

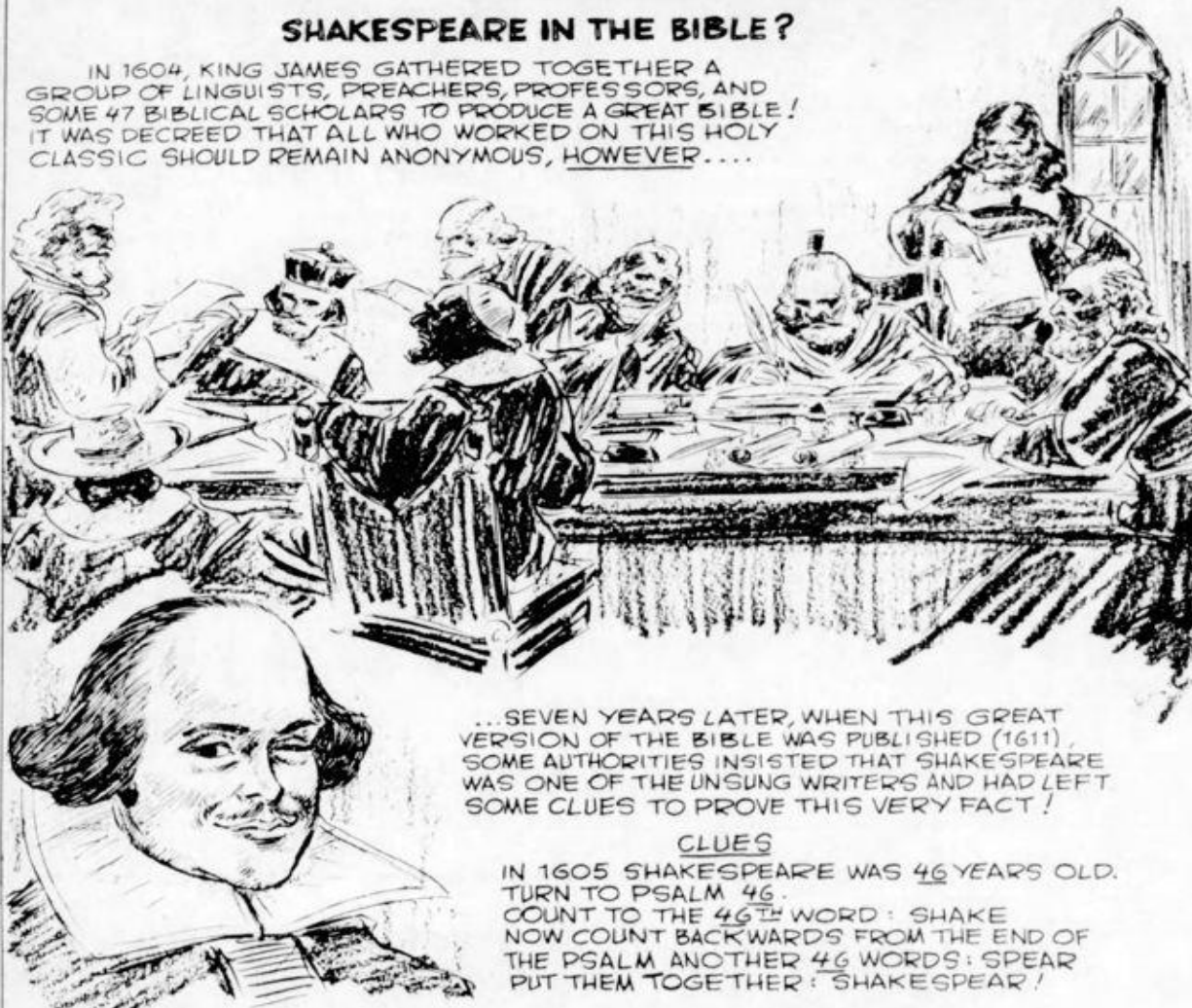
Did Shakespeare Translate Part of the Psalms KJV?

By David Lee Burris

Facts About The **BIBLE** BY JOHN LEHTI

SHAKESPEARE IN THE BIBLE?

IN 1604, KING JAMES GATHERED TOGETHER A GROUP OF LINGUISTS, PREACHERS, PROFESSORS, AND SOME 47 BIBLICAL SCHOLARS TO PRODUCE A GREAT BIBLE! IT WAS DECREED THAT ALL WHO WORKED ON THIS HOLY CLASSIC SHOULD REMAIN ANONYMOUS, HOWEVER....



... SEVEN YEARS LATER, WHEN THIS GREAT VERSION OF THE BIBLE WAS PUBLISHED (1611), SOME AUTHORITIES INSISTED THAT SHAKESPEARE WAS ONE OF THE UNSUNG WRITERS AND HAD LEFT SOME CLUES TO PROVE THIS VERY FACT!

CLUES
IN 1605 SHAKESPEARE WAS 46 YEARS OLD. TURN TO PSALM 46. COUNT TO THE 46TH WORD: SHAKE NOW COUNT BACKWARDS FROM THE END OF THE PSALM ANOTHER 46 WORDS: SPEAR PUT THEM TOGETHER: SHAKESPEAR!

WHETHER THIS LEGEND IS TRUE OR FALSE, IT'S NOT TOO HARD TO BELIEVE THAT SHAKESPEARE'S TALENT CONTRIBUTED TO THE RICH POETRY AND PROSE THAT WE FIND IN THE KING JAMES BIBLE!

NEXT WEEK: PROMISES!

SAVE THIS FOR YOUR SUNDAY SCHOOL SCRAPBOOK

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King James translators remembered Shakespeare

Religious News Services

LONDON — A tribute to William Shakespeare was included in the King James Version (Authorized Version) of the Bible, according to Anglican Bishop Mark A. Hodson.

The tribute, in the form of a cryptogram, appears in Psalm 46 of the Authorized Version, said the bishop in an article in a recent edition of the London Times:

"If you look up Psalm 46 in the Authorized Version . . . and count 46 words from the beginning of the Psalm . . . you arrive at the word, 'shake.' Discounting the word 'Selah,' count 46 words from the end of the Psalm and the word then revealed is 'spear.' "

Bishop Hodson, 68, pointed out that Shakespeare, who was born in 1564, was 46 years old in 1610, "the year the Authorized Version was being readied for publication." (It was published in 1611.)

"TO HONOR Shakespeare on his 46th birthday," Bishop Hodson maintained, "the translators, or some of them, placed the cryptogram in Psalm 46."

"To do so," the Anglican prelate explained, "was easy, because the words, 'shake' and 'spear' appeared in prior translations of the Bible (which served as the basis of the Authorized Version translation) — the Bishops' Bible (1568) and the so-called Great Bible (1539).

"Thus, by leaving out one or two unimportant words, the translators were able to honor Shakespeare in this way."

Bishop Hodson said that the existence of the cryptogram, "which must have been known in Shakespeare's time, was now virtually forgotten."

Noting that the translators were "leading

Christians and churchmen of Shakespeare's day," the bishop said: "I hardly think that they would have used the scriptures for the purpose of honoring Shakespeare unless they felt that he was a man both upright and religious.

"I should say that they must have known him, not only as a great playwright and poet — 1610 was the year the sonnets were first published — but also as a friend.

"They knew he would enjoy with an amused pleasure this charming little tribute."



Did Shakespeare translate psalms for the King James Bible?



In a letter written in 1931 by the late Canon Nigel W. Paine, we came across the remark:

*“Tea at Marlingford [in Norfolk] where Lombe [the local squire] showed me a Bible found in the church dated 1611 — the year of the publication of the AV . . . by the way Cranwich says Shakespeare had a hand in the translation because he was 46 years of age in 1611 and the 46th word of the 46th Psalm is ‘shake’ and the 46th word from the end is ‘spear’.” I am aware that, according to Moore & Reid in *The Making of the King James Bible*, there is one reason why the myth of Shakespeare being called in as consultant is absurd, as Ben Jonson remarked “‘he had ‘small Latin and less Greek’, and presumably no Aramaic or Syriac at all.”*

As explained in a brief notice ran in The Publishers' Circular (Jan 11, 1902):

DID SHAKESPEAR WRITE THE PSALMS?

'S.L.H.,' in the column of the Morning Leader headed 'Sub Rosa,' says that the following suggestion reaches him 'from a learned correspondent in West Hackney':—

'In the name Shakespear there are four vowels and six consonants..... If you write down the figure 4 and then follow it by the figure 6, you get 46.

Very well — turn to Psalm 46 and you will find that in it the 46th word from the beginning is "shake," while the 46th word from the end is "spear."

This fact, or rather these facts, may be held to prove, according to my correspondent, that the Psalms were written by Shakespear and that this is really the correct way of spelling his name.

I know that controversialists are a fierce tribe and they stick at each other as well as nothing, and so they will try to make out that the word "spear" is the 47th and not the 46 word from the end of the 46th Psalm; but this can only be done by counting "Selah," and if you think I am going to throw over a valuable literary discovery for the sake of an odd "Selah" you are mistaken.'

You'll find this claim made in Malachi York's *Christ Series*:

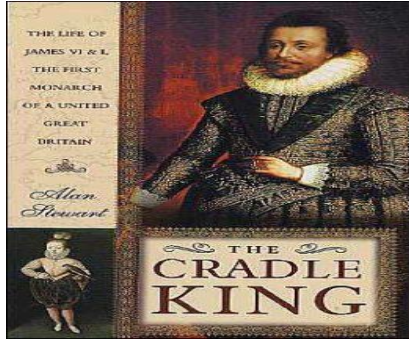
"...King James I used the version of the bible put out in 1526 A.D. by **William Tyndale**, whose other name was **William Shakespeare**, and King James I copied his version of the bible, which he put forth in **1611 A.D.** calling it the King James Version or the Revised bible. This version was translated in old English with words like "**Thou**", "**Wilt**", "**Thither**" and "**Hither**" to appeal to the aristocrats who liked the fancy English of Shakespearean literature and plays. However, by putting the bible in Shakespearean English, they lost the layman of Europe. So Europe went into a savage state. Thus the William Tyndale version of the bible, which was being called the King James version or the Revised version, was revised again in **1881-1885 A.D.** rendering it The Revised Standard Version. This is the bible that you follow today. William Shakespeare (William Tyndale) had the nerve to put his own name Shakespeare in the bible. **Psalms 46:3** has "**Shake**", which is **46** words from the top and "**Speare**" is in **Psalms 46:9**, which is 46 words from the bottom." - *Degree of Christ-ism* pg. 550

SOME HAVE GONE SO FAR AS TO SUGGEST SHAKESPEARE WAS A TYNDALE ALIAS

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Fixed To Kill His Wife And Why He Made A Translation Of The Bible. Many People Who Were Innocent Of Practicing Witchcraft Were Killed. James Had Found In Witch-Hunting And Killing, A Perfect Excuse To Eliminate His Political Enemies And To This End, He Used The "King James Version" Of The Bible.

King James I Used The Version Of The Bible Put Forth In 1526 A.D. By William Tyndale, Whose Other Name Was William Shakespeare, And King James I Copied His Version Of The Bible From Shakespeare Who Copied The Tyndale Version Of The Bible, Which He Put Forth In 1611 A.D., Calling It The King James Version Or The Revised Bible. This Version Was Translated Into Old English With Words Like "Thou", "Wilt", "Tither" And "Hither" To Appeal To The Aristocrats Who Liked The Fancy English Of Shakespearean Literature And Plays. However, By Putting The Bible In Shakespearean English, They Lost The Layman Of Europe. So Europe Went Into A Savage State. Thus, The William Tyndale Version Of The Bible, Which Was Being Called The King James Version Of The Bible Or The Revised Version, Was Revised Again In 1881-1885 A.D. Rendering It The Revised Standard Version. This Is The Bible That You Follow Today. William Shakespeare (William Tyndale) Had The Nerve To Put His Own Name Shakespeare In The Bible. *Psalms 46:3* Has "Shake", Which Is 46 Words From The Top And "Spear" Is In *Psalms 46:9*, Which Is 46 Words From The Bottom.



Evidence from a book called, "The Cradle King: The Life of James VI and I, the First Monarch of a United Great Britain" by **Alan Stewart** on page 203 refutes York's claim. It presents the following,

"John Spottiswoode recalled how, once he came to England, James set the most learned divines of that Church a work for the translation of the bible while the revising of the psalms he mad his own labor, and at such hours as he might spare from public cares went through a number of... commending the rest to a faithful and learned servant, who hath herein answered his Majesty's expectation. The faithful and learned servant was Sir William Alexander, who during James's years in England became an occasional poetic foil for the king, whether in debating the merits of the metre or providing an answering sonnet to one of James's."

From Alexander's correspondence it appears that he had a ghost-writing role similar to Maitland's in the Kings literary endeavors. Alexander had to execute the translations himself or persuade others to do them, and then James took whichever he preferred as his own. The work was still going on in **1620** when Alexander wrote to William drummond of Hawthornden 'to acknowledge receipt of the Psalm you sent, which I think very well done. I had done the same long before it came, but he prefers his own to all else though perchance, when you see it, you will think it the worst of the three. No man must meddle with that subject, and therefore I advise you to take no more pains therein.' By the time of James death, only thirty Psalms were done but his successors allowed Alexander to finish the sequence and publish it under James name. This Alexander did in **1631** and the text was adopted by royal command as the official Church translation. However, its quality was so poor that there was an outcry from the Church and the translation soon disappeared a sad end for a great project.

-The Cradle King: The Life of James VI & I, the First Monarch of a United Great Britain pg. 203

Points to Consider:

1. There's no mention of William Shakespeare in the committee of scholars that King James chose to translate the bible
2. King James chose Sir William Alexander to participate in the translation of the Psalms that would appear in the KJV 1611 bible NOT William Shakespeare!
3. Scholars when analyzing the writings of King James have concluded that William Alexander was actually the ghost writer for many of his works King James simply just put his name on it.
4. William Drummond was another participant who assisted in the translation of the Psalms, We have William Alexander, William Drummond but no William Shakespeare.

If William Shakespeare translated the book of Psalms 46 and inserted his name, by the time of James death, only thirty Psalms were done. William Shakespeare died in the year 1616, 9 years later King James died in the year 1625, so by the time of King James death in 1625 only thirty Psalms were done. If the translators of the KJV bible only completed thirty Psalms in the year 1625 which is 9 years after Shakespeare was already dead, how was William Shakespeare able to insert his name in Psalms 46?
The translations hadn't reached 46 as yet.

In the year 1631 William Alexander finally completed the translation of the Psalms, 15 years after William Shakespeare's death. Another interesting point is that **"Shake"** and **"Speare"** can be found in other places in the Hebrew Bible, meaning these words **(Shake/Speare)** was in the Psalms 46 chapter thousands of years before Shakespeare was even born. There's no way that William Shakespeare and William Tyndale were the same person as York also claims, both of men were born years apart. William Tyndale died 28 years before Shakespeare was born.

William Tyndale, (born c. 1490–94, near Gloucestershire, Eng.—**died Oct. 6, 1536**, Vilvoorde, near Brussels, Brabant), English biblical translator, humanist, and Protestant martyr. William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon in Warwickshire and was baptized a few days later on 26 April 1564 **He died on 23 April 1616** at the age of 52.

Below is the list of scholars who were responsible for translating the KJV 1611 bible:

Committees:

First Westminster Company, translating from **Genesis to 2 Kings:**

Lancelot Andrewes, John Overall, Hadrian à Saravia, Richard Clarke, John Layfield, Robert Tighe, Francis Burleigh, Geoffrey King, Richard Thomson, William Bedwell;

First Cambridge Company, translated from **1 Chronicles to the Song of Solomon:**

Edward Lively, John Richardson, Lawrence Chaderton, Francis Dillingham, Roger Andrewes, Thomas Harrison, Robert Spaulding, Andrew Bing;

First Oxford Company, translated from **Isaiah to Malachi:**

John Harding, John Rainolds (or Reynolds), Thomas Holland, Richard Kilby, Miles Smith, Richard Brett, Daniel Fairclough, William Thorne;

Second Oxford Company, translated the Gospels, **Acts of the Apostles**, and the **Book of Revelation:**

Thomas Ravis, George Abbot, Richard Eedes, Giles Tomson, Sir Henry Savile, John Peryn, Ralph Ravens, John Harmar, John Aglionby, Leonard Hutten;

Second Westminster Company, translated the **Epistles:**

William Barlow, John Spenser, Roger Fenton, Ralph Hutchinson, William Dakins, Michael Rabbet, Thomas Sanderson (who probably had already become Archdeacon of Rochester);

Second Cambridge Company, translated the **Apocrypha:**

John Duport, William Branthwaite, Jeremiah Radcliffe, Samuel Ward, Andrew Downes, John Bois, Robert Ward, Thomas Bilson, Richard Bancroft.

So, from the evidence gathered, dates and the lives of key individuals mentioned, York was completely wrong.

P S A L. XLVI.

1 The confidence which the Church hath in God. 8 An exhortation to behold it.

C To the chiefe Musician || for the sonnes of Korah, a song vpon Alamoth.

G O D is our refuge and strength: a very present helpe in trouble.

2 Therefore will not we feare, though the earth be remoued: and though the mountaines be caried into † the midst of the sea.

3 Though the waters thereof roare, and be troubled, though the mountaines shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.

4 There is a riuer, the streames whereof shall make glad the citie of God: the holy place of the Tabernacles of the most High.

5 God is in the midst of her: she shall not be moued; God shall helpe her, † and that right early.

6 The heathen raged, the kingdomes were mooued: he vttered his voyce, the earth melted.


7 The **L O R D** of hosts is with vs; the God of Jacob is † our refuge. Selah.

8 Come, behold the workes of the **L O R D**, what desolations hee hath made in the earth.

9 He maketh warres to cease vnto the end of the earth: hee breaketh the bow, and cutteth the speare in sunder, he burneth the chariot in the fire.

10 Be stil, and know that I am God: I will bee exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

11 The **L O R D** of hosts is with vs; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.



Psalm 46 in the King James Version is actually a light revision of Coverdale's version (1535) (the version included in the Book of Common Prayer). In Coverdale's version, the word "shake" is the 46th word from the beginning, but the word "spear" is the 48th word from the end. The KJV puts "spear" into the position of 46th word from the end by omitting from v. 10 two small particles ("still" and "and") that are not in fact in the Hebrew text. So, it does seem that the alleged allusion to Shakespeare could have arisen by complete accident.

(Professor) Richard Bauckham of Cambridge

Did Shakespeare Slip His Name in Psalm 46?

by [Kyle Butt, M.Div.](#)

Amazing! Incredible! Unbelievable! William Shakespeare left his mark on the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible. At least that is the rumor going around. According to a host of Websites and books, William Shakespeare was called upon to add his artistic touch to the English translation of the Bible done at the behest of King James, which was finished in 1611. As proof for this idea, proponents point to Psalm 46, and allege that Shakespeare slipped his name into the text. Here is how the story goes. Since Shakespeare was born in the year 1564, then he would have been 46 years old during 1610 when the finishing touches were being put on the KJV. In the King James Version, if you count down 46 words from the top (not counting the title) you read the word “shake,” then, if you omit the word “selah” and count 46 words from the bottom you find the word “spear.” Voilà! Shakespeare must have tinkered with the text and subtly added his signature. How else could one account for all of these 46s to work out so well? To top it all off, William Shakespeare is an anagram of “Here was I, like a psalm.”

First, it should be noted that, although Shakespeare did live at the same time the King James Version was being translated, there is no evidence that he had anything to do with the translation. The events and dates in the life of Shakespeare are fairly well known, and in all of the established facts about his life, not a single piece of paper or document puts him anywhere near the translation process of the King James Version.

Second, in order to get the “perfect” 46s out of Psalm 46, the word “selah” must be omitted from the text. Since the word “selah” seems to be used in many of the psalms as a type of musical punctuation, then the proponents of the Shakespeare rumor think that it would be acceptable not to count the word in order to obtain the desired result. However, the word is in the original text of the psalm.

If Shakespeare were involved in translating Psalm 46, he mostly likely would have had the manuscripts before him that contained the word “selah,” since it is in the text. Why, then, would he have arbitrarily decided **not** to count the word? And, if the word “spear” had come one word later in the text, would the propagators of this rumor simply say that Shakespeare **did** count the word “selah.” Needless to say, you can make numbers do anything you want them to do if you conveniently omit anything that you do not want to count.

Third, Shakespeare could not have subjectively inserted the words into the text in order to get his name in, since the Hebrew words for “shake” and “spear” had been there for thousands of years prior to 1611. Also, the word “shake” is a commonly used word in the KJV (as is the word “spear”). Finding the two words together in one psalm is unremarkable.

Finally, numbers like these 46s, and coincidences of this kind, are a dime a dozen. A person can pull numerical shenanigans all day long. My wife’s name is Bethany, and at this writing, she is 26 years old. In the New King James Version in the twenty-sixth chapter of Matthew in verse 6, the name Bethany appears. It happens to be the sixth word from the beginning of the verse, which is the exact age my wife would have been for the majority of the year 1982, which was the year the New King James Version hit the market. That must mean that she helped translate that particular section of scripture. Or maybe it just means that numbers can be made to say just about anything.

Let’s stop trying to discover “secret” codes and names in the Bible, and let’s start reading it to see what God **really** is saying to us. When we do, we won’t find secret codes and mysterious names, but instead, we will see God’s straightforward plan for righteous living.

*Did Shakespeare Translate
Part of the Psalms KJV?*
ABSOLUTELY NOT!