

When was the first time that you lost yourself in a book? You had a hard time “putting a book down?” For me it was reading and illustrated copy of *Black Beauty*.

*Black Beauty* is an 1877 novel by English author Anna Sewell. It was composed in the last years of her life, during which she remained in her house as an invalid.<sup>[1]</sup> The novel became an immediate bestseller, with Sewell dying just five months after its publication, long enough to see her first and only novel become a success. With fifty million copies sold, *Black Beauty* is one of the best-selling books of all time.<sup>[2]</sup>

While forthrightly teaching animal welfare, it also teaches how to treat people with kindness, sympathy, and respect. *Black Beauty* became a forerunner to the pony book genre of children's literature.<sup>[3]</sup> In 2003, the novel was listed at number 58 on the UK survey The Big Read.<sup>[4]</sup>

### Characters in the Story:

- **Darkie/Black Beauty/Black Auster/Jack/Blackie/Old Crony**—The narrator of the story, a handsome black horse. He begins his career as a carriage horse for wealthy people but when he "breaks his knees" (i.e. develops scars on his knees after a bad fall) he is no longer considered presentable enough and is put to much harder work. He passes through the hands of a series of owners, some cruel, some kind. He always tries his best to serve humans despite the circumstance.
- **Duchess (nicknamed "Pet")**—Beauty's and Rob Roy's mother, who encourages Beauty to be good from a young age.
- **Rob Roy**—A fellow black horse from Beauty's original farm, who is killed in a hunting incident (along with his rider, Squire Gordon's only son). It is later learned that he was Beauty's half-brother, an older son of Duchess.
- **Ginger**—A companion of Beauty's at Birtwick Park, she is named for her chestnut colour and her habit of biting, which is often how the spice, ginger, is described. Ginger is a more aggressive horse due to her traumatic upbringing. After being ridden by Lord George in a steeplechase her back is strained. Beauty meets Ginger for the last time as broken-down cab horses in London, and later a cart with a dead horse (whom Beauty believes is Ginger), passes by Beauty.
- **Merrylegs**—A short, dappled grey, handsome pony who is polite to humans and horses alike. He is ridden by the young daughters at Bihari Park, then sent to live with a vicar who promises never to sell him.
- **Captain**—A former army horse who witnessed horrific incidents in the Crimean War, although he was well treated and received no serious wounds. He lost his beloved master in the Charge of the Light Brigade. He became a cab horse for Jerry, where he works with Black Beauty. After he is injured due to a collision with a drunk driver Jerry has him shot rather than send him to work as a cart horse.

### Plot introduction

The story is narrated in the first person as an autobiographical memoir told by the titular horse named Black Beauty—beginning with his carefree days as a colt on an English farm with his mother, to his difficult life pulling cabs in London, to his happy retirement in the country. Along the way, he meets with many hardships and recounts many tales of cruelty and kindness. Each short chapter recounts an incident in Black Beauty's life containing a lesson or moral typically related to the kindness, sympathy, and understanding treatment of horses, with Sewell's detailed observations and extensive descriptions of horse behaviour lending the novel a good deal of verisimilitude.<sup>[1]</sup>

The book describes conditions among London horse-drawn taxicab drivers, including the financial hardship caused to them by high licence fees and low, legally fixed fares. A page footnote in some editions says that soon after the book was published, the difference between 6-day taxicab licences (not allowed to trade on Sundays) and 7-day taxicab licences (allowed to trade on Sundays) was abolished and the taxicab licence fee was much reduced.

## Best Selling Children's Books:

1	Janette Sebring Lowrey	The Poky Little Puppy (Golden, 1942) 14,898,341
2	Beatrix Potter	The Tale of Peter Rabbit (Frederick Warne, 1902) 9,380,274
3	Gertrude Crampton	Tootle (Golden, 1945) 8,560,277
4	Dr. Seuss	Green Eggs and ham (Random House, 1960) 8,143,088
5	J.K. Rowling	Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire (Scholastic/Levine, 2000) 7,913,765
6	Dorothy Kunhardt	Pat the Bunny (Golden, 1940) 7,562,710
7	Kathryn & Byron Jackson	Saggy Baggy Elephant (Golden, 1947) 7,476,395
8	Gertrude Crampton	Scuffy the Tugboat (Golden, 1955) 7,366,073
9	Dr. Seuss	The Cat in the Hat (Random House, 1957) 7,220,982
10	J.K. Rowling	Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets. (Scholastic/Levine) 6,335,585

## The Bible is an Amazing Book!

- **66 books (39 OT / 27 NT)**
- **Written over a span of 1500 years (1450 BC – 100 AD)**
- **Written by over 40 different authors**
- **Written in three languages**
- **Containing one central, unifying theme!**

### THE OLD TESTAMENT

There are 39 books in the Old Testament, generally separated into 4 divisions:

The Pentateuch, traditionally designated as the 5 books of Moses. [**God's Plan to Redeem His Fallen Creatures**]

Historical Books, number 12, from Joshua to Esther. [**The Absence of a Perfect Leader**]

Poetical Books, number 5, from Job to Song of Solomon. [**The Cry for the Messiah**]

Prophetical Books, including the writings of the 5 Major Prophets, from Isaiah to Daniel, and the 12 Minor Prophets from Hosea to Malachi. [**The Promise of the Messiah**]

### THE NEW TESTAMENT

There are 27 books in the New Testament, generally separated into 4 divisions:

The Gospels [**The Arrival of the Messiah**]

Historical Books [**The Birth of the Church**]

Doctrinal Books [**The Growth of the Church**]

Prophetical Book [**The Return of the Christ**]

## The Importance of Gospel Doctrine.

### A. The Bible presents a clear mission. (Gen. 3:1-15; I Tim. 2:5-6)

1. MAN HAS A PROBLEM. (SEPARATION FROM GOD)
2. GOD HAS A SOLUTION! (SALVATION THROUGH HIS SON)

### MAN HAS A PROBLEM. (SEPARATION FROM GOD)

The Fall can be summarized in the following manner...

#### The Tempter: I KNOW BETTER THAN YOU!

- Satan is the author of Doubt (vs. 1)
- Satan is the author of Denial (vs. 4)
- Satan is the author of Delusion (vs. 5)

#### The Temptation: (vs. 6) YOU ARE MISSING OUT!

- The woman saw the tree was good for food – Lust of the Flesh
- And that it was a delight to the eyes – Lust of the Eyes
- And that the tree was to be desired to make one wise – Pride of Life
  - I John 2:15-16

#### The Test: Does God really have my best interest in mind?

- The prohibition given to Adam in 2:16-17. – Are all restrictions bad?
  - The communication to Eve in 3:3. – Neither shall you touch it, lest you die...
- The headship principle – 2:18 and 23.
  - The failure of Adam to speak up. (3:6)

#### The Truth of the Fall –

##### YOU WILL DIE.

- Physical death (19)
- Spiritual death (7-11)
  - Introduction of shame (eyes open...)
    - Hide from each other (7)
    - Hide from God (8-11)
  - Introduction of blame shifting
    - Man – woman
    - Woman – serpent

##### You will live under a curse:

- Serpent (14) – cursed above all livestock; placed on his belly; forced to eat dust
- Woman (16) – pain in childbearing; desire for her husband (to subvert his God-given authority)
- Man (17-19) – toil in labor due to a cursed ground which would require greater effort (you never feel like you have enough); return to dust (become the serpents' prey again)

### GOD HAS A SOLUTION! (SALVATION THROUGH HIS SON)

God still has your very best interest in mind. (Gen 3:15)

- You will always know the difference between right and wrong!

- **Enmity** – personal hostility between the serpent and the woman (Climaxing in God tossing Satan in Hell in Rev. 20:10)
  - **Between your offspring** – includes demons and anyone serving his kingdom of darkness, those whose “father is the devil (John 8:44); according to I John 3:12, Cain was categorized as a child of the devil.
  - **Between her offspring** – humanity at large; Jesus Christ in particular (Gal 4:4)
- **You will always have hope in the midst of suffering.**
    - **He shall bruise your head** – crush your head; Christ will deliver the fatal blow
    - **You shall bruise his heel** – strike at his heel; cause suffering; reference to the crucifixion
  - Grammatically, it is difficult to establish that the “seed” here refers specifically to a single individual. It is clearer that the overthrow of Satan and sin will come from the midst of the human race. The rest of the Bible fills in the details and leads us conclusively to the Lord Jesus Christ as the ultimate fulfillment. Eve’s comments at 4:1 and 25 show how her hope had fastened on God’s promise. The hope of Noah in Genesis 6:5-8 (THE REST).

### **The Gospel Story in Genesis 5:**

- Man (is) appointed mortal sorrow; (but) the Blessed God shall come down teaching (that) His death shall bring (the) despairing rest.
- The reality of Genesis 9:20-24: Noah was NOT the Messiah!

### **The answer is found in I Timothy 2:5-6:**

– God is at work to restore His fallen creatures THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.

**The goal at FBC is to point people toward GOSPEL DOCTRINE. It may sound harsh, difficult to bear, and out of touch with the world... but it will by GOD’S GRACE always be BIBLICAL. The solution to your current struggle is not more money, more friends, more self-esteem, more leadership, or more medication. The solution is embracing the hope that your root problem is SIN and the ultimate solution is found in the GOSPEL.**

## ***A HEALTHY CHURCH Builds on the Foundation of Gospel Doctrine.***

A. *The Bible presents a clear mission. (Gen. 3:1-15; I Tim. 2:5-6)*

– God is at work to restore His fallen creatures.

B. **The Bible presents a unified message. (Eph. 2:8-9)**

– **Restoration is only possible by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.**

### **Back to the Beginning**

In the 1500s a fastidious monk, who by his own testimony "hated God," was studying Paul's epistle to the Romans. He couldn't get past the first half of Romans 1:17: "[In the gospel] is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith" (KJV).

One simple, biblical truth changed that monk's life--and ignited the Protestant Reformation. It was the realization that God's righteousness could become the sinner's righteousness--and that could happen through the means of faith alone. Martin Luther found the truth in the same verse he had stumbled over, Romans 1:17: "Therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, *the just shall live by faith*" (KJV, emphasis added).

Luther had always seen "the righteousness of God" as an attribute of the sovereign Lord by which He judged sinners--not an attribute sinners could ever possess. He described the breakthrough that put an end to the theological dark ages:

I saw the connection between the justice of God and the statement that "the just shall live by his faith." Then I grasped that the justice of God is that righteousness by which through grace and sheer mercy God justifies us through faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise. The whole of Scripture took on a new meaning, and whereas before the "justice of God" had filled me with hate, now it became to me inexpressibly sweet in greater love. This passage of Paul became to me a gate to heaven.

Justification by faith was the great truth that dawned on Luther and dramatically altered the church. Because Christians are justified by faith alone, their standing before God is not in any way related to personal merit. Good works and practical holiness do not provide the grounds for acceptance with God. God receives as righteous those who believe, not because of any good thing He sees in them--not even because of His own sanctifying work in their lives--but solely on the basis of *Christ's* righteousness, which is reckoned to their account. "To the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness" (Romans 4:5). That is justification.

- **Grace** – undeserved favor of God. [THE CAUSE OF SALVATION] It is etymologically the same as “gratis” and “gratuitous;” it occurs in the business phrase, “three days of grace” given in connection with the payment of a bill; it signifies therefore a Divine manifestation to which man has no title. In other words, we do not deserve salvation. We can never deserve it. No works of ours could entitle us to it.
- **Have been saved** – perfect passive participle (“you were saved and you continue saved.”) [THE GUARANTEE OF SALVATION]
- **Faith** – trust, depend, rely on [THE MEANS OF SALVATION] (Rom 3:22, 25; Gal 2:16; I Peter 1:5)

- **That not of ourselves (Rom 3:20; Gal. 2:16) [THE MYSTERY OF SALVATION]**
- **“THIS” is a gift from God** – [BKC] Much debate has centered around the demonstrative pronoun “this” (*touto*). Though some think it refers back to “grace” and others to “faith,” [A.T. Roberts in his *Word Pictures in the NT* states, “Grace is God’s part, faith ours.”] neither of these suggestions is really valid because the demonstrative pronoun is neuter whereas “grace” and “faith” are feminine. Also, to refer back to either of these words specifically seems to be redundant. Rather the neuter *touto*, as is common, refers to the preceding phrase or clause. (In Eph 1:15 and 3:1 *touto*, “this,” refers back to the preceding section.) Thus it refers back to the concept of salvation (2:4-8a), whose basis is grace and means is faith. This salvation does not have its source in man (it is “not from yourselves”), but rather, its source is God’s grace for “it is the gift of God.”
- Verse 9 reinforces this by showing that the means is not by works since its basis is grace (Rom 3:20, 28; 4:1-5; 11:6; Gal 2:16; 2 Tim 1:9; Titus 3:5), and its means is faith (Rom 4:5). Therefore since no person can bring salvation to himself by his own efforts, no one can boast (cf. Rom 3:27; I Cor 1:29). Their boasting can only be in the Lord (I Cor 1:31). **[THE GLORY OF SALVATION]**

**– Restoration is only possible by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.**

- *Biblical theology promotes unity. (1 Jn. 1:1-4; 2 Jn. 10-11).*
- *Biblical theology informs authentic worship. (Ps. 29:2)*

**C. The Bible presents a powerful method. (Eph. 5:15-21; Col. 3:16-17)**

**-- The Spirit of God uses the Word of God to direct the people of God to bring glory to God.**

- Spirit and Word are interchangeable in meaning.

## **APPLICATION**

- Understand the **BIG PICTURE** by reading thru the entire Bible.
- Supplement your reading with a good study Bible.
- Write down your questions and ask a mature Christian for help.
- Yield to the Spirit of God when you read the Word of God. (1 Jn 2:27)