

THE BIBLE
What Makes It Unique?

"All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial . . . , that the man of God may be fully competent, completely equipped for every good work."

-2 TIMOTHY 3:16, 17.

Just Another Book?

COME people hesitate to make such an **J** unqualified statement about the Bible. What about you? Which of the following best describes how you view the Bible?

- A work of fine literature
- One of several equally acceptable sacred texts
- A book of legends with underlying moral lessons
- The Word of God

A related question is, <u>Does it matter what</u> you believe? Consider what the Bible says about itself: "All the things that were written aforetime were written for our instruction, that through our endurance and through the comfort from the Scriptures we might have hope." (Romans 15:4) The Bible thus claims that it is designed to instruct and comfort us and to give us hope.

However, if the Bible were merely a work of literature or just one of many holy books, would you trust it to instruct you and guide your family, especially if its message differed from what you thought to be right? If the Bible were a collection of myths, would you derive comfort and hope from its promises?

On the other hand, millions who have studied the Bible are convinced that it is the unique Word of God. Why? What distinguishes the Bible from all other books? We invite you to consider five unique features of the Bible, described in the following articles.



"Bible prophecies are ... so numerous as to make accidental fulfillment almost infinitely improbable." -A LAWYER EXAMINES THE BIBLE, BY IRWIN H. LINTON

PROPHECY A PERFECT RECORD

"Not one word out of all the good words that Jehovah your God has spoken to you has failed." -IOSHUA 23:14.

Are there other surcellbooks that try to predict the future?

HOW IS THE BIBLE DIFFERENT? Ancient oracles were notoriously ambiguous and unreliable, and modern horoscopes are no better. Futurology is based on current trends and rarely even attempts to predict specific events centuries in advance. In contrast, Bible prophecies are detailed and always come true, even if they tell "from long ago the things that have not been done."—Isaiah 46:10.

AN EXAMPLE: In the sixth century B.C.E., the prophet Daniel saw a vision that foretold the rapid defeat of Medo-Persia by Greece. It also foretold that as soon as the victorious king of Greece "became mighty," his kingship would be "broken." Who would replace him? Daniel wrote: "There are four kingdoms from his nation that will stand up, but not with his power."—Daniel 8:5-8, 20-22. Listout?

WHAT HISTORIANS SAY: Over 200 years after Daniel's time, Alexander the Great became king of Greece. Within ten years, Alexander defeated the Medo-Persian Empire and extended Grecian rule as far as the Indus River (in modern-day Pakistan). But he died suddenly at the age of 32. Finally, a battle near Ipsus in Asia Minor effectively dissolved his empire. The four victors of that battle eventually divided the Grecian Empire among themselves. However, none of them attained Alexander's degree of power.

WHAT DO YOU THINK? Can any other book claim such a record of fulfilled prophecy? Or is the Bible unique?

Would you welcome more information or a free home Bible study? Please send your request to Jehovah's Witnesses, using one of these addresses. For a complete list of addresses, see www.watchtower.org/address. America, United States of: 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. Australia: PO Box 280, Ingleburn, NSW 1890. Britain: The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN. Canada: PO Box 4100, Georgetown, ON L7G 4Y4. Germany: 65617 Selters. Guam: 143 Jehovah St, Barrigada, GU 96913. Jamaica: PO Box 103, Old Harbour, St. Catherine. Japan: 4-7-1 Nakashinden, Ebina City, Kanagawa-Pref, 243-0496. Puerto Rico: PO Box 3980, Guaynabo, PR 00970. South Africa: Private Bag X2067, Krugersdorp, 1740. Trinidad and Tobago: Lower Rapsey Street & Laxmi Lane, Curepe.

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HISTORY, NOT MYTH

"I have traced all things from the start with accuracy."

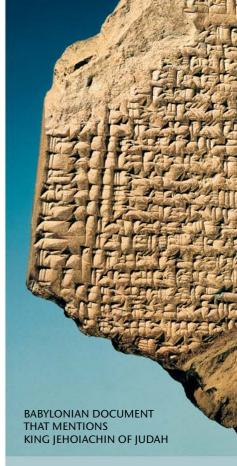
—LUKE 1:3.

HOW IS THE BIBLE DIFFERENT? Legends and myths relate fanciful tales that <u>omit specific locations</u>, <u>dates</u>, and <u>names</u> of historical figures. In contrast, the Bible includes countless historical details that reassure readers that its "sayings are supremely true."—Psalm 119:160, *The Psalms for Today*, by R. K. Harrison.

AN EXAMPLE: The Bible reports that "Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon... took [Judean King] Jehoiachin into exile to Babylon." Later, "Evil-merodach the king of Babylon, in the year of his becoming king, raised up the head of Jehoiachin the king of Judah out of the house of detention." Furthermore, "an allowance was constantly given him [Jehoiachin] from the king, daily as due, all the days of his life." —2 Kings 24:11, 15; 25:27-30.

WHAT ARCHAEOLOGISTS HAVE DISCOVERED: Among the ruins of ancient Babylon, archaeologists uncovered administrative documents dated to the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II. They list rations given to prisoners and others dependent on the royal household. The lists include "Yaukin [Jehoiachin]," who was the "king of the land of Yahud (Judah)," and his household. What about the existence of Nebuchadnezzar's successor, Evil-merodach? An inscription on a vase found near the city of Susa reads: "Palace of Amil-Marduk [Evil-merodach], King of Babylon, son of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon."

WHAT DO YOU THINK? Is any other ancient religious text as specific and accurate when it touches on history? Or is the Bible unique?



"The chronological and geographical statements are more accurate and reliable than those afforded by any other ancient documents."

—A SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, BY ROBERT D. WILSON

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"No one can fail to be impressed by the careful hygienic precautions of the Mosaic period."

-MANUAL OF TROPICAL MEDICINE,
BY DRS. ALDO CASTELLANI
AND ALBERT J. CHALMERS

ACCURATE SCIENCE

"Have I not written you heretofore with counselings and knowledge, to show you the truthfulness of true sayings, so as to return sayings that are the truth?"

—PROVERBS 22:20, 21.

HOW IS THE BIBLE DIFFERENT? Ancient books often feature unsound and dangerous ideas that have been thoroughly debunked by modern science. Even today, authors <u>must update textbooks</u> to harmonize with new discoveries. But the Bible claims that it was authored by the Creator and that his Word "endures forever."—1 Peter 1:25.

AN EXAMPLE: The Mosaic Law commanded the Israelites to dispose of sewage in a covered hole "outside the camp." (Deuteronomy 23:12, 13) If they touched a dead animal or human, the Israelites had to wash with water. (Leviticus 11: 27, 28; Numbers 19:14-16) Lepers back then were quarantined until a physical examination confirmed that they were no longer contagious.—Leviticus 13:1-8.

WHAT MODERN MEDICINE REVEALS: Proper sewage disposal, hand washing, and quarantine remain effective ways to fight disease. If there are no latrines or other sanitation systems nearby, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends: "Defecate at least 30 meters [100 feet] away from any body of water and then bury your feces." When communities dispose of excrement safely, they reduce diarrheal disease by 36 percent, according to the World Health Organization. Less than 200 years ago, physicians discovered that they infected many patients when they did not wash their hands after handling corpses. The CDC still calls hand washing "the single most effective way to prevent the transmission of disease." What about the quarantine of lepers or those with other diseases? Recently, the Saudi Medical Journal said: "In the early stages of an epidemic, isolation and quarantine may be the only and last resort to effectively control infectious diseases."

WHAT DO YOU THINK? Would you expect any other ancient holy book to harmonize with modern science? Or is the Bible unique?

A HARMONIOUS LIBRARY

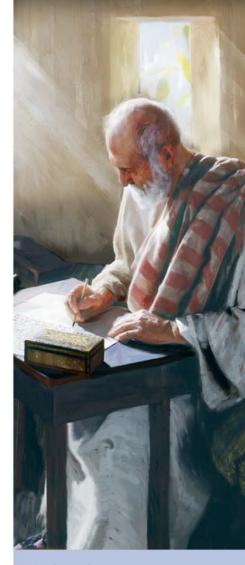
"Prophecy was at no time brought by man's will, but men spoke from God as they were borne along by holy spirit."—2 PETER 1:21.

HOW IS THE BIBLE DIFFERENT? Even contemporaneous records from ancient times often contradict one another. Books written by different men, in different places, at different times rarely harmonize completely. Yet, the Bible claims that all of its 66 books have but one Author—presenting a unified and harmonious message.—2 Timothy 3:16.

AN EXAMPLE: Moses, a shepherd of the 16th century B.C.E., wrote in the Bible's first book that a "seed" would come to save mankind. This book later foretold that the seed would be a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (Genesis 3:15; 22:17, 18; 26:24; 28:14) About 500 years later, the prophet Nathan revealed that the seed would be in the royal line of David. (2 Samuel 7:12) One thousand years after that, the apostle Paul explained that the seed would be made up of Jesus and a group of his chosen followers. (Romans 1:1-4; Galatians 3:16, 29) Finally, by the end of the first century C.E., the last book of the Bible prophesied that members of the seed would bear witness to Jesus on earth, be raised to heaven, and rule with him for 1,000 years. This composite seed will destroy the Devil and save mankind.—Revelation 12:17; 20: 6-10.

WHAT BIBLE COMMENTATORS SAY: After a thorough investigation of the Bible's 66 books, Louis Gaussen wrote that he was astonished by "the imposing unity of this book, composed during fifteen hundred years by so many authors, . . . who yet pursued one and the same plan, and advanced constantly, as if they themselves understood it, towards that one great end, the history of the world's redemption by the Son of God."—Theopneusty—The Plenary Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.

WHAT DO YOU THINK? Would you expect a book written over a span of more than 1,500 years by some 40 different men to be totally harmonious? Or is the Bible unique?



"When these writings are put together, they constitute, structurally, one book . . . There is nothing exactly resembling it, or even approaching it, in all literature."

-THE PROBLEM OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, BY JAMES ORR



to me strongly . . . because it is such excellent medicine."

-HOWARD KELLY, M.D., FOUNDING FACULTY MEMBER OF THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

PRACTICAL TODAY

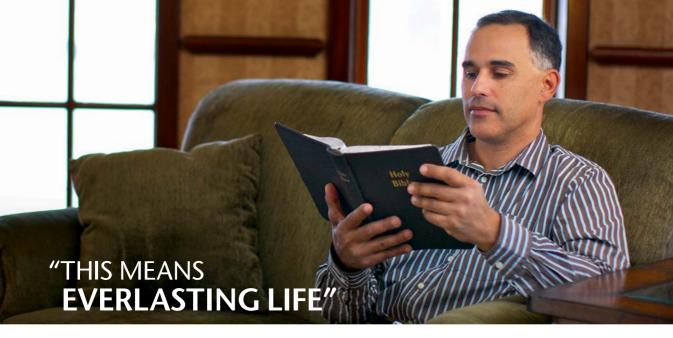
"Your word is a lamp to my foot, and a light to my roadway."—PSALM 119:105.

HOW IS THE BIBLE DIFFERENT? Literary works may be considered classics, but they are hardly guidebooks. And modern instruction manuals need to be revised constantly. The Bible, on the other hand, claims that "the things that were written aforetime were written for our instruction."-Romans 15:4.

AN EXAMPLE: Though not a medical guide, the Bible contains practical suggestions on good emotional and physical health. For example, it states that "a calm heart is the life of the fleshly organism." (Proverbs 14:30) The Bible also warns: إلى المجالة المحالة المجالة المجالة المجالة الم "One isolating himself will seek his own selfish longing; which happy against all practical wisdom ne win break to 18:1) On the other hand, it states that "there is more happi-uor de la 18:1) On the other hand, it states that "there is more happi-uor de la 18:1) against all practical wisdom he will break forth." (Proverbs

WHAT RESEARCH REVEALS: Calmness, strong friendships, and generosity can improve your health. The Journal of the American Medical Association reports: "Men who experience outbursts of anger have twice the risk of stroke as men who control their tempers." A ten-year study in Australia found that elderly people who had "better social networks with friends and confidants" were more likely to live longer. And in 2008, researchers from Canada and the United States learned that "spending money on others promotes happiness more than spending money on oneself."

WHAT DO YOU THINK? Would you trust advice on health issues from any other book completed almost 2,000 years ago? Or is the Bible unique?



"This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ."—JOHN 17:3.

NOWLEDGE can save life. When tenmonth-old Nouhou fell sick, his mother—a community health worker in Niger—knew what to do. She prepared an oral rehydration solution for her son by mixing sugar, salt, and clean water. According to UNICEF, because of her "quick response and access to community health care, her child's illness was cut short."

Knowledge from the Bible can also save life. The first Bible writer, Moses, stated: "It is no valueless word for you, but it means your life, and by this word you may lengthen your days." (Deuteronomy 32:47) Can the Bible really lengthen our days? In what way does it mean our life?

The preceding five articles in this series have shown that the Bible is a book incomparable in its reliable prophecy, historical and scientific accuracy, internal harmony, and practical guidance. This stamps the Bible as unique. So, when it claims to point the

way to a longer life—everlasting life—does it not deserve your careful consideration?

We urge you to learn how accurate knowledge of the Bible can lead to peace of mind now and happiness in the future. Jehovah's Witnesses will be happy to show you how to acquire such knowledge.

The Bible is also unique in that it alone gives satisfying answers to fundamental questions we ask:

- Why are we here?
- Why is there so much suffering?
- Is there any hope for my dead loved ones?

You can find the Bible's answers to these questions in this book, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

