

## King James Bible Study Correspondence Course

An Outreach of Highway Evangelistic Ministries  
5311 Windridge lane ~ Lockhart, Florida 32810 ~ USA

### Women Heroes of the Faith Lesson 7 – Mary Jones

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### Mary Jones and Her Bible

*“O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;”*(Psalm 63:1.)

The Psalmist that God used to write this verse was David, a great and godly king of Israel. He is described in the Bible as a man after God’s own heart. This can be clearly seen in the wording of this verse as it demonstrates his deep desire to know God. The Psalms of David have blessed Christians worldwide for hundreds of years. There is another person in history who shared this exact same longing for God. Not another great king; in fact, quite the opposite – a poor Welsh girl, daughter of a simple weaver. But just as God used King David in a mighty way, so He used this poor girl, who was rich in faith, to change the world for the spreading of the gospel.

Mary Jones was born in 1784 to Jacob and Molly Jones, weavers from the little Welsh village of Llanfihangel. Llanfihangel is comfortably situated in the foothills of the grand mountain Cadir Idris, with Cardigan Bay off in the distance to the west. Here, among the beautiful countryside, this couple made their home - a humble home, as the trade of a weaver was not a lucrative one. Nevertheless it was a happy home, and their daughter Mary was of a sweet and obedient temper, giving much delight to the couple.

Just as her parents used their loom and flax to weave a strong and durable fabric, so God wove circumstances into Mary’s life that strengthened her character. She had parents who taught her to have a good work ethic and to cheerfully obey. She had to go without many of the comforts that children of wealthier families enjoyed, but Mary found her enjoyment in the beauty and grandeur of the outdoors – God’s creation. Jacob and Molly had taught their little girl about God right from the start and took her to the village church regularly. Sadly, Jacob fell ill and died while Mary was still quite young, leaving her mother to provide alone. Mary proved to be invaluable as she willingly took on household chores so her mother could do the weaving. This she did without complaint or bitterness though the loss was great and made life difficult.

As Mary grew older, she truly longed to learn more about God, but her ability to do this was limited because she did not know how to read. There were no schools anywhere near Llanfihangel for Mary to attend, and her mother was not educated enough to teach her. Even if she had somehow learned to read, they did not own a Bible. Bibles were scarce and extremely expensive at that time, much too expensive for a widowed weaver to afford. So Mary had to learn all she could about God from what her parents had

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taught her and from what she heard at church. However, she clung to a promise that had been made to her by the wife of a nearby farmer. Mrs. Evans had told Mary that, if she were ever able to learn to read, she could come to their house any time and read their Bible. (They were of the fortunate few who owned one.) Young Mary began to pray in earnest that she could somehow learn to read, for she did not want to “grow up in darkness.”

One glorious day when Mary was ten years old, the greatest of news came to her village. A school was to be opened in Abergynolwyn, a village two miles from their home. What joy and gratitude filled her heart! God had heard her prayers and answered them. Had she had a Bible, she would likely have underlined Psalm 66:19-20, *"But verily God hath heard me; he hath attended to the voice of my prayer. 20 Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer, nor his mercy from me."*

Mary began attending the school as soon as it opened. She had to walk the two miles every day, but that was nothing to her; the value of learning to read was worth it. Conscientious as ever, she arose extra early in the morning in order to complete all her household duties before leaving for school. By so doing, her daily absence would not create an extra burden for her mother. Her schoolmaster, John Ellis, quickly recognized her eagerness and diligence and encouraged her progress. Mary was not only an excellent student, but she was also a friendly and helpful classmate, well-loved by all.

Shortly after the school opened, a Sunday school was also started. From the very beginning, Mary attended regularly with the same fervor she had at school. The Sunday school children were assigned lessons to complete throughout the week. Mary, remembering the promise of Mrs. Evans, approached her after a Sunday evening service, and asked if the invitation to read her family's Bible was still open. Mrs. Evans was thrilled to hear that Mary had finally learned to read. It was arranged that she could visit their house every Saturday and enjoy the use of their Bible to her heart's content.

Mary felt shy when she approached the Evans' home. Their house was quite grand compared to the modest cottage she lived in, and their farm consisted of several buildings. However, Mrs. Evans soon made her feel welcomed and comfortable; and, after warming herself by the fire (for the Evans' farm was a fair distance from her house), she sat down in their lovely parlor where they kept their Bible. It was on a table, covered with a clean, white cloth to protect it from dirt and dust. Mary handled the Bible with the utmost care, turning the pages slowly as she studied and prepared her Sunday school lesson. When she finished, she gently covered it with the cloth. This was the first of many splendid Saturdays in the Evans' parlor.

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What a joy to have spent time in God's word! Mary now wished even more desperately that she had a copy of her own. The cost of a Bible was so expensive; she knew it would take years of work to earn enough money for the purchase, but she was determined and willing. Without neglecting her studies or her duties at home, Mary sought for any work in the village she could find. Her tasks varied; she cleaned, mended, babysat, gathered firewood, and did all sorts of other odd jobs. She saved every penny she could.

It took Mary six years to acquire enough money to purchase a Bible. Then a new challenge arose – where could she actually find one to buy? None of the villages in their surrounding area had one. She decided to ask the preacher, Mr. William Huw, if he could direct her. He knew of no available Bibles but said the person she needed to speak to was a Mr. Charles who lived in Bala. Bala was more than twenty-five miles from Llanfihangel. That was a great distance for Mary to have to go. To Mrs. Jones the idea of her daughter making such a long trip alone and on foot was at first disconcerting. But upon further contemplation she felt she could not begrudge Mary the opportunity for which she had worked and prayed so long.

It was the year 1800, and Mary was sixteen years old when she made the long walk to Bala. She had only one pair of shoes. A walk that long and on such rugged terrain would have ruined them so she went barefoot. She had no parcel in which to place the treasured Bible once purchased, so she borrowed one from a neighbor lady. Mary made that solitary, twenty-five plus mile walk with utmost joy in her heart. Her feet became cut and blistered by the rough stones along the way, and her legs grew weary; but her spirit was in no way dampened. She was on her way to buy the greatest treasure on earth, and nothing could rob her of her happiness.

It was almost nightfall when Mary finally arrived in Bala. She found the house Pastor Huw had told her about. It was the home of a preacher named David Edwards; he would be able to tell her how to find Mr. Charles. Pastor Edwards said it was too late in the day to contact him. He invited her to stay in their home that night and said he would take her to Mr. Charles directly the next morning.

Mr. Thomas Charles was around the age of fifty and had spent over twenty years in the Lord's service, traveling throughout the Welsh wilderness, preaching the gospel, and starting day schools and Sunday schools. He was at his desk diligently working early that next morning when Pastor Edwards and Mary showed up at his door. Mary was timid upon meeting him, but she answered all his questions about how it was that she had come there. He quizzed her on her Bible knowledge and was pleasantly

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surprised at her thorough answers. He was even more surprised to discover she had learned that much without even having a Bible of her own. Then the twinkle in his eyes and the smile on his face disappeared as he told her that he had not one Bible he could sell her. All but a few had been sold, and those few were already spoken for. He explained that the company which had been printing Welsh Bibles had stopped doing so and there was no other place that printed them.

Mary's hopes were dashed. All the years of working, saving, praying, and no Bible! She began sobbing at this realization. Her crying was that of genuine sorrow; sorrow over the loss of a great hope. Mr. Charles was moved by this and by her undeniable devotion to God. He decided he must make a way for this poor girl to have a copy of the Bible. He went to the cupboard and took one of the promised ones in his hands. One of the gentlemen who was to receive a Welsh Bible could also read English. Mr. Charles would find him an English one. He could not let Mary leave empty handed and was happy to offer it to her. She held the precious Bible in her hands and began to sob again, this time from the overwhelming joy she had just received. Mr. Charles turned to Pastor Edwards and said, "Is not such a sight as this enough to melt the hardest heart? A girl so young, so poor, so intelligent, so familiar with Scripture, compelled to walk all the distance from Llanfihangel to Bala to get a Bible! From this day on I can never rest until I find some way of supplying the real need of my country that cries out for the word of God."

Mr. Charles was true to his word. He did not rest. There was a famine of Bibles, and this was greatly distressing to him. It was this famine that was at the root of the lack of devotion to God he found in the Welsh people throughout the country. It took four long years to accomplish, but finally in 1804, the British and Foreign Bible Society was established. The objective of this society was to spread God's word over the whole world, providing people with Bibles in their own language. The society is still in existence today, translating God's word into native tongues and distributing it. Millions of copies of the Scriptures have been printed and made available to people in more than two hundred countries, all because one young girl thirsted after God (Psalm 63:1.) *"O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;"*

Mary returned to her humble home in Llanfihangel, clutching her treasured Bible. One can only imagine how she poured over its pages in the years to follow. Eventually she became a weaver, like her mother, as well as a dressmaker. She took excellent care of her widowed mother, and in time married a man named Thomas Lewis who was also a weaver. She and her

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husband lived in a village not far from Llanfihangel called Bryncreug. Here in her new home, Mary remained unchanged in her devotion to God and his word. With her new responsibilities as a wife and then eventually a mother, her time was precious, but never did she miss time for God. She read her Bible, studied it, and committed bounteous portions of it to memory. She was known in the village for her Bible knowledge. The little Sunday school children often came to her for help with their lessons, and she gladly complied. She wanted them to grow up loving God and learning about Him just as she had.

Upon hearing of the Bible society that had been formed by Mr. Charles, Mary and Thomas determined to contribute however they could. They began bee keeping, and all the money made from the sale of the bees' wax they gave to the Bible society for the furtherance of the work. When asked once how a poor family of a weaver could afford to give that money away, Mary's simple reply was, *"I don't think there's anything very hard to understand. If by great care and a little self-denial we can contribute something to help in God's work, it is surely the greatest joy we can have."*

Mary lived to be eighty-two years old. She and her husband had eight children. She lived a long and simple life with unwavering faith in God and in His word, which she so greatly cherished. In her later years, she became blind. No longer able to read her precious Bible, she found joy and comfort in the Scriptures she had memorized and hidden in her heart. She died on December 28, 1866. Her Bible is now in the possession of the British and Foreign Bible Society and is stored at the Cambridge University Library. Inside the Bible she had written, ***"Mary Jones is the true owner of this Bible bought in the year 1800 aged 16."***

*"O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;"*. The country of Wales was indeed once a dry and thirsty land with its famine of Bibles. But in the midst of that, Mary sought God and thirsted for His word. She longed for knowledge of her Saviour. Hebrews 11:6b tells us that God is *...."a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.."* He certainly rewarded Mary by her receiving of a Bible; and not only that, he used this simple girl of mighty faith to inspire a work that would place His word into the hands of millions of people around the world.

### Notes

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**Women Heroes of the Faith**  
**Lesson 7 – Mary Jones**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

1. How is King David described in the Bible?
2. How many miles did Mary walk to find her Bible, How many miles do you think she would have walked in order to get a Bible?
3. What can we see in Mary's willingness that is not in our own?
4. What verse describes Mary's life?\*
5. Who was the person that told Mary where to get a Bible?
6. What does God use in our lives to mold our character?
7. How long did it take Mary to acquire enough money to afford a Bible?
8. How old was Mary when she began her quest to get a Bible?
9. Who had the Bible she so desperately longed for?
10. What did Mary do when the seller said that he did not have any more Bibles to sell to her?
11. What does Mary's character teach us all about obeying those whom God has put in authority over us?

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12. What was the promise that Mary Evans made to Mary Jones?
13. What does it say to you when you see someone taking exceptional care of the Bible God has allowed them to own?
14. How did Mary's enthusiasm for the Bible stir the heart of Mr. Charles?
15. Explain 1 Timothy 4:12 from what we have learned about Mary Jones.
16. After reading about the life and times of Mary Jones, tell us how the Lord rewarded her this side of Heaven for her love and dedication to God's word?

**True/false**

- Mary walked 25 miles barefooted to get a Bible.
- Mary was poor financially, but she still gave to missions.
- It takes self-denial if you ever want to be used by God.



Scripture memorization, write out these verses on the back on this page:  
Psalm 63:1; Psalms 66:19-20; Hebrews 11:6;  
(Must be in KJV)

Any questions?