

Lesson 3

THE BIBLE

IS THE BIBLE INDESTRUCTIBLE?

Throughout the centuries some people have hated the Bible. Some have even shown violent hatred for the Bible by attempting to destroy it, as did King Jehoiakim in Jeremiah 36:1-23. Others have killed the men who wrote the Scriptures as Stephen said in Acts 7:51-53. The Bible is hated even today because it condemns their wickedness and demands submission to the will of God. Many have attempted to discredit its divine inspiration and destroy its influence. Others are completely indifferent to God's word and have never studied it, believing it is not relevant to the problems of mankind.

In the late 1960's, A. Z. Conrad penned a poetic tribute to the indestructibility of the Bible:

Century follows century-There it stands.
Empires rise and fall and are forgotten-There it stands.
Dynasty follows dynasty-There it stands.
Kings are crowned and uncrowned-There it stands.
Despised and torn to pieces-There it stands.
Storms of hate swirl about it-There it stands.
Agnostics smile cynically-There it stands.
Profane punsters caricature it-There it stands.
Unbelief abandons it-There it stands.
Higher critics deny its inspiration-There it stands.
Thunderbolts of wrath smite it-There it stands.
An anvil that has broken a million hammers-There it stands.
The flames are kindled about it-There it stands.
The arrows of hate are discharged against it-There it stands.
Radicalism rants and raves against it-There it stands.
Fogs of sophistry conceal it temporarily-There it stands.
The tooth of time gnaws but makes no dent in it-There it stands.
Infidels predict its abandonment-There it stands.
Modernism tries to explain it away-There it stands.

The Bible has shown itself to be impervious, imperishable, impregnable, indissoluble, and invincible toward the vicious assaults hurled against it throughout the centuries. In spite of its enemies, the Bible lives. The Bible surpasses all other books in its popularity and its influence. It has been translated, in whole or in part, into nearly 2,000 languages and dialects and has been circulated by the *billions of copies* into *every corner* of the world. Bernard Ramm wrote:

“A thousand times over, the death knell of 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.”

WHY I NEED TO KNOW OF ITS INDESTRUCTIBILITY

1. The Bible's indestructibility proves that it is inspired of God.

2. When I appreciate the fact that every effort to destroy or discredit the Bible has failed, I will have greater respect for its durability.
3. These things should cause me to want to read and study the Bible.

I.

PASSAGES CLAIMING INDESTRUCTIBILITY

Turning to the Old Testament in Psalms 89:28 we read, *“My lovingkindness will I keep for him forevermore; and my covenant shall stand fast with him.”*(ASV) In Ps 105:8, *“He hath remembered his covenant forever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations,”* (ASV). In Psa. 117:2, *“For his lovingkindness is great toward us; and the truth of Jehovah (endureth) forever. Praise ye Jehovah.”*(ASV). In Isa 40:8, *“The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand forever.”*(ASV). In Isa 54:10, *“For the mountains may depart, and the hills be removed; but my lovingkindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall my covenant of peace be removed, saith Jehovah that hath mercy on thee.”*(ASV).

Therefore, the Old Testament claim is that the Word of God:

1. Shall be kept and shall stand fast forevermore.
2. Is commanded and remembered forever or to a thousand generations.
3. Endureth forever.
4. Shall stand forever.
5. Shall not depart or be removed.

These are all **claims of indestructibility**.

Turning to the New Testament in Matt 24:35, *“Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”* (ASV). In John 10:35, *“the scripture cannot be broken.”* (ASV). In John 12:48, *“He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day.”* (ASV). In 1 Pet 1:24-25, *“For, All flesh is as grass, And all the glory thereof as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower falleth: But the word of the Lord abideth forever. And this is the word of good tidings which was preached unto you.”* (ASV).

The New Testament also claims that the Word of God:

1. Shall not pass away.
2. Cannot be broken.
3. Shall judge us in the last day.
4. Liveth and abideth forever.
5. Endureth forever.

These are **claims of indestructibility**. There are many other passages claiming that the Word of God is indestructible, but these should suffice.

II.

THE FOLLY OF MAN'S ATTEMPTS TO DESTROY THE BIBLE

ANCIENT FOES OF THE BIBLE

The first attempt to pervert the word of God was the serpent's assurance to Eve. In Genesis 3:1-6 we read of this effort:

“Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which Jehovah God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of any tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, Of the fruit of the trees of the garden we may eat: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.” (A SV)

From the very beginning man has been at variance with God's word because he has so often yielded to Satan's lies, John 8:54. Even though Satan changed the word of God, the word stood and Adam and Eve suffered the consequences of their disobedience.

King Manasseh of Judah, (697 to 642 B.C.) encouraged all forms of paganism and possibly destroyed all copies of the law that he could find. Twenty years after his death, his grandson, Josiah, found the lost book of law in the temple and brought about a great spiritual restoration in Judah. You can read of this in 2 Chronicles 34 and 35.

Jehoiakim was The Prince in Judah. He lived in the period of the divided kingdom and reigned from 609-598 B.C. (2 Kings 23:34-36; 2 Chronicles 36:4-5). The problem was that Jehoiakim and the house of Judah were involved in doing what was evil in the sight of God (2 Kings 23:37; 2 Chronicles 36:5). When God delivered His word to Jeremiah and then had it declared to Jehoiakim, He said, “It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin” (Jeremiah 36:3). But because of the continued evil of Jehoiakim and Judah, God, through Jeremiah, issued this pointed prophecy to Jehoiakim:

“But thine eyes and thy heart are not but for thy covetousness, and for shedding innocent blood, and for oppression, and for violence, to do it. Therefore thus saith Jehovah concerning Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah: they shall not lament for him, (saying), Ah my brother! or, Ah sister! They shall not lament for him, (saying) Ah lord! or, Ah his glory! He shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem.” Jer 22:17-19 (ASV)

Therefore, when Jehoiakim heard what God said he launched a persecution against the word of God. He cut and burned the roll of Jeremiah thinking such would destroy the word of God. But, Jehoiakim learned that the word of God is indestructible and that **sin has a price** (Romans 3:23). Another roll was written, describing the payoff of Jehoiakim's persecution, wherein God said:

“And concerning Jehoiakim king of Judah thou shalt say, Thus

saith Jehovah: Thou hast burned this roll, saying, Why hast thou written therein, saying, The king of Babylon shall certainly come and destroy this land, and shall cause to cease from thence man and beast? 30 Therefore thus saith Jehovah concerning Jehoiakim king of Judah: He shall have none to sit upon the throne of David; and his dead body shall be cast out in the day to the heat, and in the night to the frost. 31 And I will punish him and his seed and his servants for their iniquity; and I will bring upon them, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and upon the men of Judah, all the evil that I have pronounced against them, but they hearkened not. 32 Then took Jeremiah another roll, and gave it to Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah, who wrote therein from the mouth of Jeremiah all the words of the book which Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire; and there were added besides unto them many like words.” Jer 36:29-32 (ASV)

This challenger to the indestructibility of the word of God died and, though he had been the Prince of Judah, his burial was the burial of an ass, with no lament. Josephus wrote the following concerning this:

“Now a little time afterwards, the king of Babylon made an expedition against Jehoiakim, whom he received [into the city,] and this out of fear of the foregoing predictions of this prophet, as supposing that he should suffer nothing that was terrible, because he neither shut the gates nor fought against him; yet when he was come into the city, he did not observe the covenants he had made; but he slew such as were in the flower of their age, and such as were of the greatest dignity, together with their king Jehoiakim, whom he commanded to be thrown before the walls, without any burial.”

ENEMIES OF THE BIBLE DURING THE CHRISTIAN ERA

Still others have challenged the indestructibility of the Bible, such as some of the Potentates of the Roman Empire.

Valerius Diocletian ruled Rome during the period from A.D. 284-305. The problem at this time was political and is summed up in the following quotes:

*“Diocletian was a strong military leader who came to the imperial throne at the end of a century that was marked by political disorder in the Roman Empire. He decided that only a strong monarchy could save the Empire and its classical culture. In 285 he ended the diarchy of the principate, created by Caesar Augustus in 27 B.C., by which the emperor and senate had shared authority. A powerful, orientalized monarchy seemed in his opinion to offer the only alternative to chaos. In such a despotic Empire there was no place for democratic elements in government or for the toleration of faiths hostile to the state religion. It was out of this historical situation that the most severe persecution that the Christians ever endured came. (Earle E. Cairns, *Christianity Through The Centuries*, p. 100).*

“The first edicts calling for persecution of the Christians came in March, 303. Diocletian ordered the cessation of meetings of the Christians, the destruction of the churches, the deposition of officers of the church, the imprisonment of those who persisted in their testimony to Christ and the destruction of the Scriptures by fire.” Ibid

*“All assemblies of Christians were forbidden and churches were ordered to be torn down. Four different edicts were issued, each excelling the preceding in intensity. One edict ordered the burning of every copy of the Bible—the first instance in [Christian] history when the Scriptures were made an object of attack.” (Wayne Jackson, *Reason & Revelation*, 1994, 14:12:90)*

“Moreover, after a couple of years of these persecutions, he became so arrogant that he claimed to have exterminated the Christian writings from the face of the earth. He

even erected a monument over the ashes of burned Bibles with the inscription: Extincto Nomine Christianorum—'Extinct is the name of Christians.' He also fashioned a medal With the engraving, 'The Christian religion is destroyed and the worship of the gods Restored.'" (B. J. Clark, *The Indestructibility of the Bible As Proof of Inspiration*, 1996, p. 61-62)

There were radical changes made when Constantine the Great came to the Roman throne in A.D. 306. In A.D. 313 he issued the famous "Edict of Milan," which granted freedom from persecution to Christians and the church. *"During the next few years Constantine issued edicts that brought about the restoration of confiscated property to the Church, the subsidization of the Church by the state, the exemption of the clergy from public service, a ban on soothsaying and the setting apart of the 'Day of the Sun' (Sunday) as a day of rest and worship."* (Cairns, p. 134). Therefore, in spite of the fact that Diocletian had waged the worst persecution against the Bible in the history of the Roman Empire, and in spite of the fact that he had boasted that he had completely destroyed the Christian writings from the face of the earth, Constantine offered a substantial reward to anyone who could discover and deliver copies of the word of God. Within twenty-five hours fifty copies of God's Word were offered to the emperor.

From that day to this, the rest of the story is history! Diocletian's monument and medal are but dust and ashes, as is Diocletian, but the Bible has become and still is the world's best selling book. The poet Flynn thoughtfully captures the ineptitude of the Bible's opponents:

They burned Truth in the market place
And thought their work complete;
But next day, with a smiling face,
They met it on the street.
They threw it in dungeon damp
And thought it was no more;
But lo, it walked with lighted lamp
Among them as before.
They scorned and ostracized it,
And ordered it to depart;
But still it dwelt in all the land
And challenged every heart.

The Bible, the Word of God, has not only had to survive attempts of destruction from its enemies, but also from its so-called "friends." Toward the close of the Dark Ages, Roman Church authorities were the chief enemies of the Bible.

In 1184, Pope Lucius III excommunicated the Waldenses, who became the forerunners of the Protestant Reformation, and who kept the Bible central in their worship. Pope Innocent III, in 1199, had the French Bibles burned at Metz and forbade the people to have more. A Catholic synod in Toulouse, France, in 1229, forbade the people to possess the scriptures, except for the Psalms and a few verses contained in prayer books. The synod particularly denounced all Bible translations. Ferdinand and Isabella, 1474-1516, forbade the people to have Bibles....Ten thousand Bibles were burned at Graez in Steiermark on August 8, 1600 by order of Ferdinand II, who had been emperor. The Jesuits boasted of burning 60,000 Bibles in a single year – 1637 – in Bohemia. Pope Clement II, in 1713, condemned Bible reading on the part of Christians. Pope Pius VI did likewise. Pope Julius VII called the Bible societies a pest in 1816. Pope Gregory XVI, on May 6, 1844, said those favoring Bible societies were guilty of the greatest crime before God and the church. (Adapted from *Why We Believe The Bible* by George Dehoff, p. 111).

The problem **was** and **is** that the Roman Catholic Church does not recognize the Bible as the supreme and sole authority in religion. According to Catholicism: “*Tradition is to be held as the highest authority in the church, even above the Bible.*” However, the modern approach of the Catholic Church is to emphasize great love and respect for the Scriptures. Present day Catholics want people to believe that the Catholic Church has faith in the Bible, is the church of the Bible, and encourages its members to read and study the Bible. However, when Catholics try to disprove the Bible as the **only** authority in religion, their true attitude toward the Bible is revealed. Notice some arguments against the Bible:

NOT INTENDED TO BE WRITTEN

“If Christ Himself had written the book and set it forth as a text-book, so to speak, of His religion, we would rest securely in it, and have no need to inquire farther. That the Bible is not a book, like the Koran for instance, set forth by the founder of the religion as its authoritative exposition, is in fact the fundamental weakness of Bible Protestantism. If Christ had intended His religion to be propagated and preserved by means of a book, can any conceivable reason be urged why He should not have written one?”
(Plain Facts for Fair Minds – p. 26 A Catholic source)

The above is an effort to establish that the Bible alone is not the standard of authority. Christ did not actually take a pen in His hand and write the New Testament; nevertheless, it is His production. The Old Testament declares that God built the temple (I Kings 8:16, 20), but God did not actually come down and build it Himself. He built it through the agency of others. Likewise, the written New Testament is the will of Christ. He wrote it through those commissioned by Him. It contains His laws (I Corinthians 14:37) and produces the faith that brings life in His name (John 20:30-31).

Christ commanded the apostle John, “Write therefore the things that thou hast seen, and the things that are, and the things that are to come hereafter.” (Revelation 1:19). Therefore, the Catholic officials are incorrect when they say Christ never commissioned His apostles to write. In many different places in the Old Testament the prophets were instructed by God to write. The purpose of writing was to preserve God’s will for all time.

DOES NOT CONTAIN ALL TRUTH

“The Bible does not contain all the teaching of the Christian religion, nor does it formulate all the duties of its members.” **(The Faith of Millions, pp. 153-154).**

“Now the Scriptures alone do not contain all the truths which a Christian is bound to believe, nor do they explicitly enjoin all the duties which he is obliged to practice. (Ibid, p. 72).

“Can you learn to save your soul just by reading the Bible? No...because the Bible does not have everything God taught.” **(A Catechism for Adults, Q. 1, p. 52).**

Paul told Timothy, “And that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 2 Tim 3:15 (ASV). Consequently, according to an inspired apostle, one can save his soul just by the Scriptures. Paul continued by saying, “***Every scripture inspired of God (is) also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness. That the man of God may be***

complete, furnished completely unto every good work.” 2 Tim 3:16-17 (ASV). The Scriptures contain everything that is necessary to ***“life and godliness through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue;”*** 2 Pet 1:3 (ASV).

NOT UNDERSTANDABLE

“A competent religious guide must be clear and intelligible to all, so that everyone may fully understand the true meaning of the instructions it contains. Is the Bible a book intelligible to all? Far from it; it is full of obscurities and difficulties not only for the illiterate, but even for the learned.”
(**The Faith of Our Fathers**, p. 70).

“We must, therefore, conclude that the Scriptures **alone** cannot be a sufficient guide and rule of faith...because they are not of themselves clear and intelligible even in matters of the highest importance...” (Ibid., p.73).

As you can see from the above, the Catholic Church claims that the Bible cannot be understood. It then declares that it alone is God’s official interpreter to give the true meaning of the Bible. Of course, this claim is false.

Paul wrote in Ephesians 3:3-4, “How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)” (KJV).

That which the word of God does and supplies to the hearts of men can be done only by an intelligible source. For example, Ps 19:7 ***“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;”*** (NKJ). Ps 119:130 ***“The unfolding of thy words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple.”*** (RSV). Acts 20:32 ***“And now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build (you) up, and to give (you) the inheritance among all them that are sanctified.”*** (ASV). Heb 4:12 ***“For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart.”*** (ASV). These things could not be said of a dead letter, and one that cannot be understood by all who receive it.

God requires that we understand: Eph 5:17 ***“Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.”*** (KJV). Would God command something that is impossible? God wants all men to come to knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:4). Jesus teaches that we will be judged by His words (John 12:48-49). Will God judge us by a standard that cannot be understood? There are many passages teaching us to study, search, and grow in knowledge and they all imply that Scripture is understandable.

The Roman Catholic Church has made other charges against the Bible that can be proven from their own authorities such as the following:

1. Not intended to be circulated
2. Not intended to be gathered into one volume
3. Not accessible to all
4. Not a safe method
5. Is a dead letter
6. Does more harm than good

We have not presented these facts to be ugly or unkind, but to show that the Bible has suffered at the hands of so called “friends of the Bible.”

PHILOSOPHERS OF FOOLISHNESS

In more modern times attempts have been made through philosophy. Some of these philosophers include:

1. Voltaire
2. Thomas Paine
3. Robert Ingersoll

Voltaire lived and wrote during the period of 1694-1778. The problem during this period was “Rationalism,” which is defined as, “*the claim that the fundamental principles of religion are innate or self-evident and that revelation is not necessary.*” (Herbert R. Morgan, Funk & Wagnalls New Encyclopedia 1988, 22:126).

“Voltaire was a deist who produced several volumes brimming with hatred for the Bible. No one in Europe did as much to destroy faith in the Word of God as Voltaire. France rejected the Scriptures, tied a copy of the Bible to the tail of a donkey, and dragged it through the streets to the city dump, where it was ceremoniously burned. But since that time, the government of France has fallen thirty-five times.” (Wayne Jackson, *Reason & Revelation*, 1994, p.92).

In his persecutions of the Bible, Voltaire made a number of prophetic predictions. He boasted, “*One hundred years from my day there will not be a Bible in the earth except one that is looked upon by an antiquarian curiosity-seeker.*” He blasphemed and called Christ “*the cursed wretch.*” Voltaire sought to destroy the Bible with his boasting and bragging and blaspheming, but the payoff for such insolence is seen in the trouble he suffered.

“His final days were spent in agony. As an ex-Catholic, he loathed the idea of not having a “Christian burial.” He even signed a confession begging God to forgive his sins—which his biographers claim was insincere. When the composer Mozart heard of the skeptic’s death, he wrote: “[T]he ungodly, arch-villain, Voltaire, has died miserably, like a dog—just like a brute. That is his reward.” (Wayne Jackson, *Reason & Revelation*, 1994, p. 92).

Geisler and Nix observe that “only fifty years after his death the Geneva Bible Society used his press and house to produce stacks of Bibles.” (Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, 1968, p. 124). One hundred and fifty-five years later “a first edition of Voltaire’s work sold in Paris for eleven cents. That same day—December 24, 1933—the British government paid \$500,000 for an ancient New Testament manuscript, Codex Sinaiticus, dating to about 350 A.D. and it is now in the British Museum. A poet by the name of Blake, put it very well when he wrote:

“Mock on, Mock, Voltaire, Rousseau;
Mock on, mock on; ‘tis all in vain!
You throw the dust against the wind,
And the wind blows it back again.”

In America, men like Thomas Paine led the battle against the Bible. He lived and worked during the period 1737-1809. He gained considerable prominence as a result of his writings advocating America's independence from Britain. However, he went to France and yielded to the influence of French deism and so composed his infamous work, *The Age of Reason*, which was a passionate attack against the Bible. Although he confessed a belief in God, his book was called the "**atheists bible**." Like Voltaire, Paine boasted of the coming demise of the Bible, except that Paine was much bolder in his assessment of how soon the Bible would be obsolete. He said: "*In five years from now there will not be a Bible in America. I have gone through the Bible with an axe and cut down all the trees.*" (Roy J. Hearn, *Inspiration of the Bible*). The payoff for such arrogance is seen in the fact:

“....that within ten years of this arrogant claim, Thomas Paine was a largely forgotten man. The sunset of his life was spent in bitter isolation. In fact he is reported to have said: “I would give worlds if I had them, had *The Age of Reason* never been written. O Lord, help me! Christ help me!....Send even a child to stay with me, for it is hell to be alone. If ever the devil had an agent, I have been that one.” (Ibid).

Ironically, after Paine died, his printing press was also employed to print Bibles and Biblical materials.

Robert Green Ingersoll, who lived during 1833-1899, was a politician who gained his real fame as an agnostic lecturer. He toured the country blasting the Bible. Quite the eloquent speaker, he was paid as much as \$5000 for some of his speeches, and thousands thronged to hear him rail against things holy. His "*Mistakes of Moses*" was a popular presentation. William Jennings Bryan once quipped that it would be much more interesting to hear Moses on the "Mistakes of Ingersoll."

Ingersoll had been greatly influenced by the writings of Voltaire and Paine and initially was a deist. Eventually, he evolved into a full-blown agnostic. Also Ingersoll was enamored with Charles Darwin's theory of evolution, and argued that Darwin's discoveries, "*carried to their legitimate conclusion,*" would destroy the Scriptures. He prophesied that in a quarter of a century no more churches would be built. He held up a copy of the Bible on one occasion and arrogantly asserted, "*In fifteen years I will have this book in the morgue.*" But, instead of Ingersoll having the Bible in the morgue, Ingersoll was in the morgue and the Bible continues with us today. Furthermore, after his death, a man by the name of Robert Garry sat and wrote Bible lessons at the very desk at which Mr. Ingersoll had worked to try to discredit the Bible.

III.

PRINCIPLES CONFIRMING INDESTRUCTIBILITY

PRESERVATION

The preservation and transmission of the Bible from the time that it was written until the present involves two areas of study. The study of the process by which the documents (66 in all) were written, used, collected into groups, and elevated to the authoritative place that they occupy today is called the study of the canon. The other is the process of preserving in writing and translations the text of the documents. This is the study of text and versions. Some divide the history of the text of the Bible into two periods.

1. From the time the documents were written until the time of printing (A.D. 1453).
2. From that date until the present.

The invention of printing was very important for the transmission of the text of the Bible. Before that date, the only way that a person could have a copy of any written work was to make a copy (or have it made) by hand, letter by letter. This was slow and often expensive.

It was to the Jews that this task of preservation was committed (Romans 3:1-2), and what a wonderful job their reliable and ready scribes did.

“The most noted of the earlier scribes was the priest Ezra, who was “a ready scribe in the law of Moses” (Ezra 7:6). Such men, to whom we owe the transmission of the text of the Old Testament, were more than copyists...The scribes were known as *sopherim* (counters), because it was said that they counted all the letters of the Hebrew Old Testament: they knew the middle verse, the middle word, and the middle letter of the various books. Under the guidance of carefully established rules a high standard of accuracy was maintained.” (Henry S. Gehman, *The Biblical Archeologist*, Vol. VIII, Manuscripts of the Old Testament in Hebrew.)

Bernard Ramm asked: “*Who ever counted the letters and syllables and words of Plato or Aristotle? Cicero or Seneca?*” Greenfield observed “*that the Jews have neither mutilated nor corrupted these writings is fully proved by the silence of the prophets as well as of Christ and His apostles, who, though they bring many heavy charges against them, never once accuse them of corrupting one of their sacred writings.*” Such preservation is, itself, a marvel. Adolph Saphir explains:

“The Jews, who themselves rejected the Messiah of whom Moses and the prophets testify, preserve the very books which prove their unbelief and convince the world of the divine authority and mission of Jesus. Where is there a nation preserving carefully a record which so repeatedly and emphatically declares that they are obstinate, ungrateful, and perverse; and which attributes all their victories and excellencies, not to their natural disposition and qualities, but exclusively to the mercy and power of God?The Jews bear unwilling witness to Jesus.” (Rene Pache, *The Inspiration and Authority of Scripture*, 1969).

PROVIDENCE

Melvin J. Wise gives this explanation:

“It is an indisputable fact that what man can produce, man can destroy. Why, then, if the Bible is a mere product of mortal man, have nineteen centuries of assault upon the Bible been unable to destroy it? Down through the centuries enemy after enemy has come forth to war against God’s Word. But this Holy Book has survived despite the frequent and continue attempts to destroy it. Again and again, the most powerful governments in the world sought to eradicate it from the earth. Men have died on the gallows for reading it, and they have been burned at the stake for possessing it. If the Bible had been man’s book it would have gone down in defeat and would have been forgotten centuries ago.” (Melvin J. Wise, *God: Abilene Christian College Annual Bible Lectures*, 1958).

W. J. Russell in *New Testament Christianity*, Vol. II, Edited by Z. T. Sweeney, paints a picture of how God's providence has protected the Bible:

“The last book of the Bible was written nearly 1,300 years before the invention of printing. And when you think how those many centuries horde after horde of heathen barbarians swept like destroying blight over the lands where the Scriptures had a home; when you think of all the great libraries of the world, those for example at Alexandria and Constantinople, and Athens and Rome, were destroyed by fire; you see that it is a wonderful thing that the Bible has come to us in its integrity. How true are the words: “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God shall stand forever.” ...Nations have been born and have passed away since the Bible was written. New customs have come into existence and formed parts of the government of the world. Manners have changed, dynasties have crumbled, while the Bible alone, in spirit, has remained the same, fresh, true, and as indestructible as its Author. Linguists have assailed its language—tested, tried, analyzed and weighed in the balance, and yet not one iota of its truth has grown weaker, nor one ray of its light dimmer. Age has failed to affect its power. It has flourished, while its adversaries have been entombed one after another, and it never bade so fair as at present to be the Book of Truth, and the Most High has ever been its conservator and defense.”

PROPHECY

The Bible contains remarkable prophecies that were written hundreds of years before the events described occurred and which have been accurately and minutely fulfilled. If predictive prophecies recorded in the Bible can only be explained on the basis of supernatural influence, then they are evidences (proofs) of the Bible's supernatural claims of inspiration. As Bernard Ramm has pointed out, this argument from prophecy “is essentially the argument from omniscience. Limited human beings know the future only if it is told them by an omniscient Being.” We have seen some of the passages that predicted that the Scriptures would “endure forever” and in spite of every attempt to destroy them they are with us today and are even more glorious than ever.

No other book has been so chopped, knifed, sifted, scrutinized, and vilified. What book on philosophy or religion or psychology has been subject to such mass attack as the Bible? With such venom and skepticism? With such thoroughness and erudition? Upon every chapter, line and tenet? Considering the thorough learning of the critics and ferocity and precision of the attacks, we would expect the Bible to have been permanently entombed and forever forgotten. But such is not the case. The Bible is still loved by millions....It still remains the most published and most read book in the world of literature. Its survival through time, persecution and criticism is remarkable. This can only be attributed to God's providence.

CONCLUSION

Abraham Lincoln affirmed, “All the good from the Savior of the world is communicated through this Book; but for this Book we could not know right from wrong. All things desirable to man are contained in it....It is the best gift which God has given to man.”

The Bible is indispensable to man. It is all sufficient for our needs. The Bible as God gave it is perfectly adapted to man as God made him. Experience proves that the Bible cannot be denied; the word of the Lord cannot be broken; the Bible never fails; it is infallibly right; it is our only source of right living, of comfort, hope and life.

Therefore, it is not surprising that believers are going into every country with the word of God. Its blessed influence is gaining strength and power, and when the last battle has been fought and the last victory has been won, when the last attack has been made and the last drop of martyr's blood has been shed, the earth will melt with fervent heat, and Christians will stand before the Lord and see opened their Book, which guided their weary feet and brought them safely home. Someone wrote the following:

Despised and torn to pieces,
by infidels decried,
The thunderbolts of hatred,
the haughty cynic's pride—
All these have railed against it in this
and other lands
Yet dynasties have fallen, and
still the Bible stands!