

# Some interesting Bible facts!

- **The word 'Bible'** comes from the Greek word 'biblia', a word of Latin origin and simply meaning, 'books'. This word had its beginnings with the word 'biblos', which referred to any kind of written document, but originally to one written on the inner bark of the papyrus plant, imported from Egypt.
- **By 500AD the Bible** had been translated into many languages. Not long after this the church ruled that all Bibles had to be in Latin, which effectively took the Bible away from the ordinary folk of many countries. An early break from this in the 10<sup>th</sup> century was the Gospels in Anglo-Saxon and known as the 'Wessex Gospels'.
- **The first English translation** of the Bible was made and **hand written** around 1380 by John Wycliffe. It is possible to go back to manuscripts earlier than Wycliffe, but the language is very 'Anglo-Saxon', and not very close to today's English.
- **The very first book printed** was the Bible at Mentz in Germany, by Johannes Guttenberg, who was the inventor of the 'movable type' printing press. By 1455 he had printed the Bible in Latin, the first edition being 180 copies, making the Bible the first mass produced book.
- **William Tyndale translated and printed** a New Testament in 1525-26. He was imprisoned and then burnt at the stake by the religious leaders of the day for his valiant effort. Tyndale's loyal assistants, Myles Coverdale and John Rogers, continued Tyndale's work, and finished their translation of the Old Testament. The first complete Bible in a more modern English was printed in 1535, known as the Coverdale Bible.

- **The Geneva Bible** was the first Bible to add verses to chapters for easier reference. This Bible was published in 1560 and remained the most popular Bible for decades after the 1611 King James version was released. The Geneva Bible was the first Bible taken to America by the Puritans and Pilgrims.
- **A collection of the oldest** manuscripts of the Bible were discovered in 1947 in a cave in Wadi Qumran on the north of the Dead Sea. Among this collection was a 23-foot leather scroll containing the complete book of Isaiah. This copy of Isaiah is unique proof of the reliability of the Holy Scriptures, for the text agrees exactly with what we have in our present day Bible. From a total of 11 caves many more scrolls of different books were discovered. In the early 1960s a special museum in Jerusalem called, the Shrine of the Book, was built to house many of the scrolls.
- **The word 'Armageddon'** only appears once in the Bible, but would be one of the most recognised Bible words today (Rev.16:16).
- **Bible prophets** predicted the rebirth of Israel as a nation in the 'latter years'. This was prophesied over 2500 years ago by several of the Jewish prophets including Ezekiel and Zechariah.  
See Ezek.28:25-26, 34:13, 36:24, 38:8; Zech.8:6-8.
- **Hebrew words** that start with a 'Y' sound have mostly been given a 'J' sound in our English Bibles. The Hebrew name 'Yehowshua' becomes Joshua or Jesus in English. The rather long name, 'Yeruwshalayim' becomes Jerusalem in English. 'Yarden' becomes Jordan, 'Yizreel' becomes Jezreel, 'Yeriychow' becomes Jericho and 'Yowceph' becomes Joseph.

- **God's name appears over 7000 times** in the Bible, being translated as 'LORD' in most English Bibles. It appears in the Hebrew as YHWH with no vowels. In the seventh century some Jewish biblical scholars added the vowels 'e', 'o' and 'a' so that the name read, 'Yehowah'. These additions had the effect of aiding English pronunciation.
- **The English spelling of God's name** can differ. Most churches today have settled for either 'Yahweh' or 'Jehovah'. 'Jehovah' is actually the Latin ie Catholic version of God's name which emerged in church writings in the late Middle Ages. Many people would not be aware of this.
- **Some additions** have been made to the original text of the Bible. These additions were simply made to help our English version make grammatical sense. The AV and NKJV translations indicate these additions by writing them in *italics*. Psalm 68 is an example where many of these words in italics have been added, but you will notice that their addition does not alter the meaning of the text.
- **Other additions** and changes have been made particularly to the New Testament which have not been shown in italics. Fortunately many Bibles today including the New King James Version list these additions in the centre margin for your convenience. Two examples of this are the following words that are later additions to 1 John 5:7-8 in the AV: "...in heaven: *the Father; the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness on earth...*", and the words, "*in heaven*", were added to Heb. 10:34. All of those words are man made additions to the Authorised Version, and are not found in the original Greek New Testament manuscripts.

