

5 Amazing Facts About the Bible Every Christian Should Know

By now you have probably heard that the editors of *GQ* magazine included the Bible in their list of “21 Books You Don’t Have to Read.” In this article, they foolishly and naively describe the Bible as “repetitive, self-contradictory, sententious, foolish and even at times ill-intentioned.”

Such a clueless, dismissive attitude is embarrassing in light of the fact that the Bible has been the basis of the rise and fall of civilizations, and the source of inspiration for emperors, kings, presidents and untold millions of people of all cultures and races. They obviously know very little about the Bible, and I suspect they have never read it.

Here are five amazing facts about the Bible the *GQ* editors need to know. Every Christian should also be aware of these facts.

Fact No. 1: There Is No Other Book Like the Bible

The Bible is unique in its circulation. It is the perennial all-time best seller. No other book comes close. It has been translated into over 2,800 languages with new translations being continually produced by committed linguists who believe every people group on earth should have God’s word in their own language. No other book has anything approaching its constant circulation.

The Bible is also unique in its composition. It is comprised of 66 books written over a 1600-year period by over 40 authors from every walk of life, including kings, peasants, philosophers, shepherders and fishermen. Despite the diversity of authorship and time of composition, there is a

thread of unity running throughout that binds the whole together, making it one book. There is nothing like it in all of human literature.

The Bible is unique in the opposition it has provoked throughout history. Regimes that oppress their people fear the Bible because of its message of individual freedom, hope and salvation. Communist and Islamic nations fear the Bible and tend to outright ban it or restrict its free access to their people. It was for this same reason that the medieval church approved laws banning individuals from possessing the Bible in their own language. In spite of the opposition, the Bible has survived because it is God's Word. It is like an anvil that has worn out many a hammer.

Fact No. 2: The Bible Profoundly Influenced the Founding of America

A 10-year project to discover where the Founding Fathers got their ideas for America's founding documents found that, by far, the single most cited authority in their writings was the Bible. The following select quotations affirm this primary role of the Bible in America's founding.

- "It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible." –George Washington
- "I have examined all ... and the result is, that the Bible is the best book in the world!" –John Adams, in a letter to Thomas Jefferson
- "Of all the systems of morality that have come under my observations, none appear to me so pure as that of Jesus." –Thomas Jefferson
- "I have for many years made it a practice to read through the Bible once every year." –John Quincy Adams
- "That book, sir, is the Rock on which our Republic rests." –Andrew Jackson

- “It is the best gift God has given to mankind. All the good the Savior gave to the world was communicated through this book.” –Abraham Lincoln
- “No other book of any kind ever written in English has ever so affected the whole life of a people. –Theodore Roosevelt

Fact No. 3: The Bible’s Accuracy and Reliability Have Been Confirmed by Modern Archaeology

Archaeology, a recent science, has confirmed the accuracy and reliability of the Bible. Sir William Ramsay, an agnostic professor of theology at Oxford University and one of the greatest archaeologists of all time, originally thought he would scientifically discredit the New Testament by retracing the steps of Paul as delineated by Luke in the Book of Acts.

Ramsay was a student of the skeptical German higher criticism of the 19th century and he taught that the New Testament is an unreliable religious treatise written in the mid-second century by individuals far removed from the events described. But after years of retracing Luke’s account of Paul’s travels and doing archaeological excavations along the way, Ramsay completely reversed his view of the Bible and first-century history.

Ramsay became convinced that Acts was written in the first century by the traditional author, and he acquired a very high regard for Luke as a historian. He wrote, “Luke is a historian of the first rank; not merely are his statements of fact trustworthy, he is possessed of the true historic sense; in short, this author should be placed along with the greatest of historians.”

In 1896, Ramsay began publishing his discoveries in a book entitled *St. Paul the Traveler and the Roman Citizen*. The book caused a furor of dismay among the skeptics of the world, for its affirmation of the biblical record was totally unexpected.

Over the next 20 years, he published other volumes showing how he discovered Luke to be accurate in the tiniest details of his account. He wrote, for example, "You may press the words of Luke in a degree beyond any other historian's and they stand the keenest scrutiny and the hardest treatment." The evidence was so overwhelming that many atheists gave up their atheism and embraced Christianity.

Archaeology has, indeed, affirmed the biblical record again and again. William F. Albright was a world-renowned archaeologist and professor of Semitic languages at Johns Hopkins University. Like Ramsay, he began his work as a skeptic, but he too was changed by the evidence. After many years of leading archaeological excavations in the land of the Bible, he wrote, "Discovery after discovery has established the accuracy of innumerable details, and brought increased recognition to the Bible as a source of history."

Reason No. 4: The Bible Is God-Breathed

Second Timothy 3:16 says, "All Scripture is inspired by God." The phrase "inspiration of God" is translated from a Greek word that means "God-breathed." In other words, this book has the very life of God in it.

This explains why people of all races and all ranks of life are drawn to the Bible. Countless millions find daily comfort, peace and hope in the Bible. When Martin Luther began reading the Bible as a religious monk, he said, "I felt that the gates of heaven were opened and that I had been born again."

John Wesley's life was forever changed as he sat listening to a reading of Martin Luther's comments on the Book of Romans. He wrote, "I felt my heart strangely warmed." Multitudes, including this writer, often find their heart "strangely warmed" by reading or listening to the words of the Bible.

It is this God-breathed nature of the Bible that draws men and women to read its pages. Not only are the common people drawn

to this book, but kings, presidents and prime ministers have found in its pages the strength and fortitude to carry out their difficult assignments.

For example, William Gladstone (1809-1898), who served as prime minister of Great Britain four separate times, was an avid reader of the Bible and committed to its revelation of Jesus Christ. Commenting on the influence of the Bible, he said, "I have known ninety-five of the world's great men in my time and of these, eighty-seven were followers of the Bible."

Fact No. 5: God Will Have the Final Say

Men may rage and bluster about the Bible, but God will have the final word. The famous agnostic, Voltaire, boasted that 100 years after his death, the Bible would be a forgotten book. Fifty years after his death, however, the Geneva Bible Society purchased his home and printing press and began printing and distributing Bibles throughout Europe.

One hundred years after Voltaire's death, this Bible Society had printed and distributed thousands of Bibles on his printing press and from his home. I think heaven must have been smiling! It reminds me of Isaiah 44:24-25 (NIV), which reads, "I Am the LORD, the Maker of all things . . . who foils the signs of false prophets and makes fools of diviners and overthrows the learning of the wise and turns it into nonsense."

A People of One Book

Yes, the Bible is the most unique and powerful book ever written. Its ultimate purpose is to reveal to humanity God's Messiah and Savior of the world, Jesus Christ. Jesus spoke of all the things that had been written in the Old Testament concerning Himself (Luke 24:44). We, therefore, read the Bible, not to just accumulate knowledge, but to come to know God and His Son, Jesus Christ. It is a relational book.

The *GQ* article merely reflects a trend in modern culture the church must guard against. We must be people of the Book. The noted historian, Philip Schaff said, "Every true progress in church history is conditioned by a new and deeper study of Scripture." Concerning being a people of the Book, John Wesley, the Oxford scholar, revivalist, and founder of Methodism, wrote,

I am a spirit come from God and returning to God: just hovering over the great gulf; till, a few moments hence, I am no more seen; I drop into an unchangeable eternity! I want to know one thing—the way to heaven; how to land safe on that happy shore. God himself has condescended to teach me the way. For this very end He came from heaven. He hath written it down in a book. O give me that book! At any price, give me the book of God! Let me be a man of one Book. {eoa}

This article is derived in part from Dr. Eddie Hyatt's book, Pilgrims and Patriots, available from Amazon and his website at . To schedule him to speak at your church or event, send an email to dreddiehyatt@.