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Question 72 - Who were Thomas Cromwell, John Rogers, and John Reynolds?

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101 MOST ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BIBLE

72. Who were Thomas Cromwell, John Rogers, and John Reynolds?

- A. **Thomas Cromwell** – The man who did the most to ensure that the English had access to the Bible in their own language was Thomas Cromwell, Henry VIII's chancellor from 1533 to 1540. Cromwell (portrayed by Hans Holbein above) was the spirit behind an injunction requiring that a copy of the English Bible be placed in every parish church.

Published in September 1538, the injunction ordered the clergy to provide "one book of the whole Bible of the largest volume in English" and place it where "your parishioners may most commodiously resort to the same and read it." The "largest volume" referred to the Great Bible, then being printed in Paris at Cromwell's expense.

The Great Bible was finally published in April of 1539. Its appearance – and the permission it conferred on the public to read and discuss Scripture freely – was greeted with great enthusiasm by many and with hostility by the more conservative churchmen.

After falling out of favor with the king, Cromwell was executed in 1540. In 1543 an Act of Parliament restricted reading of the English Bible to the upper classes.

(The Bible Through the Ages. Reader's Digest. Pleasantville, N.Y. 1989. p. 311)

- B. **John Rogers** – (c.1500-1555), English Lutheran reformer and martyr, born at Deritend, near Birmingham, England, educated at Pembroke Hall, Cambridge. Ordained rector of Holy Trinity, London (1532-1534). Chaplain of the English merchants at Antwerp (1534-1536). Made the acquaintance of William Tyndale, and renounced the Roman Catholic faith. In 1537, under the pseudonym of Thomas Matthew, issued a skillful combination of Bible translations of Tyndale and Coverdale, with preface and marginal notes, which has since been known as the Matthew's Bible. Work was largely used by those who prepared the Great Bible (1539-1540), out of which in turn came the Bishop's Bible in 1568 and the Authorized Version in 1611. Pastor at Wittenberg until the accession of Edward VI, when he returned to England by invitation of Bishop Ridley. Simultaneously made rector of St. Margaret Moyses and vicar of St. Sepulcher, London in 1550. In 1551, made prebendary of St. Pancras, St. Paul's. On the accession of Queen Mary in 1553 arrested for his vigorous denunciation of Romanism. After many months of imprisonment was burned at the stake at Smithfield, London, becoming the first martyr under Mary's reign.

(Who Was Who in Church History. Elgin Moyer. Keats Publishing. New Canaan, Conn. 1974. p. 354)

- C. **John Reynolds** was the Puritan president of Corpus Christi College at Oxford who (in January of 1604) initially informed King James I that a new English translation of the Bible was needed. This proposal resulted in the King James Bible of 1611.