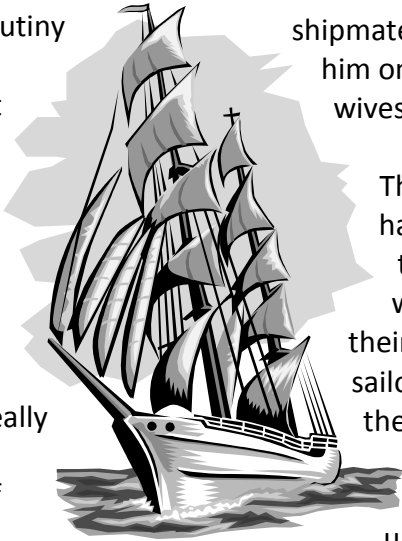


# The Bounty Bible

The story of the “Mutiny on the Bounty” is world-famous – but its sequel is not so well-known. The Hollywood films end with the arrival of the mutineers on Pitcairn Island. But it is here that the really important and encouraging part of the whole affair begins.



shipmates to forcibly give him one of the natives’ wives.

The Tahitian men hatched a plot to kill the English, but were betrayed by their women. The sailors seized four of them as hostages, and threatened to kill them unless they

themselves killed the two ringleaders. So, the first blood was shed on this island. An uneasy peace held between the two groups for two years.

## Full of Hatred

However, the natives were still full of hatred. One day they borrowed a musket, saying they wanted to shoot a hog. Instead, they shot the Englishman who had stolen one of their wives. Then they went after Christian and shot him, intending to go from house to house until all were

## Mudrer!

The nine sailors under their leader, Fletcher Christian, had taken six native men and twelve women when they left Tahiti, fleeing from the Royal Navy. Each of the white men took a Tahitian woman as a wife, and the remaining three were to be shared amongst the six Tahitian men. The resentment this created was increased when the wife of one of the Englishmen died and he persuaded his

dead. At the end of the day only four sailors remained – two in hiding in the hills and two prisoners of the Tahitians.

## No Choice

The natives then began to quarrel among themselves over the allocation of the widows. The English seized this opportunity and with the help of some of the women, killed off those who had not already killed each other. The result was that the women now

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*He knew true joy and peace  
from the God of all hope*

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outnumbered the men by eleven to four. There was another murder plot but when this failed, all co-operated to build a boat to return to Tahiti. This sank on launching, and so they had no choice but to settle down as best they could.

## Suicide

The Scotsman, McCoy, then discovered how to distil spirits from an island root and in a bout of drunkenness, threw himself from the cliff. Soon

after this, the wife of Quintal (an Englishman) died, which led to a quarrel with Young and Smith over a replacement. As a result, they killed him as well. This left only two men with nine women and 20 children. It seemed only a matter of time before the entire community died out.

## A Dramatic Change

But then something unexpected happened to change the whole situation, and to open up an

entirely different future. With the weight of all the bloodshed on their consciences, and the heavy responsibility of the care of all these children on their hands, the two survivors Young and Smith, began to take life more seriously.

Among the articles salvaged from the scuttled Bounty were her Bible and Prayer Book. Young, the only one of the two able to read, began to hold Sunday services, and to read

daily portions from the Bible. He also taught Smith to read, using the ship's Bible as his textbook. But Smith learned far more than how to decipher letters. He learned how to repent of his sins and to find peace of conscience. He learned to trust in the crucified and risen Christ who saves sinners. He learned how to obtain power to live a new life and keep the commandments of God. He knew true joy and peace from the God of all hope.

*What power had caused such a change?*

Soon after this, Young died of Asthma. Smith now took over the care of all the families. As the island's children grew up, and had children of their own, this mutinous sailor became a kind of patriarch to the growing population, holding church services and reading passages from the Bible, and exhorting his people to trust Christ as their Saviour.

### **A Different World**

What a different world this new generation came into from that which their parents had created! What power had

caused such a change? The Bible. It had changed Smith from a violent man into a God fearing Christian, who knew Christ, obeyed His commandments and loved his fellow man. The Bible also had a tremendous influence on all the others.

### **A Surprise Discovery**

It was eighteen years after the mutineers arrived that the first ship called at Pitcairn and

discovered their secret hideout. The surprise at this

discovery was only exceeded by that at the behaviour of these offspring of criminals and savages. They would escort their visitors through the turbulent seas of the Bay, carry their baggage up the steep cliff path, then fall on their knees, sing a psalm and pray. Before a meal, heads would bow to give thanks to God, and if a visiting mariner or tourist let slip a blasphemy or obscenity, he would be rebuked in no uncertain terms.

Over the two centuries of its inhabited life, Pitcairn has had

its ups and downs, with disease and storms taking their toll of the population. There has been little development or technology, apart from a radio station to keep them in touch with the outside world. Today, there is little work for the young people, who tend to leave and settle in New Zealand. On the other hand, there is no taxation, licensing, police or prison.

### **The Power of the Bible**

One thing, however, stands above all others – the love of the Bible. For it was the Bible that first steered the island out of its storms of racial violence and terror into an era of peace and happiness. What else could have done this?

People today are often worried about how society is falling apart and they wonder what can be done about it. But they rarely look in the Bible for answers.

Today God's Word still has the power to transform peoples' lives, if they will read it with a desire to know the Lord Jesus Christ as their own personal

Saviour. The Lord Jesus said: "I am the light of the world". Why not read the Bible for yourself and ask God to give you that light?

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