

This article is based on an extended video-recorded interview with Tyndale Biographer Professor David Daniell and is abridged and edited for this DVD.

Childhood

William Tyndale was born about 1494 in the county to the west of Britain called Gloucester, which is on the border of Wales; a wonderful rich county, very beautiful still. Through it runs a river, big by British standards, called the River Severn which flows to a port called Bristol from which ships went all over the world in Tyndale's time.

From an early age, Tyndale was privileged to attend a very fine and famous school at a nearby town where among other things he would learn very good Latin, the language of scholars throughout Europe and the language of the Church. From there he proceeded to the University of Oxford when he was about 12 years of age and there he remained for 10 years.

Life at Oxford

Life as an Oxford student would consist of listening to lectures and reading books. But unlike books today, the books Tyndale would have studied from would have been handwritten, as there weren't many printed books in existence and they were very scarce and very private.

The two most significant things about his time in Oxford were first, that he became passionately interested in the Scriptures. (Oddly enough the Scriptures were not studied there even though he was supposed to be doing theology.) And the second most significant occurrence was that while he was at Oxford the New Testament was printed in the original Greek for the first time by a wonderful European scholar named Erasmus.

It is important to note that Greek had been closed as a language and nobody really taught it until about 20 years before Tyndale went to Oxford. So, Tyndale eagerly took the opportunity to learn Greek and we know he learned it very, very well.

Erasmus's New Testament in Greek flooded Europe and everything more or less in Tyndale's life flowed from that event. He realized that with access to the printed Greek New Testament, he could translate from the original Greek, the original language in which the New Testament was written, into English.

Latin and the Church

Today we have many, many Christian denominations, particularly in America. So, it may be difficult to realize that at the time of Tyndale and for the previous 1200 years, there had been in Europe only one church, the Roman Catholic Church controlled by the Pope in Rome. This was universal throughout Europe.

Slightly further east, the Greek Orthodox Church -- and later on, the other Orthodox churches in Russia for example -- had nothing to do with the Pope, they disliked him very much. They also maintained the original New Testament in Greek, which the Roman Church wouldn't have. The Roman Church suppressed even the idea of a New Testament in Greek insisting it had to be Latin.

Now the original language of the New Testament is Greek and that of the Old Testament is Hebrew. Originally when the Greek New Testament was written, Greek was the language of communication in all countries of the eastern Mediterranean. However, with the expansion of the Roman Empire, Latin became the common language and naturally the Scriptures were eventually translated into Latin and remained that way for 1200 years.

One of the reasons for this was control. If the people didn't know what the Scriptures said, they couldn't be aware of things the Church was doing that were not within the Scriptures. There was the idea which the Roman Church put about very strongly, that the Scripture was too difficult for the people to understand and that it had to be interpreted from the Latin by a priest. Now all of us that have Bibles in our hands these days know that that's not true. Of course there are difficulties and hard bits to read, but the Gospels, the parables of Jesus, anybody can understand.

Now when Tyndale was a child, there were circulating in Gloucester and throughout that part of England, illegal translations of the Bible into English. These were translated not from the original Greek, but from the Latin, the language the Church inaccurately insisted was the official language of the Bible. This was a convenient way of controlling the public; if they could not read Latin, they could only do as they were told.

Attending your local church, you could expect to hear the mass in Latin and perhaps the sermon in English with an occasional few Scriptures translated from the Latin into English. Sadly even many of the priests had little idea what they were reading as few of them knew proper Latin.

A growing desire to see the Word of God translated into the common language for the benefit of every English citizen became paramount to Tyndale. His passion for the Scriptures was never purely academic, though he was very skilled. He had realized that the Greek New Testament had to be translated into English. If he had a conversion experience, it was recognizing -- when he had in his hand that volume of Erasmus's Greek New Testament -- that it had to be in English, that God was calling him to do that. Having the privilege of understanding Scripture first-hand made him realize the benefit that Scripture could have on an individual and he longed to make the experience available to all. There was however a problem ahead of him.

Translations outlawed

Tyndale faced a dilemma: for reasons only applying to England, it had been decided by the Church 100 years before that nobody should translate the Bible into English or anything else other than what the Church authorized.

If you tried to translate the Bible from the Latin -- because the Greek was unknown -- into English, you would be regarded a heretic and very severely punished. The least you would have is imprisonment for life and most commonly you would be burned.

Now we say, when we're talking about history, "Oh, that person was burned alive." But we forget that it was a most horrifying death because it was not quick. Sometimes burning alive could take as long as 3 days. It was an appalling punishment.

Sir John and Lady Anne Walsh

After Oxford, Tyndale became a priest, but this is because there was really no other life available to him. An enormous number of people became priests. It didn't necessarily mean that they had a very special calling from God to be one. It was a way of life as a man nowadays might become an attorney or doctor.

He then went back to Gloucester to a wonderful manor house called Little Sodbury manor, home to Sir John and Lady Anne Walsh, who took Tyndale in as a tutor to their children. The Walsh's had a royal connection to Henry VIII and Lady Anne's brother had been a courtier with the king.

To have a great Oxford scholar tutor such young children would not have taken Tyndale a great deal of his day. I believe it's quite clear that the Walsh's were sympathetic to his idea of having a quiet place in which to translate the New Testament from Greek into English. (Little Sodbury manor is privately owned now, but some years ago I was able to be in the room where Tyndale did his work and had the opportunity to kneel down on the floor and thank God for his work.)

Many an evening the Walsh's would invite local people to meals where Tyndale would be present and very often these developed into quite interesting discussions. On one very famous occasion in a heated debate, a local priest challenged Tyndale's idea of the availability of the Scriptures in English. The priest insisted that the Scriptures could only be understood by the learned and thus by interpretation of church leaders, who would then pass down decrees to the people. Tyndale disagreed and the discussion soon erupted into a heated exchange of words culminating with the priest saying, "We were better without God's law than the Pope's". To which Tyndale famously replied, "I defy the Pope and all his laws! If God spare my life ere many years I shall cause the boy that driveth the plow to know more of Scripture than thou dost." And of course that's what he eventually did.

Tyndale's dilemma and the Bishop of London

Tyndale's outspoken passion for the translation of the Scriptures began to draw the attention of the local clergy. It was clear to those that supported him, such as Sir John and Lady Anne Walsh, that his outspoken convictions could endanger his life.

One possible way of translating the Bible with the official blessing of the Church was to do it under the guise of a scholarly study, so with this idea in mind, Tyndale approached Tunstall, the Bishop of London, who had been known to be sympathetic to the ideas that Tyndale held.

By the time he went to see the Bishop, Tyndale was about 23 or 24 years of age and was already considered a brilliant scholar in Oxford as well as a linguist that mastered 8 languages. He took to the Bishop of London his own translation of an oration: a speech by the Greek writer Isocrates which is among the most difficult bits of Greek there is. We've lost the translation now, it's disappeared, but we know it was a very, very good translation.

Tunstall looked at Tyndale's Greek translation of Isocrates and was very impressed with his translating abilities. Clearly Tyndale was a capable and

brilliant linguist. However, to Tyndale's proposal for a translation of the New Testament, the Bishop's response was negative and he had his reasons.

As well as being Bishop of London, Tunstall was a politician and he was under the control of Cardinal Wolsey, a very powerful man in Henry the VIII's court. Wolsey was a very ambitious politician and churchman who exercised a great deal of control over the English Church. However he was disliked very much by the common people because he was an oppressor who tried to keep England in the stranglehold of the Roman Church.

Cardinal Wolsey also had an ambition to be the next Pope. Now, you could not in that case be associated in any way with heresy, so Tunstall, being under Wolsey, had to say no to Tyndale's request. But this is rather alarming because Tunstall was a great friend of Erasmus and had actually found Greek manuscripts in Europe for Erasmus to use, so he should have been sympathetic, but politics intervened and Tunstall declined his permission.

Tyndale objected very strongly to the stranglehold that Wolsey had on Henry and on the Church and he referred to him in one of his books as "Wolfsey"; one of the few people Tyndale was rude about.

Wolsey built one of the biggest and some would say one of the best colleges in Oxford which is called Christ Church. It's actually smaller now than he intended to be; so grand that the king himself would have been made small by it. But here Wolsey personally assembled a large number of the best scholars of Britain and Europe that he could find, including some friends of Tyndale, not knowing that they didn't agree with him at all.

Henry Monmouth/ Tyndale works outside of the established Church

Having been snubbed by Bishop Tunstall, Tyndale remained in London for a year staying with a wealthy merchant named Henry Monmouth and also preaching in London where we know a lot of people heard him. But he realized, having hung about in London trying to get permission to translate the Bible and meeting with closed doors that, as he wrote later, "There was no place in all England where he could do this work."

So, with Monmouth's money helping him, he fled to Germany. As he left England with Monmouth's support Tyndale was breaking the law, and both of them knew it because it was illegal in England to translate any part of the Bible into English.

When Tyndale was crossing the sea to go to Germany, just at that time we know of a young man in Norwich, a city north of London, who was burned alive for having in his possession a small piece of paper on which was written the Lord's Prayer in English. Tyndale also knew that by going to Germany he would not be out of range of King Henry, Cardinal Wolsey or Bishop Tunstall. He was taking a risk. He also knew that he would probably never see England again because while Henry was alive and while Wolsey was powerful, as soon as he stepped back into England he would be arrested and sentenced to burn at the stake. Tyndale accepted to being a fugitive for the rest of his life

Germany

Relocating to Germany was a very sensible idea. In 1500, there were in Europe about one thousand printers, and we know many of their names. And there were two in England; neither of them very good. So for Tyndale to go abroad to a printing house in

Germany was very sensible: one, because it would be good printing and two, because the resultant book would be more widely circulated.

He settled in Cologne, at a very famous printing shop with a man called Peter Quentel and there he began to print the Greek New Testament in English, the work he'd been doing at Little Sodbury manor.

Living in Cologne, Tyndale wouldn't have needed to live in hiding. He was living just as an English merchant would. There were a large number of English merchants around in Germany, and particularly in Belgium. He would not consider himself in too much danger in Cologne. The danger to him came later.

Printing

Printing in Europe could be very good. You could produce a very beautiful book on beautiful paper with beautiful type and beautifully bound; most of the time the printing was just ordinary and unbound. If you bought a book you bought it without a binding, you just bought the loose leaves and got it bound yourself.

Printing could be very quick and very successful and very accurate. A good print shop, like Peter Quentel's, would have twenty or thirty people working on printing frames there. And not only setting up the print and establishing the printing but binding it all together. Had Tyndale gone on and finished printing his New Testament in Cologne it probably would have taken 6 weeks just to print.

Peter Quentel

Peter Quentel was not really breaking the law. He was a very canny printer and made a lot of money printing for both sides so to speak.

He was printing powerful Catholic documents and also printing things like the New Testament with comments on them which were forbidden in England. However things were a little looser in Germany and in Belgium and there was more freedom.

Quentel would have known that once Tyndale finished his New Testament it would be smuggled into England. But on the other hand printers are not fools, he wouldn't have set up what was going to be a very beautiful book without knowing it was going to be bought and that he was going to make a lot of money off of it. He knew that there were thousands upon thousands of people in England waiting to receive it, to buy it.

Raid at Peter Quentel's shop

It's obvious that by the time Tyndale approached Quentel he had already finished the whole New Testament translation first. A printer wouldn't accept a manuscript to print unless he had the complete work so that he could calculate how much paper he needed, how much ink and so on. The printing got as far as nearly the end of Matthew's gospel, which is about a twentieth part of the whole New Testament, when the print shop was raided. This was because a rather nasty man, who went under the Latin name of Cochlaeus and who was violently, violently against Martin Luther and wrote enormous amounts against him, discovered that Quentel was printing a New Testament in English.

The story goes that he got the printers drunk and when they were inebriated they said, "There's a book being printed that is going to change England". So, Cochlaeus told

Henry's court, Henry's court got back to Cologne and the Cologne authorities were persuaded to raid the shop.

Tyndale flees/ smuggling the Scriptures

Luckily Tyndale gets warning that Cochlaeus' raid on Quentel's print shop is coming and he and his helper, a man called William Roy, manage to take the manuscript and the few pages they printed with them and sail in a boat up the River Rhine to a city which was safe for them, a city called Worms.

And there in Worms a small printer printed the very first translation of the New Testament into English; a wonderful treasure! 6,000 were printed which was a lot for a book of that time, smuggled down the Rhine in bales and then across to England.

Now when we hold our modern Bibles we have to remember that the Bible in English is less than 500 years old. You could only be an owner of a Bible thanks to Tyndale. We have to remember that it was a small book that you could not only hold in your hand, but slip into your pocket. So that you could take it into the fields, you could read it round the hearth, you could read it in the pub, as people did; you could read it in the backs of churches. You always have to remember this, because we're used to Bibles being bigger. But every book that Tyndale ever printed, and he printed many, was pocket sized.

We know that when these bales arrived in the English seaport they would be eagerly received by a network of Christians who were awaiting the books. This was partly because 150 years before, there had been manuscript translations made from the Latin into English which were still about, still copied and were still being made. Many people would know that it was possible to get hold of a translation into English secretly and there was a great network of people who carried these secret manuscripts about. Then the people heard that there was a printed New Testament from the Greek coming into England, and they were watchful and the network alerted.

That first translation that Tyndale made in 1526 in Worms, was then reprinted later in Antwerp and within eight years we know that 20,000 copies were printed and bought in England. This was in spite of the fact that the Bishop of London originally collected as many as he could find and punished the owners, some with death, and made a great bonfire outside St. Paul's Cathedral and burned all of the copies that he was able to get his hands on.

This is a terrible thing, to burn God's Word but on top of that, the Bishop also preached a sermon while the burning was going on in which he said that the books were heresy and that the Church had refused it because there were 2000 errors in Tyndale's translation.

Well, from Tunstall's point of view there *were* that many errors because Tyndale was translating from the original Greek and not from the Church's Latin version. The two are different, in fact very different in places, so therefore Tunstall saw 2000 errors. Tyndale later said that the Church was so determined to make him a heretic that if he failed to dot an "i" they would call that heresy and burn him.

Hearing in Germany of the burning of his books and the hostility, Tyndale didn't give up as a lesser man would. What he did do was something that was completely strange in England: he learned the Hebrew language.

Translating the Old Testament

The Jewish Scriptures, what we Christians call the Old Testament, are written in Hebrew, which is an odd language actually. It was a language unknown in England apart from two scholars in Cambridge who thought it was an interesting language to learn. No one was attracted in translating from it but Worms, as it happened, was a center of Rabbinical learning; a center where scholarly Jews could teach.

There Tyndale learned very good Hebrew. Then he went from Worms to Antwerp on the Belgian coast to a very thriving seaport which was full of printers and there he printed the first ever translations from Hebrew into English of the first five books of the Old Testament: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. These were then smuggled across to England in larger numbers and more of these have survived to date.

One copy of the 1526 New Testament in Greek out of 6000 printed had survived until this time. And that, the British Library in London bought ten years ago for a million and a quarter pounds to display in public view. You can see it there now.

Eight years ago in the German city of Stuttgart another copy was found. So we now have two copies of that original New Testament. But there are more copies about of the Hebrew translation.

As well as writing other books, Tyndale then went on to revise his 1526 New Testament into a second one with a few changes. This was because he'd learned Hebrew meanwhile and he had discovered what people tend to know very well now, that if you know Hebrew well, the New Testament reading looks a little different. So, modern translators of the Greek New Testament tend to know Hebrew as well.

He published the revision in Antwerp in 1534 and many, many of these were smuggled into England and were more successful as fewer of them were destroyed. One of them actually came to King Henry's court and was proudly owned by the young woman who became Henry's second queen, Anne Boleyn. This is a remarkable volume which the British Library now holds. I've held it in my hands and around the four edges is written in Latin, "*Owned by Anne Boleyn, Queen*". It's a wonderful document and she was sympathetic to Tyndale and what he was doing though she had very little influence on Henry.

King Henry seeks Tyndale

King Henry, knowing of Tyndale's books, realized that this man was going to have even more influence in England than himself. He therefore thought it would be a good idea if Tyndale became part of his own court where he could be controlled. So through various means he sent a messenger to him, a man named Steven Vaughn.

Now, while Tyndale was in Antwerp, that very busy, thriving port, he was living in what we call the English House, which was the house of the English merchants. It was a little bit like an Oxford College where everybody would live together. Tyndale would be very comfortable there as it also allowed him some protection. Being the English House it was a little bit like a modern embassy, like when you have an American embassy in London. When you go into it you are actually going into America. So when Tyndale was in the English House at Antwerp in a sense he would be under English law and safe because the Belgian people were aware they couldn't do anything to him. Regardless,

Tyndale had to lie low and the English merchants knew that he had to be kept secret. Even though he was free from European law, he was under danger.

Steven Vaughn spent a long time trying to find Tyndale. He would know through rumor that he was somewhere in Antwerp, and he would know that probably somebody in the English House knew where to find him. Through others, Tyndale eventually made himself known to Steven Vaughn and they met secretly in the corner of a field by night. We have a record from Vaughn of how the conversation went.

The outcome was that Steven Vaughn said that the King would be ready to bring Tyndale back to the court if he would come. Tyndale said that he would certainly come back if the King would only authorize the translation of the Bible into English. Tyndale also made it very clear that he was a loyal subject of the King, that he was in no way a man of treason and he wanted to do the best for King Henry's England. He pointed out that England was alone in not having the Scriptures in the common language. Other European countries had had the Scriptures in their language for decades. England was alone in this, and so, if the King would authorize a Bible in English, Tyndale would be very happy to come kneel at his feet. But until then he was not coming.

Vaughn took that message back to King Henry and we don't know whether King Henry reacted at all, but the result was a violent letter which I believe was dictated by the then Chancellor Sir Thomas More.

Tyndale in Antwerp

Tyndale continues to live in Antwerp quietly and in poverty, cold and hungry and working on translating. He is not getting any money for his books though they were selling well; the money was going to the printer. It was not the modern system of royalties to the author.

Tyndale knows that he is in danger all the time, but he also knows through the English merchants as well as friends like John Frith who came to visit him, that very many people are buying, living by and being converted by his New Testament and the first five books of the Old Testament translations. That's all he's done so far.

He then begins working on the next quarter of the Old Testament, the historical books but beyond that he is not able to go.

Betrayed

As he's just finished a new manuscript of his translation of Joshua through Chronicles, a horrible Englishman called Henry Phillips arrives. Phillips claims to be a great admirer of Tyndale and is introduced to him. Tyndale, who is a nice man, befriends Phillips and likes him and shows him his work and Phillips even offers to help him, although he has no skills.

We know two things about Henry Phillips: first, he was an appalling villain. His father had entrusted him with all his money to take into safekeeping in London and Phillips on the way spent it all. He then became very desperate for money. This came to the notice of the church authorities in London, particularly the new Bishop of London, Bishop Stokesly, who decided to give Henry Phillips some money if he would make sure that Tyndale was captured and killed. So Phillips turns up smarmily trying to be friends with Tyndale who takes it in completely and doesn't realize the deceit.

Presently, Phillips invites Tyndale out to lunch and Tyndale agrees, though it's a foolish thing to do, because it means stepping out of the safe house. And when they go out the door, there waiting for him are soldiers arranged by Phillips. Tyndale is arrested and taken to the Holy Roman Emperor's court in Brussels where he is accused of heresy and plunged into a dungeon cell in Vilvorde Castle outside Brussels. This castle doesn't exist anymore.

He then spends the next sixteen months of his life in darkness and in cold, unable to have his books, unable to do any work, but visited very frequently, every day in fact by Catholic scholars from the University of Leuven nearby who are trying to convict him of heresy and take him through all the points of his belief. This is not to save his life, as he was going to lose his life anyway. This was to save him in the afterlife so that he would confess his heresy of having translated the Bible into English. This Tyndale never did confess because it was what he lived by.

His condition in the prison cell was very bad. He was arrested in August and in September, as the weather's getting colder, he wrote to the authorities a letter in Latin requesting his own warm clothes, which had been confiscated. He also asked for a light for the evenings because *"as it is getting dark it is wearisome sitting alone in the dark"*. This is the greatest scholar in Europe who is sitting alone in the dark for 16 months! He also asks for his Hebrew dictionary, grammar and Scriptures so that he can go on with his work. We don't think any of them were supplied.

For 16 months he was subject to interrogation in Latin and the prison authorities as well as the jailor and his daughter would speak to him only in Flemish. This man who knew more about the English language than anybody else, even in a way than Shakespeare, who gave us brilliant translations, so clear, so memorable and wonderful, never heard any English spoken for the last 16 months of his life. It's a horrifying thought; it was part of the punishment of course.

Eventually both the jailer and his daughter became very fond of Tyndale, finding him a wonderful man. And clearly, though in Flemish, Tyndale was able to speak to them. So impressed were they by Tyndale as a man, the work he had done and his faith in Jesus Christ that they were converted. This is told to us by a later historian called John Fox.

Execution

Then on the morning of October 6th, 1536, he was taken out of his cell, stripped, degraded from the priesthood through a special ceremony where symbolically it was shown that he was rejected by the Church, and then tied to a stake in the courtyard of the prison in the presence of grand churchmen who had come to celebrate the occasion.

Because he was a great scholar they allowed him to be strangled first. He died of strangulation and then, he was burned.

Aftermath

After his death, Tyndale was more or less forgotten. His colleague, a man called John Rogers, who was chaplain to the English House made sure that the manuscript of the second quarter of the Old Testament, the historical books Joshua to Chronicles, went to print so that after his death we have in print two New Testaments and half of the Old

Testament. But whether he went beyond 2 Chronicles into the great poetic and prophetic books of the Old Testament, we don't know.

To think of what Tyndale would have made of the book of Job, the prophet Jeremiah, the Psalms ...we have no knowledge of this. We can gather, we can hint, but he would have made wonderful things of them.

The really tragic part of the story is that within ten months of Tyndale's death, King Henry was authorizing a Bible in English for the English people. And from that point on everyone could have access to Tyndale's Bible because half the Bible that was printed was in fact Tyndale's although that wasn't mentioned.

When this first edition in 1537, ten months after Tyndale's death, was printed by his colleague John Rogers, there's no mention of Tyndale in it. No mention at all. In fact, it had to be so secret who the author was that they invented a different name for it and called it Thomas Matthew's Bible.

Immensely popular in England, it was bought almost as soon as it arrived. And out of that, King Henry, so struck by the popularity, authorized his own very big revision of the whole Bible, which he issued to every parish and which we call "The Great Bible". An enormous number of copies of that were made and survived. But, everybody knew that Thomas Matthew's Bible, the first one, was mainly Tyndale's work, because between the Old Testament and the New there are some ornamental letters, "WT". This tells everybody that it really is the work of William Tyndale.

King Henry changed his mind very often in all directions depending on who was most powerful at court. During this time his ideas were being influenced by Thomas Cromwell who was secretary to the court. Cromwell persuaded Henry that it would be a very good idea if Matthew's Bible was not only authorized but also redone for every parish. Through this, John Rogers was able to get Henry's authorization so on the title page it says that it was authorized by his majesty the King and therefore it was freely printed. Only 1600 copies were done and they rapidly sold out.

Mind you there was a backlash! There was a reaction to this in the court and Cromwell was charged most ridiculously with illegal things and before he had time to breathe he was executed. That's the life at Henry's court!

That had also happened to Anne Boleyn, his former queen. Trumped up charges which were totally lunatic came against her: that she was incestuous and adulterous. Things completely unlike Anne Boleyn, and before she knew what was happening her head was chopped off. The same thing happened to Thomas Cromwell. Already the backlash was happening in the court. At the end of his life Henry was persuaded to recant a lot of his reforming ideas and say that everybody had to be strictly Catholic again. But that's Henry VIII.

Supporters' fates

Around Tyndale were very powerful friends who suffered. **Lord Monmouth** who helped him in England was, under Thomas More, raided and imprisoned. His books were confiscated and he suffered severely financially. Eventually he was set free and he wasn't killed.

John Frith, a very dear Oxford friend of Tyndale's, who was a brilliant theologian, wrote a book about the Eucharist, questioning the doctrine of transubstantiation. This was heresy to Thomas More and Frith would eventually be killed for it, having first been imprisoned many months and shackled by his feet and his arms so that he couldn't lie down. The amount of cruelty involved in pursuing heretics, is beyond belief.

But the man who carried a great deal of responsibility and affection for Tyndale was Lady Anne Walsh's brother, **Thomas Poyntz** who was living in Antwerp in the English House. Thomas was horrified by Tyndale's arrest and tried to get the merchants to do something about it but his efforts were all blocked by Henry Phillips.

Thomas however, was determined to rescue Tyndale from prison but so vicious was the attack on heresy at the time that Thomas himself suddenly found that because he was a friend of Tyndale he himself was going to be arrested. So he escaped from his house in Antwerp leaving his wife, family and business behind. Sadly, he totally failed to make any connection with the court and his wife divorced him, saying that she didn't want to have anything to do with the man anymore because he was a heretic. Thomas Pointz eventually died in poverty in England, a disgraced courtier.

Legacy

Tyndale gave his life for translating the Bible and we must remember when we hold a modern English Bible in our hands that the English Bible was made in blood. It's very important to remember that. At the same time we rejoice that what Tyndale opened has never been shut up since. It's always there.

His legacy to us all is not only his witness as a great Christian man but above all, the Scriptures in English for the first time accurate to the original languages, which can't be said of all the translations. Secondly, written with clarity that is immediately understandable by anybody. His gift to us is of that clear, simple, short sentence English instead of Latin. And above all, the English he speaks is close to the heart, so that one always feels, "*Here is the Christian heart!*" in what Tyndale is writing.

I have spent a long time studying Tyndale and working through his translations, seeing what the original was and how he made it and I have written books about him and he remains an astonishingly powerful figure for me; a man who was prepared to sacrifice everything, including his life, for giving people the Scriptures so they could read them. Therefore I respond so much more strongly to the Scriptures in English than I did before. I've always been a Christian even before I knew Tyndale's work, but in his work I feel, "Here's the original speaking through Tyndale", and I love him for it.

I have a great friend, a scholar in Cambridge, who is a great Greek scholar. He was chair of one of the panels for the New Testament, producing an English translation 10 years ago and he told me once that they would spend the morning sitting around the table, all the scholars, working on the piece of Greek from the New Testament and they'd work around various translations. In the end they had come up with an idea that was very, very good and they had all written it down when somebody said "*That's Tyndale!*" and they discovered that it was!

He got there first.

