



The Miracle Book:

Fascinating Facts about the Bible

<http://blog.forerunners4him.org/the-miracle-book-the-bible>

Lately, I've found myself calling the Bible "The Miracle Book" at every opportunity. I can't help myself. It just wants to come out so I let it. Of course I believe it, but the curious thing to me is why it suddenly became so important for me to say it. I think that the big reason is because something so widespread becomes common place: we tend to take things in our immediate environment for granted.

Years ago our young family lived on the North Carolina shoreline. God and nature treated us daily to absolutely stunning sunrises and sunsets over the broad stretch of Bogue Sound beyond our back door (the coastline ran east to west making such a marvel possible). One day while driving my teenager home, I burst into high praise over the truly scintillating colors on full display, only to be followed by a brief glimpse and a world weary, "Oh yeah, I've seen it before."

If that's the way (kinda, sorta) that you see the Bible, please allow me to fan the flames of first love and recall to mind some fascinating reasons why this book is in a class all its own. If you'll hop on, we're going to take a "motor cycle ride" through history, speeding past stale observations in order to see this marvel from some splendid vantage points. In the end (we'll get there quickly), I hope you'll agree with me that this "Book of Books" is truly "The Miracle Book" we need.



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1

The Bible is a book of miracles. That's our first stop, though it is far from being the leading reason why the Bible is a miracle book. Still, it is well worth remembering that the miraculous runs throughout the pages of scripture like streams flowing through fertile valleys. You simply cannot separate the supernatural occurrences from the natural history without the entire story line falling apart. Many have tried at this; none have succeeded. Dam the streams and the valley becomes a desert; remove the miracles and divine life fails to be imparted.

The God who is revealing Himself to us through the stories of the Bible evidently wants us to know that He is fully capable of all the supernatural power attributed to His rivals—the so-called gods of the world's false religions. He has the stuff of which only deity is capable, but there's a twist, a telling tremendous shift in the way He uses it. Read the legends, read the fantasies, read the religious texts and you will see time and again, supernatural power being used capriciously, or for self-aggrandizement, or (sadly) merely as a parlor trick. Not so with the God of the Bible: His miracles always serve a redemptive purpose.

Whether it is the flood, or the Exodus, or Jonah and the whale, or the signs of the prophets, or most powerfully, the death and resurrection of Jesus, the miracles are never Self-assertive displays. They release the oppressed and the afflicted, they point to our need for repentance and restoration, and they instruct us that our Father's power only serves His love and mercy. Curiously, the miracles themselves begin the instruction, because they challenge us to see that "our world" is neither ours alone, nor what it was created to be, nor even what we imagine it to be. To believe in the Bible's miracles is to believe in the miracle of having such a God for our Creator. It is to begin to see life as it really is.

2

It is a miracle that we have the Bible. Right now the Bible is the number one selling book on the planet. Publishers continuously print it in such stupendous numbers that it is never included in any of the best-selling lists. That would be a spoiler to the vanity of the other authors. But that is nothing new. It has been this way for centuries—ever since the Reformation which began in 1517 made it possible for people to have the scriptures in their own language. Here's one review:

Guinness Records reports an estimated 2.5 billion Bibles were printed between 1815 and 1975 and The Economist estimates more than 100m new Bibles are printed every year making a staggering total of over 6 billion in print. The New Yorker also pointed out that in 2005 the number of Bibles sold in the US alone was conservatively estimated at 25 million



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and Barna research indicates that 92% of all American households have at least one Bible and typically own three. That means most of the 25m Bibles are being sold to homes that already have at least one and likely more.

By comparison the Harry Potter series – 7 books in all – sold only 400 million copies total and no one expects it to keep pace. Also, there is nothing to suggest it will become a classic and I doubt existing owners are buying second, third or even fourth copies of each book in the series.

Other interesting comparisons include Mao's book of quotations which has sold over 900 million copies in a comparatively short time, since 1966, and the Qur'an which became popular in recent years but there are big differences in the way these two books compare to the Bible... Mao's book of quotes and the Qur'an enjoy high print volumes due to political and cultural enforcements. The Bible, however, has never enjoyed the same kind of promotion. <http://nowthinkaboutit.com/2012/06/why-the-bible-is-the-true-best-seller/>

The real miracle of the Bible's popularity is that from the beginning it has been a persecuted book. Nowadays, to admit to reading the Bible in secular circles brings a stigma. That's unpleasant enough, but to be caught owning a Bible in other societies can bring punishment, torture, even death. This has been going on since the beginning of Christian persecution at the hands of the Romans in the first century. This persistent prejudice continues today in some communist nations like Vietnam and China and also in practically all Islamic nations. To this day Christians are driven from the homes, their churches and Bibles burned, themselves tortured and killed—all to satisfy the hatred of spiritual darkness. Yet, those under persecution cry out for more Bibles, not less!

Persecution surrounding scripture even occurred in the Christian nations of Europe, which under Catholic influence prior to the Reformation, waged strenuous campaigns against the Bible being translated into the common tongue of the people. The people wanted to read it for themselves; their oppressive and controlling religious leaders were saying no! Yet, against all odds and despite the mounting piles of martyred bodies, the Bible's popularity kept soaring. Now, that it is free of those self-imposed Christian shackles, the Bible's popularity keeps soaring. How's that for being a Miracle Book? That we even have it, that we have it in such abundance, that we have such a courageous hunger for it—these are genuine miracles.

FREE BONUS: If you're having trouble picking the Book up with a satisfactory strategy for reading it, may I suggest the "Refrigerator Plan" I came up with years ago? It's been satisfying my appetite for truth ever since! Go now for an absolutely [free download](#).



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3

The textual reliability of the Bible is a miracle. People who have a bone to pick with God often try to pick at the reliability of the Bible as an untampered record of what was originally given so long ago. The charges they bring seem to make sense, but only to unschooled ears. Once any open minded person views the evidence, the truth becomes clear that the Bible is far and away the most thoroughly vetted and approved text coming to us out of antiquity. If the Biblical texts aren't reliably true to the originals (and they are), nothing is.

All that we “know” about Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar and the Pharaohs, just to name a few, comes to us on manuscript chains that are gossamer thin compared to the massive anchor cables that connect the scriptures in your hands to the hands which wrote them. I want to examine three frequent areas for complaint: 1) the oral tradition which preceded the actual writing in some cases, 2) the allegation of “sources” other than the named author, and the passing down of the original written text to us. I promise to be brief, because this could easily become too pedantic.

First, some charge that the prior oral traditions cannot be trusted. I have heard this compared to what happens in a group when you whisper a brief saying to your friend on the right; it travels mouth to mouth around the circle and returns to you in an unrecognized form from the one on your left. We can safely throw that analogy out! Anyone who has ever read a nursery tale to their children knows that by the second or third reading the kids know when you change even one word—and cry out against you! This natural conservative principle applied in spades to the ancients where what was being passed down was for them not bedtime stories, but issues of life and death. Not only that, but the memorization capacity of the ancients was far superior to our own. Nowadays we have trouble remembering names and phone numbers. Those who were trained could carry the entire Hebrew scriptures in their heads.

Second, much has been made for the last two centuries about the “discovery” of previously unrecognized source material underlying the text, suggesting that many of the Biblical books were put together, not by the inspired authors, but by later editors, editors with an agenda who picked selectively from the oral traditions to assemble a text that suited their purpose. I was force fed this in seminary, but never swallowed it for several reasons: 1) These are unprovable theories, why bet your life on them?; 2) The theorists themselves are forever disagreeing with each other; 3) Even if they were true, the theories add nothing to the text; 4) It is the text “as we have received it” which we are being asked by God to believe; and 5) Jesus fully believed that the text He received was the Word of God to Him (“Your Word is truth!”). In the end, I decided that if believing the scriptures to be “true as written” was good for Jesus, it would be good for me, too. Even so, there are excellent resources by conservative Biblical scholars who make compelling arguments for why the source theories can't hold a candle to the traditional view regarding the inspired authors. Go here to get started: <http://creation.com/debunking-the-documentary-hypothesis>

Finally, there is the recurring allegation that much has been lost, or twisted, in the passing down of the written text over the centuries. Wow, I suppose that if you believed in the tooth fairy, you



could believe that, but eventually we grow out of childhood fantasies. Two tremendous facts put the lie to this accusation. First, the manuscript chain is immense—there are thousands more manuscripts and hundreds of a much later date than any of the other writings coming to us from antiquity. These are in near total agreement with each other. The points of textual difference are slight in number compared to the whole and the points themselves are slight, in no way changing the general meaning of scripture. Second, a slew of truly miraculous discoveries, the [Dead Sea Scrolls](#) being the most famous, provide us with texts older than the oldest manuscripts, and guess what? Their agreement level with the texts we already have is further confirmation that our present texts are completely reliable!

4

The Bible has had a miraculous effect on world civilization. I have had enough of my writings scorned by atheists to know that some people will read this with unreasoning prejudice and with severely truncated views about history. Since it is impossible to answer the objections of close-minded people, I'm not going to try to build the case up from facts. That would make for a longer article than others may desire to read. Anyone who wants to study the historical record with an open mind will quickly discover that the following general observations are demonstrably true.

Unquestionably, the Bible's influence upon Western Civilization—through Christianity—has been immense in every area of development. Has that influence always been benign and beneficial? No, of course not. That would be as absurd as arguing that because atheistic regimes in the last century slaughtered roughly 120 million of their own people, that nothing good came out of atheists. There are always exceptions to the rule. As you will see, Christianity's rule—shaped by the Bible—has been nothing short of miraculous. But it has not been without lamentable blemishes. Nothing like that of its rivals' more consistent and colossal blunders, but grievous none the less. That said, let's look at the positive record.

1) Manners and morals. Christianity has always exerted a refining influence upon manners and a reforming pressure upon morals. When Jesus said, "Do unto others and as you would have them do unto you," He articulated the core Biblical principle that has informed good manners ever since. Manners may seem superficial, but it was a monk who wrote the first book on chivalry during the Middle Ages in what became a successful effort to restrain the unruly violence of the warrior class, the knights. That chivalric ideal transformed over time into the concept of the refined Christian gentleman and by extension, the gentle woman, or lady. Would we really want to live in a society utterly without good manners? Then the ethos of the New Testament is a friend to everyone in civilized society.

The problem really has to do with morals. The moral vision of both the Old and New Testaments put Israel, then Christians, at variance with the grossly immoral pagan world surrounding them. The pagan world practiced abortion and infanticide (particularly of



females) without blushing. Biblical morality takes a clear stand for the dignity of each life as God's creative gift. The pagan world knew few restraints upon its sexual activity: sex with young boys, sex as part of ritual religious rites, sex outside of marriage, sex with any gender, public orgies and public nudity were commonplace. Biblical morality set Jews and Christians radically apart, especially with their high view of marriage between a man and a woman as sacred and God-ordained. With empire-wide conversion, not only were the old gods thrown down, so were the immoral practices they winked at. Until fairly recently this high Biblical view of the sacredness of "the marriage bed" has reigned for two millennia in the West. It has been integral to the development of our culture. Naturally enough, pagans of all ages have rebelled against it.

2) Slavery. Slavery has existed all over the Earth from time immemorial. What the Bible brought to the table through the Old Testament was a clear vision of Israel's God as the liberator of slaves and protector of their rights. The Israelites were reminded in scripture that just as they had been freed from slavery, they were to remember to treat their own slaves with justice. Proper treatment was delineated, included processes for working through to freedom. Even so, it was the logic of the New Testament which eventually spelled doom for the institution of slavery. Jesus came to put an end to all forms of slavery, especially to end the reign of the perennial slave masters, sin and Satan.

Christian liberty, therefore, extended from spiritual freedom to personal freedom, economic freedom, political freedom and freedom from bondage. Throughout history the ones who actually risked life and livelihood to end slavery were practically without exception, devout Christians. Christians in England pushed for the abolition of the world-wide slave trade, then an end to slavery itself within the bounds of dominion. Likewise, Christians in America led the abolitionist crusade to free the Southern slaves culminating in a bloody Civil War to end the institution. If you hate slavery, you should be forever grateful to the Bible's influence.

3) Universities and science. Nowadays in America, a majority of universities and professors promote a secular perspective that is increasingly hostile to faith, the Bible and Christianity. This is strange indeed for it was faith, the Bible and Christianity that gave birth to both the universities and the sciences. Our Ivy League universities began as seminaries. The world's oldest university, that of Bologna in Italy (founded 1088) evolved as most medieval universities did, out of Cathedral schools which trained future priests and "doctors" of canon law. Until the mid-eighteen hundreds you would have been hard pressed to find professors or scientists who were atheists, rather than Christians.

The great Isaac Newton, who was like a "god" in the pantheon of physics for centuries was a devout Christian, writing more on Biblical subjects than on scientific ones. Sir Francis Bacon (scientific method), Blaise Pascal (mathematics), Johannes Kepler (astronomy), Robert Boyle (chemistry), Gregor Mendel (genetics), Max Planck (quantum theory) [and many more](#) prove the debt the world owes to Christianity for the launching of science. Key to this was the Biblical perspective that God created a rational, real and ordered universe whose hidden laws could be discovered. This was an idea foreign to the minds of the ancient world. Only out of the Bible's insights, in Christian lands, did the miracle of modern science arise.



4) Personal, economic and political liberty. In some ways this is saving the best for last. As touched upon earlier, the entire “logic” of the New Testament is towards liberty, as Paul stated, “It was for freedom that Christ set you free.” The absolutely unparalleled success of the West in elevating the standard of living world-wide and in extending universal human rights world-wide came through the Christian nations of Europe and North America. Specifically, it was the Protestant nations of northern Europe, England, Scotland and the United States which “birthed” the industrial revolution which, along with free market capitalism, dramatically elevated the economies and living conditions of masses of people beyond anything the world had ever known.

Max Weber, the German sociologist (1864-1920), first called attention to this phenomenon in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Something about Christianity was at the core of the economic transformation taking place in the West. This is a fascinating and contested subject, but what I think is beyond debate is the locus of emergence: it didn’t happen in countries dominated by any other religion. Christianity rightly should get the credit for midwife-ing the miracle of our present economic prosperity. Why it happened through the Bible’s influence would require an article of its own. That it happened is another Biblical miracle!

Political freedom is easier to trace. Because the Christian princes of Europe claimed a divine right to rule, the Church and lay nobilities had to dig deep to find Biblical principles for reigning in the otherwise unrestrained power of their rulers. This they did through studious application of canon (church) law and civil law (remember the first universities?). The first freedom set forth in the Magna Carta was freedom of religion. The US Declaration of Independence built on this European and Christian process, declaring “that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” and that for this reason governments are instituted. Thus, the miraculous birth of political freedom and individual rights took place within a profoundly Christian context, shaped by men devoted to the Biblical view.

5

The Bible has had a miraculous effect on individuals. This is easiest miracle of all to prove. Just open your mind and heart, then plunge into the scriptures determined to discover the Lord of the Book through His Book. How many countless billions of people have been forever transformed by encountering Jesus through the Bible? How many have received the incomparable miracle of sins forgiven, of hope restored, of purpose ignited? How many have benefited directly from healing miracles induced through Biblical faith. (I have myself received and seen a multitude.) How many have been raised through growth in faith to see the Lord working Biblical miracles through them? Oh, that will transform you!



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The real miracle of the Bible is its effect upon individuals. You and I, my friend, will live to outlast the Grand Canyon. Will it be in the happy company of the Creator God and His Son, the Lord Jesus? Or will it be... somewhere we don't want to contemplate. Taking the words of the Bible to heart as what they really are, the Word of God to us, will work to transform even the meanest individual into someone full of grace and truth.

If you haven't done it already, wouldn't you like to join our Lord's happy band of merry makers?

[**LIFE SUPPORT:** I've prepared an 11-page download, [Getting to Heaven](#), complete with a full color illustration, explanation, scriptures and prayer. It's free—[download here](#).]



Finally, a personal note. The closest I ever came to the Bible during my first 33 years, was “speed reading” through it at age 18 on my way to a summer of archaeology in Israel in 1967. I wanted background, but I took much more time with *Exodus* by Leon Uris and *The Source* by James Michener, reading them word for word with immense interest. I got nothing at all out of my Bible reading except the totally erroneous impression that I had been there, done that.

It wasn't until my conversion 15 years later that I picked it up again. That night as Jesus was being revealed to me in a heavenly vision, I heard a voice saying, “The scriptures are true! The scriptures are true!” Immediately, I heard my own thoughts responding, “Yes, and if I had only believed it, it would have spared me my years of hell on earth.” That story is told in *Rescued from Hell* ([go here](#) if you want a free copy of the eBook).

From that moment of divine embrace until now, the Bible has been my go to book for wisdom, comfort, insight, restoration, understanding and re-encounter. I wouldn't trade it for the world for it connects me with the One who created the world and everything in it, including my hopes and dreams... May you embrace the journey!

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Through Forerunners4Him Steve Evans has been showing how we can be saved for heaven and teaching the way to live a Spirit filled life on earth. Go now to receive a completely free primer, [Getting to Heaven](#) and/or an introduction to [Living in the Spirit](#) at our website.



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