

The Dark Ages

Scriptures Suppressed

Satan does not like written truth. He hates “It is written.”

God’s Word is powerful and strengthens people to resist his power.

He is obligated to flee before the power of God’s word.



The Dark Ages

Predicted

Paul foresaw a period of difficulty for God's people.

“Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

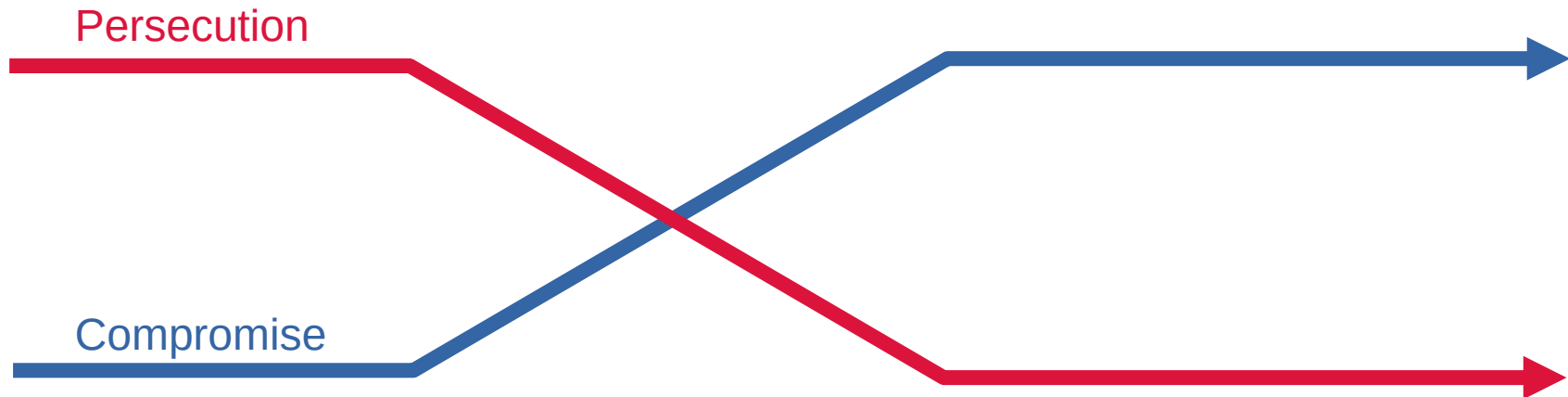
For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work.”

2 Thessalonians 2:3,4,7

The Dark Ages

Predicted

“Little by little, at first in stealth and silence, and then more openly as it increased in strength and gained control of the minds of men, “the mystery of iniquity” carried forward its deceptive and blasphemous work. Almost imperceptibly the customs of heathenism found their way into the Christian church.” GC 49.2



The Dark Ages

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“Satan well knew that the Holy Scriptures would enable men to discern his deceptions and withstand his power. It was by the word that even the Saviour of the world had resisted his attacks. At every assault, Christ presented the shield of eternal truth, saying, “It is written.” To every suggestion of the adversary, He opposed the wisdom and power of the word. In order for Satan to maintain his sway over men, and establish the authority of the papal usurper, he must keep them in ignorance of the Scriptures. The Bible would exalt God and place finite men in their true position; therefore its sacred truths must be concealed and suppressed. This logic was adopted by the Roman Church. For hundreds of years the circulation of the Bible was prohibited. The people were forbidden to read it or to have it in their houses, and unprincipled priests and prelates interpreted its teachings to sustain their pretensions.... The detector of error having been removed, Satan worked according to his will.” GC 51

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Little by little, Christian principles were replaced with pagan principles.

Especially:

- The pope putting himself in the place of God
- Eliminating the commandment about images
- Replacing Sabbath observance with Sunday
- Perfection of the church
- Etc.

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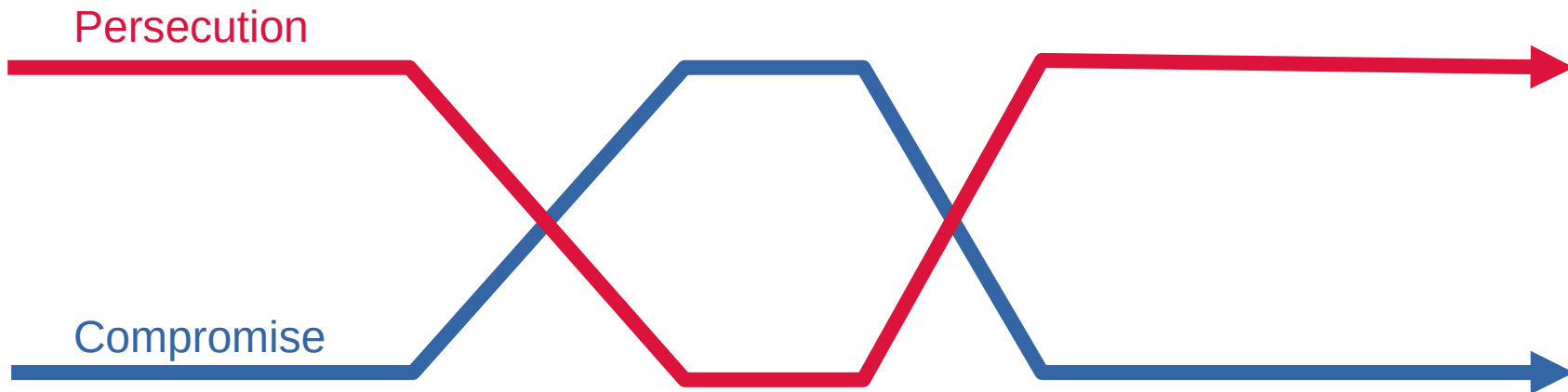
“In the sixth century the papacy had become firmly established.... The dragon had given to the beast “his power, and his seat, and great authority.” Revelation 13:2. And now began the 1260 years of papal oppression foretold in the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation. Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13:5-7. (See Appendix.) Christians were forced to choose either to yield their integrity and accept the papal ceremonies and worship, or to wear away their lives in dungeons or suffer death by the rack, the fagot, or the headsman's ax. Now were fulfilled the words of Jesus: “Ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for My name's sake.” Luke 21:16, 17. Persecution opened upon the faithful with greater fury than ever before, and the world became a vast battlefield. For hundreds of years the church of Christ found refuge in seclusion and obscurity. Thus says the prophet: “The woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and three-score days.” Revelation 12:6. GC 54.2

The Dark Ages

Scriptures Suppressed

As soon as the Catholic church gained what it wanted by compromise, it returned to persecution in an attempt to eradicate the few who remained faithful to the Bible.

“The accession of the Roman Church to power marked the beginning of the Dark Ages. As her power increased, the darkness deepened.” GC 55.1



The Dark Ages

Scriptures Suppressed

The Dark Ages lasted roughly 500 - 1500 AD.

The Catholic church discouraged people from reading the Bible for themselves. They reserved the right to read and interpret Scriptures for the church leaders only.

Decrees were sent out prohibiting any lay member to own a copy of the Scriptures.

The Dark Ages

Scriptures Suppressed

“But “the noon of the papacy was the midnight of the world.”—J. A. Wylie, The History of Protestantism, b. 1, ch. 4. The Holy Scriptures were almost unknown, not only to the people, but to the priests. Like the Pharisees of old, the papal leaders hated the light which would reveal their sins. God's law, the standard of righteousness, having been removed, they exercised power without limit, and practiced vice without restraint.... A moral and intellectual paralysis had fallen upon Christendom.” GC 60.2

The Dark Ages

Waldenses

“Amid the gloom that settled upon the earth during the long period of papal supremacy, the light of truth could not be wholly extinguished.”
GC 61.1



The Dark Ages

Waldenses

“The Waldenses were among the first of the peoples of Europe to obtain a translation of the Holy Scriptures. (See Appendix.) Hundreds of years before the Reformation they possessed the Bible in manuscript in their native tongue. They had the truth unadulterated, and this rendered them the special objects of hatred and persecution. They declared the Church of Rome to be the apostate Babylon of the Apocalypse, and at the peril of their lives they stood up to resist her corruptions....” GC 65.2



The Dark Ages

Waldenses

“...While, under the pressure of long-continued persecution, some compromised their faith, little by little yielding its distinctive principles, others held fast the truth. Through ages of darkness and apostasy there were Waldenses who denied the supremacy of Rome, who rejected image worship as idolatry, and who kept the true Sabbath. Under the fiercest tempests of opposition they maintained their faith. Though gashed by the Savoyard spear, and scorched by the Romish fagot, they stood unflinchingly for God's word and His honor.” GC 65.2



The Dark Ages

Waldenses

“Pure, simple, and fervent was the piety of these followers of Christ. The principles of truth they valued above houses and lands, friends, kindred, even life itself. These principles they earnestly sought to impress upon the hearts of the young. From earliest childhood the youth were instructed in the Scriptures and taught to regard sacredly the claims of the law of God. Copies of the Bible were rare; therefore its precious words were committed to memory. Many were able to repeat large portions of both the Old and the New Testament. Thoughts of God were associated alike with the sublime scenery of nature and with the humble blessings of daily life. Little children learned to look with gratitude to God as the giver of every favor and every comfort.”

GC 67.1

The Dark Ages

Waldenses

“From their pastors the youth received instruction. While attention was given to branches of general learning, the Bible was made the chief study. The Gospels of Matthew and John were committed to memory, with many of the Epistles. They were employed also in copying the Scriptures. Some manuscripts contained the whole Bible, others only brief selections, to which some simple explanations of the text were added by those who were able to expound the Scriptures. Thus were brought forth the treasures of truth so long concealed by those who sought to exalt themselves above God.” GC 68.2



The Dark Ages

Waldenses

“By patient, untiring labor, sometimes in the deep, dark caverns of the earth, by the light of torches, the Sacred Scriptures were written out, verse by verse, chapter by chapter. Thus the work went on, the revealed will of God shining out like pure gold; how much brighter, clearer, and more powerful because of the trials undergone for its sake only those could realize who were engaged in the work. Angels from heaven surrounded these faithful workers.” GC 69.1

The Dark Ages

Waldenses

“To have made known the object of their mission would have ensured its defeat; therefore they carefully concealed their real character. Every minister possessed a knowledge of some trade or profession, and the missionaries prosecuted their work under cover of a secular calling. Usually they chose that of merchant or peddler.

“They carried silks, jewelry, and other articles, at that time not easily purchasable save at distant marts; and they were welcomed as merchants where they would have been spurned as missionaries.”—Wylie, b. 1, ch. 7. All the while their hearts were uplifted to God for wisdom to present a treasure more precious than gold or gems. They secretly carried about with them copies of the Bible, in whole or in part; and whenever an opportunity was presented, they called the attention of their customers to these manuscripts. Often an interest to read God's word was thus awakened, and some portion was gladly left with those who desired to receive it.”

GC 71.1

The Dark Ages

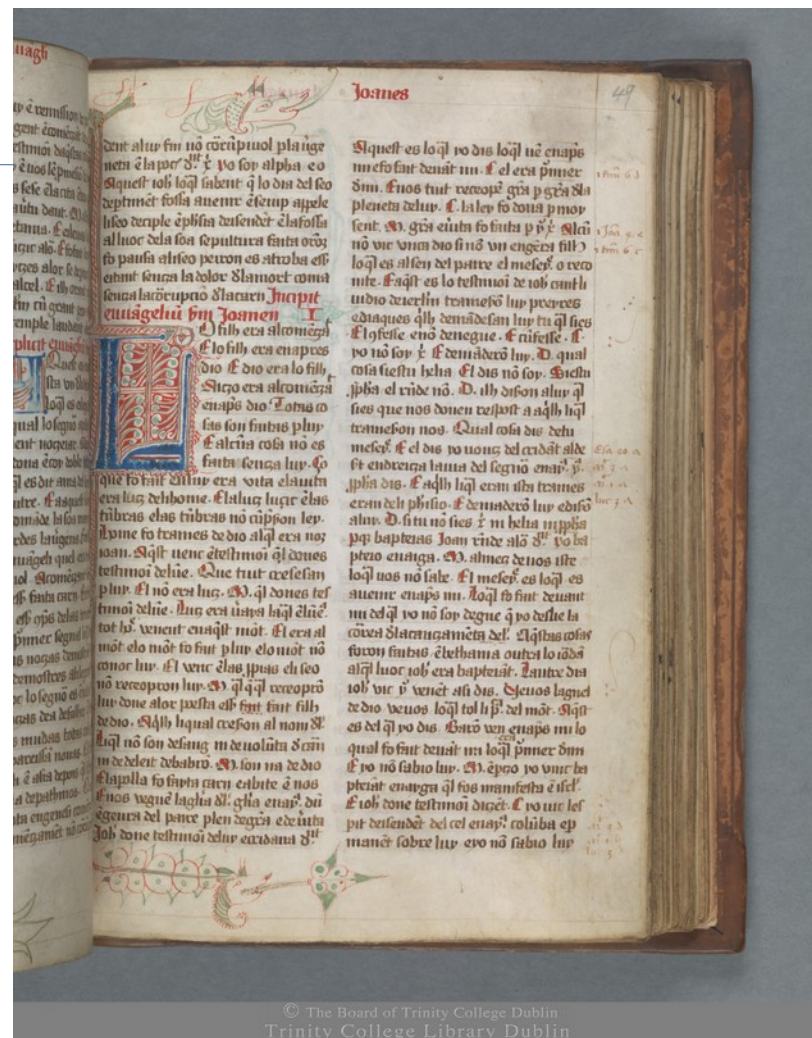
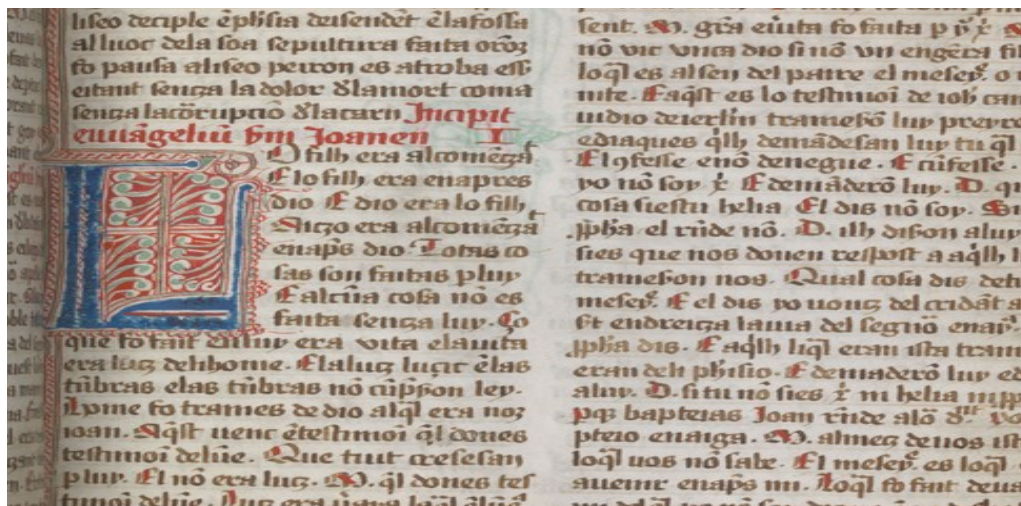
Waldenses

“The work of these missionaries began in the plains and valleys at the foot of their own mountains, but it extended far beyond these limits. With naked feet and in garments coarse and travel-stained as were those of their Master, they passed through great cities and penetrated to distant lands. Everywhere they scattered the precious seed. Churches sprang up in their path, and the blood of martyrs witnessed for the truth. The day of God will reveal a rich harvest of souls garnered by the labors of these faithful men. Veiled and silent, the word of God was making its way through Christendom and meeting a glad reception in the homes and hearts of men.” GC 71.2

The Dark Ages

Waldenses

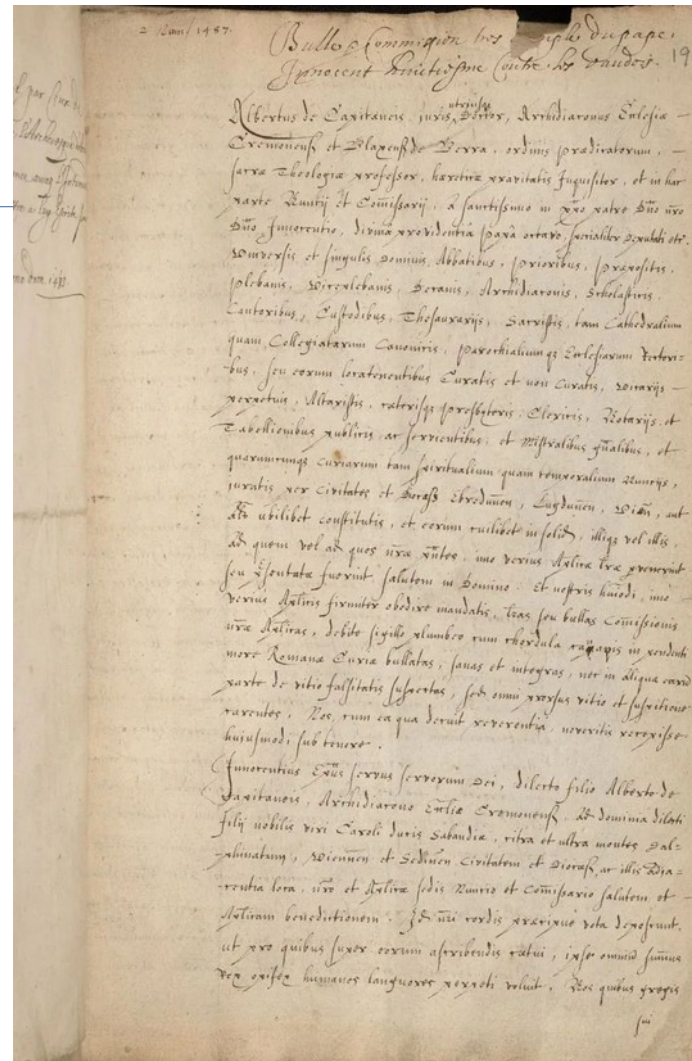
Dublin manuscript
Waldensian Bible from 1500s
John chapter 1
meticulously handwritten



The Dark Ages

Waldenses

This Bull of Pope Innocent VIII was promulgated in Rome on April 27, 1487. The Bull outlined a plenary indulgence (forgiveness) for anyone who joined the military crusades against the Waldensians. His commands extended to religious and secular powers and threatened excommunication for those who did not join.

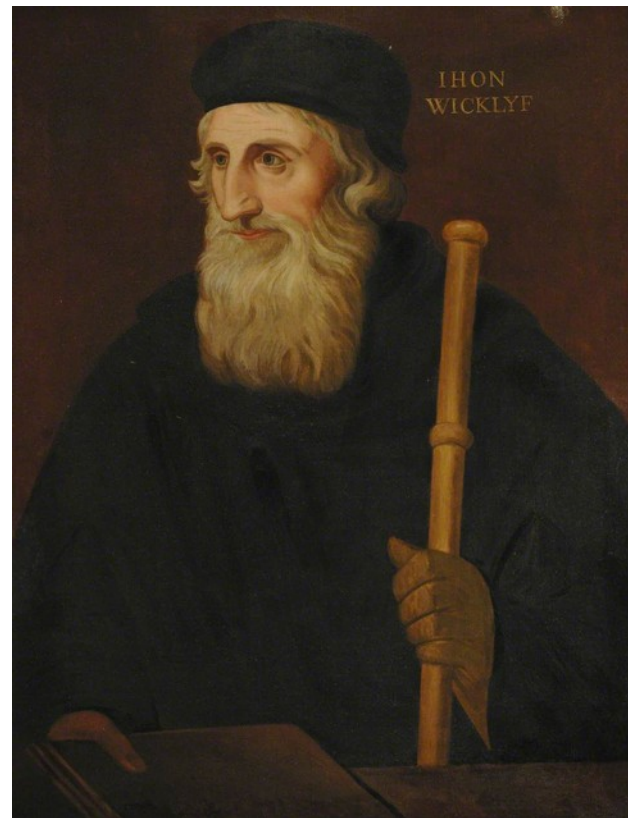


Light after Darkness

John Wycliffe

John Wycliffe
1328-1384
England

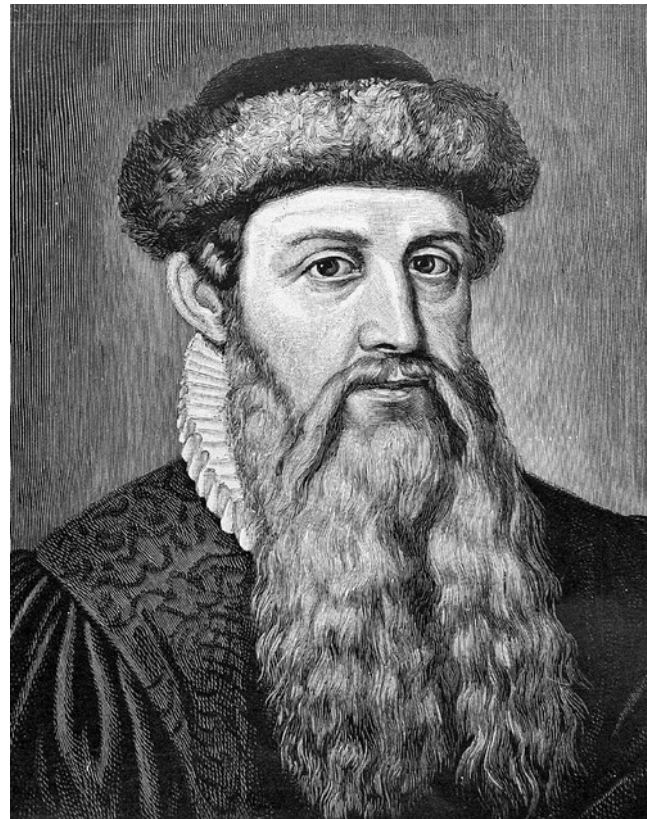
During the Dark Ages, there were only a few copies of the Bible in existence.
Existing copies were in languages of the more educated.
Translated the Bible into English.



Light after Darkness

Gutenberg

Gutenberg was born in Germany around the year 1400 A.D. He invented the movable-type printing press. His work led to the massive spread of literature in Europe. The Gutenberg Bible was the first Bible printed on a printing press.



Light after Darkness

Gutenberg

An early wooden printing press. Such presses could produce up to 240 impressions per hour (4 per minute).



Light after Darkness

Gutenberg

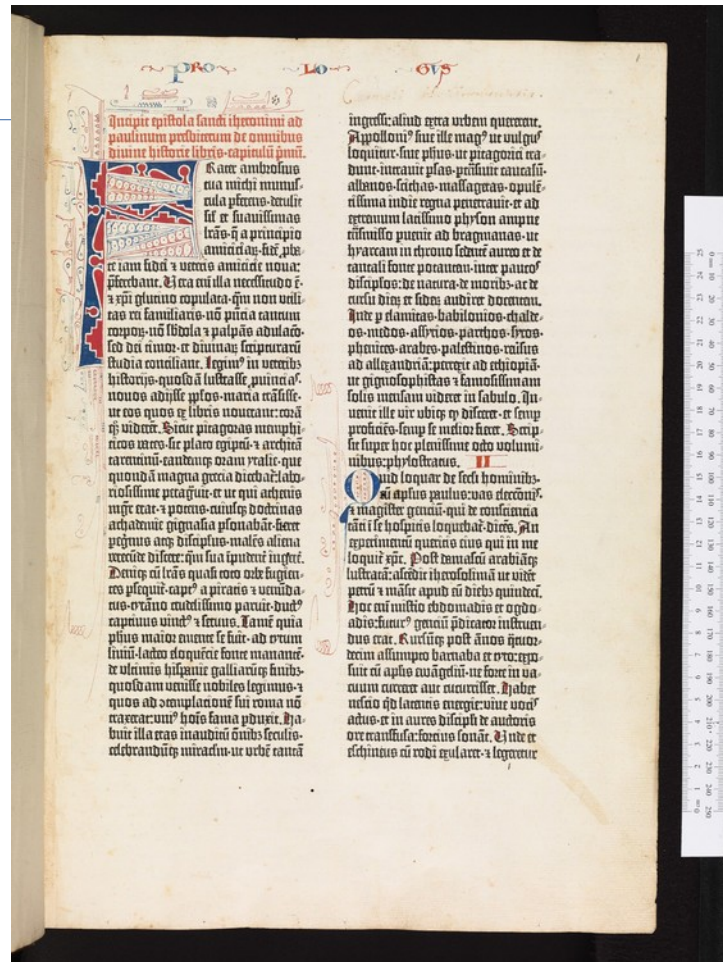
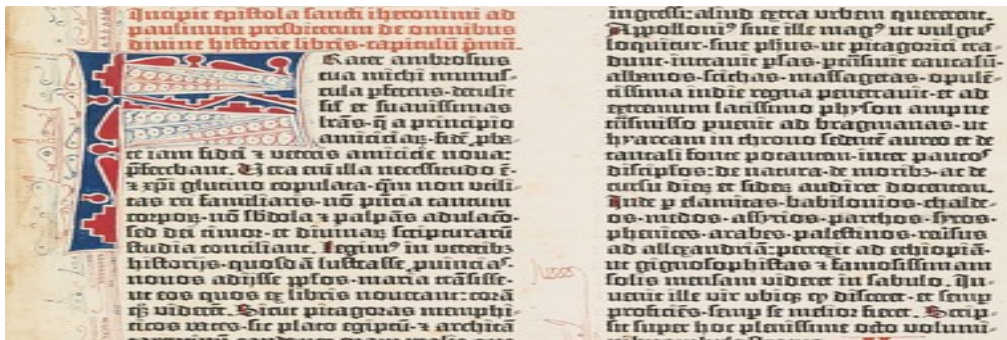
See video.



Light after Darkness

Gutenberg

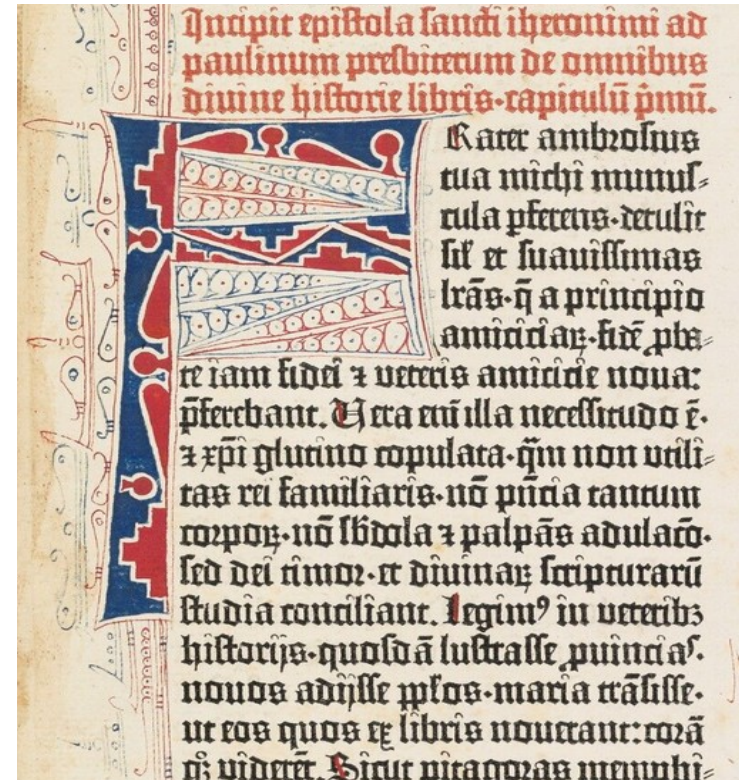
Gutenberg Bible
Oxford, Bodleian Library Archives
c. 1455



Light after Darkness

Gutenberg

In 1455, Gutenberg completed copies of a well-executed folio Bible (Biblia Sacra), with 42 lines on each page. Copies sold for 30 florins each, roughly three years' wages for a clerk. Nonetheless, it was much cheaper than a manuscript Bible that could take a single scribe over a year to prepare. After printing, some copies were rubricated or hand-illuminated in the same elegant way as manuscript Bibles from the same period.



Light after Darkness

Martin Luther

Before the invention of the printing press, printed books and Bibles were rare. This meant that the church could easily control access to the few physical copies. What most people knew about the Bible was from what they heard, not from what they read.

Once the Bible became widely available, the church could no longer control what the people heard. Each person could now search for himself what is in the Bible.

Light after Darkness

Martin Luther

Martin Luther

1483-1546

Prominent leader of the Protestant Reformation

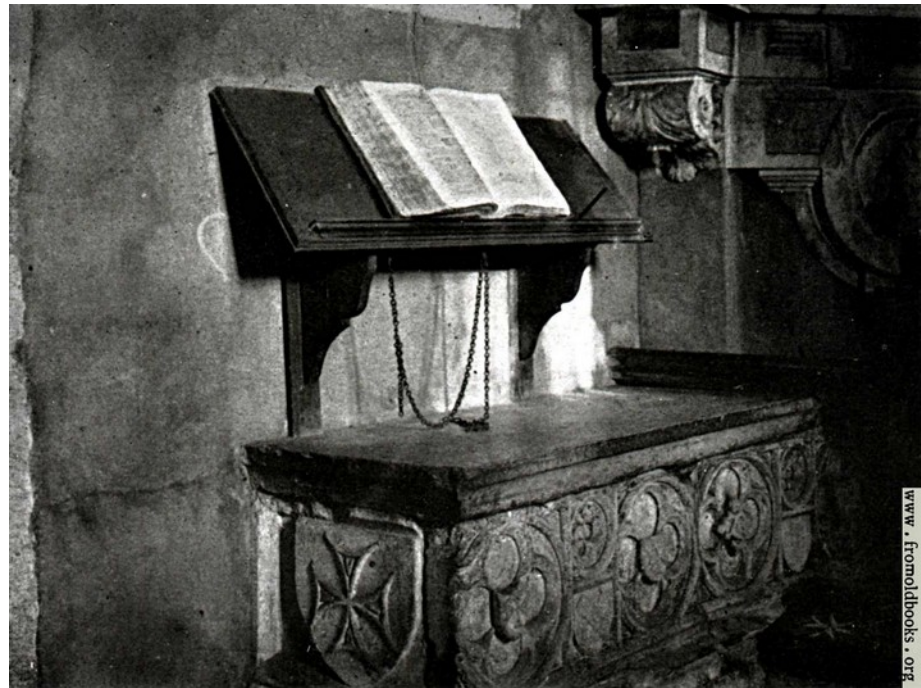


Light after Darkness

Martin Luther

Bibles were chained to the wall to keep them from going too far.

“While one day examining the books in the library of the university, Luther discovered a Latin Bible. Such a book he had never before seen. He was ignorant even of its existence.... Now, for the first time, he looked upon the whole of God's word.... Above everything else he delighted in the study of God's word. He had found a Bible chained to the convent wall, and to this he often repaired.” Great Controversy p.123



Light after Darkness

Martin Luther

Luther's 95 Theses

Printed in 1517

Detailed opposition to teachings of the Catholic church

Promoted teachings of the Bible

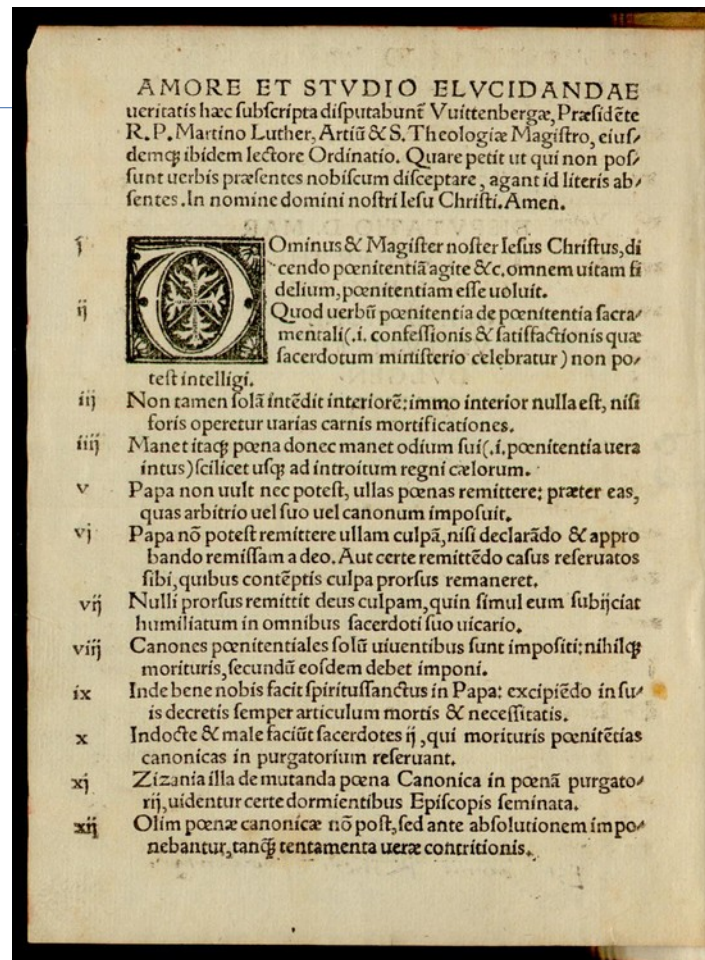


Light after Darkness

Martin Luther

Luther's 95 Theses were also printed in a 4-page tract format. Several hundred copies were produced in 1517.

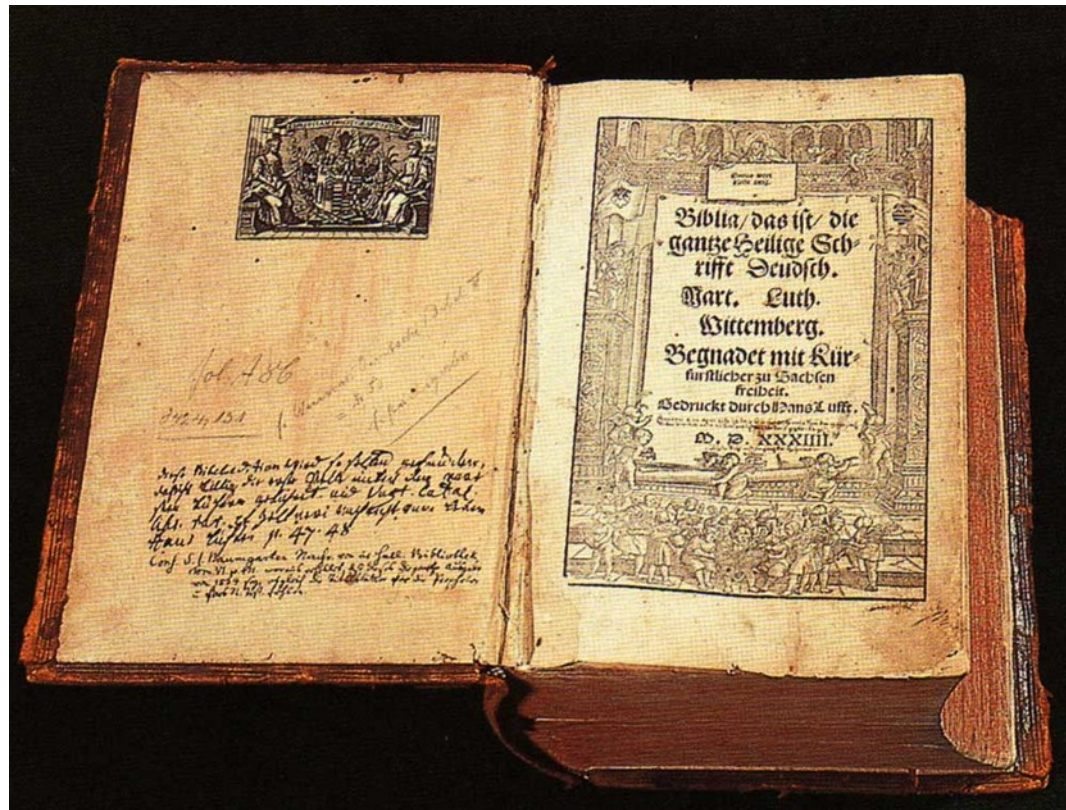
By 1519, it was widely read and distributed.



Light after Darkness

Martin Luther

Translated the Bible into German from Latin. This allowed many people to have access to the Bible for the first time. He completed the Old Testament in 1534.



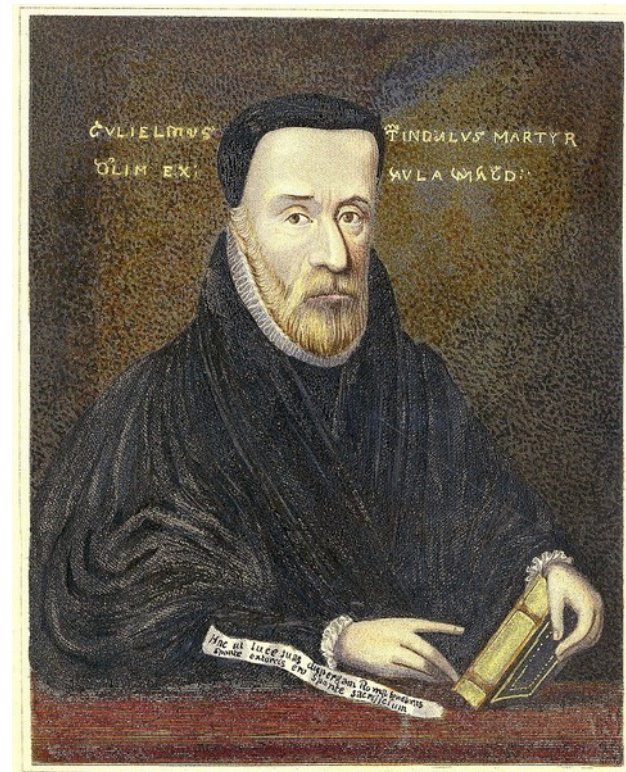
Light after Darkness

William Tyndale

Translated the Bible into English. Wycliffe's Bible had been translated from a latin text full of errors. Tyndale was able to complete the work of John Wycliffe.

First Bible to be translated into English directly from Hebrew and Greek texts.

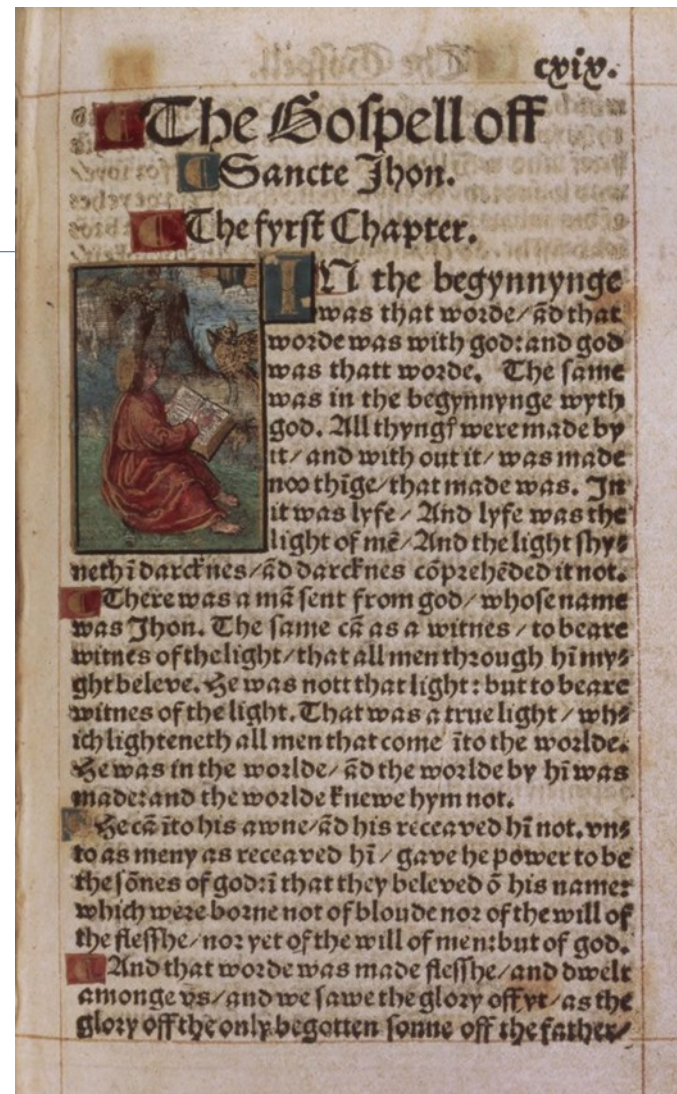
Wycliffe's translation had never been printed. Tyndale's version was the first English translation to take advantage of the printing press.



Light after Darkness

William Tyndale

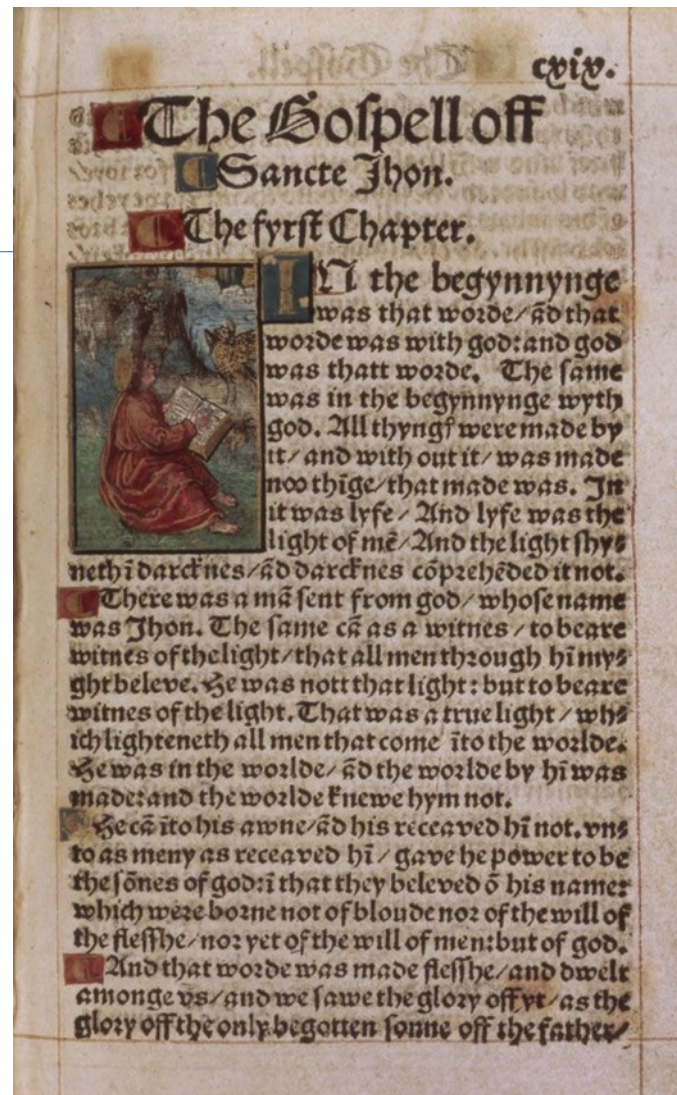
Tyndale was persecuted and left home for London. Then violence forced him to flee to Germany. Here, he began to print the English New Testament. When he was forbidden in one city to print, he went to another. Finally, in Worms, he was able to produce 3,000 copies of the New Testament. Another edition followed.



Light after Darkness

William Tyndale

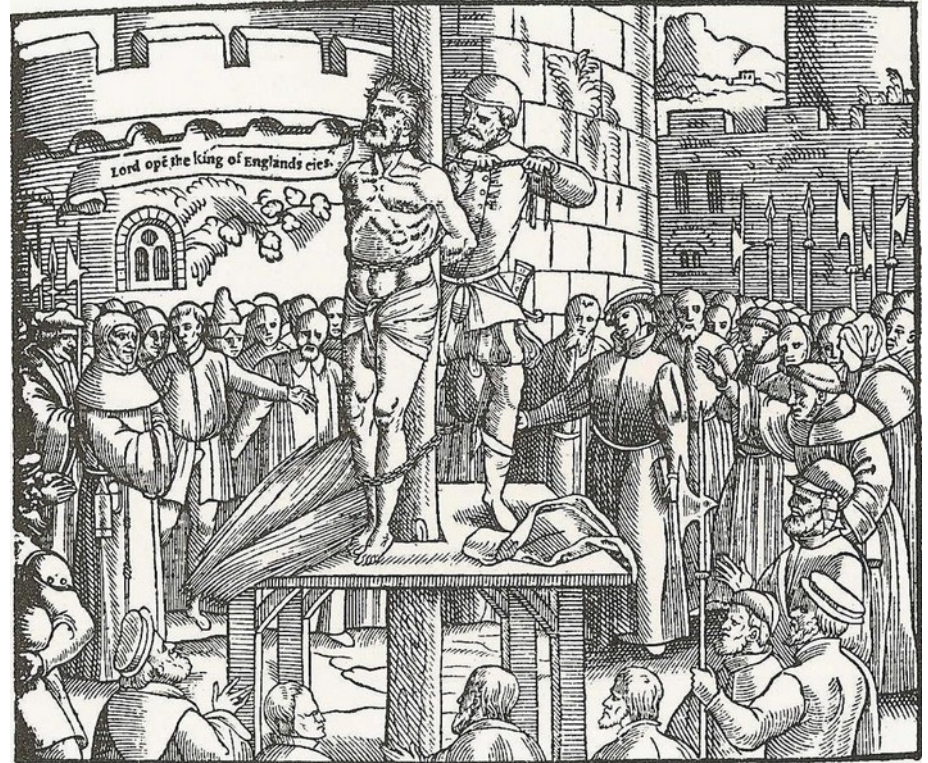
“The papists attempted to suppress the truth, but in vain. The bishop of Durham at one time bought of a bookseller who was a friend of Tyndale his whole stock of Bibles, for the purpose of destroying them, supposing that this would greatly hinder the work. But, on the contrary, the money thus furnished, purchased material for a new and better edition, which, but for this, could not have been published. When Tyndale was afterward made a prisoner, his liberty was offered him on condition that he would reveal the names of those who had helped him meet the expense of printing his Bibles. He replied that the bishop of Durham had done more than any other person; for by paying a large price for the books left on hand, he had enabled him to go on with good courage.” GC 247.1



Light after Darkness

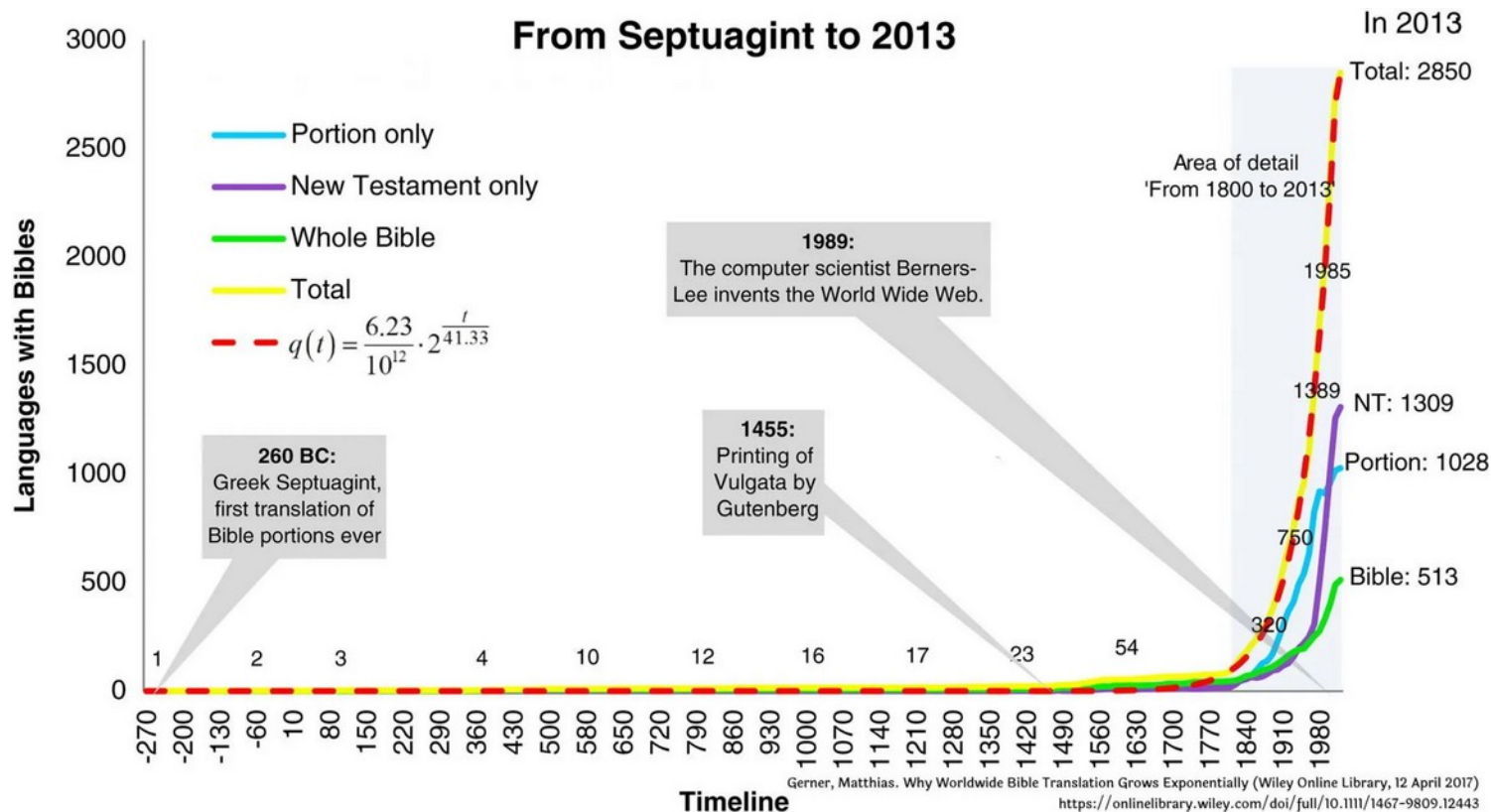
William Tyndale

“Tyndale was betrayed into the hands of his enemies, and at one time suffered imprisonment for many months. He finally witnessed for his faith by a martyr's death; but the weapons which he prepared have enabled other soldiers to do battle through all the centuries even to our time.” GC 247.2



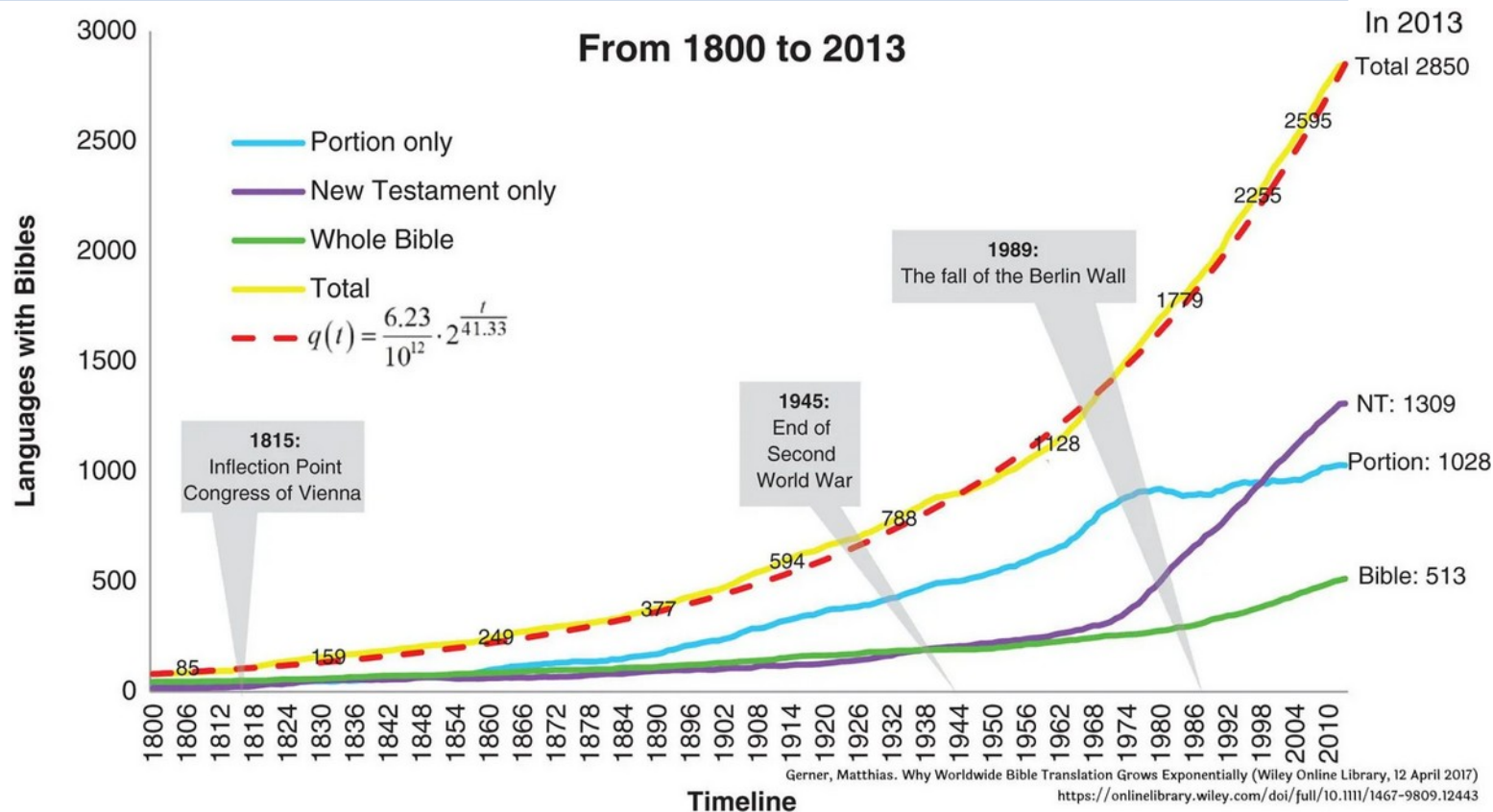
Light after Darkness

Bible Languages



Light after Darkness

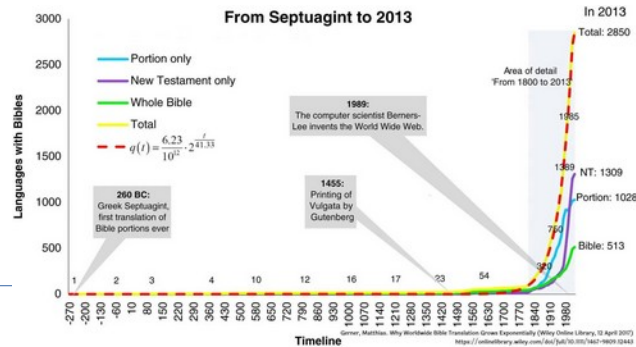
Bible Languages



Light after Darkness

Now

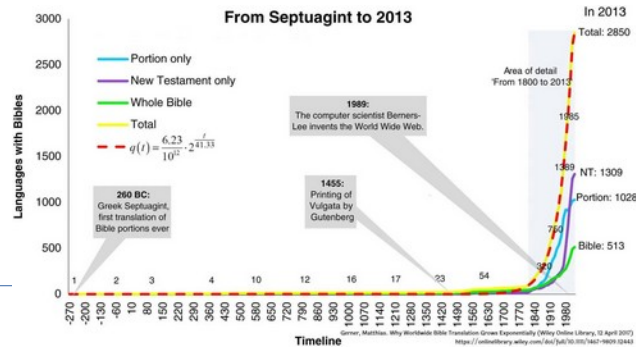
“In these days of travel, the opportunities for coming in contact with men and women of all classes, and of many nationalities, are much greater than in the days of Israel. The thoroughfares of travel have multiplied a thousandfold. God has wonderfully prepared the way. The agency of the printing press, with its manifold facilities, is at our command. Bibles, and publications in many languages, setting forth the truth for this time, are at our hand, and can be swiftly carried to every part of the world.”
Christian Service p. 150



Light after Darkness

Now

“We are living in an age when reading matter is abundant and cheap. The perfecting of the printing-press has made possible the rapid multiplication of the printed page. This was intended by the Lord to be a blessing to the world.” { CUM September 3, 1907, par. 9 }



Light after Darkness

Now

“God has placed at the command of His people advantages in the press, which, combined with other agencies, will be successful in extending the knowledge of the truth. Tracts, papers, and books, as the case demands, should be circulated in all the cities and villages in the land. Here is missionary work for all.” CET 226.1

Light after Darkness

Now

“Our houses of publication have become a power in the world. A great change has taken place. With our increased facilities to make the clear light shine forth to those who are in darkness, it is not now so hard as it once was to see and accept the truth. Those who first led out in the work were objects of the combined assaults of evil men and evil angels. The enmity of Satan, working through men as his instruments, was strikingly developed. On the other hand, the believers, though few in number, were earnest and zealous to vindicate the honor of God in exalting His law which had been made void, and to press back the workings of Satan revealed in every form of destructive error.” PM 385.1