# Bible Study 79

# May 31, 20230

The Book of Common Prayer

The Book of Common Prayer was first conceived in the year 1549. Henry VIII had broken away from the Roman Catholic Church and formed his own Church of England. He wanted a Prayer Book for the Liturgy that everyone could use and understand. The task fell to Archbishop Cranmer.

The BCP underwent several revisions in its early history. It was meant to unify worship, liturgy and doctrine. Then there came a dilemma. The Thirteen Colonies in America declare Independence July 4, 1776. With the end of the Revolutionary War, the Anglican Church in America left and returned to Britain with many of its clergy. There were no bishops in North America forcing all ordinations to priesthood to take place back in London.

Anglican in the Thirteen Colonies, now the United States of America decided to change their name to ‘The Episcopal Church.’--- They had no intention of changing their doctrine, liturgy or prayer. The problem was that calling themselves a ‘church of bishops was a misnomer as they had no bishops. They subsequently applied to England but were turned away. Eventually Episcopal bishops were ordained by the Church of Scotland.

In 1789 The Book of Common Prayer was revised, edited and published in North America as the standard accepted authority for doctrine, liturgy and prayer in the Episcopal Church. There were certain changes in regard to its relationship with the State and Government. Removed were all references to any oath or allegiance to the British Crown. Episcopalians found in the BCP a uniformed doctrine, uniformed liturgy and prayer.

One of the benefits of the BCP has always been that it leaves no room for wild interpretations, or wayward expressions of liturgy or belief that do not conform to the belief of the body of the church. On the contrary, the main liturgical expression may be found in the celebration of the Eucharist, adherence to the Church’s Liturgical calendar, and Morning and Evening Prayer. There are liturgies for special feasts and occasions, sacraments and liturgical events. All other liturgies are determined by the bishop.

If you have a BCP copy that is printed in Black and Red, know that all prayers are black and red is the rubrics.

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