

Can We Know the Mind of God? (Part II)

Ephesians 1:9: (NASB) He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention, which He purposed in Him.



A few weeks ago, we began a discussion on the keys to understanding the Bible as the word of God, and therefore being able to understand the mind of God. Is it really possible to know what God is thinking and what He is planning for the entire race of mankind? Well, we believe it is not only possible but attainable as well! Let's continue the discovery process of Bible study.

We believe the Bible is the inspired word of God and that it has a detailed, consistent message throughout that reflects the mind of God.

We are offering the free booklet, "How to Study the Bible and Have it Make Sense." There are three easy ways to get it: Write to us through ChristianQuestions.com, request it from Rick@ChristianQuestions.net or just click for it on our smartphone app.

The booklet outlines five specific methods of Bible study that we follow at Christian Questions.

Please refer to our program from November 9, 2014, "Can We Know the Mind of God? (Part I)" where we discussed the first two techniques: Topical Bible study and symbolic language.

First Testing Ground: **Exhaustive Topical Examination**



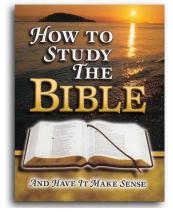
The examination of every Scripture on a given subject. The information age in which we live makes this test far easier than ever before.

Second Testing Ground: The Study of Symbolic Language



The examination of Scripture with an eye for separating those things literal from those things symbolic.

Our belief is not what we are told by a minister, or which version of the Bible is infallible or what denomination we believe. It is the testing and scrutinizing of the Scriptures to find harmony of His mind and plan. We put a lot of pressure on ourselves to find the truth. Our understanding has to pass through all these different "gates" for us to believe it.







We are inviting you to do the same thing - to put yourself in a place of discovering what is already there - to understand where and how to look.

Now we continue our journey towards a clearer understanding of Scripture.

Third Testing Ground: The Study of Time Frames



The examination of Scripture with the understanding that all scripture texts do not apply to all time frames of history.

The Bible tells us it has divided itself into periods of time. Perhaps think of it like the four quarters in a football game. They play differently in the first quarter than the fourth quarter. Sometimes there is a focus on defense then offense, etc.

What do we need to pass our personal scriptural understanding through this test of the study of time frames? We need a working knowledge of the kinds of time frames into which the Bible divides itself! Where do we find that?

Let's start with a set of Scriptures that divide Bible teaching into three major time frames:

<u>2 Peter 3:5-7</u>: (NASB) ⁵...by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, ⁶through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water. ⁷But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the Day of Judgment and destruction of ungodly men...

<u>2 Peter 3:13</u>: (NASB) But according to His promise we are looking for **new heavens and a new earth**, in which righteousness dwells.

What do we have here? There are three different "worlds" that have and will all exist on this earth, *but never at the same time*. Therefore, we can see these worlds as consecutive ages or "dispensations" (inclusive periods) of time.

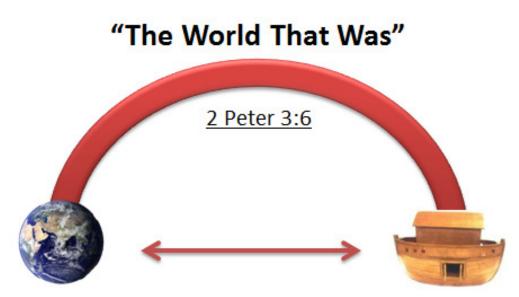
Let's take a closer look:

<u>2 Peter 3:5-7</u>: (NASB) ⁵...by the word of God the heavens existed long ago and the earth was formed out of water and by water, ⁶through which the world at that time was destroyed, being flooded with water.

The "world that was" - the social order in which the fallen "sons of God" mixed with the race of man here on earth - was destroyed, never to rise again.

Please see the program, "What Can We Learn From Noah? (Part II)" from December 7, 2014, for more on this point.





Even with its destruction, sin persisted:

⁷But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the Day of Judgment and destruction of ungodly men...



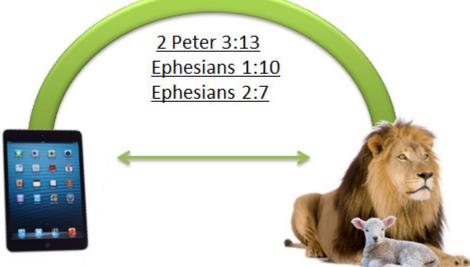
The "world that is" - our present evil state of things here in earth - in which sin prevails under Satan's rule, is beginning to meet its end by a (figurative) fire, necessitating its replacement with something new.

¹³But according to His promise we are looking for **new heavens and a new earth**, in which righteousness dwells.



Ah, this sounds better! A new world - a new social order - here on earth where God once again will have His hand directly over man's affairs.

"New Heavens and Earth" "The World to Come"

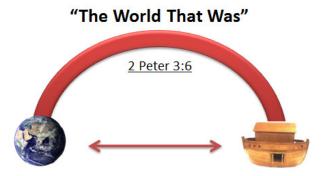


There are different frames of time in which the way God works with mankind actually changes, grows and develops. World history according to Scripture is divided into specific frames of time. Certain Scriptures only apply to certain time frames.

So, are Bible time frames that simple? Three and done? (Of course not!)

Now, let's fill in the details of these three Dispensations: (Each change represents progression in the plan.)

1. THE FIRST GREAT DISPENSATION: THE WORLD THAT WAS The shortest of the three (1,656 years) and most easily defined



It begins with one man, created in perfection:

<u>Genesis 2:7</u>: (NASB) Then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

It ends with one righteous man, Noah, and his family: <u>Genesis 7:23</u>: (NASB) Thus He blotted out every living thing that was upon the face of the land, from man to animals to creeping things and to birds of the sky, and they were blotted out from the earth; and only Noah was left, together with those that were with him in the ark.



2. THE SECOND GREAT DISPENSATION: THE PRESENT EVIL WORLD Has three distinct ages, is far more intricate and begins with God dealing with individuals and family lines

"Present Evil World" "World That Is"

2 Peter 3:7



The Age of the Patriarchs, "Fathers of Faith"



<u>Genesis 8:20</u>: (NASB) Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird and offered burnt offerings on the altar.

<u>Genesis 12:1-2</u>: (NASB) ¹Now the LORD said to Abram, Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you; ²And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing;

After Abraham came Isaac then Jacob. Jacob had 12 sons and at his death a nation and a new age was born.



Fava (aka Moe)

Mario

•

This next clip portrays trying to understand what is really meant. Its lesson is that some people see what they want to and take things out of context.

(1) I don't like the juice, Cancel Glove and Boots, Glove and Boots (YouTube)

- (drinking out of juice boxes) Mario: Moe, I don't like juice.
- Fava: Why? It's good for you.
- Mario: No it's not. It's full of sugar. I would rather just eat the fruit.
- Fava: Well, what about orange juice?
- Mario: Nope.
- Fava: Grape?
- Mario: No!
- Fava: Pineapple juice?
- Mario: No! I don't like the juice. Moe, I don't like juice.
- (Warthog watching Mario and Fava on youtube) WHAT??? I'm going to share this with the whole world!!!!
- Breaking news! Mario from the YouTube channel, Glove and Boots, is allegedly anti-Semitic.

The age of the nation of Israel, the Jewish Age

It began with Jacob's deathbed blessing to his sons who became a nation that will eventually bless mankind.

Exodus 19:5-6: (NASB) ⁵Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; ⁶and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel.

<u>Amos 3:2</u>: (NASB) You only have I chosen among all the families of the earth; Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.



Its end was proclaimed with a sad announcement of failure:

<u>Matthew 23:38-39</u>: (NASB) ³⁸Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! ³⁹For I say to you, from now on you will not see me until you say, Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!

(The last phrase is actually a hint about the beginning of the third dispensation!)



(YouTube) Misquote corrected, Cancel Glove and Boots, Glove and Boots (YouTube)

- What does anti-Semitic mean? Someone who doesn't like the Jewish people! We caught up with Mario's co-host, Fava, earlier today with an exclusive interview.
- So, explain yourself and explain Mario's hatred for the Jews.
- Fava: What are you talking about? Mario's cousin David is Jewish.
- Mazel tov!



• Fava: Mario just doesn't like that drink. He doesn't like juice. He would rather drink milk or water.

Gospel Age: God deals With those Who answer the gospel call for true followers of Christ.

The age of the Gospel call, the Gospel Age

To the Jew first, but then to Gentiles as well!

<u>Acts 10:34-35</u>: (NASB) ³⁴Opening his mouth, Peter said: I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, ³⁵but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.

This is in the context of going to Cornelius, the first Gentile convert.

<u>Revelation 2:10</u>: (NASB) Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

This age ends with the completion of the call of true Christians and trouble - lots of trouble!

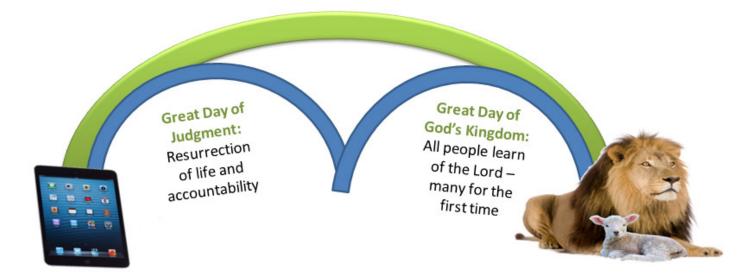
<u>Daniel 12:1</u>: (NASB) And there will be a time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation until that time; and at that time your people, everyone who is found written in the book, will be rescued.





3. THE THIRD GREAT DISPENSATION: "THE WORLD TO COME" Has at least two distinct parts we know of

"New Heavens and Earth" "The World to Come"



Great Day of Judgment: Resurrection of life and accountability

First, it is the great Day of Judgment:

John 5:28-29: (NASB) ²⁸Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, ²⁹and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.

<u>Jeremiah 31:29-30</u>: (NASB) ²⁹In those days they will not say again, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge. ³⁰But everyone will die for his own iniquity;

But then, it is a great day of God's kingdom:

<u>Jeremiah</u> 31:31-34: (NASB) ³¹Behold, days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, ³²not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them, declares the LORD ³³...I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ³⁴They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, Know the LORD, for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, declares the LORD, for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.





We should not twist the Bible to fit what we want, but rather, twist ourselves to conform to it. The Bible's intentions should be reflected within our lives.

Selfish reading, How Not to Read Your Bible

Lord, this is the passage of Scripture my friend Brian gave to me. He said this is what he used when he had to explain to his wife when he purchased the bass boat without asking her. May it speak the same to me! Psalm 107:23-24: "Those who go down to the sea in ships who do business on great water, they see the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep." That's good God, that's really good. I hope I can get 'er done.

Also, sometimes the traditions and ceremonies we grew up with do not actually match up with biblical teachings.

Now the test...WHEN do the following Scriptures belong?



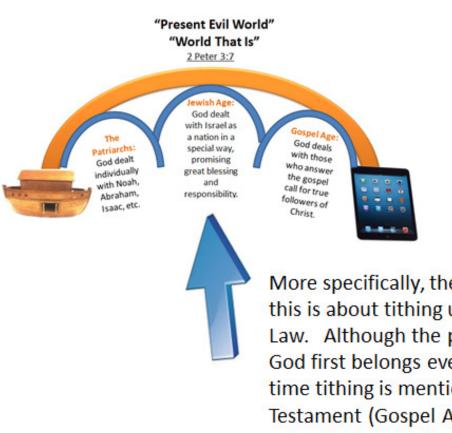


<u>Malachi 3:10</u>: (NASB) Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.





<u>Malachi 3:10</u>: (NASB) Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.



More specifically, the Jewish Age, because this is about tithing under the Law. Although the principle of giving to God first belongs everywhere, the only time tithing is mentioned in the New Testament (Gospel Age) is when Jesus refers to it under the Law. He does not bring it over to the New Testament, so it does not apply in the Gospel Age.







Deuteronomy 22:11-12: (NASB) ¹¹You shall not wear a material mixed of wool and linen together. ¹²You shall make yourself tassels on the four corners of your garment with which you cover yourself.

Once again, this Present Evil World and more specifically, the Jewish Age, because this was part of the Law. It was about Israel being separated – acting and thinking differently than everybody else. The principle of separation exists for us as Christians, but we are not supposed to follow the rituals of the Law. That command belongs to the Jewish Age.



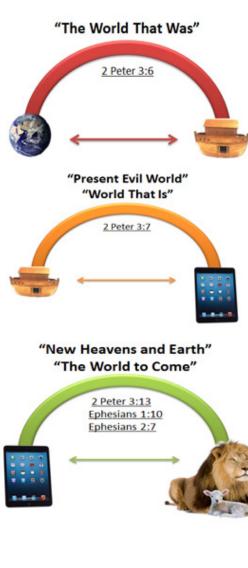
the future.





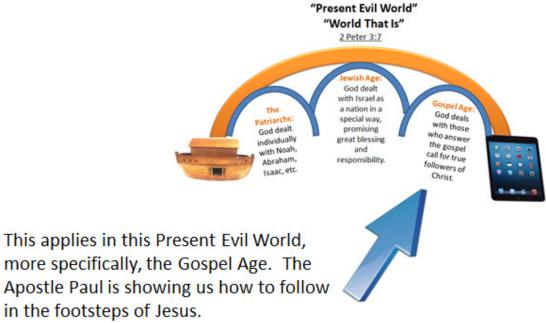
<u>Isaiah 35:5-6</u>: (NASB) ⁵Then the eyes of the blind will be opened and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. ⁶Then the lame will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute will shout for joy. For waters will break forth in the wilderness and streams in the Arabah.







<u>Romans 12:1</u>: (KJV) I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.





The principles of various Scriptures can apply in different time periods, but their actual application belongs in very specific points in time. "What applies when" aids in our understanding of the Bible. To know the mind of God, we need to know the time frames His word is addressing.

"The World That Was"



"New Heavens and Earth" "The World to Come"



Zechariah 8:23: (NASB) Thus says the LORD of hosts, In those days ten men from all the nations will grasp the garment of a Jew, saying, Let us go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.



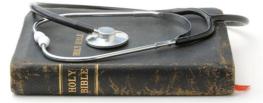
"New Heavens and Earth" "The World to Come"





We talked about the process, the testing ground, of understanding the mind of God by understanding the time frames in which human history is broken into from a biblical standpoint. We need to be careful that the Scriptures we read get applied where they belong. That can be disappointing sometimes from our traditional perspectives, but it can be incredibly enhancing to find out what God really means.

Fourth Testing Ground: Study based on context.



To know the context of a statement is the first step in understanding the statement itself. Biblical context establishes biblical teaching.

What do we need to pass our personal scriptural understanding through this particular test? We need the power of observation and a willingness to allow our observations of context to influence our direction and conclusions. In short, we need a desire for truth and the humility to accept it.

 (\neg, \neg) Context Matters, How Not to Read Your Bible

• Man, I am bored. I guess I will do my once a year Bible reading to see what God has to say. (Blows dust off his Bible.) Here goes nothing. Matthew 27:5: "Then he went out and hung himself." What? Uh, let's just try it again. Philippians 4:9: "These things you have seen, these do." Oh, great! I'll just wait to see what He says next year.

This is a silly example of taking two verses and trying to put them together. We are dealing with the mind of God expressed through Scripture. Are we going to just drop in on one little piece and assume that is going to be a direct message for us? Or do we take the time to put the individual pieces together to create a masterpiece of reasoning, hope and integrity? That is what the Bible is! A masterpiece of reasoning, hope and integrity that helps us see things the way they are supposed to be. Study in context is so important.

Let's start with a text that creates a context that we may not even see: <u>1 Timothy 4:10</u>: (KJV) For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.



Here the Apostle Paul is encouraging young brother Timothy to remain deeply focused in the responsibility he has been given to nurture the churches. Paul tells him that godliness is much more profitable than bodily exercise, for it brings eternal life. The admonition is to be godly in everything you do in life.



Now we re-read our verse:

<u>1 Timothy 4:10</u>: (KJV) For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.

What context does this verse set? What is it talking about?

Salvation! But wait - salvation here is divided into *two* categories - those who are saved and those who believe and are "specially" saved! Salvation is for all men, but especially for those who believe. How is that possible? Is this a unique thought, or are there other verses that do the same?

Another verse with two distinct classes:

<u>1 John 2:2</u>: (NASB) and he himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

Propitiation means satisfaction or the fulfillment of sins - not only for us as believers, but for the whole world.

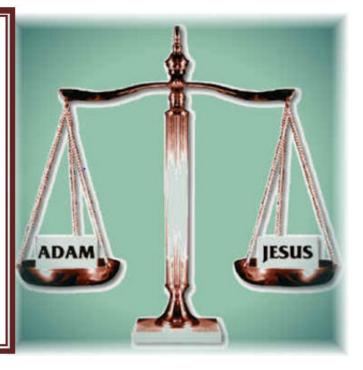
A verse that establishes the universal effect of the ransom:

<u>1 Timothy 2:5-6</u>: (NASB) ⁵For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, ⁶who gave himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.

There is a universal effect of the blood sacrifice, the ransom, of Jesus. Ransom means paying a price of equal value.

<u>1 Corinthians 15:22</u>: As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Justice is exacting in what is required. A perfect man had to die for a perfect man. That is the Ransom. The word for "ransom" means "corresponding price," or the right amount. Everyone suffering under Adam can have that suffering eliminated under Christ.





Because of the sin of Adam, we all die. Because of the life and sacrifice of Christ, we are all made alive. Jesus paid the right amount to cancel the sin of Adam. With that, the context of these verses shows different things happen. There is a revitalization of those who believe now in the Gospel Age (*specially those who believe*) and the rest of the world mentioned in a very positive way - not one of burning forever.

If there are *two different classes* who receive salvation as these verses indicate, then we cannot always assume that all verses speaking of salvation apply only to just the one class of true Christians! So, how do you tell when the verse applies to the Christian or to the rest of the world?

Is there a general rule for context in the New Testament?

The following is an example of grasping the larger context of Scripture. Most of the New Testament is a collection of letters. To whom are they written?

Romans 15:25: (KJV) But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints.

The saints are the followers of Jesus.

<u>2 Corinthians 1:1</u>: (KJV) Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia:

Not only those of the brotherhood at the church in Corinth, but *all the saints* in Achaia.

<u>Ephesians 1:1</u>: (KJV) Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:

<u>Philippians 1:1</u>: (KJV) Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus, which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:

<u>Colossians 1:2</u>: (KJV) To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.



We can see this is a common phrase. *The saints*, the enlightened followers of Christ, are those to whom are given special promises and from whom are required to give special sacrifices. The New Testament specifically is written to the saints, the true followers of Jesus.

No wonder so many who look at the Bible are scoffers! They are reading someone else's mail! If they do not have the context they are reading about, who would be expected to understand correspondence that is not meant for them?

The larger context of the New Testament is written to the saints - not always *about* them, but *to* them for their understanding. This helps them not only understand their job and objective but also understand the world around them, Satan, prophecy, and more.

Anybody can read the New Testament. But when they do, they should realize the larger context. This helps us understand the mind of God.



Knowing the larger context (written for the benefit of the saints) can help us zero in on the smaller contexts (the specific subject matter).

ー(り) Overboard detail, How Not to Read Your Bible

• Whew, fifty-six hours of straight study. Honey! I'm ready to teach these five verses at small group tonight, and I'm gonna go verse by verse like Jay does. No, I'm gonna go letter by letter! Punctuation mark by punctuation mark!

We don't want to discourage study and anyone's desire to understand the mind of God, but we need to keep it within the actual context. The Bible is many individual thoughts that make up the integrity of the mind of God. If we try to break them down to such a fine point, we could lose the big meaning.

For example, the parables of Jesus were very symbolic because he told us they were stories. We don't want to read into every single detail (where did the foolish virgins go when they were late?) and miss the intent of the story.

Now, back to the context of <u>1 Timothy 4:10:</u>

<u>1 Timothy 4:10</u>: (KJV) For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe.

With the concept of there being more than one type of salvation on the table, let's now look at some resurrection Scriptures:

<u>John 5:28-29</u>: (NASB) ²⁸Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, ²⁹and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life (a heavenly reward), those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.

Why would the *resurrection of judgment* be a "good" resurrection? Because it beats being dead and judgment in righteousness is a good thing! I would rather be alive, answer for the things I have done and have the opportunity to make it right than to never be alive again.

Please refer to the program from November 2, 2014 called, "How Many Resurrections Will There Be?" for more on this subject.

Can we go from good to better?

<u>Hebrews 11:35</u>: (NASB) Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, so that they might obtain a better resurrection.

What is the context? Who is being spoken about in <u>Hebrews 11</u>? This chapter reviews those who were found faithful in the Old Testament. These are examples of individuals who lived above the world around them. These were not followers of Jesus because he had not yet come. But here these faithful to God receive a *better resurrection*.

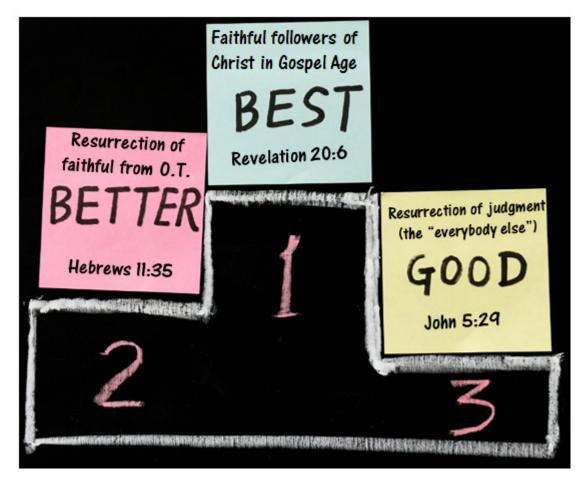
How about from better to best?

<u>Revelation 20:6</u>: (NASB) Blessed and holy is the one who has a part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

These are the faithful followers of Christ. Again, having context for many Scriptures that deal with the same topic makes understanding a much easier task!



All three of these Scriptures deal with resurrection, but they are dealing with different aspects of resurrection that apply to different individuals. It is only by seeing them in context that we can get where they belong and how they apply. <u>1 Timothy 4:10</u> helped us to first see the two general classes.



Now let's see how the good and the best resurrections dovetail:

<u>2 Corinthians 5:17-19</u>: (NASB) ¹⁷Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. ¹⁸Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

He has committed to us the word of reconciliation - who is us? The followers of Jesus. We know this by the context - that is to whom the letter was written. What are the followers reconciling back to God? The world of mankind. God is reconciling - through Christ - the world to Himself. We can now build verse upon verse as to how these resurrections dovetail.



Studying the Scriptures in context really does help us understand the mind of God through the word of God. Anyone can read the Bible, but very few will end up truly understanding it. It takes work. The idea that you can say, "I want to know God, so I'm just going to start reading the Bible and it will all come together for me," is a very disappointing idea.

<u>2 Timothy 2:15</u>: (KJV) Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

The word of truth can be wrongly divided very easily and frequently.

Can context help when Scriptures seem to contradict each other?

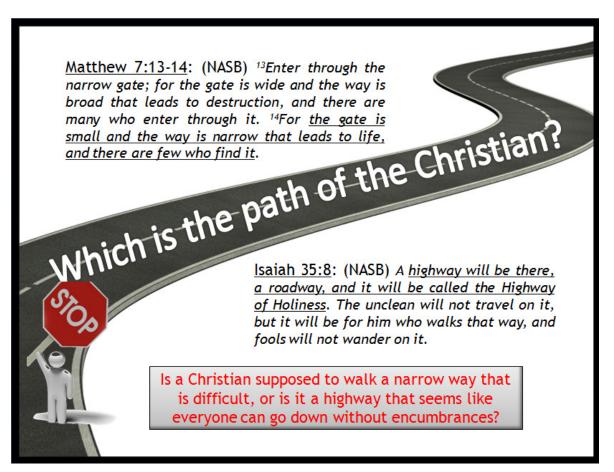
First thought, only a pass or fail approach:

<u>Matthew 7:13-14</u>: (NASB) ¹³Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. ¹⁴For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

Second thought, a get everyone together and make progress approach:

<u>Isaiah 35:8-10</u>: (NASB) ⁸A highway will be there, a roadway, and it will be called the Highway of Holiness. The unclean will not travel on it, but it will be for him who walks that way, and fools will not wander on it. ⁹No lion will be there, nor will any vicious beast go up on it; These will not be found there. But the redeemed will walk there, ¹⁰And the ransomed of the LORD will return and come with joyful shouting to Zion, with everlasting joy upon their heads. They will find gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Can both be true?







Let's check the smaller context of each verse:

Jesus is teaching his followers; therefore, this is a "Gospel Age" application:

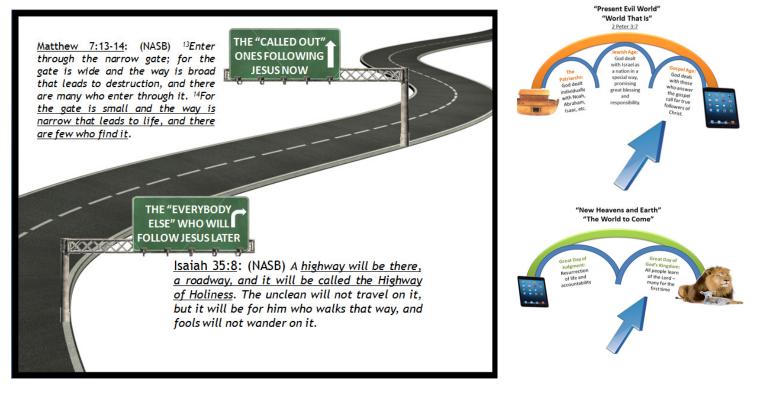
<u>Matthew 7:11-15</u>: (NASB) ¹¹If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him! ¹²In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets. (Jesus has compared mankind's goodness with God's) ¹³Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. ¹⁴For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it. (He compares mankind's natural path of sin with the choice to follow him higher as a disciple) ¹⁵Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

The Isaiah text in context - this is a "World to Come" text!

<u>Isaiah 35:4-7</u>: (NASB) ⁴Say to those with anxious heart, Take courage, fear not. Behold, your God will come with vengeance; the recompense of God will come, but He will save you. ⁵THEN the eyes of the blind will be opened and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. ⁶Then the lame will leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute will shout for joy. For waters will break forth in the wilderness and streams in the Arabah. ⁷The scorched land will become a pool and the thirsty ground springs of water; In the haunt of jackals, its resting place, grass becomes reeds and rushes. ...Now the highway is spoken of in the next verse.

These verses apply for a different time than when Jesus was talking to his followers in Matthew 7! Isaiah is talking about the future destiny of mankind. This highlights the two paths of salvation we previously discussed.

So, contextual understanding helps us to solve the mystery of contradiction! They apply at two different times to two completely different groups of people.





An important aspect of context is that every verse in the Scriptures does not explain the whole plan every time. It deals with different parts of it. We need to realize what part of the plan we are dealing with, and who is being dealt with and why. This helps to unlock the mind of God and His grand and glorious plan. We do not want to limit ourselves to our own little troubles in our little world.

One last cautionary example about the context in which we read and study Scripture:

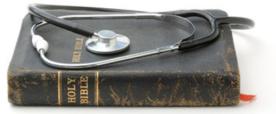
 (\neg, η) A bad plan, How Not to Read Your Bible

- (Lady driving) Ugh, this light is so long. Hey, Lord, can you please reveal Your heart to me in this passage before the light changes?
- (Car honking) Come on lady move it!
- Hey! Cut it out! I'm being spiritual up here. Oh, bother!

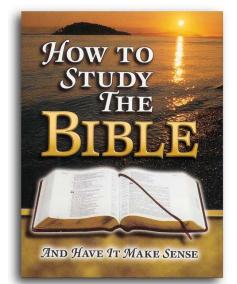
We have to carve out the time to truly study the word of God.

Our time is done but we still have one more testing ground to explore!

Fifth Testing Ground: Study by Type and Antitype



Observing the larger and future meaning of certain events as a means of grasping the breadth of God's plan.



(Source: How To Study The Bible And Have It Make Sense) "In the Old Testament are many events which actually happened but which have significance above and beyond their original import. For example: Exodus describes the institution of the Passover which involved the slaying of a lamb, the deliverance of the firstborn at night, and the deliverance of the rest of the people in the morning. The miracle would have been great in itself. But in 1 Corinthians 5:7 Paul states, "Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us," indicating that God meant to make an informative picture of the Passover event."

The Passover in Exodus was a "type." The "antitype" - the fulfillment of that original picture - was Jesus as our Passover lamb. We will study this the Sunday before Resurrection Sunday.



There is so much to understand trying to grasp the mind of God by studying Scripture. If we understand the different methods used and how to apply them, the mind of God becomes clearer. We see His intention for mankind, and it is all good news!

For a free copy of the booklet, please contact us at <u>Rick@christianquestions.net</u> or...just click for it on the Christian Questions smartphone and tablet app!

So, can we know the mind of God? For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions... Think about it...!

And now <u>even more</u> to think about... only in the Full Edition of CQ Rewind!

First Testing Ground: Exhaustive Topical Examination

Examination of every Scripture on a given subject. (The information age in which we live makes this test far easier than ever before.)

Second Testing Ground: The Study of Symbolic Language

The examination of Scripture with an eye for separating those things literal from those things symbolic.

Third Testing Ground: The Study of Time Frames

The examination of Scripture with the understanding that all Scripture texts do not apply to all time frames of history.

Fourth Testing Ground: Study based on Context

To know the context of a statement is the first step in understanding the statement itself. Biblical context establishes biblical teaching.

Fifth Testing Ground: Study by Type and Antitype

Observing the larger and future meaning of certain events as a means of grasping the breadth of God's Plan.





Now a little practice:

All of the following verses are prophetic and therefore need careful attention for their meaning to be grasped. We have applied "testing grounds" 1-4 as we have set them up for your attention.

First Testing Ground: Exhaustive Topical Examination

While this is certainly not an exhaustive list, it is a sampling of the subject of "all nations, all people, and the ends of the earth..." We know that there are many texts that show God's wrath and we understand them to apply during the great time of trouble and the Day of Judgment. But these verses deal with the same groups afterwards (see <u>Zephaniah 3:8-9</u> below) and show a very positive result!

Second Testing Ground: The Study of Symbolic Language

These verses contain some symbolic language, but not a lot. Please see the CQ Rewind Full edition from last week to more easily grasp some of the symbolism.

Third Testing Ground: The Study of Time Frames

The time frame in all of these verses is the same - the third Dispensation - The World to Come. We know that by virtue of the preceding trouble that is expressed in Zephaniah 3:8-9. Proper time placement of these prophecies truly enhances their impact!

Fourth Testing Ground: Study based on Context

The context of these verses is the fulfillment of the will of God concerning His creation. Notice how the will and words of the LORD permeate each verse.

God's desire for man as expressed to David:

This details the suffering of Jesus on the cross. These verses represent the victory that follows the cross:

<u>Psalms 22:27-29</u>: (NASB) ²⁷All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will worship before You. ²⁸For the kingdom is the LORD'S and He rules over the nations. ²⁹All the prosperous of the earth will eat and worship, all those who go down to the dust will bow before Him, even he who cannot keep his soul alive.

God's desire for man as expressed to Zephaniah:

<u>Zephaniah 3:8-9</u>: (NASB) ⁸Therefore wait for Me, declares the LORD, For the day when I rise up as a witness. Indeed, My decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out on them My indignation, all My burning anger; For all the earth will be devoured by the fire of My zeal. ⁹For then I will give to the peoples purified lips, that all of them may call on the name of the LORD, to serve Him shoulder to shoulder.

<u>Zephaniah 3:15</u>: (NASB) The LORD has taken away His judgments against you; He has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you will fear disaster no more.

<u>Zephaniah 3:20</u>: (NASB) At that time I will bring you in, even at the time when I gather you together; Indeed, I will give you renown and praise among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the LORD.



God's desire for man as expressed to Isaiah:

<u>Isaiah 45:22-24</u>: (NASB) ²²Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; For I am God, and there is no other. ²³I have sworn by Myself, the word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness and will not turn back, that to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance. ²⁴They will say of Me, Only in the LORD are righteousness and strength. Men will come to Him, and all who were angry at Him will be put to shame.

<u>Isaiah 62:1-2</u>: (NASB) ¹For Zion's sake I will not keep silent, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not keep quiet, until her righteousness goes forth like brightness, and her salvation like a torch that is burning. ²The nations will see your righteousness, and all kings your glory; and you will be called by a new name, which the mouth of the LORD will designate.

<u>Romans 8:19-21</u>: (NASB) ¹⁹For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope ²¹that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

Can we know the mind of God? Didn't He just tell us?