

The Greatest Book in the world

— by Peter Hammond

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 history. It has continued to be the number one best-selling book of all time. It is the most valuable book in the world. There is no question that it is the most life-changing book ever written.



The Foundation of Western civilisation

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

The Bible has inspired the greatest literature, art, 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 civilisation. Most of the world’s languages were first written down by Christian missionaries. The first book in most languages in the world was the Bible.

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 its authority...”

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

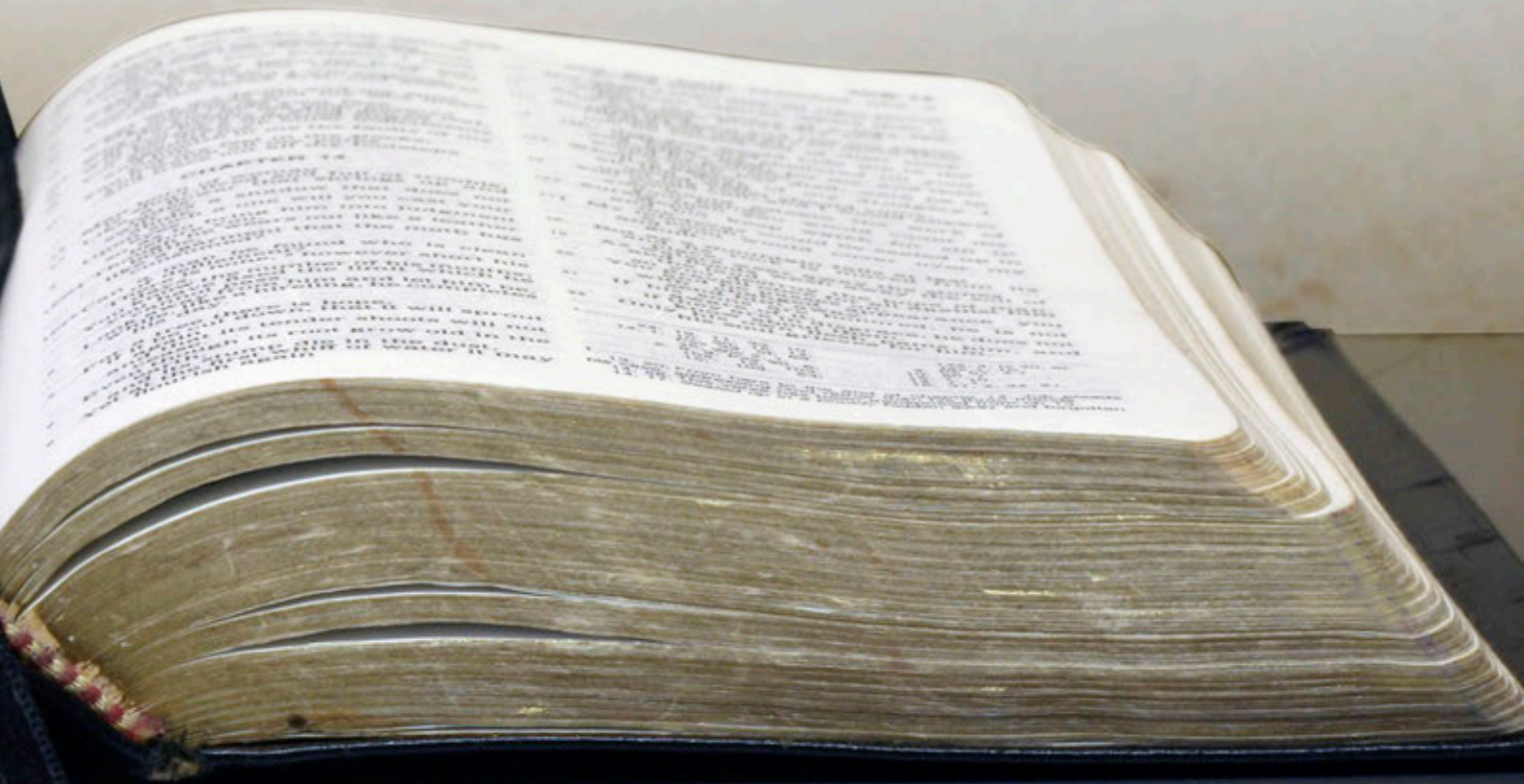
All of the great pioneer scientists who laid the foundations of modern physics, astronomy, calculus, dynamics, oceanography, anesthesiology, and every other branch of science, confirmed the Bible as the foundation and inspiration for their work.

This included Johannes Kepler, Francis Bacon, Galileo Galilei, Isaac Newton, Karl van Linnius, 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

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 one million New Testaments distributed each week by the Gideons; the New Testaments distributed by the Pocket Testament League; 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, the 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 into which it is translated. No other book could compare with the Bible's worldwide impact throughout history. Yet, the Bible is also the

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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

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."

Noah Webster taught: "...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."

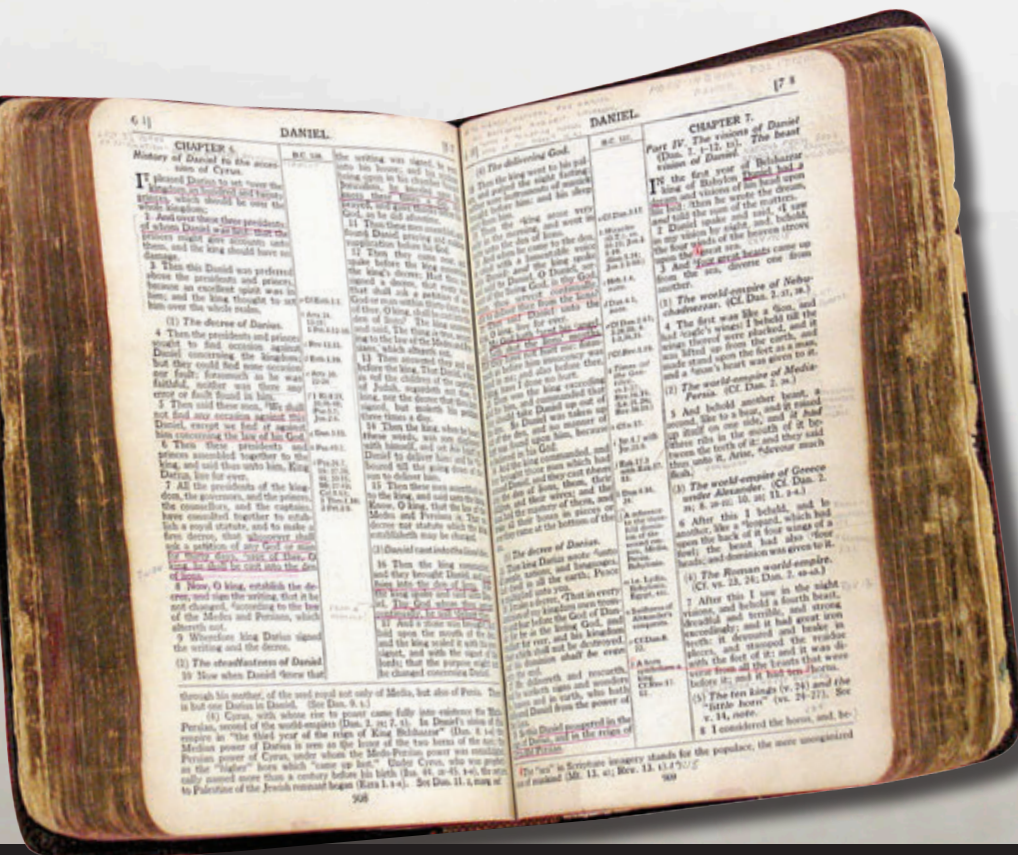
Scientist John Newton declared: "I will put down all apparent inconsistencies in the Bible to my own ignorance."

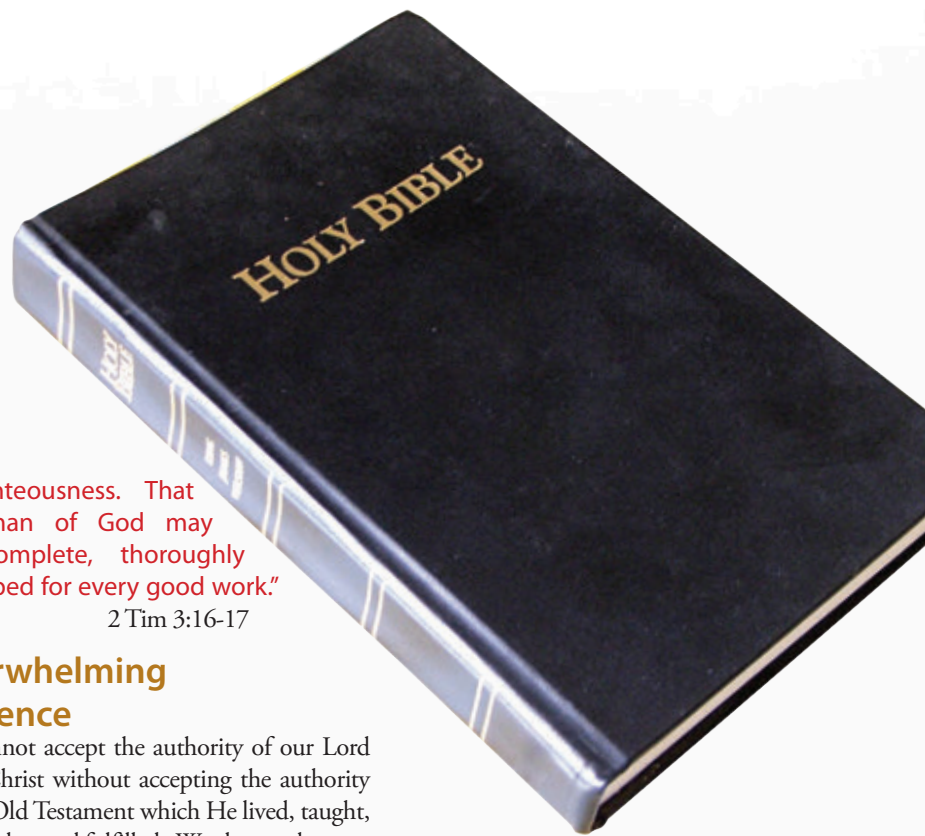
The author of the great Webster's dictionary, Daniel Webster, observed: "If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will go on prospering and to prosper; but if we were to neglect its instructions and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe can overwhelm us and bury our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

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 Pet 1:20

"God spoke...through the prophets...and by His Son."

Heb 1:1-2

"The Scripture cannot be broken."

John 10:35

"The Word of the Lord stands forever."

1 Pet 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 Tim 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) and His Words must be heard and obeyed (Matt 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 and historical evidence 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 lives, too. Now, some sceptics may not believe that the Bible is the Word of God, but they have to ignore a lot of accumulative evidence to do so. Oh the Power of God's Word. ■

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The Bible is:

- The source of Truth: "Sanctify them by Your Truth; Your Word is Truth." John 17:17
- The source of God's blessings: "Blessed are those who hear the Word of God and obey it." Luke 11:28
- 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..." Rom 1:16
- The source of Spiritual guidance: "Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Ps 119:105
- Infallible: "The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple." Ps 19: 7

- Inerrant: "Every Word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him." Ps 30:5
- Authoritative and final: "For ever, O Lord, your Word is settled in the Heavens." Ps 119:89
- 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." Rev 22:18-19

The Bible will accomplish what it 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." Isa 55:11.

Therefore we should:

- believe (John 6:68-69)
 - honour (John 29:18)
 - study (Ezra 7:10)
 - love (Ps 119:97)
 - obey (1 John 2:5)
 - guard (1 Tim 6:20)
 - fight for (Jude 3)
 - preach (2 Tim 4:2)
- the Bible, the Word of God. ■