

## 1. The Uniqueness of the Bible (2Q 2020—How to Interpret Scripture)

**Biblical Material:** Deut. 32:45–47; Gen. 49:8–12; Isa. 53:3–7; 1 Cor. 15:3–5, 51–55; Rom. 12:2; Psalm 119:105.

### Quotes

- The Bible is God’s book because it is in a unique and universal sense Man’s book.  
*Richard Brook*
- The Congress of the United States, in recognition of the unique contribution of the Bible in shaping the history and character of this Nation, and so many of its citizens, has by Senate Joint Resolution 165 authorized and requested the President to designate the year 1983 as the ‘Year of the Bible.’ *Ronald Reagan*
- The Bible must be its own argument and defense. *H.J. Van Dyke*
- All my life I’ve loved books. But the Bible was the only book that ever loved me back.  
*Edward Grinnan*
- As I spent time chewing over the endless assurances and promises to be found in the Bible, so my faith in the living God grew stronger and held me safe in his hands. God’s word to us, especially his word spoken by his spirit through the Bible, is the very ingredient that feeds our faith. If we feed our souls regularly on God’s word, several times each day, we should become robust spiritually just as we feed on ordinary food several times each day and become robust physically. Nothing is more important than hearing and obeying the word of God. *David Watson*
- The Bible is different from all other books. Its uniqueness rests in its divine authorship.  
*P. Gerard Damsteegt*

### Questions

How does the Bible defend its claims? In what ways is it unique? How can we prove it really is God’s Word? Other religions have holy books, so how is the Bible unique and different? Who decided which books were to be included in the Bible, and why do some Bibles include different books? How do we avoid worshipping the Bible?

### Bible summary

In Deut. 32:45–47 Moses tells the people that God’s word is life. Gen. 49:8–12 is Jacob’s prophecy about Judah. Isaiah predicts the saving ministry of Jesus (Isa. 53:3–7). 1 Cor. 15 speaks of what happens at the resurrection. “Don’t follow the ways of this world; instead be transformed by the spiritual renewal of your mind so you can demonstrate what God’s will really is—good, pleasing, and perfect.” Rom. 12:2 FBV. “Your word is a lamp that shows me where to walk, it’s a light for my path.” Psalm 119:105 FBV.

### Comment

So often the Bible is accused of being mistaken—in its facts, and in its conclusions. Take one example from the recent past. High-brow scholars read the Bible and found mention of a nation nobody had ever heard of. The Hittites. And with the arrogance of modernity the scholars said: “We know nothing of a nation called the Hittites. They are never mentioned by classical historians. This proves the Bible is untrue. It cannot be trusted—at least not as a historical record.

Then some unknown inscriptions were found in Asia Minor, and in 1906 archaeologists discovered that the city they were excavating at Boghazkoy in Turkey was the ancient capital of the Hittite empire. Here was an unknown empire whose only mention came from the Bible. Their existence had been forgotten by everybody else. Now here they were! What a knock-back for the critics when they were faced with hard evidence of the real existence of a vast Hittite empire...

Many of the other supposed “historical mistakes” of the Bible have also been disproved. The Bible is an accurate historical document. As Werner Keller, author of the best-selling *The Bible as History* said: “In view of the overwhelming mass of authentic and well-attested evidence now available...there kept hammering in my brain this one sentence: ‘The Bible is right after all!’”

So what of the possibility that though the historical facts are accurate, the interpretations may be wrong? Like the resurrection of Jesus, the many miracles, God’s direct actions. Can we trust the Bible when it speaks about such “fantastic” things? For the Bible itself claims to be the record of God speaking and relating to people. Some critics claim that’s where these Bible writers made their big mistake...

Even some Christians say at this point: “Oh well, that’s where you have to have faith.” As if faith was entirely separate from proof and evidence... But if the Bible is what it claims to be: a record of God’s dealings with mankind, then everyone should examine the evidence. Is it possible, is it true; could God could have done this, said that? And if so, what kind of person is this God of the Bible?

Look again at what the Bible claims:

- “In the beginning God...” (Genesis 1:1). God is proclaimed from the first verse of the Bible. He is not proved, or debated. God is.
- Nearly 4000 times it’s recorded that “The word of the Lord came to...” or “Thus says the Lord”. Clear proof of what the Bible says of itself—the word of God.
- “For no prophetic message ever came just from the will of man, but men were under the control of the Holy Spirit as they spoke the message that came from God.” (2 Peter 1:21 TEV). “All Scripture is God-breathed... (2 Timothy 3:16 NIV). God speaks through men. That’s what the Bible says it is—the record of this inspiration.
- “Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” (John 20:30, 31 NIV).

That’s the purpose of the Bible. And that’s why it’s unique!

### **Ellen White comments**

In His Word, God has committed to men the knowledge necessary for salvation. The Holy Scriptures are to be accepted as an authoritative, infallible revelation of His will. They are the standard of character, the revealer of doctrines, and the test of experience. {FLB 13}

I recommend to you, dear reader, the Word of God as the rule of your faith and practice. By that Word we are to be judged. God has, in that Word, promised to give visions in the “last days”; not for a new rule of faith, but for the comfort of His people, and to correct those who err from Bible truth. {EW 78}

When God’s Word is studied, comprehended, and obeyed, a bright light will be reflected to the world; new truths, received and acted upon, will bind us in strong bonds to Jesus. The Bible, and the Bible alone, is to be our creed, the sole bond of union. {ISM 416}