

International Conversation Café

Bible Topic: Famous Quotes From the Bible or William Shakespeare

The Geneva Bible was the most available, portable, and affordable book during the life of William Shakespeare, 1564 – 1616. It was loosely called the Puritan Bible. Shakespeare quoted the Bible often, sometimes in direct quotes and sometimes by referring to stories or themes in the Bible. It is easy to see that Shakespeare read and listened to the Bible being read.

We know that Shakespeare was a lodger for several years in the home of the Mountjoy family on Silver Street in London. The Mountjoys were religiously fervent French Huguenots—refugees from anti-Calvinist persecutions in France. John W. Belz speculates that Shakespeare would have heard the Geneva Bible read at family devotions and would have seen the Bible upon on the table. Just incidentally, Shakespeare’s first acquaintance with the Geneva Bible would have come as a student at the Stratford Grammar School when he translated passages from the Geneva Bible into Latin and then back into English.

<http://www.reformation21.org/articles/shakespeare-and-the-geneva-bible.php>

Read through the quotes below and discuss among yourselves whether the quote belongs to Shakespeare or the Bible. If you think it is from the Bible, see if you can tell what book it is from. Or if it is from Shakespeare, which play? The answers are on the other side.

<http://www.chicagonow.com/listing-beyond-forty/2014/04/quiz-shakespeare-or-the-bible-quotes/>

1. To thine own self be true.
2. He kept him as the apple of his eye.
3. Out of the mouth of babes.
4. Put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite.
5. It is a wise father that knows his own child.
6. Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown.
7. Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we shall die.
8. The truth shall make you free.
9. I am escaped with the skin of my teeth.
10. Men of few words are the best men.
11. Neither a borrower nor a lender be.
12. The love of money is the root of all evil.

Here are the answers.

1. To thine own self be true. Shakespeare (Hamlet. Act. i. Sc. 3)
2. He kept him as the apple of his eye. The Bible (Deut. 32:10)
3. Out of the mouth of babes. The Bible (Psalm 8:2)
4. Put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite. The Bible (Proverbs 23:2)
5. It is a wise father that knows his own child. Shakespeare (The Merchant of Venice. Act ii. Sc. 2.)
6. Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown. Shakespeare (King Henry IV. Part II Act iii. Sc. 1.)
7. Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we shall die. The Bible (Isaiah 22:13)
8. The truth shall make you free. The Bible (John 13:32)
9. I am escaped with the skin of my teeth. The Bible (Job 19:20)
10. Men of few words are the best men. Shakespeare (King Henry V. Act iii. Sc.2.)
11. Neither a borrower nor a lender be. Shakespeare (Hamlet. Act i. Sc. 3.)
12. The love of money is the root of all evil. The Bible (1 Timothy 6:10)

Do you have any other examples of quotes that may be attributed to the Bible?

