

The Miracle of the Bible

The Bible is so much more than a piece of literature, collection of rules, sayings, fables and myths, but rather a truthful and accurate revelation of God's plan of creation, freedom, redemption (buying back that which was lost) and instructions for living well. It is His Love Letter to us.

About the collection of the Books of the Bible:

- Around 425 BC, Ezra, a Jewish scribe and spiritual leader, may have collected some of the OT (Old Testament) books (the Law) into a single volume by forming a counsel of 120 devout Jewish leaders called the "Great Synagogue." Some believe the Book of Nehemiah, chapters 8-10 may describe this.
- Some say the OT books of the "prophets" were collected around 300-200 BC with the remaining books of the OT collected around 160-105 BC. All the writings of the OT were confirmed at the "Council of Jamnia" in 90 AD. However, evidence shows the OT Books were already in place around 400-300 BC.
- The Council of Hippo (393 AD) and Carthage (397 AD) are sometimes cited as events that confirmed the books of the NT (New Testament) by the Roman Catholic Church. The Catholic Bible however includes the "Apocrypha" (hidden books) which are not included in the Protestant Bible and thought to be of doubtful authenticity. They were written between 200 BC and 100 AD, were never quoted in the NT or by Jesus, contain historical and geographical errors, and teach false doctrine such as prayers offered to the dead, purgatory, and salvation by works. Many feel these councils had little effect on the Protestant Bible.
- Whatever the historical process was to choose the books of the Bible, it is without doubt that the entire process was led by the Holy Spirit (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21).

The power and uniqueness of the Bible; a light to our path to keep us from stumbling (Psalm 119:105):

- Unlike other ancient writings, the Bible is "God breathed" and was written by human authors as they were "carried along" by the Holy Spirit (as already stated above, 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21).
- The Bible is "living and active," and penetrates our souls unlike any other writings (Hebrews 4:12).
- It is given to us that we may believe in Jesus Christ and have life in His Name (John 20:31.)
- The Bible gives us endurance, encouragement and hope (Romans 15:4).
- The Bible also helps us to stay pure and to keep from sinning against God (Psalms 119:9-11).
- To fully and more clearly understand the Bible, the Holy Spirit dwells in believers (1 Corinthians 2:12-16).
- We are not merely to read and understand the Bible, we are to do what it says (James 1:22) for all the freedom and blessings God has for us (James 1:25).
- We are "sanctified" (set apart for God and His purposes) by the Truth of His Word (John 17:17).
- The Bible is powerful (1 Corinthians 1:18) and transforming (Romans 12:1-2).

Regarding the authenticity and reliability of the Bible:

- It is the best selling book of all books and has been read by more people than any other book.
- It has been translated into over 1,400 languages, more than any other book.
- It was the first book printed in 1452 on the Gutenberg Printing Press (first printing press).
- The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947 shows the amazing accuracy of the Bible maintained from 800 BC to the present time.
- The Bible was written:
 - over 1600 years
 - by more than 40 inspired authors
 - on three different continents
 - in three different languages by peoples of all backgrounds (fishermen, kings, generals, peasants, philosophers, shepherds, politicians, historians and more)
- Over 25% of the Bible is prophetic (describes future events), most of which has already come to pass with staggering accuracy including Jesus' first coming, death and resurrection.
- It gives incredible details on history, geography, dates, names and places giving much opportunity for skeptics to try and disprove the Bible (yet it has never been done).
- It has never been disproven by archeology. In fact, it has been used to discover things long hidden.
- It has been published more than any other book.

How can we use and apply the Bible to know God, love Him and obey Him better?

- Read and consume it daily, not as something that we "have to do," but something we get to do to grow in our knowledge of and love for the Lord (2 Timothy 3:16-17) and to be transformed (Romans 12:1-2). A good Study Bible with a concordance and digital Bible apps may be helpful for those so inclined.
- Maintain fellowship with others who love Jesus to pray and study together. (Acts 2:42)
- Attend church regularly where God calls you to worship and serve. (Hebrews 12:28)
- Pray to grow in your knowledge of, love for, faith in, and gratitude to God. (1 Thessalonians 5:17)
- Don't just read it, do what it says! (James 1:22)