

The Uniqueness of the Bible

I. Definition of “Unique” from Webster’s dictionary:

- A. One and only; single; sole
- B. Different from all others; having no like or equal.

II. The Bible is “unique” in the following ways.

- A. Continuity
- B. Circulation
- C. Translation
- D. Survival
- E. Teachings
- F. Influence on surrounding literature.

III. The Bible is “unique” in its **continuity**. It was written:

- A. Over a **1500 year** time span.
- B. Over **40 generations**.
- C. By over **40 authors** from every walk of life.
- D. In many **different places**.
- E. At many **different times** such as war and peace.
- F. During **different moods**.
- G. On **3 continents**
- H. In **3 different languages**.
- I. In **harmony** and **continuity** about **controversial subjects** from Genesis to Revelation.
- J. The Bible is one unfolding story which makes it stand alone in its continuity.
 - 1. The **Law** gives the **foundation** for Christ.
 - 2. The **historical books** show the **preparation** for Him.
 - 3. In **poetry**, an **expectation** of Christ (His coming).
 - 4. The New Testament **Gospels** record the historical **manifestation** of Christ.
 - 5. The **Acts** relates the **propagation** of the Christ.
 - 6. The **Epistles** give the **interpretations** of the Christ.
 - 7. **Revelation** shows us the **consummation** of all things in the Christ.

Question: Does this prove that this is the Word of God? No!

But if you are seeking truth, shouldn't you consider the Book with these unique qualifications?

IV. The Bible is “unique” in **circulation**.

A. According to the United Bible Societies’ “1998 Scripture Distribution Report”, in that year alone member organizations were responsible for distributing 20.8 million complete Bibles and another 20.1 million testaments. That number is larger today.

See table at end for the breakdown of the distribution.

B. The Latin Vulgate was the first major ever book printed. It was printed on Gutenberg’s press.

Question: Does this prove that this is the Word of God? No!

But shouldn't the Book with such an astronomically high circulation, far exceeding any other book in history, be considered as place to look for truth?

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V. The Bible is “unique” in its **translation**.

A. In 250 BC

- One of the first known books translated. The Old Testament was translated from Hebrew into Greek. That translation was called the **Septuagint**.

B. In 1966:

- The entire Bible was available in 240 different languages.

- One or more books of the Bible were translated into 1280 different languages.

C. As of February of 1988:

- One or more books of the Bible are available in 1884 different languages or dialects

- The New Testament is available in over 667 different languages.

- The closest second is only 300 languages.

D. The number is much higher today, especially with internet propagation.

Question: Does this prove that this is the Word of God? No!

But shouldn't the Book, that has been so lovingly translated into far more languages than any other book, be considered as a source of truth?

VI. The Bible is “unique” in its **survival** through:

A. **Time** As of 1986:

1. There are 24,633 known manuscripts of the New Testament.

2. The Iliad by Homer is number 2 with 643 surviving manuscripts.

B. **Persecution**. Examples:

1. In 303 AD, Diocletian, the Emperor of Rome, outlawed Christianity and tried to destroy all copies of the Bible. 25 years later, the next Roman emperor, converted to Christianity and spent government money to make 50 copies of the Bible.

2. Voltaire, the French philosopher who died in 1778, boasted that the Bible would be gone within 100 years of his death.

a. The blessings of the Bible spread throughout the world. There was heavy slave trading in Zanzibar. Today an English Cathedral stands in the old slave market, and the communion rail is where the slaves used to be whipped.

b. The 50 years after Voltaire died, the Geneva Bible Society used his house to print Bibles.

3. Despite their best efforts, Marxists all over the world have not been able to remove the Bible from their countries. Bibles abound in Russia, China etc.

C. **“Higher Criticism”**. The Bible has withstood countless attacks through the years by skeptics. Arguments against the Bible have fallen through archeology and other studies.

Question: Does this prove that this is the Word of God? No!

But the Bible's survival through time, persecution, and criticism should make it a strong reference source for what's right and what's wrong.

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VII. The Bible is “unique” in its teachings concerning

A. prophecy.

1. Wilbur Smith who compiled a personal library of over 25,000 volumes concluded, “The Bible is the only book ever produced by men...in which is to be found a large body of prophecies relating to: individual nations, to Israel, to all the peoples of the earth, to certain cities, to the coming of One who was to be the Messiah.”
1. In Islam, there is not one prophecy pointing to Mohammed.
3. Prophecies on Christ made 750 years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem:
Isaiah 9:6-7: “For unto us a child is born...”
Isaiah 11:1-10 “ A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse...”
Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12: Predicts Christ crucifixion.

B. history.

1. The amount of historical writings is unexcelled anywhere in the ancient world.
2. The Bible clearly describes major defeats and catastrophes as well as victories.
3. Ancient Egypt would not have recorded major defeats such as the children of Israel leaving Egypt after Egypt’s best chariot force was destroyed in the Red Sea.

C. personalities.

- The Bible deals frankly with its major characters discussing both their strong points and their flaws. Consider King David as sincere man after God’s own heart, as well as the adulterer who sinned with Bathsheba. Also consider the apostles Peter who denied Christ and the apostle Paul who persecuted His followers. Both men were foundation builders in the early church.
- Other ancient writers do not display the in-depth coverage of their heroes.
- The Bible only testifies to one good life, that of Jesus Christ.

Question: Does this prove that this is the Word of God? No!
But a book which is so bold and forthright in its teachings on prophecy, history and personalities should be considered as a source of truth.

IX. The Bible is “unique” in its influence on surrounding literature.

In the book The Greatest Classic, Cheland B. McAfee says,
“If every Bible in any considerable city were destroyed, the Book could be restored in all its essential parts from the quotations on the shelves of the public library.”

X. Miscellaneous Facts. The Bible is the:

- A. The 1st religious book in space on microfilm.
- B. Genesis 1 was read by the first Apollo astronauts to orbit the moon.
- C. One of the most expensive books: Gutenberg Bible is \$100,000 and Codex Sinaiticus sold for \$510,000 in England.

Question: Does this prove that this is the Word of God? No!
But it does prove to me that the Bible is unique from every other book in the world, and does need to be serious studied as the ultimate source of truth.

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Additional notes:

1998 Distributions by the United Bible Societies

	Complete Bible	Testaments	Portions	New Reader Portions	Selections	New Reader Selections
Africa	2,436,187	541,915	1,325,206	1,494,911	4,024,764	350,092
Americas	9,869,916	12,743,263	7,074,311	6,277,936	315,468,625	25,120,757
Asia-Pacific	6,213,113	5,368,429	9,007,281	8,262,462	151,042,342	9,765,191
Europe/Middle East	2,232,299	1,463,020	1,973,054	495,301	2,197,975	275,358
Total	20,751,515	20,116,627	19,379,852	16,530,610	472,733,706	35,511,398

Testaments: New Testaments, may include Psalms

Portions: Complete books of the Bible

Selections: Short extracts on particular themes.

From United Bible Societies at www.biblesociety.org

Scripture Translation (From Web page September 30, 2009)

A summary, by UBS Area and type of publication, of the number of different languages and dialects in which publication of at least one book of the Bible had been registered as of December 31, 2008

Area	Portions	Testaments	Bibles	Bibles + DC ¹	Total
Africa	223	326	169	(31)	718
Asia-Pacific	358	501	177	(38)	1,036
Europe-Middle East	110	40	62	(49)	212
Americas	150	318	42	(10)	510
Constructed Languages	2	0	1	(0)	3
Total	843²	1,185	451	(128)	2,479

¹This column is a sub-section of the Bibles column – for example, there is a translation of the Deuterocanon for 49 of the 62 languages of Europe in which the Bible has been translated.

²The total number of Portions can decline from year to year, since a Portion in a particular language is removed from the Portions column once the whole New Testament is available in that language. This 'upgrading' process also applies when a New Testament is replaced with a full Bible.

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