

The Awesome Word of God

By Doug Hamilton

As covered in the last lesson, we examined the fact that the Holy Bible is the best-selling book of all time, selling three times more than the next four combined. Additionally, we identified seven reasons why this is true; the Bible is Archeologically, Scientifically, Poetically, Prophetically, Relevantly, Morally, and Spiritually Superior to all other books ever written. In this lesson, we will further examine the Holy Bible so as to better understand *The Awesome Word of God*.

1) The Bible is Awesome in Originality.

The Bible is not a book that one person sat down and typed out on their laptop from the comfort of their desk. The word Bible comes from the Latin word *biblia*, meaning “the books”. The Bible is actually 66 writings, being written by no less than 40 writers on three continents over the span of 1500 years. There were three languages for which the books were written, being primarily Hebrew for the OT, Greek for the New Testament), and Aramaic for small portions of both Testaments.

These writers did not base the words in their own opinion, but were “*inspired by God*” (2 Timothy 3:16). Under inspiration of the Spirit, they recorded these words, not on printing paper, but on stone (Exodus 31:18), clay (Ezekiel 4:1), wood (Isaiah 30:8), leather (Jeremiah 36:23), papyrus (Revelation 5:1), and vellum.

The inspired books of the Bible were organized into two sections, the Old Testament (39 books) and New Testament (27 books). The OT is organized into four categories, 1) The Law (Genesis to Deuteronomy), 2) History (Joshua to Esther), 3) Poetry (Job to Song of Solomon), and 4) Prophecy (Isaiah to Malachi). The New Testament is organized into three sections, 1) The Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), 2) Doctrine (Romans to Jude) and Prophecy (Revelation).

Chronologically, the oldest writing in the Bible is actually the Book of Job, being written after the flood, but before the time of Moses. The newest writing in the Bible is Revelation, written from Ephesus by the aged apostle John (AD 96).

When the churches received these letters from inspired writers and because they were spiritually valuable to the Christians, they began making handwritten copies to share among the groups. The Scribes who made the copies were extremely meticulous in their approach. For example, when Old Testament scribes sat at their tables to reproduce copies, the master scribe in the front of the room would call out the first letter of the word. The scribes then would write that letter out in sequential order, until the individual word was formed. If the word for God was the word, they would strip down, rinse with water, redress, write the word, the rinse off again. This was all done with the highest reverence for the very name of God. It might take months to years just to produce a copy of the original document.

The process of making copies of the individual letters began not long after the death of the apostle John, the last inspired writer of the Bible. From there, the writings of the New Testament were being scrutinized through the process called *canonization*. This was the process of using the OT to measure the authenticity of the NT. If the proclaimed NT writing was inconsistent with the OT, then it did not pass the test. For example, there was a gospel of Peter which emerged early on in the Christian movement. It mentioned that when Jesus was a child that He brought a fish back to life and healed a doll’s head back to the doll body. This was inconsistent with the teachings of the OT. Jesus was prophesied in Isaiah 11:1-2 to be miraculously empowered when the Spirit rested on Him. This occurred at the beginning of His



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earthly ministry (Matthew 3:16, Luke 3:32). The apostle John recorded the first miracle Jesus performed was turning water into wine (John 2:11). This is one of the reasons John is a gospel and Peter's was not.

As the churches were universally sharing their copies with the other churches, they decided to bind the canonized letters together in one big book, the Bible. Manuscript evidence, such as Codex Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, and Alexandrinus confirms that they already had complete Bibles by the third century. Corresponding to this, fragments, such as Rylands, Bodmer, and Beatty, moved that date into the second century. It appears from the evidence that in under 100 years, the 66 writings of the Bible already being assembled into one book.

The awesome story of our modern Bible does not end there. Over the years, as the gospel of hope spread out and permeated the hearts of civilization, there was a need to translate the Bible into other languages. This caused believers to start translating into different versions for the language of the populace, including English.

John Wycliffe first produced his translation of the Holy Bible in the fourteenth century. This was done because the Pope was making excessive demands on the Church of England. Tyndale brought forth another version of the Bible and started printing it in 1526, having the intention of illuminating the world.

In 1604, King James of England summoned a meeting of various religious groups to discuss religious toleration. At this meeting, someone proposed the possibility of a new translation. The King welcomed this idea and commissioned the translators to work in 1607. Their job was to revise the Bishops' Bible of 1602, a Latin version. There was a total of forty-eight choice scholars that worked on the project until completion in 1611. It was dedicated to the King and on the title-page was written "Appointed to be read in Churches." Over the next few decades and many revisions, the King James version became the overwhelming favorite version of the English-speaking world.

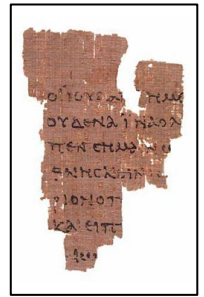
From there, there were many other versions which were brought forth, including the English Revised Version in 1885, the American Standard in 1901, and the Revised Standard Version in 1952. Since then, there have been many other versions which came forth, like the New American Standard, the Good News Bible, the New International Version, New Century Version and the New King James Version.

Though there is not anything in the different versions which would jeopardize the souls, it would allow a broader perspective overall. The Bible is awesome in originality!

2) The Bible is Awesome in Diversity.

The Bible is incredibly diverse on so many levels, representing many cultures, race's, gender, ages and lifestyles. From paganism to Christians, from Africa, Asia and Europe, from dis-abled to abled, both male and female, from the unborn to the aged, from black to white and everything in between, from the homeless to those who lived in palaces, and from shepherds to kings, everyone is represented.

Romans 2:11, "For there is no partiality with God." The Bible shows the good and bad of everyone. David was a man after God's heart and was the mightiest of all the kings, yet he had his problems, including lust, pride, and anger. Josiah was an outstanding king, yet he was shown to struggle with pride and weakness in the end. The Bible shows diversity in how the people are presented, both with strengths and weaknesses, connecting to the human element of fragility.



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Jesus said in Acts 1:8 that His gospel would be proclaimed “*both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.*” The teachings of Jesus are world-wide, encompassing many cultures, customs, and times. This is why the Bible has been successful in being able to touch so many over such a long-time span.

It is also diverse in its structure, including history, prophecy, poetry, genealogy, personal responsibility, applicability, and spirituality. Some of the books within are written while writer was enslaved or imprisoned. Others were written in peaceful times, while others written during a time a war. The 40 writers of the Bible held many roles, such as shepherd, fisherman, tax-collector were written by professionals, shepherds, fishermen, tax-collectors, kings, princes, servants, and slaves. There are long writings (Psalms) and short (Obadiah). There are long verses (Esther 8:9) and short. (John 11:35, Jesus wept). There are broad themes (God’s Love) and narrow (parenting, money management).

3) The Bible is Awesome in Consistency.

In a world which is run by inconsistent politicians and dictators, the Bible is awesome in consistency in so many ways. This is because God is consistent.

- Malachi 3:6, “For I *am* the LORD, I change not” (KJV)
- Hebrews 13:8, “Jesus Christ *is* the same yesterday and today and forever.”
- James 1:17, “...the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.”
- Matthew 24:25, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.”
- Hebrews 1:12, “BUT YOU ARE THE SAME, AND YOUR YEARS WILL NOT COME TO AN END.”

God’s word is not inconsistent because God is not inconsistent. Hence, he expects us to be consistent in our life for Him.

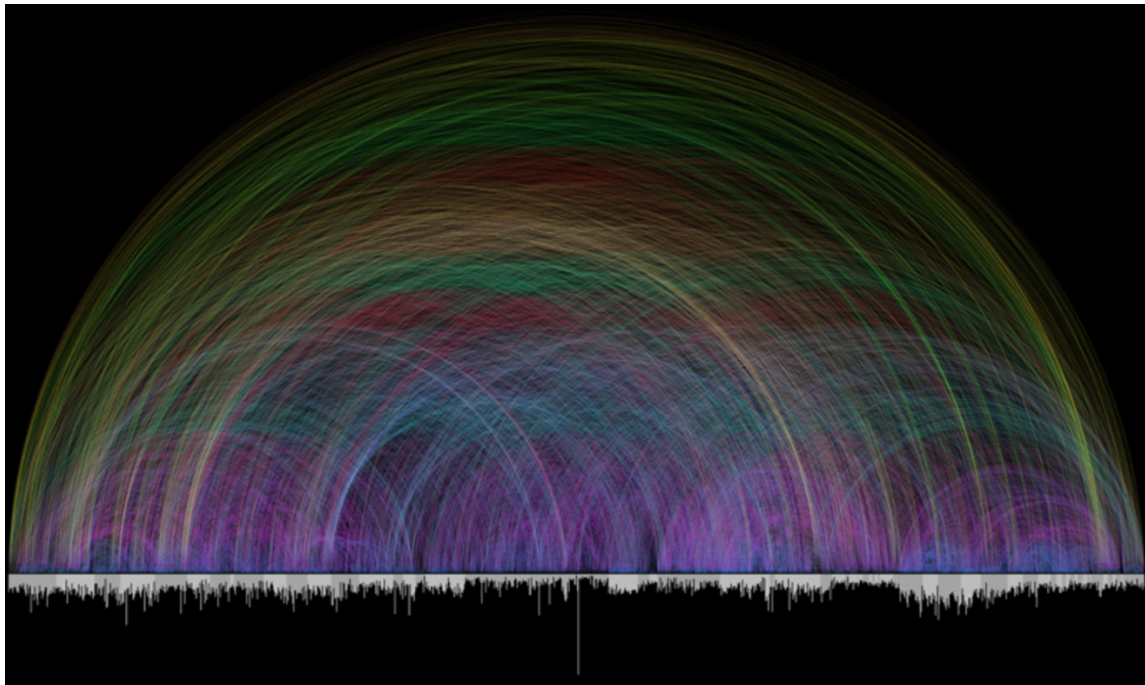
- James 1:6, But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind.
- 1 Corinthians 15:58, Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.
- Galatians 6:9, And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.
- Luke 16:13, No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”
- Matthew 5:37, Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil.
- Revelation 3:15-16, “I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.
- Matthew 6:24, “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”

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The Bible is consistent in theme, in narrative, in practice, in principle and ever in pattern. Take the following in closing. The picture below is a connection chart of 63,779 cross-references in the Bible. Each line drawn is a direct connection to another part of the Bible. Some are prophecy, some referencing events, some direct quotes, and others are paraphrased. Each color represents a connection and each line a cross-reference, beginning from Genesis on the left to Revelation on the right.

Notice the line-graph at the bottom. Some are longer and others shorter, resulting in an uneven prevalence. The lines seemingly form a beautiful rainbow. Now notice the long line in the center. This is located in the very center of the Bible, indicating the greatest convergence of the 63,000+ cross-references. The fact that it is found in the center is indicative to the balanced approach of the book.



It is near that convergence that we find the shortest chapter of the Bible, Psalm 117. It is only 2 verses, saying *“Praise the LORD, all nations; Laud Him, all peoples! 2 For His lovingkindness is great toward us, And the truth of the LORD is everlasting. Praise the LORD!”* This great convergence is also near Psalm 119, which is the longest verse in the Bible, being 176 verses. That is more verses than twenty-five other books of the Bible.

Also converging in this line is the middle chapter of the Bible, Psalm 118. Of the 1189 chapters in the Bible, 594 come before and 594 come after Psalm 118. The middle verse in the Bible just happens to be Psalm 118:8. It reads, *“It is better to take refuge in the Lord, than to trust in man.”*

Conclusion

The awesome consistency of the word of God can bring balance in your life.
Read Your Bible!