

= The Holy Bible (album) =

The Holy Bible is the third studio album by Welsh alternative rock band Manic Street Preachers . It was released on 29 August 1994 by record label Epic . At the time the album was written and recorded , lyricist and rhythm guitarist Richey Edwards was struggling with severe depression , alcohol abuse , self @-@ harm and anorexia nervosa , and its contents are considered by many sources to reflect his mental state . The songs focus on themes relating to politics and human suffering . The Holy Bible was the band 's last album released before Edwards ' disappearance on 1 February 1995 .

Although it reached number 6 on the UK Albums Chart , initially , global sales were disappointing compared to previous albums and the record did not chart in mainland Europe or North America . It was promoted with tours and festival appearances in the UK , Ireland , Germany , Portugal , the Netherlands and Thailand ? in part without Edwards . The Holy Bible has sold over half million copies worldwide as of 2014 and over the years it received significant critical acclaim . The album has been featured and listed highly on lists of the best albums of all time by British music publications such as Melody Maker , NME and Q.

= = Recording = =

According to drummer Sean Moore , the band felt they had been " going a bit astray " with their previous album , 1993 's Gold Against the Soul , and so the approach to the follow @-@ up was for the band to go back to their " grass roots " and rediscover " a little bit of Britishness that we lacked " . Singer and guitarist James Dean Bradfield recalls the band feeling they had become " a bit too rockist [...] we had lost our direction " . The band stopped listening to American rock music and returned to influences that had inspired them when they first formed , including Magazine , Wire , Skids , PiL , Gang of Four and Joy Division .

Epic Records had proposed that the album be recorded in Barbados , but the band had wanted to avoid what Bradfield called " all that decadent rockstar rubbish " . It was bassist Nicky Wire 's idea , says Bradfield , that the band " should not use everything at its disposal " in recording the album . Instead , recording began with sound engineer Alex Silva at the low @-@ rent , " absolutely tiny " Sound Space Studios in Cardiff . The album was mixed by Mark Freegard , who had previously worked with The Breeders . " She Is Suffering " was produced by Steve Brown . The recording took four weeks .

Bradfield has described the recording of the album as preventing him from having a social life and Alex Silva attributes the break @-@ up of his relationship with his girlfriend at the time to the long hours involved in the recording . Guitarist Richey Edwards attended recording sessions but would , according to Wire , " collapse on the settee and have a snooze " while the other band members did all the recording . He was drinking heavily and frequently crying . " Inevitably " , says Bradfield , " the day would start with a ' schhht ! ' ; the sound of a can opening . "

The album was constructed with " academic discipline " , according to Bradfield , with the band working to headings and structures " so each song is like an essay " .

= = Content = =

= = = Lyrics = = =

Whereas lyric @-@ writing on the two previous albums was split fairly evenly between Richey Edwards and Nicky Wire , the lyrics on The Holy Bible were 70 @-@ 75 % written by Edwards , according to James Dean Bradfield . At the time of the album 's 10th anniversary reissue Wire claimed to be largely responsible for " This Is Yesterday " and " Ifwhiteamericatoldthetruthforonedayit 'sworldwouldfallapart " , contributing only titles to some of the other songs . However , on later reinspecting his notebooks , Wire was surprised to find he had

contributed more lyrics than he had previously remembered , having also written significant portions of " Of Walking Abortion " and " Mausoleum " and a number of lines from " Faster " , now believing himself to be responsible for around 30 % of the words on the album .

The album 's lyrics deal with subjects including prostitution , American consumerism , British imperialism , freedom of speech , the Holocaust , self @-@ starvation , serial killers , the death penalty , political revolution , childhood , fascism and suicide . According to Q : " the tone of the album is by turns bleak , angry and resigned " . The same magazine commented in 1994 that " even a cursory glance at the titles will confirm that this is not the new Gloria Estefan album " .

Sean Moore has described the content of the lyrics as being " as far as Richey 's character could go " . According to Bradfield : " Some of the lyrics confused me . Some [...] were voyeuristic and some were coming from personal experience [...] I remember getting the lyrics to ' Yes ' and thinking ' You crazy fucker , how do I write music for this ? ' " . Critic Simon Price notes that the potential radio @-@ friendliness of the song is undermined by its focus on the subject of prostitution and the recurrence of sexual swearing in the lyric .

Interviewed at the time of the album 's release , Nicky Wire said that the track " Ifwhiteamericatoldthetruthforonedayit 'sworldwouldfallapart " [sic] was " not a completely anti @-@ American song " , but instead was about " how the most empty culture in the world can dominate in such a total sense " . " Of Walking Abortion " is about right @-@ wing totalitarianism , of which Wire commented : " there 's a worm in human nature that makes us want to be dominated " . " Archives of Pain " , dealing with the glorification of serial killers and seemingly advocating capital punishment , he said " was the song that me and Richey worried about most [...] the song isn 't a right wing statement , it 's just against this fascination with people who kill " . Later in 1994 , Bradfield described the song as " one of the most important things we 've done " but said it was also " very right @-@ wing " and " miscalculated " .

Wire described " Revol " as being about Edwards ' idea that " relationships in politics , and relationships in general , are failures " . " P.C.P. " , he said , was about how " PC followers take up the idea of being liberal but end up being quite the opposite " . He said that he was " completely confused " by " Faster " (most of which he had written) , although Edwards had told him that it was about self @-@ abuse .

" Mausoleum " and " The Intense Humming of Evil " , Wire said , were both inspired by visits by the band to former concentration camps at Dachau and Belsen . A first draft of the latter song had been considered insufficiently judgemental by Bradfield , who had asked for a re @-@ write (" you can 't be ambivalent about the Holocaust ") .

According to Wire , " Die in the Summertime " and " 4st 7lb " were " pretty obviously about Richey 's state of mind " . However , Edwards attested that the former song is actually about a pensioner wanting to die with memories of childhood in his mind . 4 stone 7 pounds (29 kg) is the weight below which death is reputed to become medically unavoidable for anorexics .

" This Is Yesterday " , according to Wire , is " about how people always look back to their youth and look on it as a glorious period " .

Wire and Bradfield have both expressed a disliking for the lyrics to the song " She Is Suffering " , Wire saying it suffers from " man @-@ coming @-@ to @-@ the @-@ rescue syndrome " . According to Edwards , the " she " in the song title is desire : " In other Bibles and Holy Books no truth is possible until you empty yourself of desire " .

= = = = Use of dialogue samples = = = =

Several tracks on the album are also complemented by samples of dialogue , in keeping with the themes of the songs themselves , as follows :

" Yes " contains dialogue from the 1993 documentary Hookers , Hustlers , Pimps and their Johns , by Beeban Kidron , about the prostitution trade .

" Ifwhiteamericatoldthetruthforonedayit 'sworldwouldfallapart " begins with a TV trailer for GOP TV 's Rising Tide show .

" Of Walking Abortion " begins with an extract from an interview with Hubert Selby , Jr .

" Archives of Pain " begins with the words of the mother of one of serial killer Peter Sutcliffe 's victims from a TV report on his trial .

" 4st 7lb " begins with dialogue from the 1994 documentary about anorexia , Caraline 's Story , by Jeremy Llewelyn @-@ Jones about Caraline Neville @-@ Lister .

" Mausoleum " features a quotation from an interview with J. G. Ballard explaining his motivation for writing the novel Crash .

" Faster " begins with dialogue from the 1984 film adaptation of George Orwell 's Nineteen Eighty @-@ Four , spoken by John Hurt .

" The Intense Humming of Evil " begins with an extract from a report on the Nuremberg Trials .

" P.C.P. " ends with dialogue spoken by Albert Finney from Peter Yates ' The Dresser .

= = = Musical style = = =

Musically , The Holy Bible marks a shift from the modern rock sound of their first two albums , Generation Terrorists and Gold Against the Soul . It was described as alternative rock , hard rock , punk rock , post @-@ punk , and gothic rock , with influences from British punk , new wave , industrial and art rock . During the recording of the album , the band was mainly influenced by post @-@ punk bands such as Wire , Public Image Ltd , and Joy Division , and their new sound drew comparisons to similar artists such as Magazine , Siouxsie and the Banshees , and Gang of Four . The record 's heavy style was also compared to that of popular industrial rock act Nine Inch Nails .

= = = Aesthetic = = =

James Dean Bradfield has described the album as representing " the most definitive period for us visually as well as the songs we were writing and the record [...] we 've never been scared to admit that " .

While touring in early 1994 , the band visited army surplus stores and bought clothing to wear on stage , in a homage to The Clash . This military image was used consistently by the band during the promotion of The Holy Bible , including in their videos and television appearances . A performance of " Faster " on the BBC 's Top of the Pops in June 1994 resulted in a record number of complaints ? over 25 @, @ 000 ? due to Bradfield wearing a paramilitary @-@ style balaclava .

The album cover , designed by Richey Edwards while hospitalised , features a triptych by Jenny Saville depicting three perspectives on the body of an obese woman in her underwear , and is titled Strategy (South Face / Front Face / North Face) . Saville gave her permission for use of her work for free after a discussion with Edwards in which he described each song on the album . The back cover features a photo of the band in military uniforms and a quote taken from Octave Mirbeau 's book The Torture Garden . This album is also the first instance of the Manic Street Preachers using Gill Sans typeface with a reversed " R " in their album art . The typeface would later be re @-@ used on later albums and has become an easily recognised motif of the Manics ' artwork . The typeface is similar to one used on Empires and Dance by Simple Minds , one of James Dean Bradfield 's favourite records .

The lyrics booklet features various images including Christian iconography , photographs of the gate at Dachau concentration camp and a plan of the gas chambers at Belsen concentration camp , a photograph of Lenin 's corpse , an engraving depicting an execution by guillotine in Revolutionary France , a picture of an apple , a photograph of a woman with a parasitic twin , photographs of each of the Manic Street Preachers as children and a photograph of a group of British policemen in gas @-@ masks . The booklet also contains a Buddhist saying from the Tripitaka alongside a dedication to the band 's publicist , Philip Hall , who had died of cancer in 1993 .

The title " The Holy Bible " was chosen by Edwards to reflect an idea , according to Bradfield , that " everything on there has to be perfection " . Interviewed at the end of 1994 , Edwards said : " The way religions choose to speak their truth to the public has always been to beat them down [...] I think that if a Holy Bible is true , it should be about the way the world is and that 's what I think my lyrics are about . [The album] doesn 't pretend things don 't exist " .

= = Health of Richey Edwards = =

Richey Edwards had had long @-@ term problems with alcohol abuse , depression and self @-@ harm . During 1994 , these problems had , according to Wire , " escalated to a point where everybody got a bit frightened " and Edwards had also begun to suffer from anorexia nervosa . During April and May , when the band played concerts in Thailand and Portugal , Edwards was habitually cutting himself and appeared onstage in Bangkok with self @-@ inflicted wounds across his chest .

He talked openly in the music press about his problems , telling the NME : " When I cut myself I feel so much better . All the little things that might have been annoying me seem so trivial because I 'm concentrating on the pain " , and " I 'm the sort of person who wakes up in the morning and needs to pour a bottle down my throat " .

His problems continued and , during the recording of the album , his mental state deteriorated after learning of the suicide of a close friend from university . In July , he was taken to hospital after severely lacerating himself at home , then transferred to Whitchurch Hospital , an NHS psychiatric facility in Cardiff . His weight had fallen to 6 stone (38 kg) .

By the time of the album 's release in late August 1994 , Edwards was hospitalised at the private Priory Hospital in Roehampton . He rejoined the band to tour during the autumn of 1994 . Other band members felt that his drinking was under control at this point , but his eating continued to be a problem and he continued to self @-@ harm . On 1 February 1995 , he disappeared and is presumed to have committed suicide . His car was found close to the Severn Bridge .

The Holy Bible has been described by Q as a " graphic , violent torrent of self @-@ lacerating punk fury which infamously details the horrors in Richey Edwards ' head " .

= = Release = =

The album reached No. 6 on the UK Albums Chart , remaining in the chart for 11 weeks . Despite not charting outside the UK and Japan , by mid @-@ 2014 The Holy Bible had sold more than 600 @ , @ 000 copies worldwide .

On 6 December 2004 an expanded version of The Holy Bible was released , containing two CDs and a DVD . Disc one comprised a digitally re @-@ mastered version of the original album plus four live tracks . The DVD features an interview with the band , footage of TV and festival appearances and promo videos . The second disc includes a remix of the album by Tom Lord @-@ Alge . The remixed version had been intended for release in the US , but this never happened " for well @-@ documented reasons " , according to James Dean Bradfield . The band felt the second mix was superior to the version originally released . As Bradfield puts it : " For once we got something back from the American record company ? who we despised ? and it was brilliant " .

A new special edition was released in December 2014 , commemorating the 20th anniversary of the album . This edition includes the vinyl edition of the full album , plus a three @-@ CD set , the first CD with the full album remastered for the special release , the second with the US mix remastered and the third including a performance at the Astoria in 1994 and an acoustic session for Radio 4 Mastertapes in 2014 . The special edition also contains a 40 @-@ page book full of rare photos and handwritten lyrics and notes by Richey and by the band .

As part of Record Store Day 2014 a 12 " picture disc of the US Mix of the album was released . Side A featured a mix of the Revol cover overlaid with the Jesus image from the CD . Side B was a white label image . The album was housed in a clear plastic sleeve . 1500 copies were pressed .

= = Reception = =

Despite not charting in mainland Europe , and not selling very well initially , The Holy Bible received significant critical acclaim when it was released on August 1994 , and in the years following .

NME saw The Holy Bible as primarily the work of James Dean Bradfield , saying " The Holy Bible

isn't elegant , but it is bloody effective " . Melody Maker , seeing it as primarily the work of Richey Edwards , described it as " the sound of a group in extremis [...] hurtling towards a private armageddon " . Upon its re @-@ release ten years later , the NME described it as " a work of genuine genius " .

Stephen Thomas Erlewine from AllMusic said that the album was " Richey James ' last will and testament " , finishing with " Every song has a passage frightening in its imagery . Although the music itself isn't as scarily intense , its tight , terse hard rock and glam hooks accentuate the paranoia behind the songs , making the lyrics cut deeper . " Joe Tangari from Pitchfork wrote " In a way , the story of Edwards ' spiral into some unknown oblivion is tied to the experience of The Holy Bible , which in retrospect has become a sort of horror @-@ show eulogy for a man who couldn't live with the world around him . "

Observed Roy Wilkinson in Select : " Amid all the references to coma , carcasses , ' walking abortions ' and dying in the summer sits the spectre of Richey , holed up in a private clinic , having drunk too much , eaten too little and cut himself for reasons varying between dramatic gesture , a surrogate for screaming out loud and something ' sexual ' [...] Let 's hope that , with a record of such unsettling , morbid resonance as The Holy Bible , no further gestures are required . "

Mark Edwards of Stylus opined that " The Holy Bible is easily one of the best albums of the 90s ? ignored by many , but loved intensely by the few who 've lived with it over the years [...] It puts everything the Manics have done since to shame , not to mention nearly everything else [in music] " . David Fricke of Rolling Stone also reviewed the album positively : " even the pall of [Edwards '] absence can't cancel out the life @-@ affirming force that hits you with the very first song " .

Nick Butler of Sputnikmusic praised the album , calling it a " classic " and awarding it 5 out of 5 stars , concluding with : " Punk , hard rock , indie , and even metal fans owe it to themselves to hear this . Anyone else may be scared off , but may just find they never look at life the same way again . I certainly haven't . "

= = Touring = =

In April and May 1994 the band first performed songs from The Holy Bible at concerts in Thailand and Portugal and at a benefit concert for the Anti @-@ Nazi League at Brockwell Park , London . In June , they played the Glastonbury Festival .

In July and August , without Richey Edwards , they played T in the Park in Scotland , the Alte Wartesaal in Cologne , the Parkpop Festival in The Hague and the Reading Festival . During September , October and December there was a headline tour of the UK and Ireland and two tours in mainland Europe with Suede and Therapy ? In December , three nights at the London Astoria ended with the band smashing up their equipment and the venue 's lighting rig , causing £ 26 @,@ 000 worth of damage .

James Dean Bradfield and Richey Edwards were due to fly to the United States for media interviews on 1 February 1995 , the day of Edwards ' disappearance , and Bradfield ended up doing this alone . Concerts in US cities as well as in Prague and Vienna had been scheduled for March and April 1995 , but were cancelled .

In late 2014 the band performed the album in full for the first time , at concerts in Glasgow , Manchester , Dublin and London , marking the 20th anniversary of its release . After the tour in the UK , the Manics are going to take The Holy Bible tour to North America , in the spring of 2015 , in April the band played in Washington DC , Toronto , New York , Boston , San Francisco , Los Angeles and Chicago . They also played in the Cardiff Castle with 10 @,@ 000 fans attending the gig , it was broadcast nationwide by BBC Two Wales .

= = Legacy = =

The Holy Bible has continued to receive praise in the years following its release , with many British music magazines listing the album among the greatest ever made .

The writers of Melody Maker ranked it 15th on its list of the top 100 albums of all time in 2000 , and

Kerrang ! placed it 10th in a similar list five years later . It has also remained popular with the British public ? in 2005 it topped a BBC Newsnight poll of viewers ' favourite albums . Readers of Q voted it as the 10th best album released during the magazine 's lifetime in 2001 and as the 18th greatest album ever in 2003 .

In 2011 NME ranked it number 1 in their " 50 Darkest Albums Ever " list . The same magazine placed the album at number 5 in their end of the year list of the best albums of 1994 . In 2003 it was voted on number 37 on NME 's poll of best albums of all time and , more recently , number 44 in their list of the 500 greatest albums ever made . The album is also featured in The Guardian 's list " 1000 Albums You Must Hear Before You Die " . At the NME awards 2015 , the album won " Reissue of the Year " for its 20th anniversary edition .

Ben Patashnik of Drowned in Sound later said that the album in the time of its release " didn 't sell very well , but its impact was felt keenly by anyone who 'd ever come into contact with the Manics " , and that it is now a " masterpiece [...] the sound of one man in a close @-@ knit group of friends slowly disintegrating and using his own anguish to create some of the most brilliant art to be released on a large scale as music in years [...] It 's not a suicide note ; it 's a warning . "

The album was also included in the book 1001 Albums You Must Hear Before You Die .

= = Track listing = =

All lyrics written by Richey Edwards (credited as Richey James) and Nicky Wire , all music composed by James Dean Bradfield and Sean Moore .

10th Anniversary Edition DVD

" Faster " (performed on Top of the Pops)

" Faster " (performed on Butt Naked)

" P.C.P. " (performed on Butt Naked)

" She Is Suffering " (performed on Butt Naked)

" 4st 7lb " (performed on MTV Most Wanted)

" She Is Suffering " (performed on MTV Most Wanted)

" Faster " (performed at Glastonbury ' 94)

" P.C.P. " (performed at Glastonbury ' 94)

" Yes " (performed at Glastonbury ' 94)

" Revol " (performed at Reading ' 94)

" Faster " (US video)

" Judge Yr 'self " (video)

Yes (New Film Made by Patrick Jones)

Band interview

= = Personnel = =

Manic Street Preachers

James Dean Bradfield ? lead vocals , lead and rhythm guitar , production

Richey Edwards (credited as Richey James) ? rhythm guitar , sleeve design , production

Nicky Wire ? bass guitar , production

Sean Moore ? drums , production

Technical

Steve Brown ? production (" She Is Suffering ")

Alex Silva ? engineering

Mark Freegard ? mixing

Jenny Saville ? front cover painting

Barry Kamen ? back cover painting

Octave Mirbeau ? author of back cover text (from The Torture Garden)

Neil Cooper ? sleeve photography

= = Charts and certifications = =