

1-2019

## **Question 99 - What supernatural elements may be seen regarding the universal influence of the Bible?**

Harold Willmington  
*Liberty University*, [hwillmington@liberty.edu](mailto:hwillmington@liberty.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/questions\\_101](https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/questions_101)



Part of the [Biblical Studies Commons](#), [Christianity Commons](#), and the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

---

### **Recommended Citation**

Willmington, Harold, "Question 99 - What supernatural elements may be seen regarding the universal influence of the Bible?" (2019). *101 Most Asked Questions*. 72.  
[https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/questions\\_101/72](https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/questions_101/72)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the 101 Most Asked Questions About the Bible at Scholars Crossing. It has been accepted for inclusion in 101 Most Asked Questions by an authorized administrator of Scholars Crossing. For more information, please contact [scholarlycommunications@liberty.edu](mailto:scholarlycommunications@liberty.edu).

## 101 MOST ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BIBLE

### 99. What supernatural elements may be seen regarding the universal influence of the Bible?

#### A. Its emphasis upon civilization

Western civilization is founded directly upon the Bible and its teachings – Its very manner of life had its origin in Acts 16:9, when Paul, obedient to his heavenly vision, directed his second missionary journey toward Europe instead of Asia and the East.

The world's calendar and most of its holidays stem from the Bible. It was the Bible that elevated the blood-drinking savages of the British Isles to decency.

Consider the following areas, all of which have been profoundly influenced by the Bible.

#### 1. Literature

In his remarkable book, *What If The Bible Had Never Been Written?*, Dr. D. James Kennedy lists the following well-known writers and authors whose works were influenced by the Bible:

- a. Dante Alighieri (1265–1321). *The Divine Comedy*
- b. William Shakespeare (1564-1616). *Romeo & Juliet; Hamlet; Othello; Macbeth; The Merchant of Venice.*
- c. John Milton (1608-1674). *Paradise Lost.*
- d. John Bunyan (1628-1688). *Pilgrim's Progress.*
- e. Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-1881). *Crime & Punishment.*
- f. Miguel DeCervantes (1547-1616). *Don Quixote.*
- g. John Donne (1572-1631). *Death Be Not Proud.*
- h. Jonathan Swift (1667-1745). *Gulliver's Travels.*
- i. Charles Dickens (1812-1870). *A Christmas Carol; Oliver Twist; David Copperfield; A Tale of Two Cities.*
- j. C. S. Lewis (1898-1963). *Mere Christianity; Miracles; The Problem of Pain; The Chronicles of Narnia; The Screwtape Letters.*

#### 2. Art – Over 52 world-famous paintings depicting well-known scenes in the Old Testament, along with over 65 in the New Testament are preserved today. These paintings can be found in every important museum on earth. They have been done by the greatest and most talented artists of all time. These would include Leonardo da Vinci, Rembrandt, Raphael, Michelangelo, and others.

#### 3. Music – The Bible has produced more inspiring music than all other combined books in the world.

- Bach – History has concluded that Johann Sebastian Bach “anticipated every important [musical] idea that has been born since his day. He is the inspiration of the pianist, the organist, and the composer.” Bach was a zealous Lutheran who devoted most of his genius to church-centered music.
- Mendelssohn – *St. Paul, Elijah*
- Brahms – *Requiem*
- Beethoven – *Mount of Olives, Samson and Delilah*
- Handel – *Messiah* (he quotes from 15 books of the Bible)
- Haydn – *The Creation*

#### 4. Treatment of Children –

In the ancient world, child sacrifice was a common phenomenon. Archaeologists have unearthed ancient cemeteries, near pagan temples, of babies that had been sacrificed – for example, in what used to be Carthage. Before the Jewish conquest of the promised land, child sacrifice among the Cananites was commonplace. The prophets of the ancient god Baal and his wife, Ashtoreth, commonly practiced child sacrifice as part of their worship.

That’s because life was cheap all over, in the Near East, in the Middle East, in the Far East.

It was a dangerous thing for a baby to be conceived in classical Rome or Greece, just as it is becoming dangerous once more under the influence of the modern pagan. In those days abortion was rampant. Abandonment was commonplace. It was common for infirm babies or unwanted little ones to be taken out into the forest or the mountainside, to be consumed by wild animals or to starve or to be picked up by rather strange people who crept around at night, who then would use them for whatever perverted purposes they had in mind. Parents abandoned virtually all deformed babies. Many parents abandoned babies if they were poor. They often abandoned female babies because women were considered inferior.

To make matters worse, those children who outlived infancy – approximately two-thirds of those born – were the property of their father; he could kill them at his whim. Only about half of the children born lived beyond the age of eight, in part because of widespread infanticide, with famine and illness also being factors. Infanticide was not only legal; it was applauded. Killing a Roman was murder, but it was commonly held in Rome that killing one’s own children, could be an act of beauty. Furthermore, the father exercised an absolute tyranny over his children. He could kill them; he could sell them as slaves; he could marry them off; he could divorce them; he could confiscate their property.

*(What If Jesus Had Not Been Born? D. James Kennedy. Thomas Nelson Publishers. Nashville. 1994. pp. 10-11)*

How utterly different from the above cruel pagan practices are the admonitions of the Bible regarding children. Consider:

*“And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up” (Deut. 6:6-7).*

*“Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward” (Psa. 127:3).*

*“Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence” (Mt. 19:13-15).*

*“And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Eph. 6:4).*

*“That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children” (Titus 2:4).*

Prior to Christian influence, a woman's life was also very cheap. In ancient cultures, the wife was the property of her husband. In India, China, Rome, and Greece, people felt and declared that women were not able or competent to be independent (although in Rome, particularly in the third century, some women of the upper class were asserting their independence). Aristotle said that a woman was somewhere between a free man and a slave. When we understand how valueless a slave was in ancient times, we get a glimpse of how bad a woman's fate was back then. Plato taught that if a man lived a cowardly life, he would be reincarnated as a woman. If she lived a cowardly life, she would be reincarnated as a bird.

In ancient Rome we find that a woman's lot was not much better – for those who survived infancy. Little girls were abandoned in far greater numbers than boys.

The killing of baby girls simply because of their sex was not just a practice of the ancient world. When missionaries or European explorers came into contact with foreign lands that had not been affected by the gospel, they found similar appalling practices – with baby girls, in particular, being the targets. For example, two Norwegian women missionaries in the late-nineteenth century – Sofie Reuter and Anna Jakobsen – found infanticide of little girls a common practice in China. (ibid, pp. 14-15)

Again, note the contrast regarding the biblical attitude towards women.

*"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself" (Eph. 5:25, 28).*

5. In regards to slavery

The Christian statesman William Wilberforce, urged on by his friend William Pitt (Prime Minister of England), began a holy crusade against slavery which would last nearly 60 years. Finally, in 1825, just a few days before his death he received the glorious news that the House of Commons had passed a bill freeing all the slaves in the British Empire.

6. In regards to the elderly

It has often been said that the Chinese and Japanese worship their elders, but only after exposure to Christianity were homes built for them. Throughout history, many tribes and peoples killed off their elderly, much as they have killed off their unwanted babies. The Eskimos used to kill their elderly by setting them adrift in ice floes floating out to sea. Whatever the method, the pattern is the same. Prior to Christ, the value of the elderly was determined by the particular custom of each tribe. With Christ, all human life has value, including that of the elderly.

Of course, it should be pointed out that the care of the elderly wasn't always as much of an issue as it is in modern times. Even as recently as 1892, only one in 100 people worldwide lived to be over the age of 65. Only through modern medicine are people living as long as they do today. So this wasn't as much of an issue in past times as, say, child killing.

As we move away from God and His principles in this country, we are reverting to a more pagan view of life. We see the move afoot to kill off the elderly – whether it's called mercy killing or euthanasia. Some today are advocating that those elderly persons who lack a certain "quality of life" should die and get out of the way for the younger population. (ibid, pp. 17-18)

But what are the scripture's statements on the elderly?

*"O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works" (Psa. 71:17).*

*"And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you" (Isa. 46:4).*

7. In regards to Law

The Bible has produced the law of the Western world – Early attempts of governing forms such as the English common law, the Bill of Rights, the

Magna Carta, and our own Constitution are all rooted in God's gift to Moses on Mount Sinai, the Ten Commandments.

One final quote from D. James Kennedy as he aptly summarizes the incredible influence God's Word has had upon civilization:

- Hospitals, which essentially began during the Middle Ages.
- Universities, which also began during the Middle Ages. In addition, most of the world's greatest universities were started by Christians for Christian purposes.
- Literacy and education for the masses.
- Capitalism and free enterprise.
- Representative government, particularly as it has been seen in the American experiment.
- The separation of political powers.
- Civil liberties.
- The abolition of slavery, both in antiquity and in more modern times.
- Modern science.
- The discovery of the New World by Columbus.
- The elevation of women.
- Benevolence and charity; the good Samaritan ethic.
- Higher standards of justice.
- The elevation of the common man.
- The condemnation of adultery, homosexuality, and other sexual perversions. This has helped to preserve the human race, and it has spared many from heartache.
- High regard for human life.
- The civilizing of many barbarian and primitive cultures.
- The codifying and setting to writing of many of the world's languages.
- Greater development of art and music. The inspiration for the greatest works of art.
- The countless changed lives transformed from liabilities into assets to society because of the gospel.
- The eternal salvation of countless souls. (ibid, pp. 3-4)

B. Its influence upon America

1. The Bible led to the discovery of our country. According to a written statement from his own pen, Columbus testified it was certain texts in Isaiah that prompted his fateful trip in 1492. He later wrote, "In the Name of the most Holy Trinity who inspired me with the idea and afterwards made it perfectly clear to me that I could go to the Indies from Spain by traversing the ocean westwardly."

2. It was Bible lovers desiring to read this blessed Book in personal freedom who populated our shores – There were the Puritans in England, the Huguenots in France, the Dunkers in Germany, and the Anabaptists from all over Europe who came here. The Pilgrims came to Plymouth in 1620 because of the Bible.
3. The charter of every colony includes Bible language.
  - a. Salem, Massachusetts – “We covenant with the Lord . . . to walk together in all His ways . . . as He has revealed . . . in His blessed word of truth.”
  - b. Rhode Island -- “We submit . . . to the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.”
  - c. Delaware – “For the further propagation of the Holy Gospel.”
  - d. Maryland – “A pious zeal for extending the Christian religion.”
  - e. Massachusetts – “To the knowledge and obedience of the only true God and the Saviour of mankind.”
  - f. Connecticut – “To preserve the liberty and purity of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As one considers the almost desperate (and often vicious) attacks on God from all American educational and political systems, he is forced to this painful conclusion: The actual establishment of the original 13 colonies would have been strictly prohibited under existing laws today. Thus one atheist owes the very rights she enjoys today in the state of Maryland to those “narrow-minded Puritan bigots” whose love for God and freedom she so passionately hates. It is indeed a strange world.

4. Less than one percent of the total adult population in 1776 were not members of a Protestant church.
5. The American Revolution was produced by the Bible – The Liberty Bell itself bears a scriptural injunction: “proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto the inhabitants thereof” (Lev. 25:10). Even today our most important capitol buildings and monuments display scriptural truths. These include: the Capitol building, the Supreme Court building, the White House, the Library of Congress, the Washington Monument, the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, the Lincoln Memorial, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the Union Station and others. Every single charter of the 50 United States includes the word *God* and other biblical phrases.
6. Our presidents are still sworn into their high office by placing their right hand on an ancient book, *the Bible*.
7. American education has its roots in the Bible – The New England Primer was a Bible primer. In 1642 Massachusetts law required schools to operate. The stated reason was: “It being one chief project of that old deluder Satan

to keep men from the knowledge of the Scriptures.” Of the ten first colleges in America, nine were founded by churches, and the tenth by evangelist George Whitefield. Ninety-five percent of the colleges and universities in America today were founded by Christian bodies. In 1780 Robert Raikes in England initiated the Sunday school movement, which led to the establishment of the American public school system.

8. Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address was inspired by John Wycliffe’s introduction to the New Testament when he wrote, “The Bible is for the government of the people, by the people, and for the people.”
8. Julia Ward Howe’s great Civil War song “The Battle Hymn of the Republic” was taken from the pages of the Bible. Other patriotic songs are likewise grounded in biblical terms, such as “The Star-Spangled Banner” by Frances Scott Key; “America the Beautiful” by Katherine Lee Bates, and others.
9. American altruism (humanitarianism) has been originated by those people who have loved the message of the Bible – This would include:
  - a. Reforms in penal systems
  - b. Reforms in child labor injustices
  - c. Reforms in mental institutions
  - d. Creation of mercy organizations such as the Salvation Army, YMCA, YWCA, crippled children’s associations, homes for the aged, orphanages, rescue missions, etc. Since our beginning as a nation, we have donated a total of over \$50 billion to practically every nation in the world for the purposes of good will, and in many cases to stave off mass starvation.
  - e. The modern nursing system is taken from Luke 10:30-37, the parable of the Good Samaritan.