

his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith Jehovah: for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more" (**Jeremiah 31:31-33**). In this marvelous prophecy, there is both the ground for and promise of a New Covenant. The New Covenant was not restricted to one family or nation. It is God's universal covenant with all men of all ages. It was *"not according to the covenant"* God made with Israel. It offered full forgiveness to all who came under its provisions. Jesus announced it on the night when He ate the last Passover feast with the disciples. At the end of the feast He took unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine, which were to be used by His disciples as a memorial of His death and suffering. He said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, "Drink ye all of it: for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins" (**Matthew 26:26-28**) He promised it would not be eaten again until eaten anew in the coming kingdom (**v.29**). The Bible is fully inspired of God. Paul wrote, "Every Scripture inspired of God (is) also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**). Paul's own words are described by Peter as inspired. He wrote, "And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given to him, wrote unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; wherein are some things hard to be understood, which the ignorant and unstedfast wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction" (**2 Peter 3:15-16**). Notice that Peter said Paul's writings are equal to *"the other Scriptures."* As a fully inspired work, the Bible is authoritative. Jesus used the word of God as His au-

thority, repeatedly affirming, *"It is written."* There is no more powerful phrase in any language than, *"It is written."* By the word of God, the Bible, what is right may be fully established. Responsible people are to "prove all things, and hold fast that which is good" (**2 Thessalonians 5:21**). While the Bible is not merely a book of proof texts, anything that pleases God must be found to be in harmony with its sacred teaching. The Bible is a source of information about God, man, the universe, and the eternal destinies of all men and nations. It offers real answers to the most perplexing questions of *"Who am I, whence came I, and where go I?"* It is also a great inspirational book that lifts the human soul out of the tribulations and trials common to human existence. Here are two worthy tributes to this sacred writing:

"A glory gilds the sacred page,
Majestic like the sun,
It gives a light to every age,
It gives, but borrows none."

Walter S. Landor said, "To say nothing of its holiness or authority, the Bible contains more specimens of genius and taste than any other volume in existence."

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THE BIBLE

--Dudley Ross Spears

THE Bible is referred to in many different ways. We speak of it as God's Word, the Good Book, the Holy Scriptures, and the Sword of the Spirit. It is also known as the Book of books and the Living Word. Some call it simply **THE** Book, for nothing else seems necessary. It stands alone, towering above all other writings.



This matchless book is no mere book of philosophy. It is no collection of the wit and wisdom of the ages. It is truly a supernatural and divinely produced work revealing the God of Heaven to mankind. It is of miraculous origin.

John Sullivan Dwight said, *"The Bible is a window in this prison of hope, through which we look into eternity."* No other work has offered the world what the Bible offers. There have been many books proposing to be what the Bible is, but not one of them measures up to the Bible. The claim to *"latter day revelations"* is bogus. Read the works of those who make such claims and see how empty and downright absurd they are. But not so with the Bible. The Bible has endured the strongest efforts by men to destroy it. Still it is, indeed, *the window in this prison of hope through which we look into eternity.*

It is no mere human product. Peter wrote, "And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts" (**2 Peter 1:19**). Paul spoke of the word of God as that which is "given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God

may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

Here are some facts about the Bible:

- It is miraculous in its origin—coming to us by divine inspiration.
- It is miraculous in its durability—outlasting the opposition of its critics and surviving the attempts of its enemies to exterminate it.
- It is miraculous in its results—transforming the lives of those who read and believe it.
- It is miraculous in its harmony—agreeing in all its parts, even though written over a period of 1600 years by about 40 different authors.
- It is miraculous in its message—telling of many occasions when God supernaturally intervened in the affairs of men to accomplish His redemptive purposes.
- It is miraculous in its preservation—maintaining its accuracy and reliability down through the centuries. Of no other literary work can any of these things be truthfully said.

"Bible" means simply, "the book." It is the sacred book of Christianity, a collection of ancient books of both the Old Testament and the New Testament. It is the one and only book that can rightly be called "The Holy Bible." The Bible is divinely revealed. It was not produced by human wisdom or ingenuity. The creativity of human power is indeed great, but incapable of producing such a great work as The Bible. The Bible is the word of God. God's word is His revelation of His mind to all men of all ages. Many things are not revealed. Only what is in the Bible is divine revelation. Of God's law, Moses wrote, "The secret things belong unto Jehovah our God; but the things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law"

(Deuteronomy 29:29).

There are two major sections of the Bible. The OLD TESTAMENT is composed of the 39 books beginning with GENESIS and ending with MALACHI. The NEW TESTAMENT has 27 books, beginning with MATTHEW and ending with REVELATION. These 66 BOOKS were written over more than a thousand-year period. The authors of each book were divinely inspired as they wrote. Peter wrote: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:20-21). The majority of the Old Testament was written in ancient Hebrew, a very small portion was in Aramaic. The New Testament was written almost completely in Greek.

The Old Testament has some natural divisions. They are the books of HISTORY, LAW, POETRY, and PROPHECY. The New Testament also has natural divisions. They are THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST, THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES, LETTERS TO CHURCHES, and REVELATION. The letters are more numerous, but the writings of Luke make up the majority of the New Testament. He is credited with the authorship of both the GOSPEL OF LUKE and ACTS OF THE APOSTLES. The New Testament letters are classified as letters to individual saints, letters to specific local churches (sometimes local churches in a given area) and letters of general interest to everyone. The BOOK OF REVELATION is perhaps the most unique of all New Testament books for it is written in highly symbolic language.

The Old and New are both referred to as "testaments." Our word "testament" usually refers to a personal will written by and executed for a specific individual by which are bequeathed all his property and wealth to those he designates as his heirs. That is true in part for the Old and New Testaments.

However, the principal reason why the term testament is used is because its meaning both in Hebrew and Greek is "covenant." A covenant is a "contract," a "treaty," an "agreement," or "settlement."

God's first written revelation was given to the Israelites at Mount Sinai. It is called the book of the covenant. This written law is the basis of the Old Testament or Old Covenant. God promised Moses that Israel would be His special people if they would keep His covenant (Exodus 19:3-5). Moses "took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that Jehovah hath spoken will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which Jehovah hath made with you concerning all these words" (Exodus 24:3-8). Jehovah's laws were given as the rules by which His people are to live.

The Old Covenant was not for all people, only the Jews. Early on, God revealed through Moses that this covenant was a special bond between Jehovah and the chosen seed of Abraham. "Jehovah our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. Jehovah made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day" (Deuteronomy 5:2-3) In time, the Israelites broke their part of the agreement. Jeremiah, often called "the weeping prophet," cried out: "Behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was a husband unto them, saith Jehovah. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith Jehovah: I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people: and they shall teach no more every man