

A Book Review  
by L. Walker

Let me tell you about an exciting book. I hope my enthusiasm will permit me to describe it properly. It's pretty amazing really. This book is quite old; the first author began working on it approximately 3,500 years ago. First author, you say? Yes, actually, the book has over 40 authors who contributed to it, writing the 66 different "books," as it were, over a time span of about 1,500 years. It may sound odd, but what they created was in essence a grand tapestry, a patchwork quilt of history – both good times and hard – poetry, adventure, chivalry, prophesy, allegory, instruction, and apocalypse; all with a single, incomparable golden thread interwoven through each piece, uniting them all with one message and purpose. Sounds remarkable, doesn't it? But incredibly there's more.

On top of all that, this book is a work of complete non-fiction; every fact – places, people, events, geography, &c – it records is true and real, and most have been objectively verified. Some of the book is quite artistic in nature, and if it were not true, would border on the genre of high fantasy; but the historical and factual depictions are accepted as completely authentic. There are items, people, and events in this book that weren't corroborated or verified until thousands of years after the actual fact itself [1]. Real archaeological and other scientific rigor – hard science – has been critically applied to the claims and the records of this book. And, surprisingly, if you doubt the veracity of this book, the evidence is readily accessible for one's own inquiry.

Now, as if that weren't enough, there are more amazing facts about this book. As I said, it is an ancient document composed over hundreds of years: logical questions obviously arise. However, concerning textual criticism, which is the examination of writings and their authenticity, accuracy, and purity, this text is by far the most substantiated and accurately preserved ancient document in existence. Entire careers have been spent studying this matter; let me give you one small example. It was found that in one of the most famous portions of text, of the 166 words used, after roughly one thousand years of manual copying, only three letters were found to be in question; none of which affected the meaning of the text [2]! There exists thousands upon thousands of accurate and corroborated source documents for this book: no other writing even remotely compares in authenticity. This book is, for all practical purposes, as identical as the day each portion was penned. It is really phenomenal!

"Ok," you say, "that's all nice, but what's the point of this book?" And right you are to ask. We've touched on the facts surrounding the book, but I mentioned earlier that it has one message and purpose, which is seen and traced throughout. By the way, this is truly the most incredible element, a document of this nature and construction putting forth a specific and unified theme throughout, not something vague or nebulous. You may have already surmised the book I'm describing: the Holy Bible. Its theme, from cover to cover, is God creating, redeeming, and gathering a people for himself – God's people – and the culmination of that redemptive story is the finished work of Jesus the Christ.

The Bible reveals the nature of the Triune God as a God of love who has called man, not only into existence, but into a fellowship of love with himself. It tells us how man fell into sin, bringing sickness and death to all mankind; indeed, the whole earth fell under a curse. God in his

grace set into motion a predetermined plan of redemption. God never abandoned his creation, but covenanted from the very beginning “to be your [our] God and the God of your [our] descendants after you.” He is working out everything according to his perfect plan. Page after page in scripture, we get to see this plan of redemption unfolding, climaxing in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ Jesus. Through his Son, God has secured this redemption for his people. Hallelujah! “For all the promises of God find their ‘Yes’ in him [Christ].”

One of the final revelations to the Apostle John recorded for us in the Bible is the great and breathtaking end of this present evil age in which we now live, and the glorious new heaven and new earth awaiting God’s people, the bride of Christ. We are allowed a glimpse of what awaits those whom God has redeemed. At the end of this remarkable story, the obvious question is, “Are you one of God’s chosen people?” Or as the Bible itself puts it, “But nothing unclean will ever enter it [heaven]... but only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”

Allow me close with this. On rare occasions one comes across something in this life that is unique, authentic, breathtaking, inspiring, singularly a true gem, and this – the Holy Bible – is one of those items. We have here something, a text, that is “other worldly,” as my pastor likes to say; and it is available to “whosoever will” read it. We are so surrounded by the artificial and hypocritical and unknowns and unknowables; we dare not overlook this beautiful gift provided to us, courtesy of God himself. Recommended reading.

The prophet Isaiah wrote in his 25th chapter:

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples  
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine,  
of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.  
And he will swallow up on this mountain  
the covering that is cast over all peoples,  
the veil that is spread over all nations.  
He will swallow up death forever;  
and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces,  
and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth,  
for the LORD has spoken.  
It will be said on that day,  
“Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us.  
This is the LORD; we have waited for him;  
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

Soli Deo Gloria!

Notes:

[1] 1947 – 1956 discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls; 1961 discovery of the Pilate Stone.

[2] Geisler and Nix, A General Introduction to the Bible, Chicago, Moody Press, 1968

[3] Apologies if I unintentionally used your words without full edit or credit. Please consider it a high complement with much gratitude.