

# The Heart Shield Bibles of World War II

A Shield of Righteousness  
*Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth,  
having put on the breastplate of righteousness.*  
(Ephesians 6:14)

This week, ([September 1](#)) marks the 75th anniversary of the official beginning of WWII. On September 3, 1939, President Roosevelt addressed the nation with one of his famous "[Fireside Chats](#)" stating his resolve to remain a neutral nation in the war, which culminated in an [American Proclamation of Neutrality](#) declared on September 5th.

However, all of that changed with the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941. In his famous "date which will live in infamy" message to Congress requesting that the [United States officially declare war on Japan](#), President Roosevelt stated, "With confidence in our armed forces — with the unbounding determination of our people — we will gain the inevitable triumph — so help us God."

This confidence in God and our military (along with his concern for individual American soldiers) was later evident in what is now known as The Heart-Shield Bible. These Bibles (used during World War II) were designed to fit securely into the chest pocket of a soldier's uniform. The metal plates were securely attached to the front cover of the Bible to stop a bullet from reaching the soldier's heart (which they did on several occasions). In our library at WallBuilders we have several of these World War II Bibles. In the back is a section of psalms and hymns, including "My Country 'Tis of Thee," "America the Beautiful," and "The Star Spangled Banner." In the front, there is a note to the soldiers directly from President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

*"As Commander-in-Chief I take pleasure in commending the reading of the Bible to all who serve in the armed forces of the United States. Throughout the centuries men of many faiths and diverse origins have found in the Sacred Book words of wisdom, counsel and inspiration. It is a foundation of strength and now, as always, an aid in attaining the highest aspirations of the human soul."*

Well before America joined World War II, on the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the English Bible in 1935, [President Roosevelt reminded the nation](#) of the Bible's importance in America's formation and continuance:

*"We cannot read the history of our rise and development as a Nation without reckoning with the place the Bible has occupied in shaping the advances of the Republic. . . . Where we have been truest and most consistent in obeying its precepts we have attained the greatest measure of contentment and prosperity; where it has been to us as the words of a book that is sealed, we have faltered in our way, lost our range finders, and found our progress checked. It is well that we observe this anniversary of the first publishing of our English Bible. The time is propitious to place a fresh emphasis upon its place and worth in the economy of our life as a people."*

Many other presidents encouraged Americans to read the Bible — including President John Quincy Adams. Interestingly, before becoming president and while serving as a diplomat to Russia under President James Madison, Adams wrote his ten-year-old son nine letters on the importance of reading the Bible, how to read through the Bible once a year, and how to get the most application from what he read. Immediately after Adams' death in 1847, these letters were published as a book to make his wise counsel on the Bible available to all Americans. Called *John Quincy Adams Letters to His Son, on the Bible and Its Teachings*, WallBuilders recently reprinted this work in ebook format. [Visit our website](#) to get your copy and enjoy the remarkable spiritual insight of this great President of the United States.