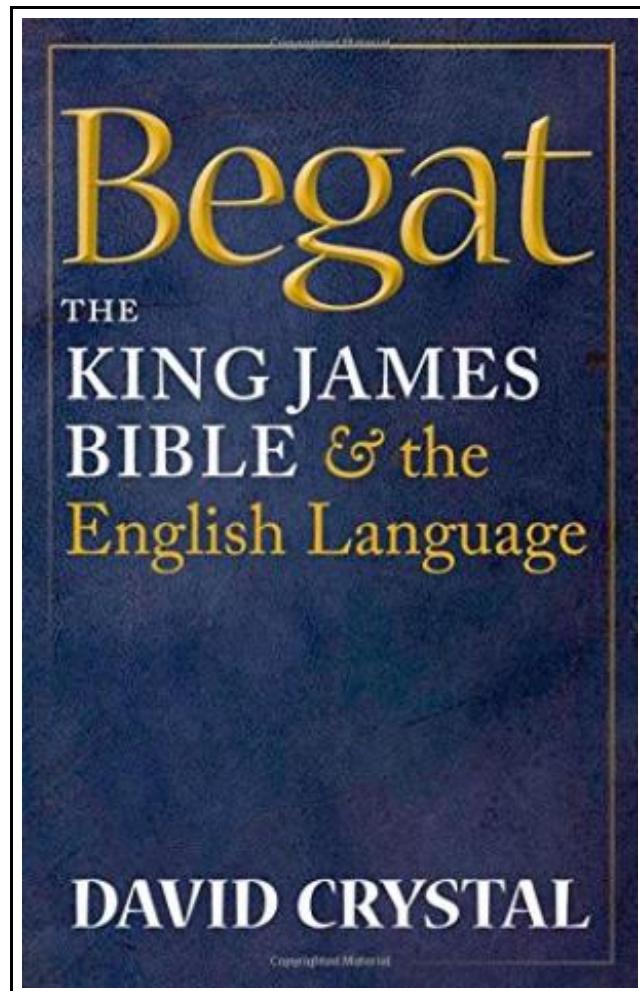


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Reviews

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BEGAT: THE KING JAMES BIBLE AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Oxford University Press. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Begat: The King James Bible and the English Language, David Crystal, What do the following have in common? Let there be light - Whited sepulchres - A rod of iron - New wine into old bottles Lick the dust - How are the mighty fallen - A thorn in the flesh - Wheels within wheels They're all in the King James Bible. This astonishing book has 'contributed far more to English in the way of idiomatic or quasi-proverbial expressions than any other literary source.' wrote David Crystal in 2004. In Begat he returns to the subject: he asks how a work published in 1611 could have had such an influence on the language and looks closely at what that influence has been. He comes to some surprising conclusions. No other version of the Bible however popular (such as the Good News Bible) or imposed upon the church (like the New English Bible) has had anything like the same impact. David Crystal shows how its words and phrases got independent life in the work of poets, playwrights, novelists, and politicians, and how more recently they have been taken up by journalists, advertisers, Hollywood, and hip-hop. He reveals the great debt the King James Bible owes to its English forebears, especially John Wycliffe's in the fourteenth century and William Tyndale's in the sixteenth. He also shows that the revisions and changes made by King James's translators were crucial to its universal success. "A person who professes to be a critic in the delicacies of the English language ought to have the Bible at his finger's ends," Lord Macaulay advised Lady Holland in 1831. David Crystal shows how true this is. His book is a revelation.

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