

Q:

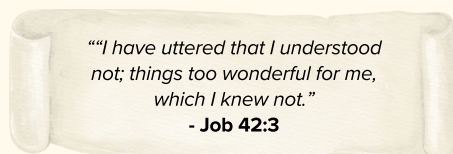
Why bother reading the Bible?

Some days I dislike the Bible. Other days I can't get enough.

The Bible can be beautiful, intimidating, confounding, offensive, poetic, inexplicable, indecipherable, disturbing, depressing and even sickening.

Loved as much as it is misused, the Bible has managed to outlast empires, justify tyrants, transform continents, and alter the entire arc of human history.

It has been both banned and burned. And spurned by skeptic and genius alike.



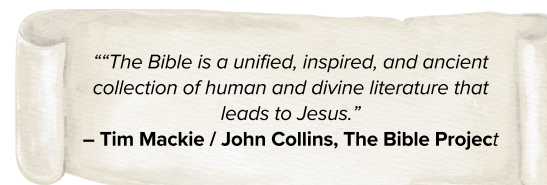
What could the Bible possibly contain to derive such power and invite such derision?

Why should anyone give this strange collection of ancient stories a single minute?

After all, it's just words.

Genesis creates the universe. Moses loses paradise. Job argues with God. Ecclesiastes doubts life itself. The Psalms praise God, question God, and plead desperately with Him to appear. The prophets indict kings, pharaohs, strongmen, even their own people. And they pay for it with their lives.

It's made up of hundreds of stories, but they all lead to one.



Cynics will dismiss the Bible as a collection of tall tales manipulated by men to hoodwink the ignorant to surrender their freedom and empty their pockets. But if it were, why would these conmen humiliate their god, portray men as weak and treacherous, choose to leave so much unexplained, and expose the greed, violence, ignorance, doubt, and unbelief of its heroes?

WORD ON THE WORD:

The Hebrew verb *hāgâ* (pronounced hah-GAH) is often translated “meditate.” But it also means to murmur, mutter, rehearse, ponder, or speak under one’s breath. Words meant to be kept “in your mouth,” repeated until they entered memory, thought, and finally conduct. The Bible is written by men and “inspired” by God. Not the low-level spark of inspiration experienced by the artist, but *theopneustos*: the word breathed out by God and brought to life.

The Bible is not a book. It's a library: law, history, poetry, wisdom, prophecy, biography, filled with lament, horror, rescue, love, tragedy, and apocalypse, and composed by dozens across millennia.

Q:

Why bother reading the Bible?

Just as the spirit of God breathed life into the man He formed from clay, the Word of God is breathed out again to us - understanding, wisdom, and guidance toward the conducting of a good and righteous life – through the Bible.

*"The spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life."
- Job 33:4*

Many believe only the red text of the gospel (words spoken directly by Jesus) are worth their time. They consider the rest "dead ink".

The King James Bible contains approximately 780,000 words. Yet billions of words have been written attempting to explain it.

Others can explain the words or decipher strange verses. But they cannot undergo the encounter on your behalf.

Behind the words, someone might be speaking.

*"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."
- 2 Timothy 3:16*

-The Bible does not speak in whole thoughts. It does not resolve tensions or solve deep mysteries. In fact, it extends and expands them. It lets the questions mount and the arguments linger.

Most books are judged by their reader. The Bible judges the reader in return. Serving as both mirror and prism, the study is also studied.

*"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."
- Matthew 24:35*

This might be the reason the Bible can be so intimidating.

- What if it asks questions I don't want to answer?
- What if it requires me to do something?
- What if I become a different person from the one who first opened it?

*"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow."
- Hebrews 4:12*



Q. Why are the psalms littered with cries of vengeance and revenge? How is one supposed to digest this?

A. THESE PSALMS (55, 139, ETC) ARE IMPRECATORY PSALMS.

PSALM 55

PRAYERS OF VENGEANCE

def: IMPRECATORY - CONTAINING A PRAYER FOR EVIL TO BEFALL A PERSON

■ SOME CALL ^{OUT} THESE PSALMS AS EVIL AND WE SHOULD AVOID THEM. AS DIFFICULT AS THEY MAY BE TO READ AND SPEAK, THERE IS ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE.

■ GOD IS A GOD OF MERCY AND JUDGEMENT

■ TO CONSIDER:

1) KNOW YOUR ENEMIES

↳ BUT REALIZE AND INTERNALIZE THAT THESE ARE NOT MY ENEMIES, BUT ENEMIES OF GOD.

2) LEAVE VENGEANCE TO GOD

↳ IT IS NOT OUR ROLE TO ENACT JUDGEMENT OR PUNISHMENT. THAT IS FOR GOD ALONE.

3) IMPRECATE YOURSELF

↳ SEARCH YOURSELF FIRST. THE FAULTS AND TRANSGRESSIONS WE FIND IN OTHERS MIGHT ALSO LIVE WITHIN US.

REVENGE IS NOT MINE, BUT THINE.

■ BEWARE OF THOSE WHO CLAIM TO SPEAK OF GOD OR FOR GOD.

↳ "GOD THINKS..."

↳ "GOD WILL..."

↳ "GOD ALWAYS..."

"THE MORE GODLY YOU BECOME,
THE LESS GODLY YOU WILL FEEL."
- TIM KEEFER

HUMILITY

■ THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS... "A SIMPLER TIME".

THE BIBLE is...

- ... THE HISTORY OF HUMANITY.
- ... THE PSYCHOLOGY OF HUMAN NATURE.
- ... THE PHILOSOPHY OF HUMAN CURIOSITY.
- ... THE POETRY OF THE HUMAN SOUL.
- ... THE TRAGEDY OF HUMAN FAILURE.
- ... THE WISDOM OF HUMAN UNDERSTANDING.
- ... THE DIARY OF HUMAN YEARNING.
- ... THE CHRONICLE OF HUMAN DEMISE.
- ... THE PROPHECY OF HUMAN DESTINY.



- IF THE BIBLE IS NOT TRASTING YOU INTO KNOTS, YOU'RE NOT READING IT RIGHT.
- SUFFERING THROUGH THE PROBLEM IS THE GIFT, NOT THE ANSWER.
- EVEN Ha Satan WAS BLAMELESS, ... IN THE BEGINNING.

LOVE
NOT...

