

TRIAL BY FIRE

A Unique Presentation by Dr. Harold Rawlings on How We Got Our English Bible

“Trial By Fire” is an illustrated lecture explaining the little known but fascinating story of how the English Bible came into existence. The early translators such as John Wycliffe and William Tyndale were men of exceptional intellect and courage who chose a specialized but highly dangerous task—to give the English-speaking people a Bible in their own language for the first time in history. They paid dearly to fulfill this task.

The story of how a few determined men fearlessly resisted an entrenched religious system to begin producing Bibles in everyday, easily understood English in spite of laws forbidding it, is one of the great, heroic episodes in the long history of Christianity. It was a costly struggle that resulted in the torture and death of hundreds of brave men and women who refused to buckle under threats of punishment. We are the privileged recipients of their noble deeds.

Harold Rawlings of the Rawlings Foundation illustrates his lecture with a number of ancient Bibles dating as far back as the thirteenth century. Some of the Bibles you will see are:

- Small *Dead Sea Scroll* fragment.
- *Latin Vulgate Bible*, hand-written circa A.D. 1230 (the basis of the first English Bible).
- Facsimile copy of a *Wycliffe New Testament*, the first-ever in English (A.D. 1382).
- Facsimile copy of the *Gutenberg Bible* (circa 1454/1455 A.D.).
- *Erasmus' Greek/Latin New Testament* printed in 1535, called “The Book that changed the World.” Rawlings explains why this book is so important.
- *William Tyndale New Testament* printed in 1551. Tyndale produced the first printed New Testament in the English language.
- *Coverdale Bible*, 1553 edition, the first complete printed Bible in the English Language.
- *Matthew's Bible*, 1549 edition, also called “The Wife-Beater's Bible.” You will find out why it has this unusual nickname.
- “*Chained Bible*,” printed in 1582, with the original chain attached. Many Bibles were chained to the podium or to a table in the churches of England. Rawlings explains the reason for doing so.
- First edition copy (1563) of *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, the book that ensured the success of Protestantism in England.
- *Great Bible*, 1540 edition. The first Authorized English Bible.
- *Rheims New Testament*, 1582 edition. The first Catholic Bible in English.
- *Geneva Bible*, 1603 edition. Called “The Breeches Bible,” it is the Bible of Shakespeare and the first English Bible brought to the New World. Also the Bible of the Mayflower Compact. You will learn why the Geneva Bible was brought to America by Pilgrims in 1620, rather than the King James.
- *Bishop's Bible*, 1602, the Bible used as a basis for the King James Version.
- First edition 1611 *King James Bible* with the original boards (binding). The KJV was the most popular English version for over 350 years.
- World's *smallest* printed Bible.

