BYUtv to Air First U.S. Documentary Series on Making of King James Bible

On Oct. 16, *Fires of Faith: The Coming Forth of The King James Bible* celebrates 400th year anniversary, capturing book’s violent birth and enduring influence through historically accurate re-enactments and interviews with leading scholars.

**Oct. 6, 2011, Provo, Utah** — BYUtv today announced that it will present and air the first U.S. television film series on the making of the *King James Bible*, coinciding with the 400th anniversary of its translation. Celebrated for its enduring and widespread use, the *King James Bible* has had immeasurable impact on religion, language, culture, art and literature. Yet the road to its influence and acceptance was paved with the horrors of humanity.

Produced and directed by filmmaker Lee Groberg, and written by screenwriter Mitch Davis, the three-part documentary and dramatic feature tells the vivid stories of international politics, intrigue, subversion, bloodshed, fire, and the runaway libido of King Henry VIII that led to its creation. The *King James Bible’s* profound impact on faith is captured through more than 130 reenactments filmed in eight different countries at many of the actual sites where originally events took place. A prestigious host of 18 international scholars and religious leaders, from the Universities of Notre Dame and Oxford to the Chief Rabbi of Israel, reveal differing perspectives while confirming that the *King James Bible’s* influence is like none other, and that the importance of the translation goes well beyond religion itself.

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“Few milestones in history have greater influence and significance than the translation of the Bible into English,” said Derek Marquis, executive producer of *Fires of Faith* and Managing Director of BYUtv. “We knew we couldn’t let the 400th anniversary of the seminal English Bible pass without telling the story of how the King James version came to be and why it has endured. The director, writer, actors, scholars and religious leaders in our film combined to create an extraordinary chorus that transcends any one religion to truly celebrate the most influential book of all time.”

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“The power of the story transcends ideological and cultural boundaries.”

“Translating [the Bible] was a death sentence.”

“Without exception, every person who contributed to this film – regardless of their own particular beliefs or background – was inspired to help us turn back the visual clock and authentically convey the events. Being permitted to use the historic locations where the story actually took place, such as a 4th century monastery in Israel, 800 year-old English castles and 500 year-old European churches, drew in the hundreds of scholars, actors, curators and crew members who worked on the production. We focused on even the smallest details, to inspire the cast and enable the viewers to feel as if they’re witnessing history.

“Fires of Faith” chronicles the cast of characters that were central to the Reformation, including John Wycliffe, Martin Luther, King Henry VIII and “Bloody” Queen Mary I, ultimately culminating with King James I, and his commissioned translation of the Bible. The film crisscrosses a tumultuous Europe at the birth of religious freedom during a time that seemed to consistently involve the burning of something or someone. In one corner or another, an entire continent was on fire.

Historians, theologians and actors transport audiences to an era when the Bible in English was an unlawful possession and reading it resulted in imprisonment. Translating it was a death sentence. The only way to buy one was, literally, under the table on the black market, the same way someone might buy illegal drugs today.

The film’s historical narrative parallels modern day insights and influences in the third and final hour of the series, highlighting its effect on music as well people’s reactions to it today.
“The phrases and rhythms of the King James Bible have worked their way into wider Anglophone sensibilities and consciousness in ways that no other translation of the Bible has achieved, nor will likely ever achieve,” said Brad S. Gregory, Professor of Early Modern History, University of Notre Dame, Indiana, during his interview in the film.

“There is nothing that compares to the classical English literary resource as the King James Bible,” said David Rosen, Rabbi, Chief Rabbinate of Israel during his interview in the film. “The closest thing, of course, are the works of Shakespeare and we do relish and treasure Shakespeare. But it doesn’t speak to our deepest commitments, as obviously, the Bible does.”

“The King James Bible has an amazing tenacity,” said Alec Ryrie, Professor of the History of Christianity, Durham University, England at the conclusion of the film. “It has hung on in the affection of particular churches and of whole peoples in a way that a 400 year old text really shouldn’t. I think the King James translators, themselves, would have been amazed that this 400 year old translation is still being used.”

Fires of Faith: The Coming Forth of the King James Bible will premiere Oct. 16th on BYUtv, which is a U.S. and worldwide cable/satellite television channel reaching 60 million households.

ABOUT BYUtv
Reaching 60 million households in the United States, BYUtv is a global cable/satellite television channel featuring engaging, educational, and uplifting content that encourages viewers to “see the good in the world.” Since its launch in January 2000, BYUtv has continued to build an ever-expanding and diverse audience, and has become a powerful tool for sharing enriching entertainment rooted in values and faith.

For more information on the range of BYUtv programs visit byutv.org.