

Rom. 14:19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another.

THE LENEXA EDIFIER

John 8:32

“And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free”

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The Greatest Book in the World

Keith Sharp

Introduction

If ever there were a people endangered of being buried alive beneath the mass of their own writings, it is we Americans. We are today overwhelmed by an almost infinite number of books about an almost unlimited variety of subjects. The Library of Congress, the world's largest library, contains approximately 33 million books, and this number grows daily. One is reminded, “of making many books there is no end; and much study is a weariness of the flesh” (Ecclesiastes 12:12).

This is a book report. But the volume I am to describe is completely unique in all history. This one book has had more influence on men and has done more good for mankind than the totality of all other volumes ever recorded. I want to introduce to you the greatest book in the world.

Authors

Who wrote this wonderful book? Approximately forty men over a period of around 1550 years, from Moses in ca. 1500 - 1450 B.C. to John in ca. A.D. 96, took part in writing “the Book.” These men not only lived in various times, they came from exceedingly different walks of life - a great deliverer and lawgiver, a shepherd-warrior-king, a priest, a wise and wealthy king, a statesman, a herdsman, a fisherman, a medical doctor, a tax collector, a lawyer, and so on.

Subjects

What is “the Book” about? The authors wrote about many different subjects, such as law, history, love stories, poetry, prophecy of the future, biography, evidences, conditions of churches, advice on how to live, and so forth.

Inspiration

Yet these men all wrote with perfect harmony and unity. Impossible? If they had written without divine aid, yes. For example, do you think ten men today, from the same profession and period of time, all writing separately about just one subject, would agree on

every detail? What about forty men from various walks of life and separate times, writing about a wide assortment of subjects? Such “unity in diversity” is possible with this great “Book of books,” the Bible, because God is its ultimate author.

The Bible was written by inspiration.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

“Inspiration” is from a Greek word, “theopneustos,” meaning “God-breathed.” This means the Bible is the Word of God.

Revelation

Also, this great volume was given by revelation.

For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles – if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel, of which I became a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effective working of His power (Ephesians 3:1-7).

A “revelation” is an “unveiling” or ‘uncovering.’ The Gospel was a mystery, that is, “a hidden purpose or counsel” (J.H. Thayer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament. 420). But the Holy Spirit uncovered the mystery to the apostles and prophets, who in turn wrote it down for us to read and understand. Every word of this original revelation was God-given. *But as it is written: Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have*

entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love him.’ But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual **(1 Corinthians 2:9-13).**

Prophecy

Furthermore, the Bible was given by prophecy. *And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit* **(2 Peter 1:19-21).**

When God commanded Moses and Aaron to go to Pharaoh, Aaron was to be “as a mouth,” that is a “*spokesman*” for Moses, whereas Moses was to be “*as God*” to Aaron **(Exodus 4:15-16)**. When the command was repeated, Aaron was called a “*prophet,*” while Moses was “*as God*” **(Exodus 7:1-2)**. Thus, the prophets of God, who wrote the Bible, were God’s mouths or spokesmen.

“Prophecy” is what is spoken for God.

Divisions

The Book of God is divided into two great categories: the Old Testament and the New Testament.

And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance **(Hebrews 9:15).**

The Old Testament consists of thirty-nine separate books which may be placed into five categories: law, history, poetry & wisdom, major prophets and minor prophets. The New Testament is composed of twenty-seven books which may also be divided into five categories: life of Christ, spread of the Gospel, special letters, general letters and prophecy.

Unity

But, despite the extreme diversity of this “divine library,” it has a steel cable of unity tying it all together. God’s twofold physical promise to Abraham, that his seed should become a great nation and inherit the land of Canaan, provides the outline for the Old Testament, while the spiritual part of that promise, “*in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed,*” completes the Old Testament and ties it to the New Testament.

Now the LORD had said to Abram: ‘Get out of your

country, From your family And from your father’s house, To a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’ ... Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, ‘To your descendants I will give this land.’ And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him **(Genesis 12:1-3, 7).**

Theme

This grand promise also helps introduce the very theme of the Bible. In Christ we “*are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.*”

For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise **(Galatians 3:26-29).**

Jesus Christ, the fullness of God’s plan to save the world, is the theme of the Bible. “*For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell*” **(Colossians 1:19)**. Christ is the great Keynote of God’s beautiful Song of Redemption, and every note in the song is in perfect harmony with that Keynote.

Perfection

How good is this book? It is the one perfect book in all the world. “*The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul*” **(Psalm 19:7a)**. This means the Bible is absolutely pure, or flawless. “*Your word is very pure; Therefore Your servant loves it*” **(Psalm 119:140)**. And it is absolutely complete.

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work **(2 Timothy 3:16-17).**

It is the only book which has the power to save your soul. “*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek*” **(Romans 1:16)**. “*Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls*” **(James 1:21)**. Nor has that power lessened over the centuries.

Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, because ‘All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the word of the Lord endures forever.’ Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached

to you (1 Peter 1:22-25).

Conclusion

This great book of God stands as the unbreakable anvil that can withstand all the hammer blows of unbelievers. As John Clifford so beautifully penned in his poem, "The Hammer and The Anvil":

Last eve I passed a blacksmith's door
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime,
When, looking in, I saw upon the floor
Old hammers worn with beating years of time.
'How many anvils have you had,' said I
'To wear and batter all these hammers so?'
'Just one,' said he, then said with twinkling eye
'The anvil wears the hammers out you know.'
And so, I thought, the anvil of God's word
For ages skeptics blows have beat upon;
Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard,
The anvil is unharmed—the hammers gone!

Will you not make this marvelous book, the Bible, your rule of life and guide to Heaven?

Taken from Meditate on These Things

ONLY IN THE NAME OF CHRIST

"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). How does a person receive the salvation Jesus Christ makes possible? For example, when a person "responds to the gospel invitation," that person walks down the aisle, confesses faith in Christ, and is baptized. These are physical actions that a person does. But is this all that is involved in someone being saved from sin? We should rightly conclude that the heart must be involved in the matter of salvation. Paul said: "But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered" (Romans 6:17).

So, just going through some kind of physical exercise does not save a person. The old camp meetings of the early 1800s that took place on the American frontier were laced with physical demonstrations of jerking, fainting, convulsing, etc., as people rolled on the ground, shouted, and prayed for the Holy Spirit to "slay them." They were looking for some kind of overt manifestation of salvation.

Roman Catholicism, with its sacramental system, teaches that God's grace is actually, literally transmitted through the bread when one takes "Holy Communion." While not discounting some kind of inward attitude, the outward physical act is emphasized. Grace is conveyed through the actual act of taking communion.

The Social Gospel Movement, which began in the early 1880s (at least here in the United States), stressed the outward, physical aspects of man's existence. The perfectibility of man was the desired goal; that higher state of being could be realized when the outward

circumstances of being were changed or altered in some way. It might be that a person's economic status was changed, or one's living conditions were bettered. When these changes took place, one's salvation had been obtained. It is true that moral actions that better the lives of people can produce good; it is not true that man's greatest need results solely from some outward change in his life - economic or otherwise.

Evangelicalism teaches that men and woman are saved by "faith alone." That is, salvation is extended to the person who comes to believe in Christ. Calvinism in its purest sense teaches that man is depraved and cannot make any kind of good response to God. So, this depraved person must be operated upon by the Holy Spirit (since he is one of God's elect), thus procuring salvation (and in this sense, whether he wants to be saved or not!). In reality, the doctrine of salvation of faith alone renders the person passive in his or her response to God.

When we read the book of Acts, we observe what people did when they became Christians. You will find the preaching of the word, the hearing and reception of the word, and obedience to the word in every case. That is where Christ put salvation.

Randy Harshbarger

HEART

Heart is used in Scripture as the most comprehensive term for the authentic person. It is the part of our being where we desire, deliberate, and decide. It has been described as "the place of conscious and decisive spiritual activity," "the comprehensive term for a person as a whole; his feelings, desires, passions, thought, understanding and will," and "the center of a person. The place to which God turns."

J. Stowell, Fan The Flame, Moody, 1986, p. 13.

HONESTY

Back in Boston in the mid-1960s, Bill Russell was the star basketball center for the world-champion Celtics. It was fun watching him and his team play at the Boston Garden. He dominated the boards, and with effortless ease, he seemed to take charge of the whole court once the game got underway. The whole team revolved around his larger-than-life presence. Sports fans watch him from a distance, respecting his command of the sport. Then, in a radio interview, I heard a comment from Russell that immediately made me feel closer to him, though I have never met the man.

The sports reporter asked the all-pro basketball star if he ever got nervous. Russell's answer was surprising. He said, in his inimitable style of blunt honesty, "Before every game, I vomit." Shocked, the sportscaster asked what he did if they played two games the same day. Unflappable Russell replied, "I vomit twice."

C. Swindoll, The Grace Awakening, Word, 1990, p. 203.

Psa. 1:1 *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of scoffers: 2 But his delight is in the law of Jehovah; And on his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water, That bringeth forth its fruit in its season, Whose leaf also doth not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. 4 The wicked are not so, But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away. 5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. 6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; But the way of the wicked shall perish.*

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Sunday A.M. 10:20 Assembled Worship
Sunday P.M. 5:00 Assembled Worship
Wednesday P.M. 7:00 Bible Study and Worship

Visitors welcome

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RON PECK TEACHER

WEDNESDAY BIBLE CLASS:
ANGELS AND DEMONS -
JIM STAUFFER TEACHER



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear the gospel - Romans 10:17

Believe in Jesus Christ - Hebrews 11:6

Repent of sins - Acts 17:30

Confess Christ as Lord - Romans 10:9,10

Be Baptized for remission of sins - Acts 2:38

Be Faithful unto death - Revelation 2:10