

More Questions and Answers...

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178. What is the significance to Masons of the King James version of the Bible?

In England since Anglo-Saxon times there have been versions of the Bible in the vernacular. Among the important versions may be mentioned those of John Wycliff (d. 1384) who had his name on two translations; William Tyndale (d. 1536) who made the first English translation of the New Testament (1525-26); Miles Coverdale (d. 1569) who issued the first Bible, the Great Bible, 1539 under the name of Henry VIII. The greatest of all English translations was the authorized (AV) or King James Version (1611), made by a committee of churchmen led by Lancelot Andres. This the version of the Bible placed at the altar in English-speaking Lodges throughout the world.

179. What is the Vulgate?

The Vulgate is the Latin version of the Bible. This is the oldest existing version of the entire Bible. It is the official Bible of the Roman Catholic Church. The translation was made by St. Jerome (about 349-419) to replace the old Latin (Itala) version. The Old Testament is a translation of the Hebrews Masoretic text, the official Hebrew Scripture. The new Testament is a careful revision of the Old Latin Text.

180. Has the Vulgate been translated into English?

Yes. The New Testament was published in 1582 at Rheims, France, and the Old Testament in 1610 at Douay, France.

181. What differences are there, if any, between the Protestant King James Version and the Catholic Douay Version?

The main difference lies in the Apocrypha, or books of doubtful authority. The Roman Catholic Church decided at the Council of Trent in 1546 that the Apocrypha are *canonical*, that is actually a part of the Holy Scriptures. The Protestants, on the other hand, do not regard them as canonical but merely valuable for information. The early editions of the King James Version included the Apocrypha as an appendix to the Old Testament. The two versions also differ in some of the titles of the various books, in the spelling of Hebrew names, and in the translation of passages in the Hebrew and Greek texts; but they substantially agree.

182. Why are Freemasons often called "sons of the widow?"

According to Masonic traditions Hiram Abif, the architect of the Temple of Solomon, was a "widow's son of the Tribe of Naphtali" (1 Kings 7:14). Mackey (*Encyclopedia of Freemasonry*, 1919, vol. II, p. 849) refers to a mythical story that the French Masons call themselves *Sons of the Widow* because the wife of Hiram remained a widow after Hiram's death, and they consider themselves as descendants of Hiram. The reason according to Mackey is that in French Masonry the term *Son of the Widow* is synonymous with *Mason*.

183. Who was Josephus?

Fluvius Josephus (A.D. 37-95?) was a Jewish soldier and historian. He was so thoroughly Romanized that he won the favor of Vespasian (A.D. 9-79), Roman Emperor (A.D. 69-79), whose son Titus (A.D. c. 40-81) ended the wars against the rebel Jews and destroyed the second Temple (Zerubbabel's) at Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Josephus wrote *The Jewish War*; *Antiquities of the Jews*; *Against Apion* (defense of the Jews) and an autobiography.