Making History: Meet John Wycliffe

Hi, friends! I'm Viktor, and I live in Russia. Russia is the biggest country in the world, so there are lots of different languages! I speak Udmurt, and it's written in the Cyrillic alphabet. It looks very different from the Latin alphabet used for English.

It took over 160 years for my people to get the full Bible translated into Udmurt. But in November 2013, we finally could hold the full Bible in our hands! I'm so grateful that people took the time to translate the Bible into my language so that I can understand exactly what God is saying to me.

John Wydiffe

Which reminds me: Did you know that someone had to translate the Bible into English too? It's true! The Bible hasn't always been in English. In fact, the Bible was originally written in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. It wasn't until the 14th century when a man named John Wycliffe decided that it was important for people like him to understand God in their own language — English! Let me introduce you to John Wycliffe and the important role he played in Bible translation.

The Bible for Everyone

John Wycliffe lived back in the 14th century (which is the 1300s).

At that time, the Bible wasn't available in English. Only the priests had the Bible and it was in Latin! While people might have known some Latin, they didn't know or understand enough to truly understand what God was saying to them in the Bible. As they sat in church, much of what the priest shared likely sounded like babble to them.

Viktor

John Wycliffe decided he was going to do something about that. He didn't want to just hear the Bible or learn about God from his priest only; he wanted to be able to learn and read it for himself! So John decided he was going to translate the Bible into

English so that everyday people like him could understand exactly what God was saying. And he did! He translated the whole Bible into English (even though the English spoken in John Wycliffe's day looked and sounded different than the English we speak today).

So the next time you read the Bible, stop and thank God for people like John Wycliffe. Without them, you and I wouldn't be able to understand what the Bible says for ourselves. People all over the world are still waiting for translators like John Wycliffe to translate the Bible into their languages too. And that's why Wycliffe Bible Translators exists! We're named after John Wycliffe because we think everyone should have the Bible in their own language — so that every man, woman and child can understand God's Word for themselves.

God's Word for All Languages

"Forsothe God so louede the world, that he gaf his oon bigetun sone, that ech man that bileueth in to him perische not, but haue euerlastynge lyf."

That verse above is in the kind of English that John Wycliffe spoke. Can you guess what the verse is? If you guessed John 3:16, you're right!

Now it's your turn to try your hand at translating. Decode the secret message so that you can understand what it says in English. If you do it correctly, you'll get a small taste of what it's like when people all around the world get the Bible in their own language.







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