

# P R E F A C E

The God-given vision to restore this special edition of the 1599 Geneva Bible was announced in January of 2004. Soon thereafter a team was organized to reset every word, making no changes except these few: modern spelling; proofreading to ensure word-for-word accuracy with the original 1599 edition; and designing an easy-to-read format. Over the subsequent three years of meticulous work, the production/editorial team witnessed the Providence of God in the daily details. The Lord clearly has ordained this special project and brought it to completion. Our hope is that the Geneva Bible, restored to its rightful place among frequently referenced Scriptures, will remind Christians of their rich heritage in the Protestant Reformation and inspire them to continue advancing the Gospel and Christ's Kingdom with the same passion and conviction of the Reformers.

We would like to share with readers the editorial philosophy and restoration processes we employed as we prepared this edition of the 1599 Geneva Bible.

## SOURCE TEXT

Unlike most contemporary Bible translations, which have unvarying contents because of copyright strictures, the Geneva Bible was never a uniform publication. Due to the relative novelty of publishing Bibles in English, as well as the sheer number of printings (approximately 150 in its first 75 years), its many editions often varied in content and presentation.

The Geneva Bible was first published in 1560, and then "in 1576 a revised form of the Geneva Bible was produced by Laurence Tomson, Secretary to Sir Francis Walsingham (then Elizabeth's Secretary of State) and formerly lecturer in Hebrew at Geneva. This contains a few changes in the translation, the most characteristic being Tomson's pedantic rendering of the Greek definite article by 'that' (e.g., Matt. 16.16, 'Thou art that Christ'); but the chief difference is the introduction of an English translation of Theodore Beza's summaries of doctrine and exposition of phrases, in Beza's Latin Bible. In 1598, the annotations on the Book of Revelation by Francis Junius, a Huguenot divine, were introduced into the Geneva Bible" [Metzger, Bruce M., "Book Notes," *Theology Today*, Vol 46, no 4 (January 1990): 463].

The edition we have chosen as our source is a facsimile of the work of Tomson and Junius, dated 1599; however "in 1599 alone ten editions appeared" [Dr. Roger Nicole, "The Original Geneva Bible," *Tabletalk Magazine*, Vol. 19, no 4 (April 1995)]. Our source copy was published

by L L Brown (The 1599 Geneva Bible. Ozark, MO: LL Brown Publishing, 7th printing, 2003), with an introduction by James W. Bennett, and back matter containing the (undated) Sternhold & Hopkins Psalms. The Apocrypha and metrical Psalms, included in that edition, are omitted here, as well as the brief introductions to the Old Testament books (since they were not available for the New Testament books, we elected to omit them consistently). A "Note to the Reader" in our source copy's front matter, lists errors that, "according to the Historical Catalogue of Printed Bibles," were in the original 1599 edition—indicating an edition printed early enough in 1599 to precede these corrections.

It has been our attempt faithfully to preserve this single source, rather than consult many editions that would risk producing an inauthentic pastiche. The only exceptions are rare indiscernible sections or words; in those cases we have consulted other editions, indicated by citations in brackets.

## AUTHENTICITY

Every word, as well as exact sentence structure, of the source edition is retained. We carefully have preserved the use of italics, by which the original translators indicated that they had supplied words not found in the original manuscripts. We retained capitalization of words, even at the risk of presenting anomalies to contemporary eyes. We avoided editorial tinkering in the name of stylistic consistency. Original punctuation was retained except in cases of egregious mistakes or obvious typographical errors in the source edition.

David Norton, in *A Textual History of the King James Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), describes his own editorial standards for a new edition of the KJB for Cambridge: "Very importantly, [to] not modernise wherever possible. Modernisation must not be at the expense of the text, even if the result is more difficult for the reader" (page 136). Similarly, we did not attempt to make the text readable from a modern standpoint—only to offer contemporary readers what the Geneva Bible said.

## ACCESSIBILITY

"The Geneva Bible was written during a period where the English language was transforming from Middle English to Early Modern English.... English was also going through a shift in pronunciation that was caught in the printing press.... Grammar was also changing, due to influence from other languages, the printing press,

and from natural simplification.... Sentence structure also changed...." [Bennett, introduction to *The 1599 Geneva Bible*, 2003, xv-xvii].

The English language evolved in major ways during the writing of the Geneva Bible, and since then has changed even more radically, especially in matters of typography and print. An exact facsimile reprint of the early Geneva Bible, therefore, would be largely inaccessible to the modern reader. We have therefore addressed and updated the spelling of some words, and the appearance of some old letters, for the sake of American readers' ease of comprehension. Many times this simply meant changing an apparent *f* to an *s*; a *y* to an *i*; a *v* to a *u*; an *i* to a *j*; and so forth. For example, instead of what contemporary eyes would read as "Iefus faid vnto him," we have typeset "Jesus said unto him."

However, some of the spelling decisions were not as clear-cut:

**Possessives** We added apostrophes for possessives (which were not used in the English of that day), because these were determined not to be changes in meaning. For instance, where the source text read "God his mercy," this edition reads "God's mercy."

**Proper Names** We have also changed the spelling of the proper names in the Bible to that of the NKJV, since this can greatly help the contemporary reader, and does not compromise the meaning of the original edition. If, however, the NKJV used a completely different word than the source text, we retained the word from the source text, since to change would be to make a different choice than the original translators made. For example, we did not substitute "Syria" for "Aram."

**Changes in Meaning** What seems like a spelling difference sometimes indicates a distinction in meaning that the original translators intended. If we were unable to discern whether that was the case, we retained the language of the source text. For example, we accepted both "bewray" and "betray," "shamefaced" and "shamefast," "astonied" and "astonished."

If, however, 16th-century spellings were freely interchanged with no distinction in meaning – and if that is not the case today – we adjusted the text based on current meaning. For example, the source uses "beside" and "besides" interchangeably, yet through the subsequent years of English usage there has developed a distinction in meaning between the two words; so we used "beside" for "by the side of," and "besides" for "in addition to." Other such examples include: "whiles" and "while," "other" and "others," "then" and "than." In such instances the original word no longer gives the original meaning.

We have referred above to philological challenges and typographical errors. Occasional words or passages in the original-source Geneva Bible are beyond the realms of subtle ambiguity or theological debate. For example, in Matthew 3:16, the source Geneva reads that John saw

the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and "lightning" upon Jesus. Because the intended word is so clearly "lighting," we made the change; but were yet concerned to place that word in brackets, indicating that it was a change from the source edition. Also, as has been noted above, if we have been unable to read our source book and have consulted another Geneva edition, we have enclosed that text in brackets. Withal, there are very few words in brackets in this edition.

**Archaic Words** If a word is archaic, obsolete, colloquial, such that the meaning is now inaccessible or completely changed, we were careful to retain the original word; to completely change one word to another supersedes a spelling correction and compromises authenticity. Instead we have provided a glossary with short definitions in the back of this edition to help the modern reader. Again, to quote Norton, "The English of the KJB has many archaic words that present... challenges to the understanding, but... it is obvious that changing them is translating them" [*A Textual History of the King James Bible*, 138]. The Geneva Bible of 1560, being even earlier than the King James Bible of 1611, has many archaic words. The purpose of this edition is to let the reader see what they are, not to see how we decided to translate them.

**Indiscernible Text** There have been occasions when we simply could not discern the meaning of a word, or the intent of the original translators, either from our original source or from any other resource available to us. In those few cases, we have used ellipses to indicate omitted text.

**Study Notes** Study notes from the source edition frequently employ wording like "Look afore, chap. 5,29" [found in Matthew 18:8] or "as God command Levit. 23.40" [at Matthew 21:9]. We have standardized all references to Scripture using the book name abbreviations listed on the Books of the Old and New Testaments page in this volume, and using contemporary practice of separating chapter and verse with a colon. In cases like the first one above we simply use, for these examples, "See Matt. 5:29" and "as God commanded, Lev. 23:40."

## CONCLUSION

To God be the glory for allowing us to be used in the restoration of this historic work. The republication of this Bible is an indication that the Lord is a faithful, covenant-keeping God, "That thou mayest know, that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy unto them that love him and keep his commandments, even to a thousand generations." (Deut. 7:9)

Merciful Lord, we ask you to once again grant Repentance, Reformation, and Revival in your Church for the advancement of your Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

*Tolle Lege Press*