



0. TYNDALE WRITES, THEN BURNS - Story Preface

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This rare book—a surviving Tyndale Bible—was displayed at Ocford’s Bodleian Library in June 2014. Steve Bennett took this image of that display. (Click on it for a better view.) It is online via Wikimedia Commons; license: [CC BY-SA 3.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/)

Most people today do not realize how significant [William Tyndale](#) still is to the English-speaking world. Taking the idea of Bible translation to its ultimate extreme, and not trusting the Church's Latin translation, Tyndale went to the Bible's primary sources. He and his colleagues translated Hebrew and Greek texts (prepared by the Dutch scholar [Erasmus](#)) into English.

Tyndale, the scholar, had a special "feel" for the poetry of the English language. It is Tyndale's translated words that brought us such [memorable phrases](#) as:

*Let there be light
and
Am I my brother's keeper?*

In fact, 85% of the King James Version of the Bible was taken directly from Tyndale's translation. Although Tyndale's translated words are still with us today, his Bibles were burned in special ceremonies in London and Antwerp. [Cardinal Wolsey](#), no doubt at Henry VIII's direction, wanted to eliminate all English Bibles from the land. And, like Hus before him, [Tyndale](#) and his editor, [John Rogers](#), were burned for translating the Bible into the "vernacular."

At the time, [people were even burned](#) for reciting parts of the Bible in English.

As Tyndale died in 1536—(Rogers was [executed later, in 1555](#))—his last words were for the King of England. Tyndale prayed for Henry VIII to see the light and allow his English translation to stand. One year after [Tyndale's death](#), Henry VIII allowed it.

Today, only three copies of the Tyndale Bible (which had to be published outside England) are known to exist. In 1994, the British Library paid more than 1 million pounds for its copy of Tyndale's *New Testament* which was published in Worms.

But the city of Worms is not principally remembered today for publishing Tyndale's Bible, important though it is. Instead, Worms is most closely associated with Martin Luther who *also* risked punishment at the stake.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)
<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/TYNDALE-WRITES-THEN-BURNS-Book-Burning-and-Censorship>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/TYNDALE-WRITES-THEN-BURNS-Book-Burning-and-Censorship>

Media Stream



Erasmus

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Cardinal Wolsey

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Censorship at Work in the 16th Century - Burning People

Clip from "[God's Outlaw - The Story of William Tyndale](#)" - 1986

Director - Tony Tew

Writer - Ben Steed

Starring:

Roger Rees - **William Tyndale**

Willoughby Goddard - **Cardinal Wolsey**

Keith Barron - **Henry VIII**

Stuart Harrison - **Henry Phillips**

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