**"GIVE ME THE BIBLE"**

**Mark Copeland**

**Why I Read The Bible**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. Perhaps you have heard people say things like...
   1. "Oh, you don't read the Bible, do you?"
   2. "Why, the Bible is just another book; you ought to read..."
2. Perhaps you have heard...
   1. A teacher degrade the Bible before his or her students, ridiculing those who read it
   2. Those who are proud to have a Bible on their bookshelf, but only as one book among other "greats" of literature
3. But the Bible is more than simply one of the "greats"; it is **unique**...
   1. Meaning "one and only"
   2. Meaning "different from all others; having no like or equal"

[Our purpose in this lesson is to review ways in which the Bible is **unique**, truly "different from all others; having no like or equal". For example, the Bible is...]

1. **UNIQUE IN ITS CONTINUITY**
   1. **HERE IS A BOOK THAT WAS WRITTEN...**
      1. **Over a long period of time**
         1. About 1600 years
         2. A span of 40 generations
      2. **By approximately 40 authors from every walk of life**
         1. Moses, political leader trained in the universities of Egypt
         2. Peter, fisherman
         3. Amos, herdsman
         4. Joshua, military general
         5. Nehemiah, cup bearer to the king of Persia
         6. Daniel, prime minister in the courts of Babylon
         7. Luke, physician
         8. Solomon, philosopher king
         9. Matthew, tax collector
         10. Paul, rabbi and tentmaker
      3. **In different places**
         1. Moses in the wilderness
         2. Jeremiah in a dungeon
         3. Daniel on a hillside, and in a palace
         4. Paul inside prison walls
         5. Luke while traveling
         6. John in exile on the isle of Patmos
         7. Others in the rigors of a military campaign
      4. **At different times**
         1. David in times of war
         2. Solomon in times of peace
      5. **During different moods**
         1. Some writing from the heights of joy
         2. Others from the depths of sorrow and despair
      6. **On three continents:** Asia, Africa, Europe
      7. **In three languages:** Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek
      8. **With subject matter involving hundreds of controversial topics,** such as:
         1. The origin of man and the universe
         2. The nature of God
         3. The nature of man, sin, and man's redemption
   2. **YET THERE IS HARMONY AND CONTINUITY...**
      1. For example:
         1. "The Paradise Lost of the book of Genesis becomes the Paradise Regained of Revelation." - **Geisler and Nix**
         2. "Whereas the gate to the Tree of Life is closed in Genesis, it is opened forevermore in Revelation." - **ibid.**
      2. **Compare the continuity of the Bible** with any other writings of men
         1. Imagine what you would have it you took just ten authors...
            1. From one walk of life, one generation, one place, one time, one mood, one continent, one language
            2. Speaking on just one controversial subject
         2. You would have a conglomeration of conflicting ideas, not harmony!

[The Bible is truly **unique**, one of a kind, in its continuity. It is also...]

1. **UNIQUE IN ITS DISTRIBUTION**
   1. **THE TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE...**
      1. One of the first major books translated
         1. E.g., the Septuagint version of the OT
         2. Translated into Greek in 250 B.C.
      2. Between 1950-1960, 3000 Bible translators were at work
      3. "By the end of 1993, the whole Bible had been translated into 337 languages; 2,062 languages have translations of at least one book of the Bible." - **Guinness Book of World Records (1998)**
   2. **THE CIRCULATION OF THE BIBLE...**
      1. As of 1804 - 409 million copies
      2. As of 1932 - one and a third billion copies
      3. "The world's best-selling and most widely distributed book is the Bible, with an estimated 2.5 billion copies sold, 1815 -1975." - **Guinness Book of World Records**
      4. "No other book has known the anything approaching this constant circulation" - **The Cambridge History of the Bible**
      5. As said of the words of God, "Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world." - [**Ro 10:18**](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Rom%2010.18)

[You would think that if a person were sincerely seeking truth, he or she would give serious consideration to a book that has drawn so much attention! The Bible is also...]

1. **UNIQUE IN ITS SURVIVAL**
   1. **ITS SURVIVAL THROUGH TIME...**
      1. Though written on material that perishes...
         1. ...having to be copied and recopied for hundreds of years by hand
         2. ...its style, correctness, or existence did not diminish
      2. Compared with other ancient writings, the manuscript evidence of the Bible:
         1. Is greater than any 10 pieces of classical literature combined!
         2. Is sufficient to ensure that we are reading the words of the original
   2. **ITS SURVIVAL THROUGH PERSECUTION...**
      1. Many have tried to burn it, ban it, and otherwise outlaw it
         1. From the days of Roman emperors
         2. To the present Communist-dominated countries
      2. For example:
         1. In 303 A.D., the Roman emperor Diocletian issued an edict to stop Christians from worshipping, and to destroy their scriptures
         2. Only 25 years later the Roman emperor Constantine called for 50 copies of the Bible to be prepared at the expense of the government!
      3. How true is the statement: "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the word of the LORD endures forever." - [**1Pe 1:24-25**](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1%20Pet%201.24-25)
   3. **ITS SURVIVAL THROUGH CRITICISM...**
      1. "Infidels for 1800 years have been refuting and overthrowing this book, and yet it stands today as solid as a rock. Its circulation increases, and it is more loved and cherished and read today than ever before. Infidels, with all their assault make about as much impression on this book as a man with a tack hammer on the pyramids of Egypt." - **H. L. Hastings**
      2. "No other book has been so chopped, knifed, sifted, scrutinized, and vilified. What book on philosophy or religion or psychology...has been subject to such a mass attack as the Bible? With such venom and skepticism? With such thoroughness and erudition? Upon every chapter, line and tenet? And yet, the Bible is still loved by millions, read by millions, and studied by millions." - **Bernard Ramm**

[Next, consider how the Bible is...]

1. **UNIQUE IN ITS TEACHING**
   1. **A BOOK OF PROPHECY...**
      1. "It is the only volume ever produced in which is to be found a large body of prophecies relating to individual nations (more than ten in Isaiah alone), Israel, all the peoples of the earth, certain cities, the coming Messiah and His kingdom." - **Wilbur Smith**
      2. There is no other book of religious antiquity which provides so many explicit prophecies:
         1. So distant in the future
         2. Which came to pass
   2. **A BOOK OF HISTORY...**
      1. The Old Testament "embodies the oldest history writing extant" - **Cambridge Ancient History**
      2. The Hebrews are the only race of people that can give such a clear and accurate picture of their origins
      3. "...in all of my archaeological investigation I have never found one artifact of antiquity that contradicts any statement of the Word of God." - **Nelson Glueck**
   3. **A BOOK OF PERSONALITIES...**
      1. The Bible deals frankly with the sins of its characters, even its heroes:
         1. **Adam and Eve** - putting off responsibility on to others
         2. **Noah** - drunkenness
         3. **Abraham** - cowardice, lying to save his skin
         4. **Moses** - disobedience to God
         5. **David** - lying, adultery, murder
         6. **Peter** - denying the Lord, causing division through hypocrisy
         7. **Churches** - divided, arrogant, materialistic
      2. The Bible has the habit of telling it like it was, and is unique in its portrayal of its key personalities

[Finally, we briefly note that Bible is...]

1. **UNIQUE IN ITS INFLUENCE**
   1. **UPON THE LITERATURE OF THE WORLD...**
      1. "If every Bible in any considerable city were destroyed, the book could be restored in all its essential parts from the quotations on the shelves of the city public library" - **The Greatest English Classic**
      2. "The Bible's influence is impossible to ignore. There are more than a thousand biblical references in the works of Shakespeare alone. John Milton, Herman Melville, Ernest Hemingway all drew on the Bible, too. Then there's Rembrandt, Chagall and Da Vinci, who all put the Bible on canvas. Even the Declaration of Independence alludes to the Bible. But it's not just history -- the Bible is in pop culture as well. The movie 'The Matrix' is so full of Biblical references people have written entire books about it." - **Sean Alfano, The Bible As Literature**
      3. "I consider an intimate knowledge of the Bible an indispensable quality of a well educated man." - **Dr. Robert Milikan**, former President of the California Inst. Of Tech. And Nobel Peace Prize winner
   2. **UPON THE WORLD ITSELF...**
      1. Our **judicial system** is based upon many of the principles found in the Bible
      2. Our **standards of morality** owe much to the Judeo-Christian ethic
      3. "The fundamental basis of this nation's law was given to Moses on the Mount. The fundamental basis of our Bill of Rights comes from the teaching we get from Exodus and St. Matthew, from Isaiah and St. Paul. I don't think we emphasize that enough these days. If we don't have the proper fundamental moral background, we will finally end up with a totalitarian government which does not believe in the right for anybody except the state." - **Harry S. Truman**
      4. "I think for any educated person, it's absolutely essential to know something about the Bible. Whether a person is a believer or not, the Bible stands at the foundation of our form of civilization." - **Bart Ehrman**
   3. **UPON MANY GREAT PEOPLE...**
      1. "The Bible is worth more than all other books which have ever been printed." - **Patrick Henry**
      2. "It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible." - **George Washington**
      3. "It has been my custom for many years to read the Bible in its entirety once a year." - **John Quincy Adams**
      4. "I believe the Bible is the best gift God has ever given to man. All the good from the Savior of the world is communicated to us through this book." - **Abraham Lincoln**
      5. "The Bible is a book in comparison with which all others are of minor importance, and which in all my perplexities and distresses has never failed to give me light and strength." - **Robert E. Lee**
      6. "The New Testament is the very best book that ever was or will be known in the world." - **Charles Dickens**
      7. "No man, educated or uneducated, can afford to be ignorant of the Bible...A thorough understanding of the Bible is better than a college education." - **Theodore Roosevelt (cf. [Psa 119:97-100](https://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ps%20119.97-100" \t "_blank))**
      8. "Within the covers of this one single book, the Bible, are all the answers to all the problems we face today. If only we would read it and believe." - **Ronald Reagan**

**CONCLUSION**

1. This lesson has not been an effort to prove the Bible to be the Word of God...
   1. Though its continuity and fulfilled prophecy are certainly evidences of it
   2. But to show it to be **truly a unique book** ("different from all others; having no like or equal")
   3. That **it's uniqueness is reason alone** for everyone to read the Bible
2. Of course, I personally believe that what has made it so **unique** is...
   1. **Its origin** - it comes from the mind of the One True God
   2. **Its process of revelation** - it came by the work of the Holy Spirit, who guided the many writers and made their works harmonious
   3. **Its central message** - that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Son of God who is the only Lord and Savior of mankind
3. Because of its uniqueness, I believe it may be rightly stated:

**"If you are an intelligent person, you will read the one book that has drawn more attention than any other, IF you are searching for the truth." - Quoted by Josh McDowell**

In my own search for truth, I have read through the Bible many times and continue to read it daily. Are you searching for the truth? Do **you** read the Bible?

In our next study, I will offer reasons **"Why I Believe The Bible"**...

**Note:** Much of the material for this lesson was taken from **"Evidence That Demands A Verdict"**, Vol. 1, by Josh McDowell.