



Cross Points

Holy Bible: Is it really?

By Rick Willis

Now-a-days there are so many Bible versions you can't keep up with them. There's the traditional King James Bible, the New American Standard Bible, the New International Version Bible, the English Standard Bible, the New Living Translation Bible; and then all those "specialty" Bibles, such as the Biker's Bible, and the Cowboy Bible, and the Military Bible, and so many more. I mean really, there's a lot more. All of them claim to be a "version" of what was written by the original authors in the original language. And as such, they all claim to be the Holy Bible (minus the footnotes)!

Pick the one that works best for you (although I'd recommend a true translation, not a paraphrase). Here's my question: Why do we call it the "Holy" Bible? Is it truly holy? Consider...

I once heard a person I worked with, a critic of the Bible, say it should be rated X for all the violence and sexual content in it. I'm not sure about X rating, but I must admit that his basic statement is true, there is a lot of violence and sex in the Bible. You might remember the story of Lot's daughters getting him drunk to have relations with them; of Abraham saying his wife Sarah was his sister to protect himself, with Pharaoh taking her into his harem; or the rape of a Levite's concubine in Judges 19 (the concept of concubines is another story); or how David invites Bathsheba to commit adultery with him, then plots to have her husband killed. There's plenty of fighting and killing as Israel battles neighboring nations.

Does that all make the Bible unholy? No, what it makes the Bible is truthful. It is this very fact, that God chooses to expose the sins of his heroes, which make us see that this book was not connived to fool anyone. It simply tells us the true story, with all the warts and scars that the characters possess. If you were making up such a story, you'd hide these things, or gloss over them. The Bible doesn't.

The Bible is not the kind of book we often try to make it. We want rules, we want doctrinal points, we want a syllabus for living. All those things are within the Bible, but not as a black and white listing of do's and don'ts. Instead we find a story, or a series of stories, and they tell of this world's history and God's dealing with humans. Within the story we find things God wants us to believe, to acknowledge, to place our faith in, to follow, to obey; but **we** must engage *ourselves* **within** this story. Why? Because the story includes you and me! Until we become part of the story, it's just a book on our shelf.

Once we become engaged within the story, we start to understand the difficulties Abraham had, the sin that constantly tempts us all, the passions that drive mistakes. We understand how the Law of Moses didn't save people, it illustrated how far short of God's perfect way people actually fall. All of us, not just the Israelites. And we finally come to understand how God answers through Jesus, who provides the perfect sacrifice for all these sins, and who says we can enjoy the company of God if we wrap ourselves in him (Galatians 3:27). In him, **we** become perfect!

Wow, this story leads us back to God and his perfection! Now that's what I call a Holy Bible.

Cross Point: "For the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart." (Heb. 4:12)