

When Christianity was taken west it was largely taken to Greek-speaking people. The churches in the west used Greek almost entirely for their services for many years, then they gradually turned to translations made in the Latin language and the Christian movement took a tremendous step forward when people could read the Bible and understand it in their own language. The languages of Europe changed. Scholars could read the Latin, but the common people--although it was called the Vulgate (a Bible for the common people) the common people could not understand the Latin.

One day Martin Luther came across the Latin Bible in the library of the monastery. He began to read it and as he read it he found that many superstitions and false ideas had sprung up through the centuries. Little by little he turned against these ideas as he found them contradicting -- contradicted in the Latin Bible that he studied. Luther decided that it should be possible for the German people to have the Bible in their own language and one of the great accomplishments of Luther's life and one of the great forces that brought about the Reformation and spread it all through Germany was Luther's careful translation. Throughout his life thereafter Luther kept bringing out new editions constantly seeking to improve the translation in order to get more and more of -- nearer and nearer to the exact idea of the original in the translation that he made into German. It brought tremendous blessing to the people in Europe. The enemies of the Gospel tried to burn Luther's translations and tried to keep people from having access to it, but the effect of God's Word as put into the language that the people read them was tremendous.

Tyndale in England decided to give his life to trying to bring a similar blessing to the English people. To his surprise he found that most of the scholars of England had no interest in this being done. He thought they would support him but instead they opposed him and he had to flee to the Netherlands, and there he made translations of the Bible and smuggled them into England. It is said that