

Spoilt for Bible Choice

Ever wondered what folks read before the good old King James Bible came along in 1611?

I've been finding out as I help organize an exhibition here in Glasgow of early Bibles, to be called 'Divine Write'. Our University has the best UK collection, including a pre-Reformation illuminated Latin Vulgate of 1490, a Wycliffe New Testament of the late 1300's, through Coverdale of 1535, The Great Bible of 1539, the first (Geneva) Bible printed here in Scotland in 1579, and on to the Bishops' Bible of 1568, to the majestic King James Version of 1611 and beyond.

I can't wait to see these important translations all in one place. But for the exhibition to make a lasting impression we have also to show how the Bible stands today in this great tradition, expanded to electronic, or screen-based, or audio or whatever platform is current. The Bible of course is a living book, not a dusty tome from a bygone age.

Print isn't sacrosanct. We are after all the beneficiaries of an oral tradition reaching back thousands of years. The Word was spoken long before it ever became written or typeset.

May it still speak to us today.

Nicholas