

Did the Roman Catholic Church Produce the King James Bible (AV 1611)?

Short Answer: Absolutely Not.

The Roman Catholic Church did not produce, support, inspire, translate, or preserve the King James Bible. In fact, it actively opposed the very work the KJV represents: putting the preserved words of God into the common language of the people without Roman authority.

I. Why Is This Claim Being Made?

Some make the claim for these reasons:

1. To undermine the authority of the King James Bible by linking it to Rome.
2. To defend modern Bible versions based on Roman Catholic manuscripts (like Vaticanus and Sinaiticus).
3. To confuse Christians about where the Bible came from.
4. To make King James or his translators look politically or religiously compromised.

But the claim does not hold up to history, textual evidence, or doctrinal truth.

II. What Was the Roman Catholic Church's View of the Bible in English?

1. The Roman Church Banned Vernacular Bibles

- The Council of Toulouse (1229 AD) forbade laypeople from owning the Bible.
- The Council of Trent (1545–1563) affirmed that only the Latin Vulgate was official.
- Catholics were taught that Scripture could only be interpreted by the Church, not by individuals.

2. The Roman Church Executed Bible Translators

- William Tyndale translated the New Testament from Greek into English.

- He said to a Catholic priest:

“I defy the Pope and all his laws. If God spare my life, I will cause a boy that driveth the plough to know more of the Scripture than thou dost.”

- He was burned at the stake in 1536 by Roman Catholic authorities.

FACT: The translators of the KJV relied heavily on Tyndale’s work, who was martyred by Rome.

III. The King James Bible: Who Commissioned It?

King James I of England, a Protestant monarch, commissioned the translation in 1604.

It was published in 1611, which is why it is called the AV 1611 (Authorized Version).

Purpose:

- To replace the corrupt Bishops’ Bible.
- To resist the influence of the Geneva Bible notes, which were seen as politically inflammatory.
- To create a uniform English Bible based on pure sources for church and public use.

King James was not Roman Catholic, and his translators were explicitly Protestant. Many of them hated Rome’s tyranny.

IV. Who Were the Translators?

54 Scholars from:

- Oxford
- Cambridge
- Westminster

These were the most learned Protestant scholars in England

— not one was Roman Catholic.

They were trained in Greek, Hebrew, Latin, and church history. Many had suffered under Catholic persecutions under Queen Mary Tudor (“Bloody Mary”).

They rejected the Latin Vulgate as the sole authority and turned instead to:

- The Hebrew Masoretic Text for the Old Testament.
- The Greek Textus Receptus for the New Testament.

V. Did the KJV Use Roman Catholic Texts?

No.

1. Textus Receptus (New Testament)

- Comes from the preserved line of manuscripts in Antioch and Asia Minor.
- Compiled by Erasmus, Stephanus, and Beza.
- Rejected by the Catholic Church.
- Not based on Vaticanus or Sinaiticus (which modern Bibles use).

2. Masoretic Text (Old Testament)

- Preserved by Jewish scribes (Masoretes).
- Used by the KJV, not the Catholic-preferred Septuagint or Latin Vulgate.

VI. Is the KJV Based on the Catholic Douay-Rheims Bible?

No.

- The Douay-Rheims was the Catholic English translation of the Latin Vulgate.
- Published before the KJV, but from a completely different textual source.
- The Latin Vulgate is not based on the Greek TR or Hebrew Masoretic Text.
- The Douay-Rheims contained heavy Catholic theology,

including:

- Penance instead of repentance
- Grace through sacraments
- Ecclesiastical hierarchy
- The KJV corrected these doctrines.

In fact, the KJV translators rejected the Latin Vulgate as unreliable and used it only for comparison, not as a source.

VII. What Did the King James Bible Say About Catholicism?

While the KJV doesn't attack Catholicism directly in the text, its very existence was an attack on Rome:

- It gave free access to God's Word without a priest.
- It replaced Rome's sacramental salvation with faith in Christ alone.
- It used the words "graven image" and "vain repetition" (Matt. 6:7), condemning Catholic rituals.
- It translated "repentance" instead of "do penance" (Acts 2:38).
- It refused to use Catholic terminology like "charity" in place of "love" when the meaning fit, preserving doctrinal purity.

VIII. So Where Did This False Claim Come From?

The idea that "the Roman Catholic Church gave us the King James Bible" is promoted by:

- Critics of the KJV who want to discredit it.
- Scholars defending modern versions based on Vaticanus (a Roman Catholic manuscript).
- Those who want to blur the lines between Rome and the Reformation.
- Misunderstanding the overlap in dates between Erasmus (a Catholic priest) and Protestant reformers.

But Erasmus was not a Roman loyalist — he opposed the

corruption of the clergy and his Greek text (TR) became the basis of the KJV, not the Latin Vulgate.

IX. Doctrinal Importance of the KJV's Origin

To say the Catholic Church created the KJV is to:

- Accuse the Protestant Reformers of trusting Rome.
- Ignore the martyrs who died at Rome's hand for translating Scripture.
- Undermine the preserved text line that runs through Antioch, not Alexandria.
- Pretend that the fruit of Rome — which includes indulgences, idolatry, and papal authority — somehow gave us the pure word of God.

Matthew 7:18 – “A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.”

Rome is a corrupt tree. The KJV is good fruit.

X. Final Conclusion

The Roman Catholic Church did not produce the King James Bible.

It killed those who tried to translate it, opposed its sources, and fought its message.

The AV 1611 stands in opposition to everything Rome teaches:

- Grace without sacraments
- Salvation without priests
- Scripture without popes
- Truth without tradition

The King James Bible is a Protestant Reformation Bible — preserved, pure, and separate from the apostasy of Rome.

2 Corinthians 2:17

“For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as

of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.”

Psalm 12:6–7

“The words of the Lord are pure words... Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever.”

Let no man steal from you the truth and preservation found in God’s book — the King James Bible, not Rome’s.

Here’s the historical timeline showing the Roman Catholic Church was not welcomed in England during time the King James AV 1611 Bible was assembled :

1. King Henry VIII (Reigned 1509–1547)

- In 1534, broke away from the Roman Catholic Church through the Act of Supremacy, declaring himself the Supreme Head of the Church of England.
- This was the official split from Rome, largely for political reasons (Rome refused to annul his marriage), but it laid the foundation for Protestantism in England.

2. Queen Mary I (“Bloody Mary,” Reigned 1553–1558)

- A devout Catholic, she reversed the Reformation, reinstated Roman Catholicism, and burned Protestants at the stake.
- Attempted to restore England to papal control.

3. Queen Elizabeth I (Reigned 1558–1603)

- Restored Protestantism and solidified England’s break from Rome.
- Passed laws making Catholic practices illegal and enforced the Church of England’s supremacy.
- The Pope excommunicated Elizabeth in 1570.

4. King James I (Reigned 1603–1625)

What did King James do?

- He was born Protestant and remained Protestant.
- He rejected both Puritan extremism and Catholic compromise — walking a tight line, but clearly upheld the Church of England's independence from Rome.
- He oversaw the publication of the King James Bible (1611) — a project rooted in the Protestant Reformation, not Catholic tradition.
- He firmly opposed Jesuit infiltration and Catholic conspiracies.

The Gunpowder Plot of 1605

- A group of Catholic conspirators (including Guy Fawkes) attempted to blow up Parliament and assassinate King James I.
- This confirmed to James and the English government that Rome was still a threat.
- After the plot, Catholic suppression increased, and their influence in England was all but crushed.

In Summary:

- The Roman Catholic Church was already politically removed from England before King James I.
- King James continued and enforced England's independence from the Pope.
- He supported the Protestant faith and allowed no Catholic influence over the Authorized Version (KJV).
- The King James Bible itself is a monumental declaration of England's complete rejection of Rome's authority.