by every means to attack the very faith and sacred doctrine of Holy Church, translated from Latin into English the Gospel, [indeed all of the Scriptures], that Christ gave to the clergy and doctors of the Church. So that by his means it has become vulgar and more open to laymen and women who can read, than it usually is to quite learned clergy of good intelligence. And so the pearl of the Gospel, [indeed of the Scriptures *in toto*], is scattered abroad and trodden underfoot by swine.”

Church Chronicle, 1395

The Church princes decreed that Wycliffe be removed from his professorship at Oxford, and it was done. Two years later, his health broken, he died.

In the decade following John Wycliffe’s death, his friend John Purvey revised their

² Nicholas (de) Hereford, an associate of Wycliffe’s and Purvey’s, helped write 2/3rds of the highly literal “Early Version” of the Old Testament (up to “Baruch”, a book of the Apocrypha then placed before “Ezekiel”), before he was summoned to Rome to explain his actions. Threatened with death by the Synod of Black Friars, he recanted. Pope Urbanus VI sentenced him to prison, where he possibly spent two years. When a civil insurrection broke out in Rome, the rioters set all the captives free. Hereford fled back to England and resumed his work to educate the ignorant and

aid the poor. Arrested again, this time his recantation stuck. Thenceforth, he worked tirelessly against his former colleagues, testifying at their trials, vociferously and vituperatively condemning the writing of the English Bible. For his efforts, the Church princes rewarded him with the position of Chancellor and Treasurer of Hereford Cathedral, as well as a lifelong stipend. Finally, after a long life of shifting alliances, of activities of both grace and perfidy, Hereford retired to a Carthusian monastery, an austere, ascetic order that embraced solitude, silence, and midnight masses. Perhaps, at long last, he felt he had said enough.

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Bible. The complete text, including Purvey's "Great Prologue", appeared by 1395. But portions of his revision, in particular the Gospels and other books of the New Testament, were in circulation as early as 1388.

Historians refer to this as the "Later Version" of the "Wycliffe Bible". This vernacular version retained most of the theological insight and poetry of language found in the earlier, more literal effort. But it was easier to read and understand, and quickly gained a grateful and loyal following. Each copy had to be hand-printed (Gutenberg's printing press would not be invented for more than fifty years), but this did not deter widespread distribution. The book you now hold in your hands is the Apocrypha from that "Wycliffe Bible" (*with modern spelling*).

For his efforts, the Church princes ordered John Purvey arrested and delivered to the dungeon. He would not see freedom again until he recanted of his "sin" – writing the English Bible. His spirit ultimately broken, he eventually did recant. Upon release, he was watched, hounded at every step, the Church princes determined that he would tow the party line. His life made a living hell, the co-author of the first English Bible finally disappeared into obscurity, and died unknown.

But the fury of the Church princes was unrelenting. Edicts flew. John Wycliffe's bones were dug up – and burned. Wycliffe's writings were gathered up – and burned. All unauthorized Bibles – that is, all those in the English language – were banned. All confiscated copies were burned. Those who copied out these Bibles were imprisoned. Those who distributed these Bibles were imprisoned. Those who owned an English Bible, or, as has been documented, "traded a cart-load of hay for but a few pages of the Gospel", were imprisoned. And those faithful souls who refused to "repent" the "evil" that

they had committed, were burned at the stake, the "noxious" books that they had penned, or even had merely owned, hung about their necks to be consumed by the same flames. In all, thousands were imprisoned, and many hundreds were executed. Merry olde England was engulfed in a reign of terror. All because of an English Bible. The "Wycliffe Bible".

But the spark that John Wycliffe and John Purvey, and their followers had ignited, could not, would not, be extinguished. The Word of Truth was copied, again, and again, and again. The Word of Truth was shared, from hand, to hand, to hand. The Word of Truth was read, and spoken, and heard by the common people in their own language for the first time in over 1000 years. At long last, the Word of God had been returned to simple folk who were willing to lose everything to gain all.

And so the pearl of the Scriptures was spread abroad, and planted in their hearts, by the servants of God...

216 years after Purvey's revision appeared, somewhat less than a century after Martin Luther proclaimed his theses (thereby sparking the Protestant Reformation), and Henry VIII proclaimed his divorce (thereby creating the Church of England), what would become the most famous, enduring, beloved, and revered translation of the Bible, the "Authorized" or "King James Version" (KJV), was published in 1611.

In their preface, "The Translators to the Reader", in the 1st edition of the KJV, the 54 translators detail many sources utilized, and the arduous efforts undertaken, to achieve their supreme accomplishment. Interestingly enough, they make scant mention of even the existence of earlier, unnamed English versions. And they make no specific reference to the work of John Wycliffe and John Purvey (or even William Tyndale). It is not my desire or

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intention here to speculate on the political and ecclesiastical reasons for this omission, simply to state its fact.

From 1611 until today, historians of the English Bible have uniformly followed the lead of the KJV translators, and have ignored, dismissed, or denigrated John Wycliffe's and John Purvey's contributions to, and influences upon, that ultimate translation, the KJV. To wit:

"The Bible which permeated the minds of later generations shows no direct descent from the Wycliffite versions; at most a few phrases from the later version seem to have found their way into the Tudor translations...Tyndale's return to the original languages meant that translations based on the intermediate Latin of the Vulgate would soon be out of date."

Cambridge History of the Bible,
(Vol. 2, p. 414.)

When you finish reading this book, you may reach a different conclusion.

WYCLIFFE'S BIBLE & WYCLIFFE'S APOCRYPHA

Wycliffe's Bible is comprised of *Wycliffe's Old Testament*, which is a modern-spelling version of the Old Testament found in extant copies of the "Later Version" of the "Wycliffe Bible" (excluding the books of the Apocrypha), and *Wycliffe's New Testament*, which is a modern-spelling version of the New Testament found in extant copies of the "Later Version" of the "Wycliffe Bible". *Wycliffe's Apocrypha* is a modern-spelling version of the books of the Apocrypha found in extant copies of the "Later Version" of the "Wycliffe Bible". For 99.9% of *Wycliffe's Bible* and *Wycliffe's Apocrypha*, the word order, verb forms, words in *italics*, and punctuation are as they appear in the "Later Version". In addition, words and phrases

found only in the "Early Version" are presented within square brackets, "[]", to provide more examples of John Wycliffe's and John Purvey's ground-breaking scholarship, as well as to aid comprehension and improve passage flow. Literally thousands of "Early Version" verses were transcribed, but limited space meant most could not appear in the printed books. See the online files, or the ebooks of *Wycliffe's Bible* and *Wycliffe's Apocrypha*, for these significant and interesting textual variations.

Because their very lives were at risk, and personal glory was of no consequence to either man, neither Wycliffe nor Purvey signed any extant copy of either version, attesting to authorship. This omission has allowed some historians to debate the matter. Both *Wycliffe's Bible* and *Wycliffe's Apocrypha* are unambiguously credited: "Translated by John Wycliffe and John Purvey". While authorship of a particular chapter or verse can be argued by those concerned with such matters, there is absolutely no doubt about the essential role that each of these men played in the momentous effort to bring the English Bible to the English people.

MIDDLE ENGLISH

The "Wycliffe Bible" was written in Middle English in the last three decades of the 14th century. "Middle English" is the designation of language spoken and written in England between 1150 and 1450. The year 1300 is used to divide the period into "Early Middle English" and "Late Middle English". During the time of "Late Middle English", there were 5 regional dialects in England (with a 6th dialect developing in London). Examples of at least three dialects are found in the "Later Version" of the "Wycliffe Bible".

What does one encounter reading the "Wycliffe Bible"? An alphabet with a widely used 27th letter, "ȝ", and a 28th letter, "þ", that

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already was frequently being replaced with “*th*” (even within the same sentence). A myriad of words which today are either **obsolete** (“*anentis*”: with), **archaic** (“*culver*”: dove), or at best, strangely-spelled **precursors** to our modern words (“*vpsedoun*”: upside-down). Spelling and verb forms that are not standardized, in part because they were phonetic to different dialects. For example, the word “*saw*” is spelled a dozen different ways (even differently within the same sentence), and differently for singular and plural nouns (similarly, the word “*say*”); “*have take*” and “*have taken*” are found in the same sentence, as are “*had know*” and “*had known*”; and so forth. Prepositions and pronouns that often seem misplaced and incorrectly used: “*at*”, “*for*”, “*in*”, “*of*”, “*on*”, “*there*”, “*to*”, “*what*”, and “*which*” again and again seem wrongly situated; “*themsel*” and “*themselves*” are found in the same sentence, as are “*yousel*” and “*yourselves*”; and so forth. Capitalization, punctuation, and other grammatical conventions that are rudimentary by today’s standards, and vary greatly from sentence to sentence. For example, the **past tense** of a verb was made by adding nothing to the present tense, or an “*e*”, “*en*”, “*ed*”, “*ede*”, “*id*”, “*ide*”, or still other suffixes. In short, one encounters formidable obstacles to being able to understand (what will become) a single verse of Scripture.

KEYS TO THE KINGDOM

And so the need for *Wycliffe’s Bible* and *Wycliffe’s Apocrypha*. *Wycliffe’s Bible* and *Wycliffe’s Apocrypha* together comprise the “*Later Version*” of the “*Wycliffe Bible*”, with its irregular spelling deciphered, the verb forms made consistent, and numerous grammatical variations standardized. *Wycliffe’s Bible* and *Wycliffe’s Apocrypha* are the keys that unlock the amazing secrets found within the “*Wycliffe*

Bible”.

For more discussion about the Middle English found in the “*Wycliffe Bible*”, and how it was dealt with in the course of writing *Wycliffe’s Bible*, and later *Wycliffe’s Apocrypha*, see the **Introduction** in *Wycliffe’s Bible*.

THE BIBLICAL APOCRYPHA

The Hebrew Scriptures, or “*Tanakh*” (that is, the Old Testament), was written by several dozen authors over a millennium, and was completed in the 5TH century before the Christian Era (BCE). The New Testament was written in Aramaic and Greek by about ten authors beginning in the middle of first century of the Christian Era (CE). The time between the two Testaments has been referred to as the “*400 Silent Years*”.

Hebrew-speaking Jews believe that the Biblical canon (the body of accepted books of the Bible) has been closed for nearly twenty-five hundred years. But in the early centuries before the Christian Era (BCE), in various parts of the Ancient World, there were significant communities of Jews whose primary language was Greek, not Hebrew. This included a large, highly-cultured and influential Jewish community in Alexandria in Egypt. Beginning in the 3RD century BCE, what would swell to become a group of 70 translators worked to produce a Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures, that is, a version in their own language. They wanted to enable Greek-speaking believers to more closely know, worship, praise and serve their God (as John Wycliffe and John Purvey likewise wanted for their fellow English-speaking believers in England more than 1500 years later). This Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures became known as the Septuagint (meaning “*Seventy*”)

The translators believed that they were

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doing God's work, and that indeed He had inspired not only them, but also a number of writers who produced more than a dozen new books and writings that were added to the Biblical canon (more on these additions to the Bible below).

For several hundred years, the Septuagint was accepted and used by Greek-speaking (or Hellenistic) Jews in the Ancient World, including Palestine. Hebrew-speaking Jews, in particular their leaders and scholars, never accepted the Septuagint, possibly from a religious point of view (they did not believe that it was divinely-inspired), but more likely from a power point of view (another divinely-inspired translation would diminish, or at least challenge the Hebrew Scriptures, and their role as sole guardians and interpreters of them), and indeed declared this translation to be an abomination, and worse. This was analogous to the situation John Wycliffe encountered, when he wanted an English Bible for English-speaking believers, and the Church, with its Latin Scriptures, felt gravely threatened. The Septuagint was also adopted by the early Christians, and quoted in their literature. Because of this, a new Greek translation was made by Aquila of Sinope, which replaced the Septuagint in the hearts and minds of Greek-speaking Jews in the late 2ND century CE. However this translation displeased Christians because of its rendering of the Messianic passages. And so it goes.

As stated above, within the Septuagint are new books and writings (the latter are additions to books already found in the Hebrew Bible). These include: 3RD Esdras (a Greek rewriting of Ezra and part of Nehemiah; also called 3RD Ezra and 1ST Esdras), Tobit, Judith, Additions to the Greek version of Esther, 1ST, 2ND, 3RD*, and 4TH* Maccabees, Psalm 151*, Prayer of Manasseh, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus (also called Sirach), Psalms of Solomon*, Baruch, Epistle of

Jeremiah, and Additions to the Greek version of Daniel (including Prayer of Azariah, Song of the Three, Susanna, and Bel and the Dragon). All of these books and writings appear in the Vulgate and in the "Wycliffe Bible", with the exception of those marked with an asterisk. The Vulgate also contains 4TH Esdras, also called 4TH Ezra and 2ND Esdras, but it is not found in the "Wycliffe Bible". Some of these books were actually first written in Hebrew (including Tobit, Judith, Ecclesiasticus, and Baruch), others perhaps were (Additions to Daniel, and Epistle of Jeremiah), and the rest originated in Greek.

These intertestamental writings are collectively known as "The Apocrypha" (from the Greek, meaning "hidden" things). Sometimes this word, or its adjective, "apocryphal", is used to describe mystical, esoteric, fantastical, strange, or obscure writings. But in the Biblical sense, "Apocrypha" refers to those books outside the accepted or first canon (the so-called "proto-canonical" books), that is, the books which comprise the Hebrew Scriptures. The books of the Apocrypha comprise a second grouping of important books whose inspiration is disputed (and are the so-called "deuterocanonical" books, or books of the second canon). Hebrew-speaking Jews believe these books were not inspired, and indeed even the authors of Ecclesiasticus and 1ST Maccabees demur claiming divine inspiration (probably humility played a role here).

But Greek-speaking Jews embraced these writings, as did the early Christians, who utilized the Greek version of the Scriptures, including the books of the Apocrypha. They added this Greek "Old Testament" to their Greek "New Testament" to form the Christian Bible. And so it is not surprising that these additional books and writings are found in Old Greek and early Latin Bibles, in Jerome's Vulgate, which served as the only Bible for

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Catholics for a millennium (and they are also found in succeeding Catholic Bibles up to and including present day editions), in the “Wycliffe Bible” (the first complete English vernacular Bible), in Old German Bibles, in Luther’s translation, in 16th century English Bibles, and in the first edition of the “Authorized” or King James Version of the Bible (but dropped from later editions). These books and writings are also found in various groupings (one list varying from another) in Orthodox and other Eastern or Oriental Christian Bibles, and even in some recently published Protestant Bibles (including the *New English Bible* and the *Good News Bible*).

In the Septuagint, the Vulgate, and the “Wycliffe Bible”, the books of the Apocrypha were intermixed with other books of the Old Testament. But beginning in the 16th century, with Luther’s Bible of 1534, and Coverdale’s Bible of 1535, Protestant versions (including the first edition of the “Authorized” or King James Version) have grouped these books in a separate section between the Old and the New Testaments, and labelled them “The Apocrypha”, making them *in essence* (if not in name), a “Third Testament”.

In 1546 the (Catholic) Council of Trent declared Tobit, Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, Epistle of Jeremiah, 1ST and 2ND Maccabees, Additions to Esther, and Additions to Daniel (Prayer of Azariah, Song of the Three, Susanna, and Bel and the Dragon) to be part of the canon, that is, that they were inspired. All of these books or writings are found in the “Wycliffe Bible”. Only the beautiful Prayer of Manasseh and the Greek edition or rewriting of Ezra-Nehemiah (3RD Esdras or 3RD Ezra) are missing from this list. In 1563 the (Anglican) 39 Articles declared that the books of the Apocrypha had less authority than the books of the Biblical canon, and in 1643 the (Anglican) Westminster Confession declared that the books of the Apocrypha were

not inspired. And so it continues. But we can make our own decisions.

REGARDING *WYCLIFFE’S APOCRYPHA*

Wycliffe’s Apocrypha consists of the modern-spelling versions of 14 books or writings of the Biblical Apocrypha found in the “Later Version” of the “Wycliffe Bible”, plus “Epistle to the Laodiceans”, attributed to Paul (though most scholars deny his authorship of it). Because Catholics, Anglicans, other Protestant denominations, and the various Orthodox churches all have differing lists of the books that they consider to comprise the Biblical Apocrypha, for this volume I have chosen to include all of the books of the Apocrypha found in the “Wycliffe Bible”, with no exceptions or deletions, but also with no additions or supplemental texts from other early pre-KJV Bibles. What is presented here is what John Wycliffe and John Purvey and their compeers published in their translation of the first complete English vernacular Bible, in the order that it is found there. Their only significant omission from most lists of the Biblical Apocrypha is 4TH Esdras (also called 4TH Ezra and 2ND Esdras) which does not appear in any copy of the “Wycliffe Bible” (perhaps it was omitted due to the anti-Semitic nature of some of its chapters). 4TH Esdras can be found in various forms online for those who are interested in reading it.

The books and writings of the Apocrypha that are found in the “Wycliffe Bible” are found in the same order in *Wycliffe’s Apocrypha*, which is as follows:

- Prayer of Manasseh (comprises a new Chapter 37 in 2ND Chronicles)
- 3RD Ezra (or 3RD Esdras; follows Ezra and Nehemiah, or “2ND Ezra”, and combines elements of both)
- Tobit (follows 3RD Ezra)

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- Judith (follows Tobit)
- Additions to Esther (follows Judith; these additions were added to six chapters of the Greek version of Esther)
- Wisdom of Solomon (follows Song of Songs)
- Ecclesiasticus (follows Wisdom of Solomon)
- Baruch (follows Lamentations of Jeremiah)
- Epistle of Jeremiah (follows Baruch)
- Additions to Daniel (follows Ezekiel; these additions were added to three chapters of the Greek version of Daniel)
- 1ST Maccabees (follows Malachi)
- 2ND Maccabees (follows 1ST Maccabees; closes out the “Wycliffe Old Testament”)
- Epistle to the Laodiceans (follows Paul’s Epistle to the Colossians)

“EARLY VERSION” AND “LATER VERSION”

As stated above, as with all the other books of the “Wycliffe Bible”, there are two versions of each book of the “Wycliffe Apocrypha”, the “Early Version” and the “Later Version”. Each version has its own footnotes, denoting variations between various copies of the “Wycliffe Bible”, and its own glosses, which consist of explanations of the text by the translators, and alternate renderings of words and phrases. All of the footnotes and glosses were consulted during the writing of *Wycliffe’s Apocrypha*, and many were utilized in order to produce the most accurate modern-spelling version possible. Because many of the original books of the Apocrypha were written in Greek, both versions found in the “Wycliffe Bible” are quite readable. But the “Later Version”, like its counterparts in both Testaments, is usually superior in readability compared to what is found in the “Early Version”.

However, as with the two Testaments, there are individual words and phrases which appear in the “Early Version” (“EV”) of the “Wycliffe Apocrypha”, but not in the “Later Version” (“LV”), and then reappear in the King

James Version (KJV) Apocrypha. Examples of “Early Version” “Wycliffe Apocrypha” and KJV Apocrypha word agreement include: “the Lord our God” (“our Lord God” in “LV”); “upon” (“on” in “LV”); “rightwiseness” or righteousness (“rightfulness” in “LV”); “rightwise” or righteous (“rightful” in “LV”); “unto” (“till to” in “LV”); and “them” (“those” in “LV”).

Verb placement at the start of a sentence, as opposed to after the subject, is often the same in the “EV” and the KJV, but different in the “LV”; as is verb tense (often present tense in the “EV” and the KJV, but past tense in the “LV”); and even word choice for the verb (often the same in the “EV” and the KJV, but different in the “LV”). A sampling of these “EV” phrases are given in the printed edition of *Wycliffe’s Apocrypha*, but this ebook edition contains literally 1000s more of these phrases.

For more information regarding the “Early Version” of the “Wycliffe Bible”, see the **Introduction** and **Endnotes** to *Wycliffe’s Bible*.

WORDS IN PARENTHESES

Words in parentheses have been added, usually simple words like “a”, “and”, and “the”, to aid passage flow, or to reorder a passage to help make it easier to understand.

For more information on the process of making the modern-spelling versions of *Wycliffe’s Bible* and *Wycliffe’s Apocrypha*, see “Other Minor Modifications” in the **Introduction** to *Wycliffe’s Bible*.

USE OF THE KJV

To further aid comprehension, and also to provide the reader with an additional historical text, my corrected version of the books of the Apocrypha from the 1611 (1ST) edition of the KJV (with the exception of 2ND/4TH Esdras) are presented here side-by-side with those of *Wycliffe’s Apocrypha*.

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The KJV text will help you to understand some of the more difficult phrases and words found in the “Wycliffe Apocrypha”. Also, because many of these passages have very similar (and sometimes identical) texts, having them side-by-side will clearly illustrate the influence the “Wycliffe Apocrypha” had upon the translators of the KJV.

The books of the 1611 KJV Apocrypha online at various websites have differing punctuation, and punctuation that is often used in unexpected ways³. For our purposes, the punctuation which modern readers would be most familiar with, and which would aid in understanding these writings, has been utilized here.

For more evidence of the usage of both versions of the Apocrypha in the “Wycliffe Bible” by the KJV translators, this ebook edition of *Wycliffe’s Apocrypha* contains literally 1000s of additional “Early Version” verses for which there was no room in the printed edition. These verses demonstrate via word choice, verb tense, and word order within a passage, the influence that the “Wycliffe Apocrypha” had upon the writing of the KJV Apocrypha.

Two notable exceptions, however, are the books of Tobit and Judith. Although there are some similarities, it becomes readily apparent that the Wycliffe and the KJV versions of these two books were derived from different yet similar source texts. And so, for these two books, unlike the other 12, the verses of the Wycliffe and the KJV have NOT been aligned with each other, due to the wide variance between them. For each of these books, the two versions need to be read independently. An attempt to make the verses line-up had only limited success, so in the end, the decision was made to present these two books

side-by-side, but with the verse breaks of the original translators, so as to provide the reader with more continuity **within** each version, if not **between** the two versions.

As well, while “Epistle to the Laodiceans” does not appear in the Vulgate, two translations of a 6TH century Latin version were used for comparison purposes with the two Wycliffe versions (which are similar, but not the same). While most scholars believe this Epistle is inauthentic, I believe it is of interest from an historical perspective (it was, after all, in the “Wycliffe Bible”). As well, its teaching is certainly in line with other Pauline epistles, and if not divinely-inspired, it is certainly as inspiring as say, Paul’s Epistle to Philemon. For these reasons, it is included here.

For more information on how the KJV was utilized in creating the modern-spelling version of *Wycliffe’s Bible* and *Wycliffe’s Apocrypha*, see “Use of the KJV” in the **Introduction** to *Wycliffe’s Bible*.

For more information on the meaning and historical usage of difficult or uncommon words, see the **Glossary** in *Wycliffe’s Bible*.

For more examples of John Wycliffe’s and John Purvey’s amazing scholarship, as well as the debt the KJV translators owe to them, see **In Conclusion** in *Wycliffe’s Bible*.

NAMES OF PEOPLE AND PLACES

Because of the significant variation in the spelling of names of people and places, most names found in the “Wycliffe Apocrypha” and in the KJV Apocrypha have been modernized in *Wycliffe’s Apocrypha*, as found in the *New English Bible* and the *Good News Bible*, to improve comprehension, and to better demonstrate the consistency between the two. In Chapter 5 of 3RD Ezra, with a dozen or so verses, because the variations in names and numbers were so great between the “Wycliffe Bible” and the KJV, because this list is

³ Primarily, but not exclusively, pertaining to the use of a colon, where one would expect a comma, a semi-colon, or a period.

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probably not of major significance to the modern reader, and because most modern translations have their own particular/peculiar spelling of this list of names, and differing numbers, so that the list from one translation generally does not match-up with that of another translation, I simply utilized the KJV list, rather than have scores of conflicting entries. These fourteen verses are clearly marked with a superscript “K” (^K), denoting that they come from the KJV, and I leave it at that.

RESOURCES

The primary source text for *Wycliffe’s Apocrypha*, like *Wycliffe’s Bible* before it, was Forshall and Madden’s 4-volume magnum opus, *The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments, With the Apocryphal Books, In the Earliest English Versions, Made from the Latin Vulgate by John Wycliffe and His Followers*, published in 1850. Written over a period of twenty years in the mid-19TH century, this monumental work of scholarship was the crowning achievement of The Rev. Josiah Forshall and Sir Frederic Madden. From about 160 extant hand-printed copies of the two versions of the “Wycliffe Bible” (about 40 copies of the “Early Version”, and about 120 copies of the “Later Version”), they selected one copy from each version to serve as a “master” text, and then, by utilizing over 96,000 footnotes, correlated the other copies with these two “master” texts.

Both versions of the “Wycliffe Bible” contain prologues (introductions to each book or group of related books, mostly taken from Jerome), marginal glosses (explanations of the text by the translators, and some alternate renderings of words and phrases), and footnotes (which indicate differences between the hand-written copies). The prologues are not utilized in *Wycliffe’s Bible* or in *Wycliffe’s Apocrypha*. The glosses were consulted, and

when utilized, appear in *italics*. There are very few glosses for the “Early Version” of the “Wycliffe Apocrypha”. The copy of the “Later Version” that Forshall & Madden labelled “C” contains the most glosses for the books of the Apocrypha, followed by copies “G”, “Q”, and, for 1ST & 2ND Maccabees, “E”, “P”, “U”, and “Y”.

The footnotes in Forshall & Madden’s four volumes are a source of invaluable information. Perhaps 6000 footnotes pertain to the Apocrypha (both versions). These footnotes delineate textual divergence – changes, omissions, insertions, copyist errors – between the two “master” texts and the other hand-printed copies of both versions of the “Wycliffe Bible”. (A footnote can refer to either a single copy or to multiple copies.) Close reading of these footnotes indicates that many times when a copy of either version was written (though less frequently with the “Early Version”), the original language texts were also consulted. For time and again, words were added, or changed, to produce a more accurate rendering of the original Hebrew or the original Greek. In creating *Wycliffe’s Apocrypha*, many of these footnotes were used to provide the most precise translation, as well as the best phrasing – the most satisfying, balanced, and rhythmic read – that is found within all extant copies of the “Wycliffe Bible”.

In *Wycliffe’s Apocrypha*, a forward slash, “/”, separates different renderings of the same phrase from two different hand-written copies, usually the “master” text and an alternate rendering found in a footnote. Most of the renderings from the footnotes in *Wycliffe’s Apocrypha* (as with *Wycliffe’s Old Testament*) come from the copies labelled “I”, “N”, “S”, “R”, and “V”, for the “Later Version”, and “A”, “C”, “E”, “F”, “H”, and “G”, for the “Early Version”. It is significant that textual variations indicated by footnotes for the “Early Version” of the “Wycliffe Bible” also appear in the KJV. This strongly suggests that the KJV translators

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consulted a variety of copies of the “Wycliffe Bible” during the writing of the KJV. See the online files, or the ebooks of *Wycliffe’s Bible* and *Wycliffe’s Apocrypha*, for most of these alternate renderings taken from the footnotes.

During the writing of *Wycliffe’s Apocrypha*, regular reference was made to the Biblical Apocrypha at (www.kingjamesbibleonline.org), (www.sacred-texts.com) and (www.biblehub.com), the digitized 1611 King James Version of the Bible at (<http://sceti.library.upenn.edu>), and (www.kingjamesbibletrust.org), the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the *New Westminster Dictionary of the Bible*, the *New English Bible*, the *Good News Bible*, and numerous entries in Wikipedia. (The five websites listed above are the only new resources that were used in the writing of *Wycliffe’s Apocrypha*.)

Because *Wycliffe’s Apocrypha* is a continuation of my earlier work, *Wycliffe’s Bible*, all of the resources utilized in the completion of that book were also utilized, consciously or unconsciously, in the writing of this book. For complete bibliographical details, see the **Bibliography** in *Wycliffe’s Bible*.

A FINAL NOTE

With the spelling up-dated, and the

obsolete words replaced, the book you now hold in your hands is a fair and accurate representation of John Wycliffe’s and John Purvey’s 14TH century translation of the books of the Apocrypha, found in the very first English vernacular Bible. This is *their* Apocrypha *with modern spelling* – not some 21ST century variation on a medieval theme. The melodies and harmonies are distinctly Wycliffe’s and Purvey’s. Only now they are sung with words that we all can understand. Six centuries later, you can now read what those common folk were themselves at long last able to read (or more likely, have read to them). Simple, direct words, with their own rhythm and charm, their own humble, cogent beauty. Sophisticated and graceful words, their originality and newness making the well-known and fondly remembered fresh and alive once again. All because John Wycliffe and John Purvey, and their helpers, cared so deeply, and sacrificed so dearly.

Today there are scores of modern translations of the Bible in English, available at the library, in bookstores, and on the Internet. But once, there was just one. The “Wycliffe Bible”. Try to imagine the impact upon hearing (or reading) these words for the very first time (see next page):

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“WYCLIFFE BIBLE”, 1395

Wisdom of Solomon, Chapter 7:

...and Y inwardly clepide,
and the spirit of wisdom came in to me.
And Y settide wisdom before rewmes,
and seetis;
and Y said, that richessis ben nouȝt
in comparisoun therof,
and Y comparisonede not a precieuse
stoon to it;
forwhi al gold in comparisoun thereof
is a litil grauel,
and siluer schal be arettid as cley
in the siȝt therof.
Y louyde wisdom more than helthe
and fairnesse;
and Y purposide to have it for liȝt,
for the liȝt therof may not be quenched.

...

For it is tresour with out noumbre
to men,
and thei, that vsiden that tresour,
weren maad parceneris of Goddis frenschip,
and weren preisid for the ȝiftis of kunnyng.

WYCLIFFE'S APOCRYPHA, 2014

Wisdom of Solomon, 7:7-10, 14:

...and I inwardly called,
and the spirit of wisdom came into me.
And I put wisdom before realms (or
kingdoms), and seats (or thrones);
and I said, that riches be nothing
in comparison to it,
and I could not compare a precious
stone (or a gem) to it;
for all the gold compared to it
is but a little gravel (or grains of sand),
and silver shall be reckoned as clay
in the sight of it.
I loved wisdom more than health
and fairness (or beauty);
and I purposed to have it for (my) light,
for its light cannot be quenched.

...

For it is a treasure without number
to people,
and they, who possess that treasure,
are made partners of God's friendship,
and are praised for the gifts of knowledge.