1777 copy of The New Testament Bible Sells for $199,500 at John McInnis Auctioneers, March 15th

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Summary
The antique Bible, diminutive at just 7 inches by 4 Â¾ inches and in fair condition, was the top lot in the virtual online auction of the estate of Peter Hickey, held on-site in Newburyport, Mass.

Message
Newburyport, MA, USA, March 26, 2026 -- A 1777 copy of the New Testament Bible, printed by Edward Draper of Boston, sold for $199,500 (hammer price) in the virtual online auction of the estate of Peter Hickey, held on-site in Newburyport on March 15th by John McInnis Auctioneers, LLC, based in Amesbury. The hardcover leatherbound Bible, just 7 inches by 4 Â¾ inches, was in fair condition. Â â€œThe price achieved for the Bible was very much a surprise, both to the family and members of my auction team that cataloged the sale,â€• said auctioneer John McInnis. â€œBut the sale had eyes on it, and we had seven hundred registered bidders. There was chatter. People were talking and that led to competition and spirited bidding. In the end the buyer and the seller were both happy.â€• Â McInnis added, â€œIâ€™ve been in the auction business for forty-five years. This was a classic example of things being done the right way and the items up for competitive bidding, not just the Bible, being showcased properly. Often, families hire a company to hold an estate tag sale. If this family had done that, the Bible could easily have been tagged at ten or twenty dollars or put into a boxed group lot. By going with a reputable auction house like ours they made the right choice.â€• Â McInnis said kudos need to go out to Dan Meader and Jay Williamson, key members of his team who did a yeomanâ€™s job of pulling it all together. â€œJay did the cataloging, but to say it was a challenge for him and Dan to go through a completely packed house and have to sort, organize and re-stage everything would be a huge understatement,â€• he said. â€œThe Bible could have been overlooked were it not for their keen eye.â€• Â During the auction, the bidding was fast and furious, up to around the $80,000 mark. â€œThen it quickly dwindled down to two determined bidders,â€• McInnis said. â€œIn the end, a local rare books aficionado outbid a New York City rare books firm. It was fun watching them go toe-to-toe.â€• Â Coincidentally, a month earlier, a first edition copy of The Book of Mormon from 1830 sold for over $200,000, surpassing the prior auction record of $240,000, establishing a new benchmark for a foundational work of American religious history. The two auctions suggest that the demand for antique religious texts may be gaining traction as a collectible, one with high-dollar potential. Â At the Peter Hickey estate auction, bidders discovered thousands of objects represented in nearly 700 lots that included not only items and furnishings accumulated over a lifetime, but also family heirlooms descended through the estateâ€™s families. The 1777 New Testament Bible was by far the auctionâ€™s top lot, but some other highlights also piqued bidder interest, to include the following: Â - World War II-era Japanese Samurai sword, 35 inches overall with an extremely sharp 24 Â¼ inch blade ($7,316) - 57-piece Wallace Grand Baroque sterling flatware set weighing 63.3 troy ounces, in a felt-lined wooden case ($5,370) - Original painting of catboats taking down their sails, by Vern Broe (1930-2011), signed, 18 inches by 24 inches (canvas, less frame) ($3,717) - Large, circa-1958 carved and painted eagle, made for Jordan Marshâ€™s Menâ€™s Department by an artisan from Marblehead, Mass., 30 inches by 101 Â¼ inches ($2,744) - Hamilton gimballed marine chronometer, model #22, in good condition ($2,655) - 19th century brass-bound rosewood lap desk, the velvet writing surface hinges open to two compartments for stationery, while the above writing surface has compartments for inks and pens ($2,596) - Oil on canvas painting by Shannon Richardson, titled They Never Looked Up, signed and dated 2007, 24 inches by 18 inches (canvas, less frame) ($2,419)Â Â All prices quoted above were hammer, exclusive of the buyerâ€™s premium. Â John McInnis Auctioneers, LLC is always accepting quality merchandise for future auctions. To consign a single item, a collection or an estate, you may call them at 978-388-0400; or, you can email them at mcinnisauctions@yahoo.com. To learn more about John McInnis Auctioneers, LLC, please visit www.mcinnisauctions.com. Updates are posted frequently.Â Â About John McInnis Auctioneers, LLC: John McInnis Auctioneers, LLC is an estate appraisal and auction company with the largest full-service auction house on Bostonâ€™s North Shore. The galleries, located in historic Amesbury, are licensed, bonded and insured for the sale of antiques, fine art and real estate. Estate appraisal, consulting, marketing and liquidation services are carried out confidentially and with courtesy. To learn more about John McInnis Auctioneers, LLC, please visit www.mcinnisauctions.com. Updates are posted often.

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