



What makes the Bible Holy – Part I

Today's Bible Focus Texts (see below)

What does the Bible claim about itself? We will explore the claims and how they have been tested over the millennia.

2 Timothy 3:16: "all scripture is given by inspiration of God."

2 Peter 1:21: "Prophecy came not in the old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

John 10:35: "The scripture cannot be broken."

1 Peter 1:24-25: "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory thereof as the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls: but the word of the Lord abides forever".

It claims to be inspired. That it was written by men who were guided by the Holy Ghost. Also, that it cannot be broken or proved untrue.

The Bible has been viciously opposed and oppressed across several millennia, reflected in thousands of Hebrew and Greek manuscripts, and even today continues to be the best-selling publication in the world.

The king Jehoiakim confiscated, cut in pieces, and tossed the scroll Jeremiah wrote into the fire, yet it survived.

After his death, Alexander the Great, Antiochus Epiphanes, "the madman," launched a bloody persecution against the Hebrew people in an attempt to destroy the Scriptures. An ancient document records, "...and [the officials of Antiochus] rent in pieces the books of the law which they found and set them on fire. And wheresoever was found with any a book of the covenant, and if any consented to the law, the king's sentence delivered him to death (The Apocrypha, 1 Maccabees 1:56-57). Also, the historian Josephus comments, "...And if there were any sacred book of the law found, it was destroyed, and those [Jews] with whom they were found miserably perished also (Antiquities of the Jews 12.5.4).

Following the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth from the dead, Christianity was introduced into the Roman world. Because it spread like wildfire in the stifling environment of ancient paganism, a determined effort to eradicate the Bible from the Roman ruler, Valerius Diocletian commenced. He ruled from A.D. 284-305. Hurst's notes write, "All assemblies of Christians were forbidden, and churches were ordered to be torn down. Four different edicts were

issued, each excelling the preceding in intensity. One edict ordered the burning of every copy of the Bible – the first instance in [Christian] history when the Scriptures were made and object of attack.

In A.D. 178 Celsus had written a treatise called “True Discourse,” which was “the first literary attack upon Christianity” (Cross 1968, 256); and Porphyry authored several books against the Scriptures between A.D. 232-303.

When Constantine came into rule in A.D. 306 he issued a legal decree to protect Christians. A form of this document is found in Eusebius’ Ecclesiastical History (Book X, Chapter V).

The apostles of paganism surmised that if one method of opposition fails, then another must be employed. When Julian took the Roman throne in A.D. 361 he openly declared his hostility to the Bible. Three centuries of bloodshed had not enhanced the cause of heathenism. Persecution has accelerated the spread of the Christian cause even though Julian was determined that he would destroy the influence of the Scriptures.

The Bible has not just had to survive the persecution of its enemies, but also the opposition of its so-called “friends” as well. The Roman Catholic system made efforts to suppress the Holy Scriptures under the guise that the translations were vulgar and that circulation of the Scriptures in the common vernacular would generate “more harm than good.” Those reading or possessing the Bible “without permission” were threatened to not receive absolution from their sins (Schroeder 1950, 274). In 1543 an act was passed forbidding absolutely the use of Tyndale’s (English) version without royal license. Thousands of copies were burned. “Of the estimated 18,000 copies printed between 1525-1528, only two fragments are known to remain” (Thiessen 1949, 84). Out of this tyrannical oppression of the Catholic Church, Protestant Reformation was born.

Johann Selmer (1725-1791) began to argue that biblical events must be judged in the light of human reason/experience and so, the reality of Jesus’ miracles was called into question, his deity was denied, and rationalistic disposition grew rapidly in German universities. Friedrich Strauss’s Life of Jesus (1835) discounted the Gospel accounts as mere “myths” (Hurlbut 1954, 178-179).

In France, Voltaire, or Francois Marie Arouer, a deist who produced whole volumes filled with hatred for the Bible, turned an entire country against Scripture. They tied a copy of the Bible to the tail of a donkey, dragged it through the streets to the city dump, and ceremoniously burned both the Bible and the Donkey. Coffman notes, “since that time, the government of France has fallen thirty-five times” (1968, 343-344). Voltaire predicted that within 100 years of his death (1778) Christianity would be swept from existence and pass into history. Over two centuries have come and gone, few have copies of Voltaire’s writings, while almost every home is adorned with a Bible.

When Mozart heard of Voltaire's death, he wrote: "The ungodly, arch-villain, Voltaire, has died miserably, like a dog – just like a brute. That is his reward" (as quoted in Parton 1881, 617).

In America, Thomas Paine (1737-1809) from Stockton, California, wrote "The Age of Reason," which was a passionate attack against the Bible, took an impactful foothold in France. Paine died a bitter and lonely old man. In the public library in his own hometown of more than a quarter-of-a-million people, The Age of Reason has only been checked out sixteen times in more than a decade.

Robert Ingersoll (1833-1899), a politician toured the country defaming the Bible. Ingersoll had been greatly influenced by the writings of Voltaire and Paine (as well as others). He was enamored with Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. Ingersoll's influence died when he did.

Our generations are quite familiar with the persecution during World War II against God, His word, and His people.

The Bible's critics wax and wane, but the Bible abides. It has and will outlast them all. In the words of John Clifford:

"Last eve I passed beside a blacksmith's door and heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
When looking in, I saw upon the floor, old hammers worn with beating years of time.

"How many anvils have you had," said I, "To wear and batter all these hammers so?"

"Just one," said he; then said with a twinkling eye, "The anvil wears the hammers out, you know."

And so, I thought, the anvil of God's word for ages skeptics' blows have beat upon; Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard, the anvil is unharmed-the hammers gone!"

I personally have, and know many people who have personally had, so many experiences with the Bible that have defied logic, defied what we considered reason (at the time), and has inexplicably proven itself as divinely inspired. One such account for me is looking back at my extremely pagan upbringing. I was given seeds of truth, that when I finally found them in the Bible when I took the time to study it myself, I thought for the first time, "I am not crazy, and I am not alone, these things I have always believed are confirmed in the pages of the Bible".

I had attended church with neighbors, aunts and uncles, and even friends but no preacher, priest, or pastor had ever really taught exactly what the Bible had to say. After decades of visiting many denominations of Christian churches I found those at the pulpit will take a text and expound on it with their own words for an hour. The Bible says itself in Revelation 1:3, "Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near".

It also says in Revelation 22: 17-19: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If

any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book”.

I started this ministry because I was in my mid-twenties when I finally studied the Bible, with the help of some truly Holy people who were filled with a pure love for strangers they never even met before. To this day I wish I had known what the real Bible had to say from the time I was a little girl. We can never turn back time, but with the help of the Holy Scriptures, the time we spend becomes so much more valuable. We become something more than we ever thought we could. I invite you to open your Bible, visit www.biblegateway.com, or study in any way you are most comfortable. But I implore you, read the WORD of God and you one day will feel as I do, that it would have been a good thing to begin this journey sooner.

Tamara Ruckdeschel
Founder/Director, 3 Angels Message Ministry

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The 3 Angels Message Ministry team