

THE HISTORY OF THE BIBLE

The history of a piece of literature often tells much about the literature itself. So it is with the Bible. It has a history more remarkable than that of any other piece of literature. Study below some of the obstacles it has surmounted in the course of its history:

A. The Destruction of Original Copies:

1. What happened to the very first part of the Bible that was written? Exodus 32:15-19

2. How was this copy replaced? Exodus 34:1, 28

3. What two things did King Jehoiakim do with another part of the Bible? Jeremiah 36:23

4. What was Jeremiah told to do after this? Jeremiah 36:27, 28, 32

B. The Neglect of Friends:

1. At one time in the history of God's chosen nation, what caused great excitement on the part of the king and his officers? II Chronicles 34:14-22, 292-30

2. What does this prove concerning their knowledge of the book before this time?
(THINK!)

3. Of all those who own copies of God's Word today, how many do you think really know what messages it contains?

C. The Hatred of Enemies:

1. In A.D. 303, the Roman Emperor Diocletian destroyed almost every copy of the Bible in existence. Yet only a few years later, in 325, Constantine made the Bible the most honored book in the Roman Empire!
2. In A.D. 1526, the Bishop of London condemned Tyndale's translation of the Bible into English, and bought all the copies he could find to burn at St. Paul's cross. But the money he paid only helped Tyndale, and soon there were many better copies to take the place of those he had burned.

D. The Denial of Scoffers:

In the eighteenth century Voltaire of Paris used his printing press to attack the Christian Church. He predicted that within fifty years, the church would be extinct, and the only copies of the Bible would be those which were preserved in museums. Before long, Voltaire died a horrible, hopeless death. Then his house in Ferney became the first depot of the Genevan Bible Society, and his press was used for printing copies of the

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Bible. How wrong he was is shown by the fact that today, about thirty million copies of the Bible are printed each year!

E. The Teachings of False Systems:

False systems have often given forth teachings that were contrary to the Bible, deliberate misinterpretations of the Bible, or just a part of the Bible truth. But false systems can never *change* the truth, as God has given it in the Bible.

F. The Barriers of Language:

The Bible, originally a Jewish book, is found today in nearly 1200 languages:

210 languages have the whole Bible.

270 have a complete New Testament.

629 have at least one complete book of the Bible.

80 others have short passages, but no complete book of the Bible.

QUESTIONS FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT:

1. Whose power has enabled the Bible to surmount all these obstacles?

2. What should I expect such a great book to accomplish in my own life?
