

## **The Uniqueness of the Bible #2 Its Impact on the World**

**Intro:** The Bible comes from the word the Greek word “biblia” meaning “books”. Yet the more we study it the more we see that it is a unified collection with a single theme—the redemption of man in Jesus Christ. This is one of the features of the Bible that make it unique among the religions of the world and point us to its divine origin. However there are many other features that make the Bible unique.

### **Unique in its Circulation**

*It is rare that a book will sell a thousand copies. A best seller might have a circulation of a few hundred thousand copies and may over its lifetime be distributed to a million people.*

*The Bible has been the world’s most published and distributed work. The number of Bibles sold is in the billions!*

*The United Bible Society reported a few years ago that the number of Bibles or Scripture portions distributed for that year was 585 million copies. That was just one outlet and one thousand times a modern best seller!*

*If you lined up all those people and gave each a Bible every 5 seconds it would take 92 years to do what was done in that single year.*

*This is what makes the Bible unique. No other book can begin to compare. What is it about the Bible that has resulted in this vast circulation? Could it be that the answer lies in the claim that its writers make for their words?*

*“And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God’s message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe” (1 Thes. 2:13).*

### **Unique in its Translation**

*Most human productions are never translated into another language. Only on rare occasions is a modern work translated into more than 2 or 3 languages.*

*In contrast, the Bible has been translated into more than 2200 languages making it understandable to over 90 percent of the world’s population.*

*Present efforts if completed will make the Bible the first book in history to be translated into virtually every tongue—the first universally translated book!*

*This fact makes the Bible unique. No other can begin to compare. There must be a reason! Could it be that the translation of the Bible resides in Jesus’ own command that His words should be distributed to all the nations and that He promises His presence in the success of this effort?*

*“And He said unto them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation” (Mk. 16:15).*

*“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Mt. 28:19-20).*

## **Unique in its Survival**

### *Its survival through time*

No book ever written has ever been as carefully copied and preserved through time as the Bible. Bernard Ramm writes: “Jews preserved it as no other manuscript has been preserved. With their massora they kept tabs on every letter, syllable, word and paragraph”. What other book could make such a claim? Who ever counted letters, syllables or words of any ancient Greek or Roman philosopher or historian? Yet it was this process that assures us that the Bible, though having passed through the centuries, remains substantially intact as it was originally written.

### *Its survival through persecution and criticism*

The Bible, though loved and revered by billions of people has at the same time been hated and opposed by many others.

In the early centuries of the church the Scriptures were opposed and destroyed by the persecuting emperors of Rome.

In modern times the Bible has been assailed by critics of all kinds who challenge its accuracy. Charge after charge has been hurled at the Scriptures, each to be proven false by the increasing discovery about the ancient world.

Consider again this quote by Bernard Ramm:

“A thousand times over, the death knell of the Bible has been sounded, the funeral procession formed, the inscription cut on the tombstone, and committal read. But somehow the corpse never stays put. No other book has been so chopped, knifed, sifted, scrutinized, and vilified. What book on philosophy or religion or psychology or belles letters of classical or modern times 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? Yet, “the Bible is still loved by millions, read by millions, and studied by millions”.

Upon this “anvil” have been worn out innumerable “hammers” of opposition and criticism; yet the Bible still stands. What is it about the Bible that has enabled it to withstand this test of time and opposition? Could it be that the answer lies in Peter’s words: “All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls off, but the word of the Lord abides forever” (1 Pet. 1:24-25).

## **Unique in its influence**

### *On literature*

Literary critic Northrop Frye observed that “western literature has been more influenced by the Bible than any other book”. Think of the countless volumes that have been written that have been inspired by Bible itself as the original work of influence. Again Bernard Ramm writes: “There are complexities of bibliographical studies that are unparalleled in any other science or department of human knowledge. From the Apostolic Fathers dating from A.D. 95 to the modern times is one great literary river inspired by the Bible—Bible dictionaries, Bible encyclopedias, Bible lexicons, Bible atlases, and Bible geographies. These may be taken as a starter. Then at random, we may mention the vast bibliographies around theology, religious education, hymnology, missions, the biblical languages, church history, religious biography, devotional works, commentaries, philosophy of religion, evidences, apologetics and on and on. There seems to be an endless number...”

### *On civilization*

Geisler and Nix wrote: “The influence of the Bible and its teaching in the Western world is clear for all who study history. And the influential role of the west in the course of world events is equally clear. Civilization has been influenced more by the Judeo-Christian Scriptures than by any other book or series of books in the world. Indeed, no great moral or religious work in the world exceeds the depth of morality in the principle of Christian love, and none has a more lofty spiritual concept than the Biblical view of God. The Bible presents the highest ideals known to men, ideals that have molded civilization”.

Who among us today could deny the tremendous impact of this truth upon our lives. The freedom that we enjoy. The moral quality of our laws. The vast blessing of our way of life has been molded by the regard that the founders of our country had for the holy Scriptures.

*“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).*

**Conclusion:** What book in the history of the world has had a greater impact on mankind than this book? One could argue that billions of people have been wrong in their esteem of the Bible, but one could never argue with the fact that the Bible is in a class all by itself. It is the most unique book ever written.

**(The material for this outline is taken from Josh McDowell’s “New Evidence that Demands a Verdict”)**