

THE GREATEST BOOK IN THE WORLD

One cannot speak of the Bible without speaking in superlatives. It is the most widely read book in the world. It is the most translated book in all of history. It has continued to be the number one best-selling book in all of history. It is the most valuable book in the world. (A single copy of a Gutenberg Bible was sold in 1987 for over \$4 million. One copy of William Tyndale's original printed New Testament was sold for over £1 million). The Bible is the most inspiring book in history and it is the most important book in history.

There is no question that it is the most life-changing book ever written.

The Bounty's Bible

On 28 April 1789, Fletcher Christian staged the most famous mutiny in history, on the English ship *HMS Bounty*, in the South Pacific. The captain, William Bligh, and those loyal to him, were set adrift in an overloaded lifeboat which they miraculously navigated across the Pacific Ocean 3700 miles to Timor.

The mutineers on the *Bounty* immediately began quarreling about what to do next. Fletcher returned to Tahiti, where he left some of the mutineers, kidnapped some women, took some slaves, and travelled, with the remaining mutineers 1,000 miles to the uninhabited Pitcairn Island. There the group quickly unraveled. They distilled whiskey from a native plant. Drunkenness and disorder characterized their colony. Disease and murder quickly took the lives of each of the men, including Fletcher. Soon only one man was left – Alexander Smith. Smith found himself the only man on the island, surrounded by an assortment of women and children.

Then Smith found the *Bounty's* neglected Bible. As he read it, his heart was transformed and he began to instruct the survivors of their community. He taught the Scriptures and helped to implement its instructions. The message of Christ so transformed their lives that, 20 years later, in 1808, when the crew of the *Topaz* landed on the island, they found a joyful society of Christians living in peace and prosperity, free from crime, free from disease, and without murder and mutiny.

That Bible that transformed the people of Pitcairn Island resides on display in the church in Pitcairn as a monument to its transforming message.

The Foundation of Western Civilization

The impact of the Bible upon Western civilization has been absolutely enormous. Western civilization is founded upon the Bible. Professor William Phelps of Yale observed: "*Our civilization is founded upon the Bible. More of our ideas, our wisdom, our philosophy, our literature, our art, our ideals come from the Bible than from all other books combined.*"

The Bible has inspired the greatest literature, the greatest art, the greatest achievements of architecture (the Cathedrals), the age of exploration, world missions, the rule of law, the separation of powers, checks and balances, representative government, the sanctity of life, and so much more.

It is to the Bible that we owe our legacy of the rule of law. It is the Bible that ushered in an era of compassion, charity, liberty and justice. The Ten Commandments are the moral and legal foundation of Western civilization.

Most of the world's languages were written down by Christian missionaries. The first book in most languages in the world was the Bible.

President Theodore Roosevelt declared: "*Every thinking man, when he thinks, realizes that the teachings of the Bible is so interwoven with our whole civic and social life that it would be literally impossible for us to figure what life would be like if those teachings were removed. We would lose almost all the standards by*

which we now judge both public and private morals; all the standards to which we, with more or less resolution, strive to raise ourselves.”

Educationalist Noah Webster declared: *“The Bible is the chief moral cause of all that is good, and the best corrective of all that is evil, in human society; the best Book for regulating the temporal concerns of men, and the only Book that can serve as an infallible guide...the principles of genuine liberty, and of wise laws and administrations, are to be drawn from the Bible and sustained by it’s authority. The man therefore who weakens, or destroys, the Divine authority of that Book may be accessory to all the public disorders that society is doomed to suffer...”*

Even Napoleon Bonaparte admitted: *“The Bible is no mere book, but a living power that conquers all that oppose it.”*

The Foundation of Modern Science

All of the great pioneer scientists who laid the foundations of modern physics, astronomy, calculus, dynamics, oceanography, anesthesiology, and every other branch of science, confirmed the Bible as the foundation and inspiration for their work.

This included Johannes Kepler, Francis Bacon, Galileo Galilei, Isaac Newton, Karl van Linnus, Charles Babbage, Blaise Pascal, Samuel Morse, Matthew Fontaine Maury, James Simpson, George Washington Carver, and many, many more.

Sir Michael Faraday, one of the greatest scientists of all time, who discovered electromagnetic induction and invented the generator, observed: *“The Bible, and it alone, with nothing added to it nor taken away from it by man, is the sole and sufficient guide for each individual, at all times and in all circumstances...Faith in the Divinity and work of Christ is a gift of God, and evidence of this faith is obedience to the commandments of Christ.”*

The Rule of Law

The foundations of the Common Law were made by King Alfred the Great of England who introduced his code with the Ten Commandments, the Case Laws of Exodus, The Golden Rule of Christ, and other Biblical principles.

The *Magna Carta* of 1215 was the first statute, the first written restriction on the powers of government. It was written by a pastor and thoroughly saturated with Scriptural principles.

The Greatest Best Seller of All Time

The Bible is the number one best-selling book in all of history. The Bible Society alone has a world distribution of 24 million Bibles, 26 million New Testaments and 577 million portions of Scripture each year. This does not include the over 1 million New Testaments distributed each week by the Gideons. Or the New Testaments distributed by the Pocket Testament League. Nor the over 80 million Scriptures provided each year by the Bible League, or the over 30 million Scripture booklets and tracts given away so far by World Missionary Press and Scripture Gift Mission. Then there are even more Bibles sold by Zondervan, Thomas Nelson, Tyndale and others. It’s estimated that over 30 million Bibles are sold each year and possibly over 100 million New Testaments!

The Bible, New Testament, or at least Gospels, have been published in over 2,300 different languages worldwide.

Incomparable

There is no other book that can compare to the Bible in value, inspiration, importance, and the amount of languages it is translated into. No other book could compare with the Bible in how many have been sold, how often it is read, and in terms of it’s worldwide impact throughout history.

Yet, the Bible is also the most attacked book in all of history. From the time of Nero, and throughout the ten waves of persecution by Imperial Rome, to Diocletian, the Romans made successive attempts to eradicate all Bibles. Yet, despite the waves of repression by Rome and the destruction unleashed by the Barbarians and the Vikings, and intensive campaigns of persecution such as under Stalin's Soviet Union, and Mao Tse Tung's Red China, the Bible remains the best attested to book in antiquity. Over 1,700 Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament still exist. And there are over 5,000 Greek manuscripts for the New Testament, 8,000 Latin and 1,000 other ancient versions of the New Testament in existence.

As Dr Martin Luther declared: *"It is a miracle how God has so long preserved His book! How great and glorious it is to have the Word of God!"*

The Book of Books

Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, who gave his life for the message of the Scriptures, declared: *"The Word of God is above the Church."*

American Founding Father Patrick Henry declared: *"The Bible is worth all the other books which have ever been printed."*

General Robert E. Lee wrote: *"The Bible is a book, in comparison with which all others in my eyes are of minor importance; which in all my perplexities and distresses has never failed to give me light and strength."*

American President Abraham Lincoln said: *"It is the best gift God has given to man. All the good Saviour gave to the world was communicated through this book. But for it, we could not know right from wrong. All things most desirable for man's welfare, here and hereafter, are to be found portrayed in it."*

W.E. Sangster observed: *"The Christian feels that the tooth of time gnaws all books but the Bible...19 centuries of experience have tested it. It is passed through critical fires no other volume has suffered and its spiritual truth has endured the flames and come out without so much as a smell of burning."*

U.S. President Woodrow Wilson declared: *"A man has deprived himself of the best there is in the world who has deprived himself of this, a knowledge of the Bible. When you have read the Bible, you will know that it is the Word of God, because you have found in it the key to your own heart, your own happiness and your own duty."*

The Prince of Preachers, Charles Spurgeon, declared: *"Nobody ever outgrows Scripture; the Book widens and deepens with our years."*

John Flavel wrote: *"The Scriptures teach us the best way of living, the noblest way of suffering, and the most comfortable way of dying."*

Noah Webster taught: *"Education is useless without the Bible."*

President Theodore Roosevelt declared: *"A thorough knowledge of the Bible is worth more than a college education."*

Noah Webster taught: *"The moral principles and precepts contained in the Scriptures form the basis of all our civil constitutions and laws...all the miseries and evils which men suffer from – crime, ambition, injustice, oppression, slavery and war – proceed from their despising or neglecting the precepts contained in the Bible."*

R.A. Torey said: *"The truly wise man is he who always believes the Bible against the opinion of any man."*

Scientist John Newton declared: *"I will put down all apparent inconsistencies in the Bible to my own ignorance."*

German scientist Professor Wernher von Braun, who pioneered rocket science and oversaw the Apollo Space Project, observed: *“In this age of space flight when we use the modern tools of science to advance into new regions of human activity, the Bible...remains in every way an up-to-date book. Our knowledge and use of the laws of nature that enable us to fly to the moon, also enable us to destroy our home planet with the atom bomb. Science itself does not address the question whether we should use the power at our disposal for good or evil. The guidelines of what we ought to do are furnished in the moral Law of God.”*

The author of the great Webster’s dictionary, Daniel Webster, observed: *“If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible our country will go on prospering and to prosper; but if we were to neglect its instructions and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe can overwhelm us and bury our glory in profound obscurity.”*

Bishop J.C. Ryle taught: *“A Bible-reading laity is a nation’s surest defence against error.”*

The Bible is the Word of God

Almost every page of the Bible contains words such as: *“The Lord said...”, “God spoke”, “The Word of the Lord came...”*.

The Gospel accounts are based on careful research, historical facts and eyewitness testimonies:

The physician Luke introduces his Gospel account with these words: *“They were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the Word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning...to write an orderly account...so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.”* Luke 1:2-4

The Apostle John wrote: *“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched – this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testified...we proclaim to you what we have seen and heard.”* 1 John 1:1-3

“No prophesy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation.” 2 Peter 1:20

“Men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.” 2 Peter 1:21

“God spoke...through the prophets...and by His Son.” Hebrews 1:1-2

“The Scripture cannot be broken.” John 10:35

“The Word of the Lord stands forever.” 1 Peter 1:25

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. That the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Overwhelming Evidence

We cannot accept the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ without accepting the authority of the Old Testament which He lived, taught, appealed to, and fulfilled. We also need to recognise that the Lord Jesus carefully chose and trained certain men to be His Apostles. He gave them a special anointing with the Holy Spirit (John 20:21; Acts 1:8). He promised to send them the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth. Jesus taught that His Words have a unique power and life (John 6:63; 15:3). His Words would never pass away (Mark 13:31). Jesus taught that His Words must be heard and obeyed (Matthew 5:17-48; 7:24; John 8:31-38; 14:23).

We can also appeal to fulfilled prophesy. During His life on earth our Lord Jesus fulfilled over 300 Old Testament prophesies.

Archaeological discoveries, manuscript evidence and historical support these internal evidences to the accuracy and uniqueness of the Bible.

Most convincingly of all, we can point to the unique impact of the Bible on millions of lives throughout the centuries, and now on our own as well.

Now, some skeptics, may not believe that the Bible is the Word of God, but they have to ignore a lot of accumulative evidence to do this.

The Power of God's Word

The Bible is the source of Truth: *"Sanctify them by Your Truth; Your Word is Truth."* John 17:17

The Bible is the source of God's Blessings: *"Blessed are those who hear the Word of God and obey it."* Luke 11:28

The Bible is a source of power: *"For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes..."* Romans 1:16

The Bible is the source of Spiritual guidance: *"Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."* Psalm 119:105

The Bible is infallible: *"The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple."* Psalm 19: 7

It is inerrant: *"Every Word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him."* Proverbs 30:5

It is authoritative and final: *"For ever, O Lord, your Word is settled in the Heavens."* Psalm 119:89

It will accomplish what is has been sent out to accomplish: *"So shall My Word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it."* Isaiah 55:11

It is complete; *"For I testify to everyone who hears the Words of the prophesy of this book; if anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this Book; and if anyone takes away from the Words of the book of this prophesy, God shall take his part from the Book of Life, from the Holy City, and from the things which are written in this Book."* Revelations 22:18-19

Therefore we should **believe** the Bible (John 6:68-69). We should **honour** the Bible (John 29:18). We should **study** it (Ezra 7:10). **Love** it (Psalm 119:97); **Obey** it (1 John 2:5). **Guard** it (1 Timothy 6:20). **Fight** for it (Jude 3); **Preach** it (2 Timothy 4:2).

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