

Beggat

THE

KING JAMES

BIBLE & the

English Language

DAVID CRYSTAL

'Wonderful' *The Guardian*

Resumo de Begat: The King James Bible and the English Language

"Let there be light," "A fly in the ointment," "New wine in old bottles," "How are the mighty fallen," "The salt of the earth." All these everyday phrases owe their popularity to the King James Bible.

Indeed, it is said that this astonishing Bible has contributed more to the color and grace of the English language than almost any other literary source. In Begat, best-selling language expert David Crystal offers a stimulating tour of the verbal richness and incredible reach of the King James Bible.

How can a work published in 1611 have had such a lasting influence on the language? To answer this question, Crystal offers fascinating discussions of phrases such as "The skin of one's teeth" or "Out of the mouth of babes," tracing how these memorable lines have found independent life in the work of poets, playwrights, novelists, politicians, and journalists, and how more recently they have been taken up with enthusiasm by advertisers, Hollywood, and hip-hop.

He shows, for instance, how "Let there be light" has resurfaced as "Let there be lite," the title of a diet cookbook, and "Let there be flight," the title of an article about airport delays.

Along the way, Crystal reminds us that the King James Bible owes much to earlier translations, notably those by Wycliffe in the fourteenth century and Tyndale in the sixteenth. But he also underscores crucial revisions made by King James's team of translators, contrasting the memorable "Am I my brother's keeper" with Wycliffe's "Am I the keeper of my brother." Language lovers and students of the Bible will be equally enthralled by Begat and its engaging look at the intersection of religion and literature.

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