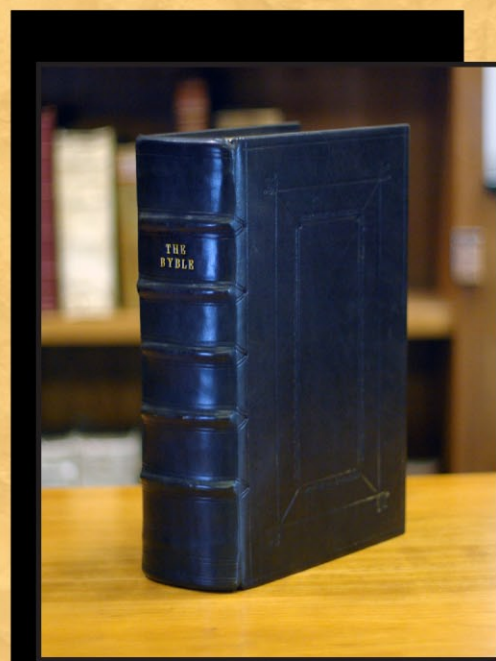


*the life and legacy of*  
**THE KING JAMES BIBLE**  
*celebrating 400 years*

SUMMER 2011 - SPRING 2012  
AN L. TOM PERRY  
SPECIAL COLLECTIONS  
EXHIBITION  
HAROLD B. LEE LIBRARY  
BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY



*The Great Bible, the first translation officially sanctioned by the Church of England*

**T**he year 2011 marks the 400th anniversary of the first printing of the Bible translation known as the King James, or Authorized, Version. The Harold B. Lee Library is one of many institutions celebrating this landmark book and its impact on the religious and secular cultures of the English-speaking world. This exhibit seeks to tell the story of the King James Bible through the printed word, including early Bible translations that informed the text of the King James Version and a showcase of written works that have, in turn, appropriated and been inspired by the King James Version text.

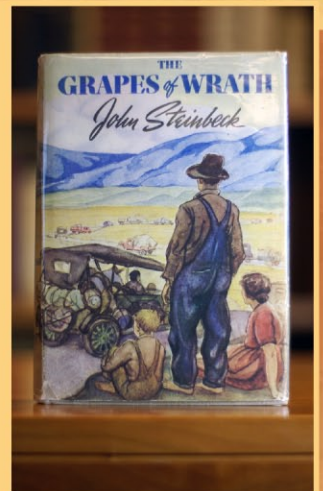
Much has been written in the scholarly and popular press about the creation of the King James Bible, its origins in earlier translations, the personalities who shaped its text, and the manner of its printing. Visitors to this exhibition may be familiar with some of the English Bible translations that came before the King James Version: the Wycliffite Bible, Tyndale's Bible, the Great Bible, the Geneva (or Breeches) Bible, and the Bishop's Bible. Some of these earlier translations were considered heretical, while others had the full endorsement of the Church of England. The King James translators drew from many of these Bibles to create the text of the King James Version, essentially revising many translations into "one principal good one" that could overcome the competing Bible versions and interpretations used by quarreling factions within English Protestantism.



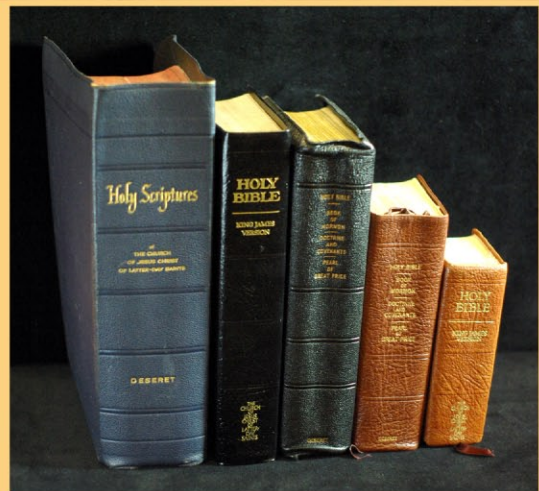
*Hampton Court Palace, where King James I ordered a new translation of the Bible be undertaken*

The ascendancy of the King James Bible as the essential Bible text for worship and study was by no means assured. It faced stiff competition from the Geneva Bible, which was preferred by many early seventeenth-century readers, received no financial support from the king who suggested it be created, and imposed significant financial liabilities on the man who undertook its printing.

Cultural, religious, and political forces over the next half century of this version's existence finally contrived to make the King James Bible the only one used in England. The King James



*The King James Bible translation has influenced music, literature, and the English language itself*



*Multiple editions of the King James Bible have been used over the years by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*

Bible traveled with the English as they colonized the world. In fact, monopolies on Bible printing ensured that the King James Bible was the only version available for export to the American colonies, firmly establishing its place in religious life well before the War of Independence.

Twentieth century British literary critic Laurence Housman asserted that no other book or author "has had so wide and deep an influence on the form and substance of all the literary and poetic work which followed during the next two centuries, as has the [King James] Version of the [Bible]." The King James Bible is a true religious, linguistic, and literary landmark worthy of celebration and commemoration for its 400-year impact on the religious and cultural landscape of the English-speaking world.

The King James Version was the Bible for English-speaking Protestants until fairly recently, as modern translations have supplanted it for individual study and denominational worship. Its decline in popularity means that it exerts less influence on the language and literature of our modern culture, but the King James Bible still holds a central place in many Christian communities, including The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The centrality and ubiquity of the King James Bible from the late seventeenth through the early twentieth century meant that for generations of English speakers, the King James translation was at the forefront of religious worship, private devotion, and personal or classroom reading. In fact, a copy of the King James Version may have been the only book owned by a household. Small wonder, then, that so much of the speech and writing and thought of previous generations borrows from the King James Bible: from direct quotation or allusion to indirect echoes of its diction, its syntax, and the rhythms of its language. The King James Bible translation has influenced music, politics, literature, and the English language itself. American educator Noah Webster observed in 1833, "The language of the [King James] Bible has no inconsiderable influence in forming and preserving our national language" by acting as a touchstone for speech and writing.

*For further information and a list of suggested readings about the history of the King James Bible, please visit the online portion of this exhibition at <http://www.lib.byu.edu/sites/bible>*