**1 – Uniqueness of the Bible**

Script

[1] The Uniqueness of the Bible

[2] The word unique means “one and only,” different from all others, having no like or equal.

[3] After studying Eastern books for 42 years and comparing them with the Bible, a former professor of the ancient language Sanskrit has this to say about the uniqueness of the Bible.

[4] “Pile them, if you will, on the left side of your study table; / but place your own Holy Bible on the right side—all by itself, all alone—and with a wide gap between them . For…there is a gulf between it and the so-called sacred books of the East, which severs the one from the other utterly, hopelessly, and forever…a veritable gulf which cannot be bridged over by any science or religious thought.”

[5] According to Josh McDowell in A Ready Defense…

[6] …The Bible is unique in its continuity, circulation, translation, survival, teaching, and influence on surrounding literature.

[7] The Bible was written over a fifteen hundred year period, ending about 100 A.D. when the New Testament was finished.

[8] It was written by more than 40 authors from every walk of life

[9] For example, Moses was a political leader, trained in the universities of Egypt,

[10] …while Peter was a fisherman.

[11] Joshua was a military general;

[12] Nehemiah a cupbearer; and Solomon a king.

[13] and Solomon a king.

[14] Paul was a rabbi;

[15] Amos a herdsman;

[16] and Matthew a tax collector

[17] All these, and others like Daniel who was a prime minister, Luke who was a physician, and David who was a shepherd, a warrior, and a king wrote parts of the Bible.

[18] The Bible was written on three different continents-- / Asia, / Africa, / and Europe.

[19] It was written in an interesting variety of places—like the wilderness, dungeons and prisons, while traveling and during military campaigns.

[20] Some portions were written during times of war, and others in times of peace

[21] Bible writers wrote in different moods—/ from the heights of joy / to the depths of sorrow and despair.

[22] The Bible was written in 3 different languages: Hebrew—the language of the Old Testament;

[23] Aramaic—the common language of the Near East;

[24] and Greek--the language of the NT and the international language at the time of Christ)

[25] The Bible contains a great variety of literature, including history, law, poetry, and more; / but for all that, the bible is not simply an anthology; there is a unity which binds the whole together.

[26] In spite of being written by more than 40 authors from all walks of life, over 1,500 years, in a variety of places and situations, / the biblical writers spoke with harmony and continuity from Genesis to Revelation.

[27] There is one unfolding story….

[28] …God’s redemption…

[29] …of man

[30] The Bible has been read by more people than any other book in history.

[31] The first major book ever printed was the Latin Vulgate version of the Bible.

[32] More copies of the Bible have been produced than of any other book. / Although no one knows for sure, one attempt to estimate the number of Bibles printed between 1816 and 1975 is nearly two and a half billion. / Another estimates closer to 6 billion Bibles have been produced up to the year 1992.

[33] No other book has known anything approaching this constant circulation.

[34] One of the first major books ever to be translated was the Bible. About 250 years before Christ, the Hebrew Old Testament was translated into Greek.

[35] The Bible has been translated and paraphrased more than any other book in existence.

[36] According to Encyclopedia Britannica “by 1966 the whole Bible had appeared in 240 languages and dialects. One or more books of the Bible had appeared in 739 additional ones.”

[37] More recent figures indicate that the whole Bible is available in around 500 languages and portions are available in at least 2500 of the world’s 7000+ languages.

[38] The Bible is also unique in its survival through time. In spite of being written on material that perishes and having to be copied and recopied for hundreds of years before the printing press was invented, its existence, style, and accuracy have been maintained.

[39] Jews preserved it as no other manuscript has ever been preserved. With their [methods of counting] they kept tabs on every letter, syllable, word and paragraph. They had special classes of men within their culture whose sole duty was to preserve and transmit these documents with practically perfect fidelity. Who ever counted the letters and syllables and words of Plato or Aristotle? Cicero or Seneca?”

[40] No documents of the ancient period are as well attested bibliographically as the New Testament

[41] The Bible is unique in its survival—not just through time, but through persecution as well. Many have tried to burn it or ban it. / But the Bible has withstood the vicious attacks of its enemies as no other book has.

[42] The noted French infidel Voltaire predicted that after a hundred years from his time Christianity would be swept from existence and passed into history.

[43] “But what happened? Voltaire has passed into history, while the circulation of the Bible continues to increase in almost all parts of the world, carrying blessing wherever it goes.”

[44] The Bible has survived through time and through persecution. It has also survived the attacks of skepticism and criticism.

[45] Listen to this dramatic description: “Infidels for eighteen hundred years have been refuting and overthrowing this book, and yet it stands today as solid as a rock. Its circulation increases, and it is more loved and cherished and read today than ever before…

[46] “When the French monarch proposed the persecution of the Christians in his dominion, an old statesman and warrior said to him, ‘Sire, the Church of God is an anvil that has worn out many hammers.’

[47] “So the hammers of the infidels have been pecking away at this book for ages, but the hammers are worn out, and the anvil still endures…

[48] “If the book had not been the book of God, men would have destroyed it long ago. Emperors and popes, kings and priests, princes and rulers have all tried their hand at it; they die and the book still lives.”

[49] Bernard Ramm offers this vivid description: A thousand times over, the death knell on the Bible has been sounded, the funeral procession formed, the inscription cut on the tombstone, and committal read. But somehow the corpse never stays put

[50] No other book has been so chopped, knived, sifted, scrutinized, and vilified. What book…of classical or modern times has been subject to such a mass attack as the Bible? With such venom and skepticism? With such thoroughness and erudition? Upon every chapter, line and tenet?

[51] Yet the Bible is still loved by millions, read by millions, and studied by millions.

[52] Another way the Bible is unique is in what it teaches. About the Bible and prophecy, Wilbur Smith says, The Bible is “the only volume ever produced by man, or a group of men, in which is to be found a large body of prophesies relating to individual nations, to Israel, to all the peoples of the earth, to certain cities, and to the coming of one who was to be the Messiah.”

[53] not in the entire gamut of Greek and Latin literature…can we find any real specific prophecy of a great historic event to come in the distant future, nor any prophecy of a Savior to arise from the human race.”

[54] In addition to including prophecy, the Bible also contains history. Distinguished archaeologist William Albright says that Hebrew national tradition excels all others in its clear picture of tribal and family origins. In Egypt and Babylonia, in Assyria and Phoenicia, in Greece and Rome, we look in vain for anything comparable…”

[55] The Bible’s teaching is also unique because of the way it deals with failure. The Bible does not try to overlook, ignore, or hide the failures and sins of its characters. It simply tells it like it is.

[56] Finally, the Bible is unique in its influence on surrounding literature. One scholar describes the great literary river inspired by the Bible, which includes various Bible reference books…

[57] …as well as an endless number of other works.

[58] It has been suggested that “If every Bible in any considerable city were destroyed, the Book could be restored in all its essential parts from the quotations on the shelves of the city public library. There are works, covering almost all the great literary writers, devoted especially to showing how much the Bible has influenced them.”

[59] We have seen that the Bible is unique in its continuity, circulation, translation, survival, teaching, and influence on surrounding literature.

[60] Although its uniqueness alone does not prove that the Bible is the Word of God, we should certainly explore this extraordinary book further.

[61] In the next presentation, we will look at some of the claims the Bible makes about itself.

[62] The main sources for this presentation were A Ready Defense by Josh McDowell and New Testament Documents by F. F. Bruce.