**Geneva Bible 1560 & 1599**

**http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geneva\_Bible**





The title page of the [1560](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1560) edition of the Geneva Bible; the illustration depicts the Israelites before the [Red Sea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Red_Sea).

The **Geneva Bible** is one of the most historically significant [translations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible_translations) of the [Bible](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible) in the [English language](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_language), preceding the [King James translation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_James_Version) by 51 years. It was the primary Bible of the 16th century [Protestant movement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Protestantism) and was the Bible used by [William Shakespeare](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Shakespeare), [Oliver Cromwell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oliver_Cromwell), [John Milton](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Milton), [John Knox](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Knox), [John Donne](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Donne), and [John Bunyan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Bunyan), author of [*Pilgrim's Progress*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pilgrim%27s_Progress). It was one of the Bibles taken to America on the [*Mayflower*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mayflower), it was used by many [English Dissenters](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_Dissenters), and it was still respected by [Oliver Cromwell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oliver_Cromwell)'s soldiers at the time of the [English Civil War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_Civil_War).

What makes this version of the Holy Bible singularly unique in world history is that, for the very first time, a mechanically-printed, mass-produced Bible was made available directly to the general public which came with a variety of scriptural study guides and aids (collectively called an apparatus), which included verse citations which allow the reader to cross-reference one verse with numerous relevant verses in the rest of the Bible, introductions to each book of the Bible which acted to summarize all of the material that each book would cover, maps, tables, [woodcut illustrations](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woodcut), indexes, as well as other included features — all of which would eventually lead to the reputation of the Geneva Bible as history's very first [study bible](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Study_Bible).

Because the language of the Geneva Bible was more forceful and vigorous, most readers preferred this version strongly over the [Bishops' Bible](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bishops%27_Bible), the translation authorised by the [Church of England](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_England) under [Elizabeth I](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabeth_I_of_England). In the words of [Cleland Boyd McAfee](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Cleland_Boyd_McAfee&action=edit&redlink=1), "it drove the [Great Bible](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Bible) off the field by sheer power of excellence".[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geneva_Bible#cite_note-0)

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**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Geneva_Bible&action=edit&section=1)**] History**

During the reign of Queen [Mary I of England](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_I_of_England) (1553 – 1558), a number of Protestant scholars fled from England to [Geneva](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geneva) in [Switzerland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Switzerland), which was then ruled as a [republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic) in which [John Calvin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Calvin) and [Theodore Beza](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodore_Beza) provided the primary spiritual and theological leadership. Among these scholars was [William Whittingham](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Whittingham), who would come to supervise what would become the effort to create the translation now known as the Geneva Bible, in collaboration with [Myles Coverdale](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Myles_Coverdale), [Christopher Goodman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christopher_Goodman), [Anthony Gilby](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anthony_Gilby), [Thomas Sampson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Sampson), and [Willian Cole](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Cole_%28Puritan%29) – several of whom became prominent figures in the proto-Puritan [Nonconformist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonconformism) faction of the [Vestments controversy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vestments_controversy). Whittingham was directly responsible for the New Testament, which was complete and published in 1557,[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geneva_Bible#cite_note-Herbert-1) while Gilby oversaw the Old Testament.

The first full edition of this Bible, with a further revised New Testament, appeared in 1560,[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geneva_Bible#cite_note-Herbert-1) but it was not printed in England until 1575 (New Testament[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geneva_Bible#cite_note-Herbert-1)) and 1576 (complete Bible[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geneva_Bible#cite_note-Herbert-1)). Over 150 editions were issued; the last probably in 1644.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geneva_Bible#cite_note-Herbert-1) The very first Bible printed in [Scotland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scotland) was a Geneva Bible, which was first issued in 1579.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geneva_Bible#cite_note-Herbert-1) In fact, the involvement of Knox and Calvin in the creation of the Geneva Bible made it especially appealing in Scotland, where a law was passed in 1579 requiring every household of sufficient means to buy a copy.[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geneva_Bible#cite_note-2)

Some editions from 1576 onwards[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geneva_Bible#cite_note-Herbert-1) included Tomson's revisions of the New Testament. Some editions from 1599 onwards[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geneva_Bible#cite_note-Herbert-1) used a new "Junius" version of the Book of Revelation, in which the notes were translated from a new Latin commentary by [Junius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franciscus_Junius_%28the_elder%29) on Revelation.

Like most English translations of the time, the Geneva Bible was translated from scholarly editions of the [Greek](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Koine_Greek) New Testament and the [Hebrew](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_language) Scriptures that comprise the Christian Old Testament. The English rendering was substantially based on the earlier translations by [William Tyndale](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Tyndale) and [Myles Coverdale](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Myles_Coverdale) (80-90% of the language in the Genevan New Testament is from Tyndale).[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ACitation_needed)] However, the Geneva Bible was the first English version in which *all* of the Old Testament was translated directly from the Hebrew (cf. [Coverdale Bible](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coverdale_Bible), [Matthew's Bible](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matthew%27s_Bible)).

The annotations which are an important part of the Geneva Bible were [Calvinist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Calvinism) and [Puritan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puritan) in character, and as such they were disliked by the ruling pro – government Protestants of the [Church of England](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_England), as well as King [James I](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_I_of_England), who commissioned the "Authorized Version", or [King James Bible](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_James_Bible), in order to replace it. The Geneva Bible had also motivated the earlier production of the [Bishops' Bible](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bishops%27_Bible) under [Elizabeth I](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabeth_I), for the same reason, and the later [Rheims-Douai](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Douay-Rheims_Bible) edition by the [Catholic community](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Recusancy). The Geneva Bible remained popular among [Puritans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Puritans) and remained in widespread use until after the [English Civil War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_Civil_War). The Geneva notes were surprisingly included in a few editions of the King James version, even as late as 1715.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geneva_Bible#cite_note-Herbert-1)

The Geneva Bible was the first English Bible to use verse numbers based on the work of Stephanus ([Robert Estienne](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_Estienne) of Paris). It also had an elaborate system of commentary in marginal [glosses](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gloss). This annotation was done by [Laurence Tomson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laurence_Tomson), who translated (for the 1560 Geneva Bible) L'Oiseleur's notes on the Gospels, which themselves came from Camerarius. In 1576 Tomson added L'Oiseleur's notes for the Epistles, which came from [Beza](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beza)'s Greek and Latin edition of the Bible (1565 and later). Beginning in 1599 [Franciscus Junius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franciscus_Junius_%28the_elder%29)' notes on Revelation were added, replacing the original notes deriving from [John Bale](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Bale) and [Heinrich Bullinger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heinrich_Bullinger). Bale's *The Image of both churches* had a great impact on these notes as well as [Foxe's Book of Martyrs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Foxe%27s_Book_of_Martyrs). Both the Junius and Bullinger-Bale annotations are explicitly anti-Roman Catholic and representative of much popular Protestant apocalypticism during the Reformation.

The 1560 Geneva Bible was printed in Roman type—the style of type regularly used today—but many editions used the older [black-letter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blackletter) ("Gothic") type. Of the various later English Bible translations, the next to use Roman type was the [Douay-Rheims Bible](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Douay-Rheims_Bible) of 1582 (New Testament) and 1609–10 (Old Testament).

The Geneva Bible was also issued in more convenient and affordable sizes than earlier versions. The 1560 Bible was in [quarto](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quarto) format (218 × 139 mm type area), but pocketable [octavo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Octavo_%28book%29) editions were also issued, and a few large folio editions. The New Testament was issued at various times in sizes from quarto down to 32º (the smallest, 70×39 mm type area [[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geneva_Bible#cite_note-Herbert-1)). In the late sixteenth century it is likely that the Geneva New Testament cost less than a week's wages even for the lowest-paid labourers.

The 1560 Geneva Bible contained a number of study aids, including [woodcut](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woodcut) illustrations, maps and explanatory 'tables', i.e. indexes of names and topics, in addition to the (in)famous marginal notes. Each book was preceded by an 'argument' or introduction, and each chapter by a list of contents giving verse numbers. Smaller-format editions might be unillustrated and lack the marginal notes, but some large folio editions had additional illustrations, such as one showing Adam and Eve, where Adam wears a typical Elizabethan beard and moustache.

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Geneva_Bible&action=edit&section=3)**] Sample**

To compare the Geneva Bible with the King James, here is Revelation 6:12-17 in both versions (with spelling modernized). The differences have been italicized in the King James extract:

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| --- | --- |
| **Geneva Bible**And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake, and the sun was as black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon was like blood. And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, as a fig tree casteth her green figs, when it is shaken of a mighty wind. And heaven departed away, as a scroll, when it is rolled, and every mountain and isle were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in dens, and among the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the presence of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb. For the great day of his wrath is come, and who can stand? | **King James Bible**And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun *became* black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon *became as* blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, *even* as a fig tree casteth her *untimely* figs, when *she* is shaken of a mighty wind. And *the* heaven *departed* as a scroll when it is rolled *together*; and every mountain and *island was* moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in *the* dens and *in* the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the *face* of him that sitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come; and who *shall be able to* stand? |

The two versions are very similar to each other. Examination of the differences shows that the earlier Geneva version is often more direct and modern in style than the later King James, e.g.

“and the moon was like blood” (Geneva) versus “and the moon became as blood” (King James)

“as a fig tree casteth her green figs” (Geneva) versus “even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs” (King James)

By and large, the difference is that the KJV lacked footnotes that the Geneva Bible contained.

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Geneva_Bible&action=edit&section=4)**] See also**

* [Editio Regia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Editio_Regia)

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Geneva_Bible&action=edit&section=5)**] References**

1. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geneva_Bible#cite_ref-0) [Study of the King James Bible by Cleland Boyd McAfee](http://www.gutenberg.org/catalog/world/readfile?fk_files=39625&pageno=24)
2. ^ [***a***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geneva_Bible#cite_ref-Herbert_1-0) [***b***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geneva_Bible#cite_ref-Herbert_1-1) [***c***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geneva_Bible#cite_ref-Herbert_1-2) [***d***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geneva_Bible#cite_ref-Herbert_1-3) [***e***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geneva_Bible#cite_ref-Herbert_1-4) [***f***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geneva_Bible#cite_ref-Herbert_1-5) [***g***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geneva_Bible#cite_ref-Herbert_1-6) [***h***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geneva_Bible#cite_ref-Herbert_1-7) [***i***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geneva_Bible#cite_ref-Herbert_1-8) [***j***](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geneva_Bible#cite_ref-Herbert_1-9) A. S. Herbert, *Historical Catalogue of Printed Editions of the English Bible 1525–1961*, London: British and Foreign Bible Society; New York: American Bible Society, 1968. SBN 564-00130-9
3. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geneva_Bible#cite_ref-2) [A Chronology of the English Bible](http://www.bible-researcher.com/history2.html)
4. [**^**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geneva_Bible#cite_ref-3) <http://encyclopedia.stateuniversity.com/pages/8308/Geneva-Bible.html>

**[**[**edit**](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Geneva_Bible&action=edit&section=6)**] External links**

Facsimiles

* [A Digital Facsimile of the 1560 Geneva Bible](http://www.thedcl.org/bible/gb/index.html)[[*dead link*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ALinkrot)] at The DCL.

Text

* [Geneva Bible Footnotes](http://www.reformedreader.org/gbn/en.htm)
* [Geneva Bible online](http://www.studylight.org/desk/?=1en&query=Genesis+1&translation=gen)
* [Geneva Bible Text](http://www.bibles.org.uk/pdf/bibles/)[[*dead link*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia%3ALinkrot)] (links to a commercial site)
* [Modern Spelling Geneva Bible with Footnotes for the Gospels](http://www.genevabible.org/Geneva.html)

Articles

* [*The Geneva Bible of 1560*](http://theologytoday.ptsem.edu/oct1960/v17-3-article6.htm): article by [Bruce Metzger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bruce_Metzger) originally printed in *Theology Today*
* [Online version of Sir Frederic G. Kenyon’s article](http://www.bible-researcher.com/geneva6.html) in [*Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hastings%27_Dictionary_of_the_Bible), 1909
* [*Geneva Bible-History*](http://encyclopedia.stateuniversity.com/pages/8308/Geneva-Bible.html) From Cambridge Encyclopedia

Editions Currently in Print

* [*1560 First Edition*](http://www.greatsite.com/facsimile-reproductions/geneva-1560.html): Facsimile Reproduction
* [*1560 First Edition*](http://www.hendrickson.com/html/product/562125.trade.html?category=all) Reduced size Facsimile Reproduction by Hendrickson
* [*1599 Edition*](http://www.plimoth.com/books-media/books/religion/i-the-geneva-bible-i.html): 2 volume Facsimile Reprint of the 1599 edition
* [*1599 Edition*](http://www.tollelegepress.com/gb/geneva.php): Modern Spelling and Typesetting from *The 1599 Geneva Bible Restoration Project* (no illustrations)

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