

The Seven Wonders of the Bible - Part 7

Cultural Consistency

Sermon Notes

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Introduction: Outside the United Nations Building in New York stands an enormous bronze figure, 13 feet tall atop his pedestal.

UN - “This action symbolizes man’s desire to put an end to war and transform tools of destruction into tools to benefit mankind.”

Beneath the sculpture are these words engraved on a marble stone. “We Shall Beat Our Swords Into Plowshares,” taken straight out of the Book of Isaiah.

Isaiah 2:4 “They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore.”

How has the Bible influenced the culture and life of people worldwide and through the ages? Is Bible culturally consistent?

George Washington, the first president and the father of this great nation said, "It would be impossible to govern rightly without God and the Bible.”

1. World Religions

a. The Hindu Vedas

The *Bhavishya Purana* is one of the eighteen major Hindu Puranas that details the history of the Hindu deities. The title *Bhavishya Purana* is translated as “The History of the Future”.

In chapters 3-5 of the Pratisarga Parva of the Bhavisya Purana, Srila Suta Gosvami recounts events that are partly described in the Old Testament of the Bible. We find the

stories of Adam and Eve (Adhama and Havyavati), Noah (Nyuha), Moses (Musa), even Jesus in these writings.

Adama & Havyavati - “In the eastern side of Pradan city where there is a a big God-given forest, which is 16 square yojanas in size. The man named Adama was staying there under a Papa-Vriksha or a sinful tree and was eager to see his wife Havyavati. The Kali purusha quickly came there assuming the form of a serpent. He cheated them and they disobeyed Lord Vishnu. The husband ate the forbidden fruit of the sinful tree. They lived by eating air with the leaves called udumbara.”

Enoch - “His son Hamuka was devoted to Lord Vishnu, and offering oblations of fruits he achieved salvation. He ruled 365 years and went to heaven with the same body being engaged in mleccha-dharma.”

Noah - “Once the Lord appeared in his dream and said: “My dear Nyuha, please listen, there will be devastation on the seventh-day. Therefore, you have to be very quick that you make a big boat and ride in it. Then he made a strong boat which was 300 feet long, 50 feet wide and 30 feet high.”

(In the Bible the Ark is described as, "Its length was 300 cubits, its width was 50 cubits, it had three stories and its height was 30 cubits.")

“It was beautiful and all the living entities could take shelter in it. Lord Indra called the devastating cloud named Sambartaka and poured heavy rain continuously for 40 days.”

Jesus: The text continues with Salivahana asking Jesus, “Who are you?” to which Jesus replies:

isa-putram mam viddhi
kumari-garbha sambhavam

“I am the Son of God (isa-putra) and I am born of a virgin (kumari-garbha).”

b. The Quran

Surah Al-Baqarah; 2:87 “Indeed, We gave Moses the Book and sent after him successive messengers. And We gave Jesus, son of Mary, clear proofs and supported him with the holy spirit.”

Surah Ali-Imran; 3:45 “Remember when the angels proclaimed, “O Mary! Allah gives you good news of a Word from Him, his name will be the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary; honoured in this world and the Hereafter, and he will be one of those nearest to Allah.”

Surah Az-Zukhruf; 43:61 And his second coming is truly a sign for the Hour. So have no doubt about it, and follow me. This is the Straight Path.

2. Education: Proverbs 9:10 “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.”

Deuteronomy 6:10 And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

The New England Primer (Elementary Textbook) was the first reading primer designed for the American colonies. It became the most successful educational textbook

published in 17th-century colonial United States and it became the foundation of most schooling before the 1790s.

The children in New America learned their Alphabets with bible names and characters. A for Adam, B for Book, P for Peter and Z for Zaccheus.

Prayer:

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray thee, Lord, my soul to take.

The so called prestigious schools/universities now called the “Ivy League”—Harvard, Yale, the University of Pennsylvania, Princeton, Columbia, Brown, Dartmouth, and Cornell—once had deep links to Christianity. The Ivies began and long persisted as distinctively Christian training grounds for America’s leaders—first for clergy and then for leaders of all types.

Princeton's Logo: A shield depicts an open Bible inscribed with VET (Old) NOV (New) TESTAMENTUM, to signify the Old and New Testaments. An optional ribbon below the shield bears the University motto, DEI SUB NUMINE VIGET, or "Under God's power she flourishes."

Harvard's Logo: The Harvard Gazette - Harvard adopted the Latin “Veritas Christo et Ecclesiae” motto in 1692, which means “Truth for the Church and Christ.” *Veritas* meant more than truth, it meant “fulfillment,” the truth of a second coming.

The three open books represent the Old and New Testaments — the truth that any could read in the Bible. But the third book represented the yet unwritten truth of the future as the Puritans saw it: the book of truth that would be written by a second coming of Christ.

Yale's Logo: Yale Alumni Magazine - The two Hebrew words (*Urim & Thummim*) at the center of the official Yale seal appear eight times in the Hebrew Bible. Jewish sources considered them oracular gems worn by the high priest Aaron. And their presence in Leviticus 8:8—the middle verse of the Pentateuch—suggests that they identify the book on the Yale seal as the Bible itself. Yale inscribed the familiar, *Lux et Veritas*—“Light and Truth.”

Isaac Newton once remarked “What we know is a drop, what we don't know is an ocean.”

D.L. Moody once said, “If a man is stealing nuts and bolts from a railway track, and, in order to change him, you send him to college, at the end of his education, he will steal the whole railway track.”

3. Beliefs and Practices - A culture is best understood by its beliefs and practices, through traditions that are passed on from one generation to another. What are some of the best practices that the Bible has given to the world.

Most American founders regarded the Bible as a great handbook for nurturing morality and ethics; and even many who doubted the Bible’s divine origins appealed to Scripture. To be sure, the founders drew on and synthesized diverse intellectual

traditions. Among them were British constitutionalism, Enlightenment liberalism, and classical and civic republicanism.

But the Bible was the most accessible, authoritative, and venerated text in 18th Century America. It was, by far, the most cited work in the political discourse of the age.

The Bible's influences on the Constitution were manifested in several ways: Scholars have remarked, for example, that a biblical understanding of original sin and humankind's radical depravity (Genesis 3) inspired the framers to design a constitutional system that would guard against the concentration or abuse of government powers vested in fallen human actors. In the words of Federalist 37, "the infirmities and depravities of the human character."

Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."

Where do we go from here? What can we do? What is God expecting us to do in such a time that we are living today.

1. Defend your faith - I Peter 3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.

John 17:17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

2. Depart from Evil/Sin - Psalm 119:11 – Your word have I treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You.

Thomas Jefferson once said “...the studious perusal of the sacred volume will make better homes, better citizens, better fathers and better husbands.”

3. Direct people to God’s Word - Matthew 4:4 But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.’ ”

4. Devote time to read the Word of God - Joshua 1:9 This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

5. Determine to live by the Word of God -

Psalms 19:7 The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul;

The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;

8 The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;

The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes;

9 The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever;

The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

10 More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

11 Moreover by them Your servant is warned, And in keeping them there is great reward.