

BEFORE READING

Big Question

How can a person's wisdom display love for others?

GENRE **Biography**

A biography is a true story about the life of a real person. The word *biography* describes what it means: *bio-* means *life* and *-graph* means *write*.

A biography is written by an author about someone else.

An autobiography is written by an author about his or her own life.

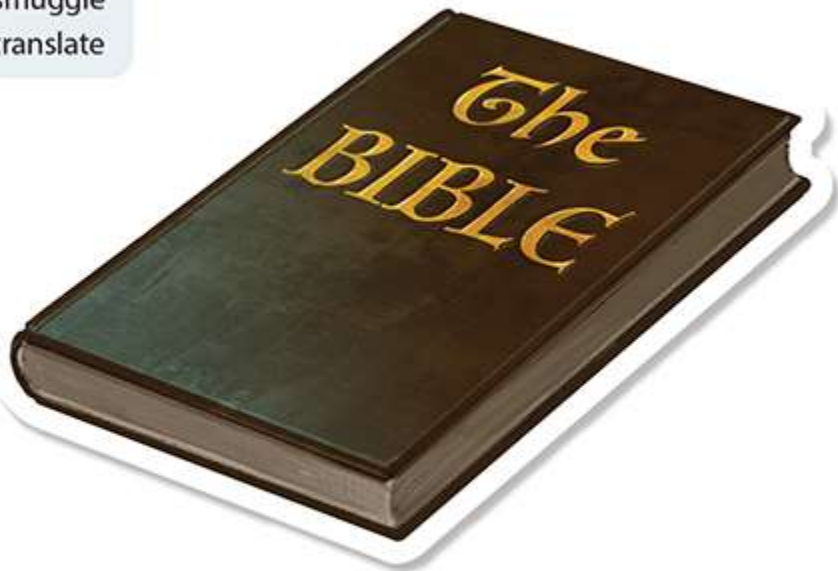
A-Z VOCABULARY

1

England
priest
question
tutor

2

betray
bishop
smuggle
translate



The Bible in English

biography by
Jennifer Olachea

illustrated by
János Orban





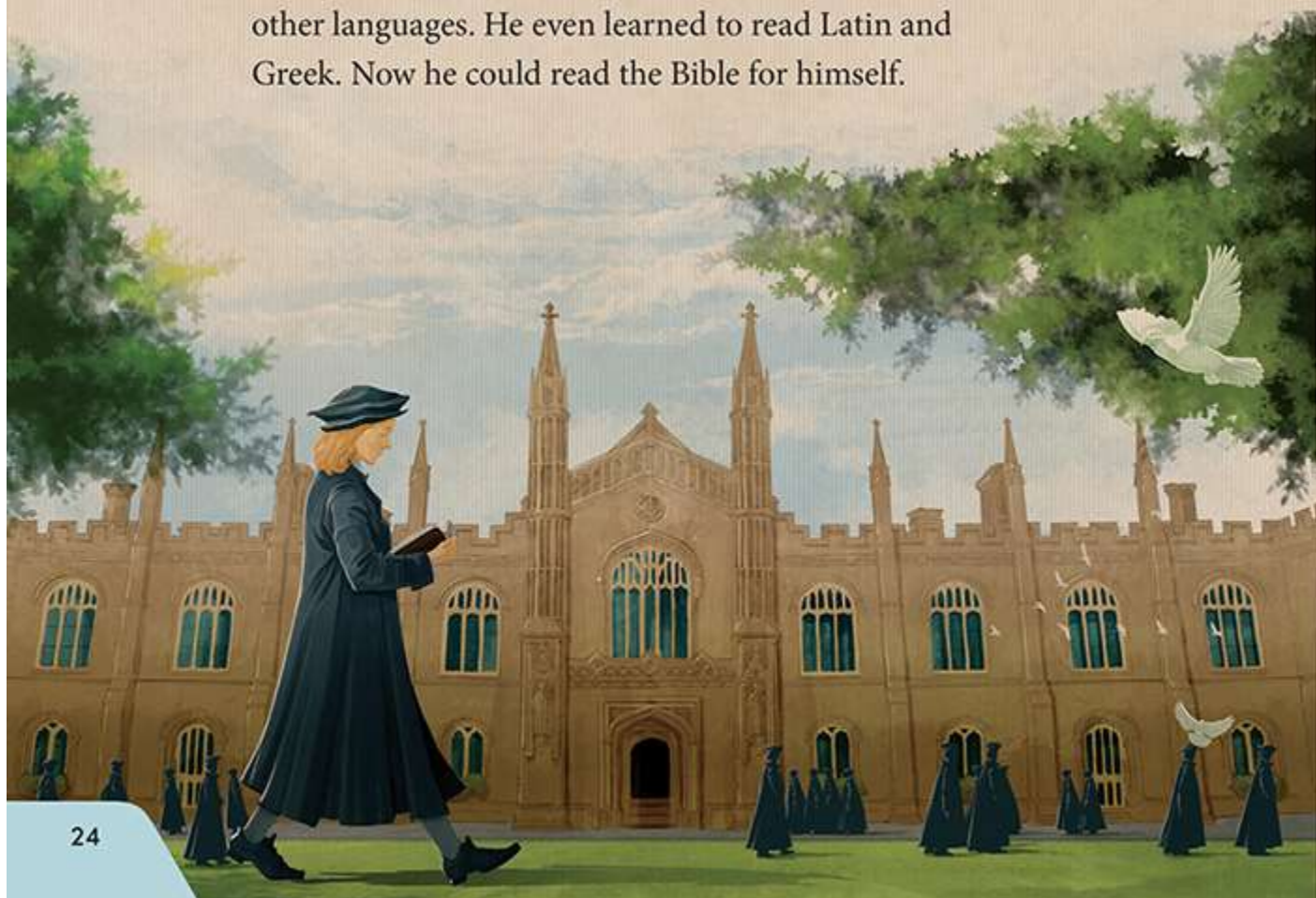
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In Latin

William Tyndale loved to learn. But as he grew up, he did not learn much in church. The **priests** in the churches in **England** read from the Latin Bible. William and his family did not understand Latin. They spoke and read English. The Bible was not written in English.



When William grew up, he went to a university to study. He learned many things. He learned to speak other languages. He even learned to read Latin and Greek. Now he could read the Bible for himself.



When William finished his own studies, he became a **tutor**. The family he worked for had two young boys. William taught the boys Latin. He would read the Bible to the boys and their friends in the village. But the villagers could not understand the words. William had to tell them what the words in the Bible said.

William wondered about the people who listened to him.



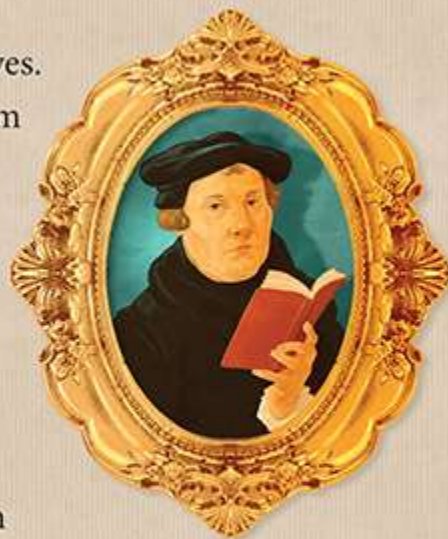
“Why do we not teach the common people to read?”
he asked a priest one day.

The priest sneered. “They feed pigs and plant crops.
They do not need to read. Why should we teach them?”

“So that they can read the Bible for themselves. The Bible can help them be better men.” William said.

“Poor people cannot learn to read Latin! They can ask a priest about the Bible!” the priest shouted.

“But what if they cannot ask a priest? What if the priest does not know? Do you not think they should have the Bible in English?” William asked. “In Germany Martin Luther is printing Bibles in the language of the common people.”



“William, that is dangerous talk,” growled the priest.
“You shouldn’t **question** the ways of the holy Church.
You could go to jail!”

William was silent. He did not want to go to jail. But he knew that the priest was wrong. It was wrong for them to keep people from reading the Bible. William wanted every person in England to be able to read the Bible.



In English

William decided he would **translate** the Bible into English himself. He studied Greek and Hebrew, the languages of the Bible. He went to see the **bishop** of London. William asked the bishop to support him in translating the Bible.

The bishop of London said no. This was against the Church of England. The Church did not want the Bible translated into the people's language.

William Tyndale did not give up. He went to Germany to get away from those who wanted to put him in jail.



Martin Luther lived in Germany. Luther printed German New Testaments for the people there. But Luther was also in danger. The priests in Germany did not like what Luther was doing. They wanted to put him in jail.

William worked to translate the New Testament into English. He worked in secret. The priests in England sent people to look for him. They wanted to stop his work. They wanted to take him back to England and put him in jail.

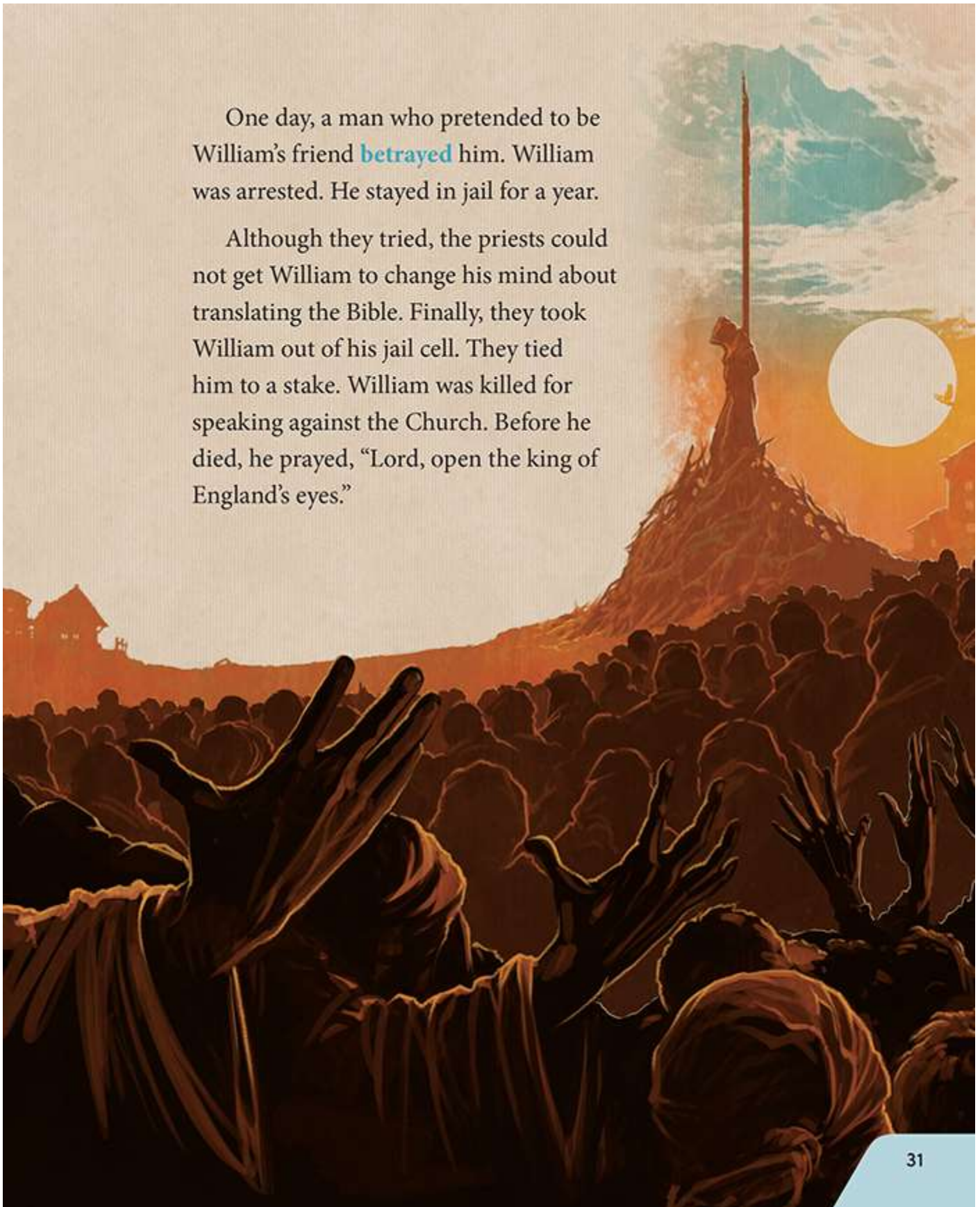
When William finished translating the New Testament, he had it printed in Germany. He had friends who helped him **smuggle** the Bibles into England. Smuggling Bibles was also dangerous work. People with his Bible could be put in jail. They could even be burned at the stake.

William lived in hiding for many years. He kept working to translate the Old Testament into English. His friends kept smuggling Bibles into England.



One day, a man who pretended to be William's friend **betrayed** him. William was arrested. He stayed in jail for a year.

Although they tried, the priests could not get William to change his mind about translating the Bible. Finally, they took William out of his jail cell. They tied him to a stake. William was killed for speaking against the Church. Before he died, he prayed, "Lord, open the king of England's eyes."



God answered his prayer. Soon after William Tyndale died, the king of England made a new law. He ordered that an English Bible be placed in every church. Now all people could read the Bible for themselves.



AFTER READING

1. What did young William Tyndale notice about going to church that frustrated him?
2. What languages did he study in the university? Why do you think he studied those languages?
3. Why did William Tyndale want the people to be able to read the Bible for themselves?
4. Who printed German New Testaments?
5. How did William Tyndale get caught?
6. At the end of his life, how did William Tyndale show his love for people?

Think & Discuss

Do you think William Tyndale was wise to go against the rules of the Church of England?

What motivated William Tyndale to translate the Bible into English for the common people?

The Bible says that Christ's love should compel, or motivate, us to no longer live for ourselves but to live for Him who died and rose again.

(2 Corinthians 5:14–15)

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

John 15:13