

A Bible Translation that began on 17th January

King James I became king of England in 1603. He was already King of Scotland. There had been five other kings of Scotland. This made him James **VI** (the sixth). There had never been a King James in England before. This meant that in England he was King James I or just King James. James hurried away from Scotland. He was pleased to be king of a richer country than Scotland. Soon he arrived in England.

When he got there he was given a petition. Do you know what a petition is? It is a request. Usually it is a request to the government. It is not just a request by one person. Many people put their names to a petition. One thousand people had signed this petition. They were all ministers of the Church of England. "We have a new king," they thought. "We will ask him to make the Church of England better. We will ask him to make it more pure. We will ask him to make it closer to what the Bible says." We call these ministers **Puritans**. They wanted to make the church more **pure**.

James did not like this idea. He ordered a conference to take place at Hampton Court. He would be in charge of the conference. He would be its chairman. A chairman directs a conference. There were ministers at the conference. There were Puritans. There were ministers who were not Puritans. They did not want the Church of England to be more pure. They wanted elaborate ceremony in the church services. The Puritans wanted simple services. The Puritans loved preaching the gospel they wanted preaching to be important in church. James was angry when he heard what the Puritans said at the conference. He would not do as they asked. "I will make them do as I want, or I will chase them out of the land", he said.

After the conference, 300 Puritan ministers were thrown out of the Church of England. It was made illegal to worship anywhere else. If they carried on preaching, the Puritan ministers were breaking the law. For this they were punished. Some people who could no longer worship in the Church of England fled to other countries. Some went to Holland at first. Then they went to the New World.

These were very bad things to happen. But something good came out of the Hampton Court Conference too. On **January 17**, 1604, it was decided to make a new translation of the Bible. This was the only good thing that James I did. A team of clever men was set up. They knew how to read old languages. They could read the languages in which the Bible was written long ago. They used William Tyndale's translation to help them.

In 1611 their translation was published. It is usually called the Authorised Version. It is a beautiful translation. It is very close to the original words that were written in Greek and Hebrew. Everyone loved it. The Puritans loved it. The non Puritans loved it. No other book was read more. The words in it became familiar. Everyone knew them. This began to affect the words people spoke and wrote. English itself changed and became more beautiful because everyone read this same beautiful translation of the Bible.