### AIRDATES

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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 reenactments and interviews with leading scholars.

Oct. 6 to Oct. 11, 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 events originally 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.

“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.”

“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.”

Fires of Faith is rife with factual Early Modern Era drama that fictional Hollywood would struggle to concoct. Those who sought to translate "God’s message" into the English vernacular were seen as heretics, persecuted and ultimately executed. At the forefront of the saga is British religious scholar William Tyndale, who was responsible for the original translations that make up more than 80 percent of the King James Bible’s text. His death by strangulation and burning at the stake under King Henry VIII didn’t stop his translated words from ultimately reaching a global audience and enduring to this day.

“The power of the story transcends ideological and cultural boundaries,” said Mr. Groberg. "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.
Background

If the martyrs who brought the *King James Bible* into existence could still talk to us today, they would most certainly tell the tales of international politics, intrigue, subversion, bloodshed, fire and the runaway libido of King Henry VIII that were the backdrop of its creation. These stories, along with a modern, scholarly perspective of the 16th century book, are presented in BYUtv’s *Fires of Faith: The Coming Forth of The King James Bible* – a series of films which celebrate the 400th anniversary of one of the most enduring pieces of writing in the history of humanity.

Since its original translation, the bible has been credited with nothing less than making the word of God directly accessible to the masses. Celebrated for its widespread use, the *King James Bible* has had immeasurable influence on religion, language, culture, art and literature. Yet the road to its influence and acceptance was paved with the horrors of humanity. Those who sought to translate “God’s message” into the English vernacular were seen as heretics, persecuted and ultimately executed. The tale is rife with Early Modern Era drama that Hollywood would struggle to concoct. As they say, you can’t make this stuff up.

In its autobiographical narrative, the best selling book of all time would convey the irony of the fact that this dark and painful history ultimately strengthened its lasting message of faith, and made it all the more profound.

*Fires of Faith* chronicles the cast of characters that were central to the Reformation, including John Wycliffe, Martin Luther, Henry VIII and “Bloody” Queen Mary I, culminating with the reign of 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 certain 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.

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At the forefront of the saga was British religious scholar William Tyndale, who was responsible for the original translation of more than eighty percent of the *King James Bible’s* text. His death by strangulation and burning at the stake under Henry VIII didn’t stop his translated words from ultimately reaching a global audience, even centuries later.

The English Reformation was brought about by King Henry VIII’s insatiable inclination to serial marriage – Queen after Queen – in pursuit of a male heir to the throne. When the Church balked at his requests to dissolve his sonless marriages, the desperate king ordered the execution of anyone perceived as an obstacle. Eventually, the throne changed hands to the more fertile Stuart line, and King James ordered a new bible to be translated, finally giving Tyndale’s work legitimacy, and carrying the monarch’s name for 400 years. The book landed in the new world along with the Pilgrims on the Mayflower, where it began a new chapter of its global influence. In North America, The *King James Bible* presided over a revolution where both sides prayed from the same book and the inauguration of the first president of the United States. It provided spiritual comfort to both Union and Confederate soldiers during the American Civil War, and witnessed the swearing into office of many of the nation’s presidents, including Ronald Reagan and Barack Obama (who movingly borrowed the very same *King James Bible* used by President Lincoln in his 1861 inauguration).

Is the *King James Bible* still relevant today? The revolutionary text that changed the world is considered the “Mother-ship” of all English bibles, and has inspired modern versions in scores of individual churches. What was born from the 16th century martyrs who burned at King Henry VIII’s stakes continues to spread the word of God to the masses today.

Produced and directed by filmmaker Lee Groberg, and written by Mitch Davis, *Fires of Faith* documents the bible’s triumph, four centuries later. The three-part dramatic and documentary feature tracks the fascinating history of the book through more than 130 reenactments filmed in eight different countries at the actual buildings and settings where the events originally took place.

Based on years of extensive research, Groberg and his team interviewed 18 international scholars and religious leaders for the series – from the Universities of Notre Dame and Oxford to the Chief Rabbinate of Israel. While their perspectives obviously differ, based on respective affiliations and orientations, these scholars and religious leaders are in agreement that the *King James Bible*’s influence is unparalleled, and that the importance of its story goes well beyond religion itself.
More than 80 percent of the *King James Bible*, printed in 1611, can be attributed to British religious scholar William Tyndale 1494-1536

- In 1408, a decree known as The Constitutions of Oxford made translation of the whole Bible or any part of it into English illegal
- In 1523, Tyndale was denied by the English church when he sought special permission to translate the bible; he subsequently left England and undertook the first English translation of the bible from the original Hebrew and Greek texts
- Tyndale’s translation, known as The *Tyndale Bible*, played a key role in spreading Reformation ideas across the English-speaking world and was viewed as a direct challenge to the Roman Catholic Church and the English church and state
- Tyndale also wrote *The Practyse of Prelates* opposing Henry VIII’s planned divorce from Catherine of Aragon
- In 1536, Tyndale was charged of heresy and condemned to death by strangulation and subsequent burning
- Just a few short years later, King Henry VIII authorized *The Great Bible* as the first Bible in English; *The Great Bible*, printed in 1539, included a majority of Tyndale’s translations (with objectionable features revised)
- Seventy five years later, King James ordered a new bible, now known as the *King James Bible*, featuring Tyndale’s work and carrying the monarch’s name forward for centuries to come

The *King James Bible* contains 66 books, 1,189 chapters and 31,102 verses

In 1620, an early edition of the *King James Bible* was brought to America on the *Mayflower* by John Alden, a member of the ship’s crew who stayed in the new world as a colonist

- Over the next few decades, the *King James Bible* overtook the *Geneva Bible* to become the preeminent Bible in the American colonies

1711 marked the first centennial of the *King James Bible*; as the leading English Bible at the time, it was read in churches and schools, influential in art, theatre and literature, and was a motivator of science and scientists

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In 1760 and 1769, the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford produced updated standard texts due to the large amount of edition misprints leading up to that point

- The two editions sought to remove the wide variations of spelling and punctuation, making approximately 24,000 minor changes to the text (i.e. ‘in stead’ was edited to ‘instead’ in Genesis 2:21)
- The 1769 Oxford edition, edited by Benjamin Blayney continues to be reproduced, almost unchanged, as the Authorized King James Version by Oxford University Press

Voltaire 1694-1778, a French infidel and ‘Enlightenment’ writer, historian and philosopher, claimed that Christianity would not last another 100 years; 50 years after his death, the Geneva Bible Society used his home and printing press to produce stacks of Bibles for the masses

During American Revolution bible shortages, The 1782 Aitken Bible was endorsed by Congress as the first King James Bible to be printed in North America

- The 1782 Aitken Bible left out all references of King James

In 1789, George Washington was sworn in using a 1767 edition of the King James Bible printed in London, and set the stage for the longstanding tradition of swearing in Presidents at their presidential inaugurations

- Known as the Washington Bible, the same bible has since been used to swear in Presidents Warren G. Harding, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Jimmy Carter and George H.W. Bush

Thomas Jefferson took scriptures from the King James Bible when creating The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth, an account of Jesus’ teachings that excluded supernatural elements in English, Greek, Latin and French.

In 1833, Noah Webster, best known for Webster’s Dictionary, published an edited version of the King James Bible, which undertook to correct translation errors and update archaic words/phrasings

In 1861, Abraham Lincoln was sworn in during his first inauguration using an 1853 Oxford University Press edition of the King James Bible

- Known as the Lincoln Bible, the same bible was recently used to swear in Barak Obama during his 2009 inauguration, where commentary focused on the historic link between Obama, the first African American president, and Lincoln, traditionally known as the Great Emancipator
- President Obama also referenced 1 Corinthians 13, verse 11 from the King James Bible during his 2009 inaugural address.
During the Civil War, over 3 million *King James Bibles* were distributed to both Union and Confederate troops; in his second inaugural address, President Lincoln said of the troops that, "Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God."

An 1889 Oxford edition of the *King James Bible* was presented to former slave Frederick Douglass when he departed to Haiti as the United States resident minister and consul-general.

Literary critic and New Yorker staff writer James Wood believed that Virginia Woolf’s novel *To the Lighthouse* (1927) was influenced by the Bible.

During his first and second inauguration in 1981 and 1985, Ronald Reagan used his late mother’s *King James Bible*, which was printed by Dickson Publishing in Chicago and contained special notations and insights made by his mother.

In 1995, President Bill Clinton quoted Proverbs after the bombing in Oklahoma City: “Let us teach our children that the God of comfort is also the God of righteousness. Those who trouble their own house will inherit the wind.”

In 1963, Rev. Martin Luther King’s famous “I have a Dream” speech was influenced by the following *King James Bible* passages: Psalms 30:5, Isaiah 40:4 and Amos 5:24.

In 1997, British Prime Minister Tony Blair read 1 Corinthians 13 at the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales.

In 2010, David Crystal’s *Begat: The King James Bible & the English Language* set out to prove that the *King James Bible* contributed more to the English language than any other literary source, where he highlights over 250 idioms made popular through the *King James Bible* compared to roughly 100 from William Shakespeare’s writings. See below for some of these common phrases*

2011 marks the 400 anniversary of the *King James Bible*; to celebrate, Zondervan released *The Holy Bible: 1611 King James Version 400th Anniversary Edition* as a partial replica (the Apocrypha being excluded and it was scaled down from its original size) of the original Authorized Version as it was released in 1611.

In 2011, Prince William of Wales and Miss Catherine Middleton celebrated their marriage in Westminster Abbey with a traditional ceremony featuring the *King James Bible*.

*Continued from above

The *King James Bible* greatly influenced the English language. Do you recognize these well known phrases originating from it?

- Let there be light
- Land of the living
- Sheep in wolf’s clothing
- Am I my brother’s keeper?
- Letter of the law
- The writing on the wall
- Know them by their fruits
- Cast the first stone
- Good Samaritan
- How are the mighty fallen
- Twinkling of an eye
- Skin of his teeth
- Stumbling stone
- Leopard change his spots?
- Judge not lest you be judged
- Heart’s desire
- Rod of discipline
- Thorn in my side
- Fly in the ointment
- Blind leading the blind
- Fall from grace
- Tree of life
- Peace offering
- Seek and you shall find
- Two-edged sword
- Sour grapes
- Salt of the earth
- Cup of wrath
- Broken heart