That You Might Believe
The Uniqueness of the Bible Part 1

There are many reasons why the Bible is unique. And we need to be able to explain to people why we believe it.

I always cringe when I hear a Christian say regarding the Bible, “That is just what I believe” as if it were just a matter of personal opinion.

*Look at 1 Peter 3:15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, NIV

God tells us that we should be able to give reasons for our belief. So let’s talk about why the Bible is different from any other book in the world.

*1. **THE BIBLE IS UNIQUE IN ITS CONTINUITY.**

*(1.) Written over a period of over 1,300 years.
*(2.) Written by more than 39 authors from every walk of life including kings, peasants, philosophers, fishermen, poets, statesmen, scholars, and more.
*(3.) Written on 3 continents: Africa, Asia, and Europe.
*(4.) Written in 3 languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.
*(5.) Its subject matter includes hundreds of controversial subjects with harmony and continuity from Genesis to Revelation. There is one unfolding story: God's redemption of humanity.

F.F. Bruce was one of the most knowledgeable biblical scholars who has ever lived. He was a professor of Greek at the University of Edinburgh and the University of Leeds, he was head of the Department of Biblical History and Literature at the University of Sheffield in 1947, and he was the Professor of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis at the University of Manchester. He wrote over 40 books. He retired from teaching in 1978.

F.F. Bruce makes this statement about the Bible: "The writers themselves were a heterogeneous number of people, not only separated from each other by hundreds of years and hundreds of miles, but belonging to the most diverse walks of life. In their ranks we have kings, herdsmen, soldiers, legislators, fisherman, statesmen, courtiers, priests and prophets, a tentmaking Rabbi and a Gentile physician. The writings themselves belong to a great variety of literary types. They include history, law, religious poetry, didactic treatises, lyric poetry, parable and allegory, biogaphy, personal correspondence, personal memoirs, and diaries, in addition to these there are the distinctively Biblical types of prophecy and apocalyptic. For all that, the Bible is not simply an anthology; there is a unity which binds the whole together."

When compared with the Great Books of the Western World, the continuity of the Bible is unmatched.

Ill. Josh McDowell, a well-known Christian speaker on university campuses, once challenged an intellectual skeptic to take just 10 authors of the great books of the western world and just one controversial subject (the Bible speaks on hundreds with harmony and agreement.). Then
he was asked, "Would the authors agree?" and the skeptic thought for a moment and said, "No." What would you have said? Immediately the skeptic said, "A conglomeration". Two days later, he committed his life to the Lord Jesus.

Why believe the Bible over all the other religious writers. Think about the religious teachings of Buddha or Confucius or Mohamad. In their teachings about God, you only have their testimony that what they teach about God is true. In the Bible, you have 66 books, written by 39 authors spread out by 1,300 years all confirming the truthfulness of what is taught about God. This kind of unity and continuity is unprecedented in religious teachings or in any other subject matter.

*The reason for the continuity of the Bible is found in 2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed NIV

TS Here is another reason the Bible is unique.

2. THE BIBLE IS UNIQUE IN ITS CIRCULATION.

The Bible has been read and memorized by more people and published in more languages than any other book. There have been more copies produced of its entirety than any other book in history. There is absolutely no book that even begins to compare to the circulation of the Scriptures. The first major book printed on Gutenberg's press was the Latin Vulgate Bible.

Let me give you the worldwide status of Bible translation as of 2015 given by Wycliffe Bible Translators:

*(1.) More than 550 languages have the complete translated Bible.
*(2.) More than 1,300 languages have the New Testament and some portions of Scripture.

About 7,000 languages are known to be in use today.

*(3.) There are over 2,000 languages across 130 countries that have active translation work happening right now.

2014 saw the highest number of printed Bibles ever distributed by Bible Societies around the world. Nearly 34 million full Bibles were distributed.

It is understandable that the Bible is unique in its circulation when we read these words of Jesus.

* Matthew 24:14 And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come. NIV

3. THE BIBLE IS UNIQUE IN ITS ACCURACY.

The historical accuracy of the Bible has been proven over and over again by modern archaeology.
Let me give you one example. Sir William Ramsay, one of the greatest archaeologists to ever live, began his career as an archaeologist having been taught incorrectly that the book of Acts was written in the late second century. Because of that, he assumed it was not a trustworthy source of historical information. Ramsay’s archaeological investigation, however, proved otherwise.

*Because of the accuracy of the book of Acts written by Luke, Ramsay said, “Luke is a historian of the first rank... This author should be placed along with the very greatest of historians.”

Written on material that perishes, having to be copied and recopied for hundreds of years before the invention of the printing press, did not diminish the accuracy of the Bible.

*4. THE BIBLE IS UNIQUE IN ITS SURVIVAL.

The Bible is the only major ancient religious Scripture whose complete textual preservation is established as virtually autographic.

The Bible has survived through time and persecution. Many have tried to discredit or to physically distort the Bible. Only the Bible has withstood 2,000 years of intense scrutiny by critics and not only surviving the attacks, but prospered as its credibility has been strengthened by all such criticism.

*The Bible, compared with other ancient writings, has more manuscript evidence than any ten pieces of classical literature combined.

A.T. Robertson, the author of the most comprehensive grammar of the Greek New Testament, wrote, "There are some 8,000 manuscripts of the Latin Vulgate and at least 1,000 for the other early versions. Add over 4,000 Greek manuscripts and we have 13,000 manuscript copies of portions of the New Testament. Besides all this, much of the New Testament can be reproduced from the quotations of the early Christian writers."

Bernard Ramm speaking of the accuracy and number of Biblical manuscript authority says: "Jews preserved it as no other manuscript has ever been preserved." They had special classes of men within their culture whose sole duty was to preserve and transmit these documents with practically perfect fidelity - scribes, lawyers, massoretes. They would count the letter from the beginning to the middle and from the end back to the middle. If the number was not the same as the origina, it would be destroyed and the scribe would have to start over. Who ever counted the letters and syllables and words of Plato or Aristotle? Cicero or Seneca?

John Lea in in his book entitled “The Greatest Book in the World”, compared the Bible with Shakespeare: "It seems strange that the text of Shakespeare, which has been in existence less than two hundred and eight years, should be far more uncertain and corrupt than that of the New Testament, now over eighteen centuries old, during nearly fifteen of which it existed only in manuscript...With perhaps a dozen or twenty exceptions, the text of every verse in the

*New Testament may be said to be so far settled by the general consent of scholars, that any dispute as to its readings must relate rather to the interpretation of the words than to any doubts respecting the words themselves.
But in every one of Shakespeare's thirty-seven plays there are probably a hundred readings still in dispute, a large portion of which materially affects the meaning of the passages in which they occur."

*5. THE BIBLE IS UNIQUE IN ITS CONTENT.

The Bible is the only religious Scripture that offers eternal salvation as a free gift. All other religions offer some form of salvation by works with no certainty of reward.

*Ephesians 2:8 God’s grace has saved you because of your faith in Christ. Your salvation doesn’t come from anything you do. It is God’s gift. 9 It is not based on anything you have done. No one can brag about earning it. NIV

Here are just a few more examples of the unique and profound content of the Bible. These are all statements made by Jesus.

*John 3:16 God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life. NIV

*John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. NIV

*John 14:9 Jesus answered, “Don’t you know me, Philip? I have been among you such a long time! Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. NIV

THE CONCLUSION IS OBVIOUS.

The Bible is the most unique book in the world. It’s historical accuracy is above reproach. If you are really searching for the truth, you will read the one book that it is unique, different from all others books; which has no equal.

*Any reasonable person would agree that the Bible deserves careful reading and study. It also deserves a thoughtful and prayerful response.

You do not have to be timid about placing your faith in the Bible or in proclaiming it as the Word of God. The Bible is like a lion; it does not need to be defended. Just release it and it will defend itself.

*Isaiah 40:8 The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever." NIV