

And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, 11 Having the glory of God: and her light [was] like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal; 12 And had a wall great and high, [and] had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are [the names] of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: 13 On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. 15 And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. 16 And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. 17 And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred [and] forty [and] four cubits, [according to] the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. 18 And the building of the wall of it was [of] jasper: and the city [was] pure gold, like unto clear glass. 19 And the foundations of the wall of the city [were] And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, 8 And prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. 9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. 10 And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. 11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death. 12 Therefore rejoice, [ye] heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time. The Woman Persecuted and Wounded by the Dragon  
13 And the woman which brought forth the man [child]. 14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent. 15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood. 16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth brought forth unto her a river of water, and the river was written in this mouth. 17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. 1 And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. 2 And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as [the feet] of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. 3 And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast. 4 And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who [is] like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him? 5 And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty [and] two months. 6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven. 7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. 8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. 9 If any man have an ear, let him hear. 10 He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints. 11 And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. 12 And he exercised all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. 13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of

## “Sexually Explicit” “Offensive” and “Unsuitable for Any Age”

### A response to the wave of evangelical book bans

Written by Wren L.W.

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## Why would someone want to ban books?

According to some evangelicals, certain books should be banned due to “sexually explicit” and “violent” language. Proponents of this viewpoint argue such books should not be present in schools, because they can expose children to ideas only adults should be able to consider. If religion motivated book banners really cared about inappropriate language, they wouldn’t have their own children read the bible, given the prevalence of sexually explicit, graphic, and violent language.

## What is the point of this zine?

I argue evangelical and religion driven book banners **do not care** about sexually explicit language, and, instead, **find their basis** in homophobia, transphobia, racism, ableism, and sexism. Ironically, the very thing their prophet preached against. This is not a revolutionary argument, but I am approaching it a different way.

Each blocked poem you will find here was created from a page of the king james version of the bible, and aims to show, not tell, the inconsistencies of book banners. I will demonstrate how, at the most granular level, **any series of words and topics, when stripped of context, has the potential to be turned into something incendiary.** No matter how well intentioned. No matter who said it.

Even God.

Thou shalt not steal, deal falsely, lie one to another. <sup>12</sup> Thou shalt not swear by my name falsely, thou profane the name of the LORD.

Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, rob the wages of the deaf, put a stumblingblock before the blind,

Thou shalt not do unrighteousness, thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honour the person

Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart, thou shalt not avenge thyself

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Thou shalt not lie carnally with a woman, that [is] betrothed to an husband, and be scourged, thou shalt not trespass the LORD

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Thou shalt not let the fruit of the uncircumcised come in to the altar of God, that it may yield thee praise. God.

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Thou shalt not mingle thy seed with the seed of another people, upon thee.

eat [any thing] use enchantment,  
of your heads  
make cuttings in your flesh for the dead,

prostitute thy daughter, cause her to be a whore; let the land fall to whoredom, and the  
land become full of wickedness. keep reverence

seek after wizards, defile  
your God.

mourn, lament  
languish.

be confounded.

be broken in purposes

the land of the  
LORD shall be called, The city of destruction.

Blessed are  
murderers idolaters, and whosoever sorcerers whoremongers,  
lie.

Jesus testify unto you these things

men

become fools deceived; seduced

a perverse spirit and they have caused err in  
every work.

## A Word Occurrence Breakdown

whore: 76  
seduce: 9  
rape: 54  
murder: 49  
kill: 249  
sin: 1565  
blood: 469  
defile: 131  
circumcise: 92  
foreskin: 14  
beaten: 40  
bondage: 40  
evil: 776  
profane: 50

**This is a breakdown of how many times each of these words were mentioned in the bible.** Are you wondering the context these were used in? The overall message? Sure, sin was mentioned over a thousand times, but how many times was love used?

These are all valid questions, and I would agree. **Individual words do not make a book.** It is how they are woven together that tells the full story. **No book should be judged on occurrences of words, or the presence of profanity, without the whole message being taken into account.**

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## Final Note

My blocked poems have stripped a holy religious text of all meaning. You likely would be shocked, if I had not told you, that these block poems even came from the bible. **I do not believe the bible should be banned.** I think there is something for everyone to learn from any book. **But, when you take a book, violently shred it into bloody bits of prose and break the bones of its meaning, of course you will fear it rather than understand it.**

Context *matters*. Intention *matters*.

**Some of the stories I blocked out were beautiful ones;** stories of peace, forgiveness, and love. But you wouldn't know that, because I forced you to focus on what I wanted you to see. **I've read the bible, and I know its good and its limitations. I wonder if book banners can say the same of what they wish to destroy.**

Rather than letting hackles rise at the word "queer", "gay", "gender", or "race", think instead about the deeper meaning that could be present. **All books can be misrepresented; all books deserve a chance.**

All books should be **free**.

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