

When I opened the Bible for the first time, I didn't know anything about it. Some decades later, I'm still reading it. This book (or, rather, its Author) knows all about me!

I started reading the Bible as a teenager and have never left it aside since: sometimes reading it with passion, cover to cover, even twice in six months; other times at a very slow pace, focusing on specific books, such as the Gospels, describing the life of Jesus. Back and forth, wrestling with the prophetic books of Daniel and Revelation or comparing my views with those of Paul, the famous apostle.

Why did I read it?

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all

creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.'
(Hebrews 4:12, 13)

Why would one be interested in reading the Bible?

The short answer: because it's an amazing piece of literature.

The Bible has been coined 'the book of books'. Beyond the metaphor itself, that's actually a first fact about it, as its title really means 'the books' (from Greek, *Biblia*). The Bible is indeed a library, a rich collection of no fewer than 66 books of different sizes.

Let's look at 10 quick points of reference, 10 anchors showing the Bible's multifaceted value and worldwide influence, thus trying to answer the why.

1. Either as a whole or in part, it is the sacred literature for two of the world's major religions, Judaism and Christianity.

2. Currently one third of the world's population believe it to be the inspired Word of God.

3. It is a worldwide best-seller, having been printed in billions of copies, in more than 2,800 languages and dialects (not to mention the many websites and apps for the electronic versions).

4. It is the only book that describes, from eyewitnesses, the life of Jesus of Nazareth, whose birth still divides our timeline into 'before Christ' and after ('Anno Domini', the year of our Lord).

5. Over the centuries, different religious or political authorities have prohibited its reading; some regimes have even used it to justify their own deeds, when aiming to exterminate their opponents.

6. The Bible has changed many lives, transforming people from debased sinners to altruistic saints, from cannibals to missionaries.

7. It has influenced numerous artists and men of science; it has inspired or become the basis of legislation, cultures, civilisations.

8. Its prophecies, proclaiming then-future events, have been confirmed by history, clearly evidenced in handbooks and encyclopaedias.

9. Facts, people, and events described in its pages have been backed up by many archaeological discoveries – artefacts and manuscripts – being displayed in the world's most famous museums.

10. The Bible answers existential questions and offers a unique view about the creation of the world, the current state of things, and the world's future destiny.

A volume dedicated to the Bible's main teachings starts as follows:

'No book has been so loved, so hated, so revered, so damned, as the Bible. People have died for the Bible. Others have killed for it. It has inspired man's greatest, noblest acts and been blamed for his most damnable and degenerate. Wars have raged over the Bible, revolutions have been nurtured in its pages, and kingdoms crumbled through its ideas. People of all viewpoints – from liberation theologians to capitalists, from fascists to Marxists, from dictators to liberators, from pacifists to militarists – search its pages for words with which to justify their deeds.'

Speaking for itself

People read the Bible to learn more, and yet, by reading it, they experience much more: spiritual growth, satisfaction, encouragement, hope.

Some may refer to a text saying: 'You have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise . . .' (2 Timothy 3:15). And the next verse expands on it: 'All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness.'

And what if you're not a believer? No worries: not all who started reading it were believers. Some never became one. Some have experienced a hard time reading it, maybe even misunderstanding its teachings. Accordingly, they may have thrown it away.

We, indeed, hope that by reading the Bible you will get a different perspective on the world's most thorny issues: suffering, death, the future, origins, and hope for a better life. We believe the Bible to be *The Message of Truth* – and if this is indeed the truth (even in a world of many truths), we'll simply let it speak for itself. It shall reveal itself to you.

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10 REASONS TO READ
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