

THE Bible IN America™ M U S E U M

Houston Baptist University

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Anniversary of the World's Most Published Book

2004 is the 400th anniversary of the beginning of the King James Version of the Bible, the most published book in the world. Soon after King James assumed the throne of

England in 1603, Puritan church leaders sent the King a petition to reform the Church of England. Over sixty years earlier, King Henry VIII had separated the Church of England from the Roman Church and made the English monarch head of the English Church. The English Church continued many of the rituals and practices of the Roman Church.

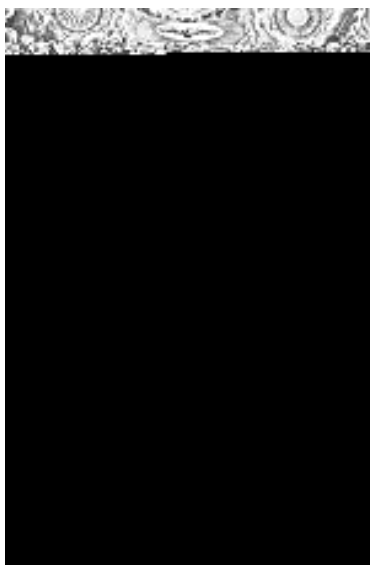
The Puritans wanted to purify the Church so its teachings and liturgy followed the Bible more closely.

In response to their petition, King James called a conference of leading churchmen and theologians to meet at Hampton Court, a royal palace fifteen miles from London, in January 1604. The Puritan petitioners sought "a due and godly reformation" in the Church of England. Believing the church government of bishops as well as some church practices and the liturgy in the Book of Common Prayer were "not agreeable to the Scriptures," they encouraged the planting in all churches of good pastors who could preach the Scriptures. They were optimistic that King James, who considered himself a scholar and something of a theologian, would move forward the Church's reformation. In concluding their address to the king, they quoted Mordecai's words to

Esther, "Who knoweth whether you are come to the kingdom for such a time?"

However, during the three days of the Hampton Court Conference, the King gave little support to the petitioned reforms and favored few changes in the ecclesiastical order. King James fully supported the established bishops, believing they were necessary supports to his own throne. He feared the abolition of the one would lead to the abolition of the monarchy itself. King James was determined to make the Puritans conform to the established church, "or else I will harrie them out of the land, or else do worse."

Though the King would not accept Puritan reforms, he did accept an almost off-handed comment made by Dr. Rainolds, the Puritan spokesman. When Dr. Rainolds mentioned a new translation of the Bible might be in order, since the translations approved under earlier monarchs were "corrupt and not answerable to the original," the King became interested. He gave an order for a new Bible translation, "to be done by the best learned of both the Universities." In almost a footnote to the Hampton Court Conference, King James set in motion the project for translating a Bible into English. The sponsorship of this translation, which came to bear the King's name, today is King James' most memorable accomplishment.



My dear Son:

September 1811

In your letter of the 18th January to your mother, you mentioned that you read to your aunt a chapter of the Bible or a section of **Doddridge's Annotations [available in the Bible in America Museum]** every evening. This information gave me real pleasure; for so great is my veneration for the Bible, and so strong my belief, that when duly read and meditated on, it is of all books in the world, that which contributes most to make men good, wise, and happy – that the earlier my children begin to read it, the more steadily they pursue the practice of reading it throughout their lives, the more lively and confident will be my hopes that they will prove useful citizens of their country, respectable members of society, and a real blessing to their parents...

I have myself, for many years, made it a practice to read through the Bible once every year... My custom is to read four to five chapters every morning immediately after rising from my bed. It employs about an hour of my time...

It is essential, my son, in order that you may go through life with comfort to yourself, and usefulness to your fellow-creatures, that you should form and adopt certain rules or principles, for the government of your own conduct and

There is no charge for admission

- During June and July, tours of the **Bible in America Museum** will be by appointment only. Regular hours will resume in August. Appointments for tours may be made by calling 281-649-3287 or emailing: dseverance@hbu.edu.
- Tours for groups up to 45 are available.
- School groups and home schoolers are welcome (grades 7 and above).

The Museum is currently located in the Moody Library at Houston Baptist University.

1836 Children's Bible For Sale

The Bible in America Museum has reprinted a facsimile of an 1836 children's Bible in its collection. Called a *Hieroglyphic Bible* for its 400 illustration, made by noted American engraver Joseph Adams (1803-1880),

"MANY BOOKS IN MY LIBRARY ARE NOW BEHIND AND BENEATH ME. THEY WERE GOOD IN THEIR WAY ONCE, AND SO WERE THE CLOTHES I WORE WHEN I WAS TEN YEARS OLD; BUT I HAVE OUTGROWN THEM. NOBODY EVER OUTGROWS SCRIPTURE; THE BOOK WIDENS AND DEEPENS WITH OUR YEARS."

—CHARLES H. SPURGEON
