

**The Sword of 1611**  
**Teaching the King James Bible and its Doctrinal Truths**  
**Dr. Peter S. Ruckman**

Peter S. Ruckman, 1921-

Peter Sturges Ruckman was born in Wilmington, Delaware, on November 19th, 1921 (only four months after C.I. Scofield died). His father, John Hamilton Ruckman, was a third generation Army officer with a Master's degree from MIT in Boston. His mother, Mary Warner Armstrong Ruckman, was from a wealthy family in Pasadena, California. At this time, he had one older brother named Johnny. While Peter was still a baby, the family settled in Topeka, Kansas.

The Ruckmans were Episcopalians, so Peter was twenty-seven years old before he received a clear presentation of the Gospel. As a boy, he came through the Great Depression reading books, drawing cartoon characters, going to the movies, running with "the gang," and being a first rate "daredevil."

After high school, Peter went through the Citizens Military Training Camp at the demands of his father and then entered college in Kansas. While in ROTC, he transferred to the University of Alabama to finish his junior and senior years. Hard sinful living continued to be his "norm" no matter where he went.

With World War II being well under way, Peter figured he would be shipped overseas and killed in battle before long, yet he continued his education, changing his major to Radio Arts.

He secretly married Janie Bess Mays in March of 1944, whom he had met and dated while at the University of Alabama. She was a clean girl with a praying Christian mother, while Peter was a wicked fornicator looking for "convenience." Their first child was born in June of 1945.

He served Uncle Sam in Japan and in the Philippines, but never engaged in combat. He had six years of infantry training, but he never had the chance to fire a shot. He didn't know it at the time, but God had another war for him to fight.

After the war, he came back to Alabama and went to work as a disc jockey. He did quite well in radio, but he was growing more and more miserable on the inside. He had "lived" more in twenty-seven years than most people do in seventy, and he was just worn out and miserable. He even contemplated suicide.

One night after a few beers in a Pensacola cafe, Peter heard an inner voice telling him "YOU NEED TO GET A BIBLE." The voice wouldn't go away, so he stole a King James Bible at a nearby boarding house. He went home and randomly opened the Book to Ezekiel chapter twenty-eight. Verses two and three hit him "like a jackhammer," and verses six through ten compelled him to throw the Book across the room. He then picked the Book up and read Deuteronomy 28:20-24. Across the room it went once again, and Peter went out and "got drunk." This continued for a few weeks (in early 1949) until he decided to visit a Catholic priest and was encouraged to take convert courses and "join the church."

None of this gave him any peace. Then one Sunday night in mid March he entered a Methodist church building during a Sunday night service to find Christ. He heard some singing in the building, but the auditorium was empty. He went to the empty alter and prayed for about a half hour. Knowing not what to pray, he just poured his heart out to God and went home in tears. The next morning God sent Hugh Pyle to lead him to Christ in the radio station where he worked.

He dropped his Catholic convert courses and started attending Brent Baptist Church in Pensacola, where Hugh Pyle was pastor. His wife, Janie, attended church with him, but was never really impressed with his conversion or with church.

In September of the same year, Peter enrolled at Bob Jones University to get his Radio Arts degree in a clean Christian environment, but it wasn't long before he changed his major and studied for the ministry

instead. His GI bill paid for the schooling, but he still had to struggle to support his family while living in a plywood trailer with no bathroom or hot water.

During his years at BJU, he read his Bible through about once per month and butted heads more than once with the “scholars” in the Bible department. He sat under the fine preaching of Bob Jones Sr., and he learned Greek and Hebrew. He began preaching on the street, leading souls to Christ, and even holding weekend meetings and doing chalk talk sermons. He was ordained in a Southern Baptist church in 1950.

After earning his Masters and his Doctorate from Bob Jones University, Peter spent several years as an evangelist, and he saw hundreds of souls saved and many young men called to preach. However, as he labored for the Lord, his family life suffered and his marriage grew weaker.

By 1959, Peter and Janie had five children: Diana (1945), David (1950), Priscilla (1952), John Michael (1956), and Peter S. Jr. (1959).

He began pastoring Brent Baptist Church in 1962, and his wife left him and took all five children the same year. Within a couple of years he was granted custody of all the children. So, through the sixties, a single Peter S. Ruckman raised five children, pastored a church, held regular Bible conferences, wrote books, and started a Bible institute.

Brother Ruckman quickly became a well known advocate of the King James Bible. Pensacola Bible Institute was founded in 1964 for the purpose of teaching the Bible and training men to preach. A heavy emphasis was placed upon the local church, street preaching, and foreign missions. Those who read his books or attended his school were labeled, “Ruckmanites,” by people who knew very little about the man or the school.

He remarried in 1972 (to Sherry Rueben), and one third of his church opposed the marriage. Rather than stay and “fight it out,” he chose to resign. He founded Bible Baptist Church in 1974.

Through the seventies and eighties, Peter continued to write books, hold Bible conferences, pastor the church, and produce dozens of Bible-believing pastors, teachers, and missionaries through the school.

Then, in 1988, his second wife left him. This marriage, like the first, had lasted sixteen years. In his autobiography, he describes the second marriage as a time of reaping what he sowed during the first marriage. In the first marriage, he did the taking and the wife done the giving; in the second marriage, just the opposite.

After much prayer and searching, he married Pamela Irene Huggins. Many of the brethren said he was “finished,” but God went right on blessing the ministry more than ever.

At the writing of this tract (early 2000), Brother Ruckman is seventy-eight years of age with a world-wide book and tape ministry, a monthly newsletter, regular Bible conferences, summer camp meetings, and over two hundred students enrolled at PBI.

His best literary works include commentaries on over twenty books of the Bible, The History of the New Testament Church (two volumes), Theological Studies (two volumes), The Christian’s Handbook of Manuscript Evidence, The Christian’s Handbook of Biblical Scholarship, The Christian’s Handbook of Science and Philosophy, Problem Texts, The Local Church, Music and Musicians, The Mythological Septuagint, and scores of topical booklet studies. His autobiography, The Full Cup, is very interesting, and should be read by anyone interested in knowing more about one of the most effective preachers of the twentieth century.

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Written by James Melton, 2000, Bible Baptist Publications.