

Someone asked me, 'Isn't the Bible just an ancient book without relevance for today?' 'Not at all,' was my reply. 'The Bible is an old book, but it is timeless in its messages and is relevant for every generation.'

For instance, while time has marched on, fashions have evolved, and cultures differ from previous ages, the underlying human nature and needs remain the same. We still have a need for love, significance, assurance, safety, and hope for the future. There remain some fundamental questions about life that never seem to vary much from generation to generation. These include:

- Why is there so much suffering in the world? Is there more to life than this? What is the purpose of my life? What has gone wrong with the world? How can the world be fixed? Where am I heading? What does the Bible have to say about these thorny issues?

The Bible can answer all these questions, and more besides. This is one of the reasons why this ancient book can speak to the needs of a modern twenty-first century person like you and me, and why the Bible is relevant and can be trusted as well.

A brief sample of other reasons includes the fact that the Bible was given to us by a loving and caring God, evidenced by fulfilled prophecies, encouraging messages, words of comfort in times of need, changed lives, and riveting stories. In the pages of the Bible, we read about Earth's origins, and how people and all life came into existence – at the hands of a loving God. And we also read about what has gone wrong with the world, *why* it's gone wrong, and God's plan to fix it. So why doesn't He do so now?

God's goodness is not always evident in the suffering around us, and someone

might ask, 'If God is good, why is there so much suffering in the world?' The Bible contains the answer to that question and paints a picture of what is termed *the Great Controversy between good and evil*. It explains why God's good and faultless creation now experiences upheavals and turbulence.

The Bible does not pull any punches. It does not try to give a rosy picture when evidently things have gone wrong. Yes, there is pain and suffering, but there is also hope and joy. Psalm 30:5 speaks to this when it says,

*'Weeping may endure for a night,  
But joy comes in the morning.'*

We live in a damaged world, and the Bible sheds light on why that is, while also offering hope for the future. These are spiritual issues, affecting all of us. The Bible lifts the veil on spiritual things and addresses such concerns with messages of hope and of restoration.

*'I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.'*  
(Romans 8:18)

While the Bible is not a history book, historical sources affirm the Bible's accuracy. One example refers to the life of Jesus. Evidence outside the Bible about Jesus includes Roman historians such as Tacitus and Suetonius, or the Jewish historian Josephus. They wrote about Jesus and the early Christian Church. Their evidence is made all the more credible because they were not Christians themselves, and even opposed Christianity. The life of Jesus Christ is still a point of reference for marking historical time (BC/AD).

In addition, the Bible contains stories from the past that are not recorded in any other historical source. One such example is the Hittites, a recent archaeological discovery. The Hittites

are mentioned forty-six times in the Bible, yet until recently no historical record mentioned them, so they were otherwise relegated to the realm of legend. Looking at the significant catalogue of archaeological finds, we can say with confidence that archaeology supports and does not contradict the biblical record.

The Bible also contains a number of messages to offer comfort in various times of need. A sample of these includes:

- **Psalm 23:4:** ‘Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.’
- **John 3:16:** ‘For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.’

The story of Jesus tells us of a God Who loves us so much that He will go to any extent to redeem us. The Bible says that Jesus is the only way to God (John 14:6). C.S. Lewis wrote,

*‘I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen – not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.’* (The Weight of Glory, pp. 91-92).

Jesus is the means by which we see the world for what it really is. We see suffering in this volatile, uncertain, confusing, and ambiguous world. But we also see hope and healing, and reading the Bible can strengthen us in our challenges, comfort us in our perplexity, and teach us in times of puzzlement. The Bible is the best-selling book in history, and there are countless testimonies as to how reading it has changed people’s lives for the better. It is unique, containing a divine impression upon its pages.

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