

Isaiah 55:8-9: (NASB) *⁸For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways, declares the LORD. ⁹For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.*



with this anyway? The Almighty God, Creator of all things, surely could have had the Bible written in such a way that it would be universally understood! Well the fact is, He did not! Why not? There is actually a really cool answer to this!



**It was written over 1600
years ago and by about
40 different people.**



Clarity of purpose and content from beginning to end - no style or interpretative issues, just a straightforward summation of important events and teachings.



Reasons one and two, *Ten Reasons the Bible Isn't a Well-Written Book*, friendlyatheist.com

- So, how do we know the Bible is not a well-written book? It's not well-organized. The Bible is a huge mess. I mean, it's written in chronological order, not thematic order. That might be okay if the Bible were a history book, but not so much when it's a guidebook for life. And that's especially a huge problem when Christians use the Bible to justify their beliefs and actions. They have to flip through the book all over the place to find passages that support their views. You want passages about love, marriage, homosexuality, abortion? You won't find them in one spot. There's not even a helpful index. And this forces Christians to quote verses out of context all the time.

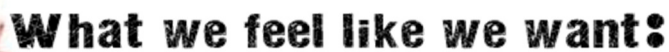
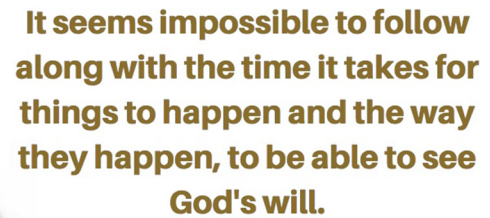
But it IS a history book! As a matter of fact, those in the Jewish faith use the Bible as their history.

- There are no pictures! I know, not all books need pictures, but sometimes, diagrams and charts can be very helpful. Even the Lord of the Rings came with a map. Where's the diagram of a family tree instead of a long list of "begats"? What about a timeline to help you keep track of what all the various characters are doing all the time? I'm just saying, it would be helpful.

The Bible gives very detailed instructions on building things like the Tabernacle, the Ark of the Covenant and the Temple. Such things can be drawn as precise measurements are given. Jesus spoke in parables. He spoke in picture language so we can visualize many things in the Bible.



Does this make sense for a book provided to us by our Creator? Instead of finding that everyone in all the earth has a Bible, we find that billions have gone to their graves without ever knowing such a book exists. Of those who do know, only a small proportion of them have copies. Of those that have copies, only another small proportion are deeply interested in what it contains, while among those who are deeply interested and do frequently come to God's Word, what confusion exists!



The fact that we cannot understand it but it comes to pass anyway verifies the power of God and our own smallness.



His plan and its timing of it, is comprehensive, eternal and precise. The foggy view of His timing we have verifies His power and foresight.

Zechariah 9:9: (NASB) *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; He is just and endowed with salvation, humble, and mounted on a donkey, even on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*

Luke 19:37-40: (NASB) ³⁷*...the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice...³⁸shouting: blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord; peace in heaven and glory in the highest!* ³⁹*Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, Teacher, rebuke your disciples.* ⁴⁰*But Jesus answered, I tell you, if these become silent, the stones will cry out!*



Hundreds of years earlier, the prophecy predicted the people would shout in triumph, lauding Jesus as their king. If no one fulfilled it, God would have seen to it that its fulfillment would have been accomplished in some way. *The stones will cry out!* Jesus was saying, “God said it would happen this way and there is nothing I can do to change it.”

Time and timing are precise and important features in the revealing of God’s plan! What about these?

2 Peter 3:9: (NASB) *The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.*

Sounds like this would be worth waiting for!

Ezekiel 33:11: (NASB) *Say to them, As I live! declares the Lord GOD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?*

God lectured Israel through Ezekiel. *I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live - when the wicked turn from darkness to light. The previous verse said God wants none to perish but for all to come to repentance.*

If this is what God wants, when does He want it to happen? This was written thousands of years ago. When will we see evidence of God’s love coming into focus for the sinners of the world? If God is precise with His timing, why is it taking so long?

If God does in fact love sinners so much, He sure seems to be losing the conversion battle! Is He really losing?

One of the great challenges we have in understanding God’s plan is the limited perspective that we can view it from. Think about it - here we are living in this age of technology where everything comes to us at the push of a button in a lightning fast manner, and here God is seemingly slogging along through thousands of years to get His plan to work. Let’s rethink this! What “seems to be” and “what is” are often two different things.

I am against religion because it teaches us to be satisfied with not understanding the world.
— *Richard Dawkins*

One of the reasons we do this Christian Questions podcast is because we want to understand the world and want to see it through the eyes of God. We want a better understanding of not only what the world was and is, but what it will be according to God’s will.

 **Reasons three and four, *Ten Reasons the Bible Isn’t a Well-Written Book*, friendlyatheist.com**

- *It’s not very specific. When it comes to things you’re not supposed to do, the list is scattered everywhere. A more helpful book would just include a checklist of things you’re supposed to do and things you’re not supposed to do. And maybe that list would include page numbers, just in case you want to go to the actual document for reference. And you know, maybe a side bar to let you know when killing other people in the name of your faith is okay.*



He is looking for a book that is clearly set up as a "how to" book, but the Bible is not organized that way.

- It's not easy to understand. We shouldn't need theologians and pastors to explain all of this material to us if God felt it was that important. It's not like they're doing a good job of it anyway, since all these different Christian pastors interpret the book in so many different ways. I mean, you show me a hundred Christians, I'll show you a hundred different Christianities. If all these people think God is saying very different things, that's partially His fault as a communicator. I mean, He should have been more explicit in terms of saying what He wants from us.*

God has a specific reason for doing what He does BECAUSE He is a great communicator. We will unfold this as we move along.



The Bible does not plainly reveal God's plan and who benefits from it, instead it seems to tell a lot of failure stories and reminds us of God's wrath.



What we feel like we want:

Just tell us the details!
Are we in? Are we out?
Does what I believe matter or not?



Why God arranged it to be this way:

God's plan does include the conversion of the world BUT FIRST IT REQUIRES that the human race be left to their own devices to plainly learn how they would fare *without* God.

Man without God is pretty pitiful! How many different ways of governing has God permitted humankind to try and fail over and over again? Selfishness, greed, power and wealth seem to be the culprits that make them all fail.



A caller from Connecticut suggests: Why is the Bible difficult to understand? Deuteronomy 29:29: (KJV) *The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us...* Jeremiah 29:13: (KJV) *And ye shall seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart.* And we answer, yes, Father, we want to know Your secrets. Teach us how to operate your GPS. Truly, Father, we find You beyond the printed page. We need prayer to achieve a relationship with Him. It is true and meaningful that we cannot live by bread alone; we need His precepts and guidance. Time is the key factor to understanding our God.

The Apostles sought diligently to know God's times and seasons, but Jesus told them: Acts 1:7: (KJV) *And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.* Some things were not revealed as it was not time. Daniel 12:9: *And he said, Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end.*

There are many other aspects to God's revealing Himself to us. The main key is our Lord Jesus. Hebrews 1:2: (KJV) *Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things...* How many people throughout history have tried to destroy the Bible? It does not happen.

How do we know that the last 2,000 years of history was not for the purpose of converting the world to Christianity, and if that is true, then what has been the purpose?

Reason #1. We do not believe the Lord has been trying to convert the world for the past 2,000 years BECAUSE THE WORLD IS NOT CONVERTED.

Let's go back to some of the context of our theme text:

Isaiah 55:9-11: (NASB) *⁹For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts. ¹⁰For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth and making it bear and sprout, and furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; ¹¹So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.*

If God's word was meant to convert the world, it would be done! God never *tries* to do something; He does it. Some might look at this reason and say it is simply a reason of convenience, so let's examine a few more reasons why we know God is not trying to convert the world right now:

Reason #2. We do not believe the Lord has been trying to convert the world for the past 2,000 years BECAUSE THE BIBLE PLAINLY TELLS US SO.

Jesus explains that there is presently a DOUBLE STANDARD in place regarding understanding:

Matthew 13:10-12: (NASB) *¹⁰And the disciples came and said to him, why do you speak to them in parables? ¹¹Jesus answered them, to you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. ¹²For whoever has, to him more*

Christianity, if viewed by the sheer number of those who went into their graves unconverted throughout all of history, would be a COMPLETE FAILURE.



shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him.

Whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him - Jesus starts out talking about a double standard.

He next explains the reason for that double standard - God's sure word of prophecy by quoting from the Old Testament:

Matthew 13:13-16: (NASB) ¹³Therefore I speak to them in parables... ¹⁴In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, (Isaiah 6:9-10) you will keep on hearing, but will not understand; you will keep on seeing, but will not perceive; ¹⁵for the heart of this people has become dull, with their ears they scarcely hear, and they have closed their eyes, otherwise they would see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and return, and I would heal them. ¹⁶But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear.

The words of Jesus would for the most part fall on deaf ears. Jesus realized that and did not try to change it. He spoke in parables to make it even harder!

We can begin to see the logic of God's plan: His timing is impeccable; His word accomplishes what it is sent to do and when it is supposed to be done, and *He works in systematic stages.*

When do we find out about the stage where God pays attention to those who seem to be left out?

Again, we need to be aware of our own puny perspective regarding the enormous and eternal plan of God. To us things may seem unfair and it may seem as though God has even lost interest, but neither is true. The fairness of God can only be understood in the context of the comprehensiveness of God and that has yet to be uncovered.

Truth will always be truth, regardless of lack of understanding, disbelief or ignorance.
—W. Clement Stone

Regardless of how people think of the Scriptures, it does not change who God is. Our challenge is to present the character of God through the writings inspired by Him for the purpose of giving us the understanding of His plan. How come He did not make it plain? He could have just sent an email to everyone opening it at the same time. They would all read it in their own language (because God can do that!) and it would be so much easier. It would, but He has a bigger reason and purpose.

With our little perspective should come a large dose of humility. After all, we are trying to understand an eternal plan by the eternal God and He is actually letting some grasp it!

The humility we should have for this study:

1 Corinthians 1:26-29: (NASB) ²⁶For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; ²⁷but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong,²⁸ and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, ²⁹so that no man may boast before God.



If you give this incredible knowledge of the eternal plan of God to those who have the great egos of this world, what would they do with it? Probably sell it. Probably put themselves in a position to be lauded by many. Unfortunately we see this within Christianity today. There are those who reap millions of personal dollars from preaching their interpretation of the Gospel. There is no humility there. God has chosen the base things of this world so you do not get all puffed up, thinking you are so smart.



Reasons five and six, *Ten Reasons the Bible Isn't a Well-Written Book*, friendlyatheist.com

- *It's not consistent. There are so many contradictions throughout the Bible and it's not like they're hard to spot. I mean, even Genesis 1 and 2 have difficulties reconciling with each other. And the Gospels have contradicting accounts of the details of Jesus' life. But instead of fixing the Bible where it's clearly wrong and clearly contradictory, people just keep replicating it. God doesn't need a copy machine, He needs an editor.*

Genesis 1 and 2 - one is a summation of the other. The Gospels do not contradict each other; they tell the story from different perspectives. God's plan works in stages. The inconsistency we see is the development of several stages. Some things apply to some stages and do not apply to others. That looks inconsistent until you back away and see these are steps furthering the plan of God.

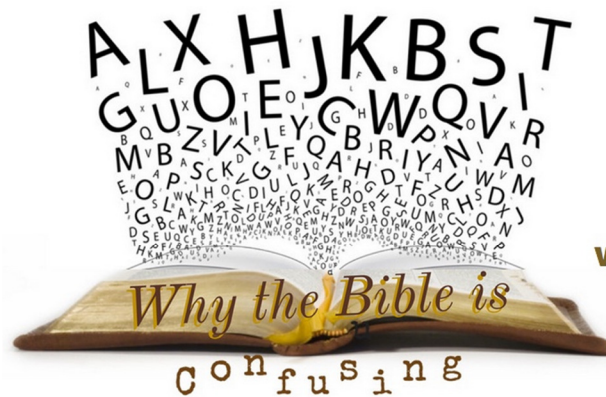
- *It doesn't make any clear predictions. The Bible makes these vague prophecies, like "The Messiah will come soon" or "We're going to have a war." But, there are no specific predictions that you would need some sort of insider knowledge to figure out. There's a lot of reverse engineering going on to make sure that our modern realities retroactively fit what the Bible supposedly said. There are people who think the end of the world is coming soon because of biblical clues. Maybe if the Bible predicted a natural disaster with dates, and locations and the number of victims, then skeptics like myself would have to take that book a little more seriously. God has the same psychic abilities as Nostradamus. You can read into it whatever you want but the prophecies are vague enough that they will eventually be fulfilled by someone if you're willing to look hard enough. That's just not impressive.*

We disagree with the Bible not having clear predictions. There are hundreds of prophecies of Jesus at his first advent, and the detail is startling. It was predicted where he would be born, where he would teach, how he would die and more.

Please see our podcast from November 8, 2015, "How is Jesus the Truth?" for more. This program detailed just a few of the hundreds of prophecies of Jesus' first advent and the statistical odds of even just eight of them coming to pass in one person's life - calculated as 10 to the power of 17. That is like covering the entire state of Texas in two feet of silver dollars, putting a black "x" on one coin and putting it somewhere randomly. Send a blind man to wander the state, reach down and randomly come up with the "x" coin on his first try!



What about the concise prophecy about the regathering of Israel as a nation? How many nations have returned to their homeland after they were scattered across the earth for thousands of years? None, except for Israel.

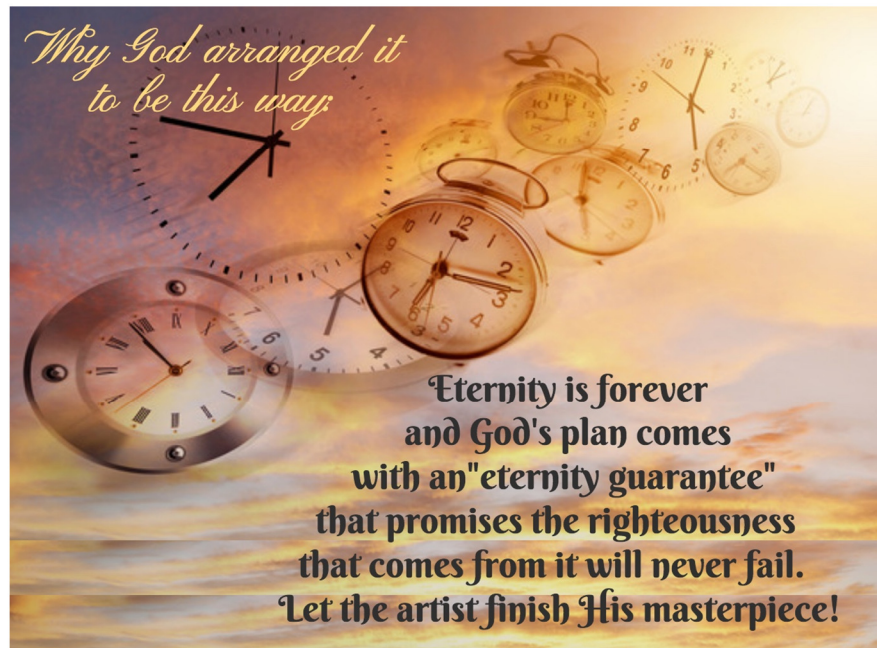


**God works in stages -
long drawn-out stages
with long drawn-out purposes.**



What we feel like we want:

We impatiently want it all to be equal,
understandable and applicable now!



Reason #3. We do not believe the Lord has been trying to convert the world for the past 2,000 years BECAUSE THE BIBLE POINTS TO AN AGE STILL FUTURE FOR THIS PURPOSE.

Back to a broader look at the context of the Isaiah text we just talked about:

First is the portion that we would typically quote - that Jesus himself first answered and then quoted:

Isaiah 6:8: (NASB) *Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, whom shall I send, and who will go for Us? Then I said, here am I. Send me!*

Isaiah was answering God's call to teach the people.

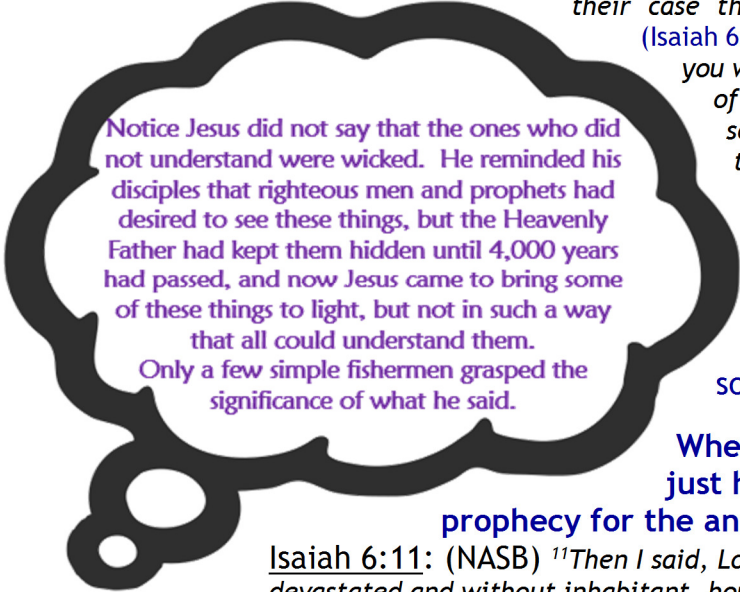


Prophetically, this spoke of Jesus. How do we know? Because Jesus quoted the exact words that come next that God instructed Isaiah to say. Jesus said these words as his own reason for doing what he did.

Isaiah 6:9-10: (NASB) ⁹*He said, go, and tell this people: Keep on listening, but do not perceive; keep on looking, but do not understand. ¹⁰Render the hearts of this people insensitive, their ears dull, and their eyes dim, otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and return and be healed.*

Here again is Jesus quoting this passage in Isaiah:

Matthew 13:13-16: (NASB) ¹³*Therefore I speak to them in parables... ¹⁴In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, (Isaiah 6:9-10) you will keep on hearing, but will not understand; you will keep on seeing, but will not perceive; ¹⁵for the heart of this people has become dull, with their ears they scarcely hear, and they have closed their eyes, otherwise they would see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and return, and I would heal them. ¹⁶But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear.*



Notice Jesus did not say that the ones who did not understand were wicked. He reminded his disciples that righteous men and prophets had desired to see these things, but the Heavenly Father had kept them hidden until 4,000 years had passed, and now Jesus came to bring some of these things to light, but not in such a way that all could understand them. Only a few simple fishermen grasped the significance of what he said.

Jesus stopped at this point and did not read further. His point made was, "I am teaching so they cannot understand."

When is finally time for them to understand? We just have to read the next verse in Isaiah's prophecy for the answer - the part Jesus did NOT quote!

Isaiah 6:11: (NASB) ¹¹*Then I said, Lord, how long? And he answered, until cities are devastated and without inhabitant, houses are without people and the land is utterly desolate...*

Jesus in Matthew 24 described a time of trouble *such as there never was since there was a nation*. God is not trying to convert the world now. How do we know? By the words of Isaiah that Jesus himself quoted. Isaiah went on to ask God how long until the people would no longer be in the dark. The answer given was, "Until the time of trouble when everything has fallen apart."

In other words, this age would be brought to a close by a great time of trouble and distress, and until then there would be many who would hear and see things without being able to grasp their significance. The age for earth's conversion is coming, but it has not come yet.

God's plan allows the masses to be in ignorance until that ignorance brings extreme hardship:

Zephaniah 3:8-9: (NASB) ⁸*Therefore 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.*

This sounds again like a time of great trouble...but keep reading!



The hardship part always gets the most attention, but look at what follows for those same people:

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.

All the earth will be devoured - some people think this means the literal earth will be burned up, but we know from Ecclesiastes 1:4 that *the earth abideth forever*. This passage is symbolic, showing that the social order of things will be destroyed. The people could not be given *purified lips* if they are all destroyed.

On the other end of all the destructive and scary trouble is a beautiful promise of *purified lips* and the people *working shoulder to shoulder*.

Great trouble everywhere is listed as one of the things that is to precede the great blessing and world-wide conversion.

**Prophecy points to a future age of conversion,
BUT what if we are misunderstanding prophecy?**

It is always important to realize that prophecy can be and often is misunderstood. Having said that, we need to look for other clues that will help our understanding of prophecy either to ring truer or be proven potentially faulty. Fortunately, we have several other scriptural statements that help! Do we look honestly for clues in prophecy even if our view is proven faulty?

***The limit of your present understanding is not the limit of your possibilities.* — Guy Finley**

 **Reasons seven and eight, *Ten Reasons the Bible Isn't a Well-Written Book*, friendlyatheist.com**

- *It lacks knowledge that humans of the time could not have had. The Bible is only as scientifically accurate as the people of the time. Isn't that a coincidence? It says nothing about modern astronomy, or mathematics or medicine. There are no passages about light bulbs, or vaccines or the sun being a star with the earth revolving around it. And there is no mention of the United States. It's exactly the sort of book that you would expect people of that time to have written. In other words, it's just not that special.*

Please see our podcast, **"Does Science Show the Existence of a Creator"** from **July 24, 2016**. The Bible contains science that is breathtaking in its knowledge! It talks about the earth being round, the earth moving around the sun, the cords of Orion being loosed (those stars in the constellation of Orion are moving apart to a point where it will no longer look like a belt), ocean currents, the importance of hygiene and more. The Bible gives a sense of the smallness of the earth in relation to the bigness of the ever-expanding universe - something just recently starting to be understood.

- *The characters make no sense. If you read really great books, the main characters are very complex. The heroes often have flaws and the bad guys sometimes have good intentions. In that sense, the Bible doesn't even bother with complex characters. God is always good no matter what. Even when He kills people with reckless abandon, it's for the greater good. Jesus is supposed to be without sin. And the redemption stories aren't even really that inspirational. Isaac, who did nothing wrong, is almost a victim of*



slaughter at the hands of his father. Job suffers, and suffers for the crime of being faithful to God. It really makes you wonder who you should be rooting for.

For character complexity - just look at the life of Job. Last week we talked about temptation and another complex character, King David. To understand God and Jesus in the context of what the Bible tells us gives us a complexity that is breathtaking. It comes from study and not judgement. So many people look at the Bible and judge it because t do not take the time to find out what it really says.



Prophecy can be whatever we want it to be and other biblical teachings can be twisted as well. Who knows how to really interpret this book?



What we feel like we want:

Just speak in easy language
and give me plain, simple
and clear teaching!

"I want God to
reveal Himself to
me the way I
want Him to."

Why God arranged it to be this way:



Because the unfolding and revealing of God's plan is in timed and sequential steps, the understanding of His plan must work the same way.

All WILL have their turn!



Reason #4. We understand this age is not for the conversion of the world BECAUSE OF MANY OF THE STATEMENTS MADE BY OUR LORD JESUS AND HIS INSPIRED APOSTLES.

A few of those other scriptural statements that verify the prophecies which point to everyone having a *future* opportunity:

First, another example of Jesus avoiding bringing the Gospel to Gentiles:

Matthew 10:5-6: (NASB) ⁵*These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them: Do not go in the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter any city of the Samaritans; ⁶but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*

The search was being narrowed for who was to hear the Gospel. Why? It was not yet time for the rest to hear.

Now an example of Jesus showing an actual ray of hope for those billions who never heard any part of the Gospel:

Matthew 11:20-24: (NASB) ²⁰*Then he began to denounce the cities in which most of his miracles were done, because they did not repent. ²¹Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.*

The plan of God is big and inclusive, but it takes time to do it God’s way in God’s time. Tyre and Sidon were cities that existed at the time of Jesus but also existed in the time of the prophets of the Old Testament. Back then they were spoken of as dark and evil places. They had that reputation still in Jesus’ day. These were generations of people who lived in utter darkness. *For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes - they would have been receptive.* If now was the time for world conversion and those cities were still in existence and Jesus KNEW that they would and could repent, then WHY DID JESUS NOT GO TO THEM?

Next Jesus shows how ALL will have opportunity, though it will be harder for some than for others:

²²*Nevertheless I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.*

Even the people in those evil cities will be resurrected in the Day of Judgment.

God’s timing!

²³*And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. ²⁴Nevertheless I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you.*

Jesus again showed hope for BOTH cities here - not a lack of accountability, but hope.



Jesus' conclusion on this matter:

Matthew 11:25: (KJV) *I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.*

Jesus, could have sorrowfully said, "Oh, Father, I wish you had made your revelation plainer and clearer. If you had only told them I was coming as the Messiah, and made it so simple and clear that no one would have made a mistake; but instead, you have put one statement of my coming here, another there, and another somewhere else, and people do not believe when I tell them about these things. Why did you not put all so clearly that they could not doubt? Why did you not make a connected chapter or book of my life here?" But no, instead of Jesus being rebellious, he said, *I thank Thee that Thou hast hid these things...* It looks as though Jesus had the same thought and spirit in this matter as the Heavenly Father had and was glad the Bible was not as plain as many would like to have it.

John verifies Jesus' role as including all men:

1 John 2:1-2: (NASB) *¹My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; ²and he himself is the propitiation (atoning sacrifice) for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.*

God's method was not to keep the Bible itself hidden from all but those who would be given understanding; rather, it was to hide the truth of the matter in plain sight - He hides it with such obscure language that only a certain group of people are able to appreciate these things.

Why? Because God's timing said, "Not yet!"

**If the world is not being converted in our time,
then what is God's plan accomplishing right now?**

This question really does get to the core of the matter. We have been emphatic in our approach that God works steadily and progressively over time and we have also been emphatic that Jesus did not set out to immediately convert the world, but did pay the price to save the world. How do all of these pieces add up?

Understanding is a three-edged sword. Your side, my side, and the truth.

— J. Michael Straczynski



Reasons nine and ten, *Ten Reasons the Bible Isn't a Well-Written Book*, friendlyatheist.com

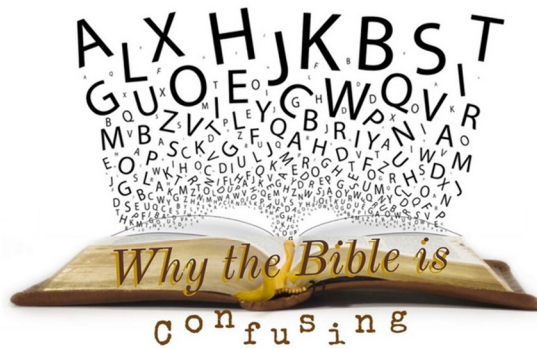
- *It's too repetitive. The Bible tells the same story multiple times and it doesn't even bother to keep all those versions consistent with each other. A good writer tells the story once, properly, and then moves on. Or if you're like William Faulkner writing "Absalom, Absalom!" maybe you'd tell the same story from different perspectives and add more to each layer of the story. The Bible doesn't do that. Just look at the genealogy sections as an example. They are a chore to read. Surely you can explain lineage in a more interesting way than this person gave birth to that person, and that person gave birth to somebody else, and on and on for pages on end.*



The repetitiveness of the Bible adds more detail. For example, the Gospels allow different personalities to provide their perspective, appealing to our various personalities. Matthew is written from the perspective of Old Testament prophecies. Mark is the shortest Gospel and shows us the deeds of Jesus. Luke shows us the chronology of Jesus' life. John shows us the heart of Jesus. These are four different perspectives of one life. Put together, they are breathtaking.

- *It goes too far with the stories. If you wanted to convince people to take the Bible seriously, the stories would be a little more plausible, and yet there are so many miracles that deny any semblance of plausibility. Between talking snakes, and virgin births, and great floods, and people almost living to the age of a thousand, it's a wonder anyone could take this book seriously. God should have backed off, instead He jumped the shark in the first chapter. The Bible isn't a good book.*

From the small, little perspective of humanity here at the end of this age, everything comes to us with instantaneous satisfaction. The Bible was written over a long period of time and shows us ancient thinking, prophecy and history to tell us the story of God's plan. It just begins to tell the stories. The miracles performed were pictures of future blessings. Using proper principles, studying the Bible allows us to unfold incredible treasures.

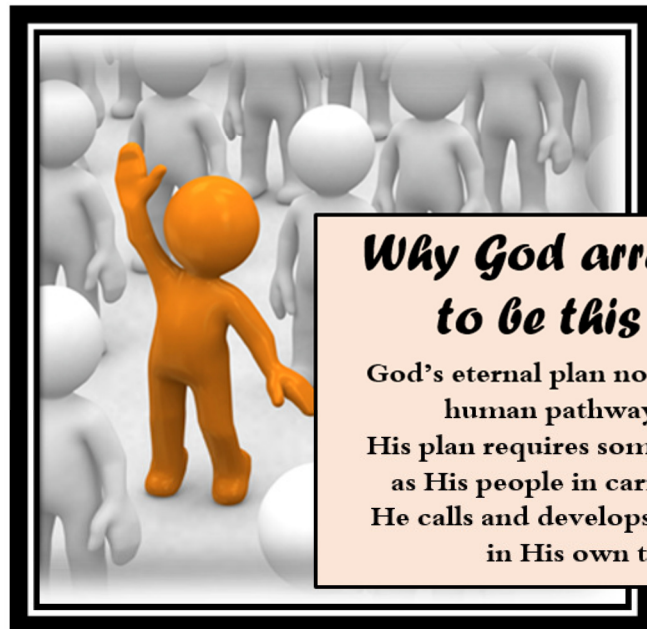


This book applies different sets of rules to different time periods. How am I supposed to know what applies when when it does not tell me?



What we feel like we want:

God, just send me a direct message that tells me what to do!



Why God arranged it to be this way:

God's eternal plan not only sets the human pathway to life, His plan requires some to be active as His people in carrying it out. He calls and develops these people in His own time.



The true followers of Jesus see things differently than others who may name the name of Christ:

Matthew 13:44: (NASB) *The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.*

They do not merely hear and appreciate the call, they sell all for its sake, for it is a treasure. They dedicate their lives to the call. This means everything else is secondary.

The rejection of Jesus by the masses and all he truly stood for draws his true followers to him:

1 Peter 2:4-12: (NASB) *⁴And coming to him as to a living stone which has been rejected by men, but is choice and precious in the sight of God, ⁵you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

This is a big hint of what this time is supposed to be for, if not for the conversion of the world. Now is for the true followers of Christ to follow him! Just like he was rejected by men and his choice was precious in the sight of God, *you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house, to be formed into something bigger than just you, as a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

You are being called and developed now for very specific reasons.

Again, prophecy shows us the importance of Jesus' role and the effect it has on his called-out ones:

⁶For this is contained in Scripture: behold, I lay in Zion a choice stone, a precious corner stone, and he who believes in him will not be disappointed. ⁷This precious value, then, is for you who believe;

Prophecy also shows us the effect that Jesus would have on unbelievers - God's timing:

...but for those who disbelieve, the stone which the builders rejected, this became the very corner stone, ⁸and, a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed.

A cornerstone is the foundation of a building. Jesus is the beginning of the "building" of reconciliation for the world of mankind. Without him, we have nothing to be "built in to." That cornerstone shows us how the building is supposed to look - we are to use that pattern.

Notice others *stumble* over Jesus - they "trip" over him and do not want him in their way. It is okay that some eyes are blinded, as now is not the time for them to be converted.

Peter builds on prophecy and explains the role Jesus' followers will play relating to all humanity:

⁹But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.



Peter ends with the impact that the true followers of Christ will have on the world not now but later:

¹¹Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. ¹²Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation.

Those who now look down upon us with disdain will eventually glorify God.

We still have not dealt with how this massive change for the world will take place. Listen for more on our October 2, 2017 episode, "Why Didn't God Make the Bible Easy to Understand? (Part II)."

This is a complex subject but is exciting! God does have a plan and it unfolds step-by-step. Let us follow the steps and glorify God in the process. God made the Bible hard to understand on purpose, but for YOUR good!

*So, why didn't God make the Bible easy to understand?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*

*And now even more to think about...
only in the **Full Edition** of CQ Rewind!*



A few more Scriptures showing the importance of God's creation to Him:

2 Peter 3:9: (NASB) *The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.*

Ezekiel 33:11: (NASB) ¹¹Say to them, As I live! declares the Lord God, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live.

Jesus informed us that not even a sparrow falls without our Father's notice:

Luke 12:7: (NASB) *Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.*

Does this not make it clear that God wants sinners to be converted and all of His creation is valuable?

A few more Scriptures confirming that God has NOT been trying to convert the world since Jesus' time:

Acts 28:25-26: (KJV) ²⁵...Well spake the Holy Spirit ...unto our fathers, saying, ²⁶go unto this people and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive.

John 12:36-50: (NASB) ³⁶While you have the Light, believe in the Light, so that you may become sons of Light. These things Jesus spoke, and he went away and hid himself from them. ³⁷But though he had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in him. ³⁸This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet which he spoke: Lord, who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? (Isaiah 53:1) ³⁹For this reason they could not believe, for Isaiah said again, ⁴⁰he has blinded their eyes and hardened their heart, so that they would not see with their eyes and perceive with their heart, and be converted and I heal them. ⁴¹These things Isaiah said because he saw his glory, and he spoke of him. ⁴²Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; ⁴³for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God. ⁴⁴And Jesus cried out and said, he who



believes in me, does not believe in me but in Him who sent me.⁴⁵ He who sees me sees the One who sent me.⁴⁶ I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in me will not remain in darkness. ⁴⁷If anyone hears my sayings and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. ⁴⁸He who rejects me and does not receive my sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day. ⁴⁹For I did not speak on my own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent me has given me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak. ⁵⁰I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore, the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told me.

Acts 16:6-10: (NASB) ⁶They passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; ⁷and after they came to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them; ⁸and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. ⁹A vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, come over to Macedonia and help us. ¹⁰When he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

A few more quotes regarding understanding:

Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. — Martin Luther King, Jr.

Understanding is a two-way street. — Eleanor Roosevelt

Anger and intolerance are the enemies of correct understanding. — Mahatma Gandhi

Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding. — Albert Einstein

The Bible was ahead of its time related to science:

Job 26:7: (NASB) *He stretches out the north over empty space and hangs the earth on nothing.*

The expansion or stretching of the universe since the Big Bang. This fact makes the following Scriptures more interesting:

Job 9:8: (NASB) *Who alone stretches out the heavens and tramples down the waves of the sea;*

Psalms 104:2: (NASB) *Covering Yourself with light as with a cloak, stretching out heaven like a tent curtain.*

Isaiah 40:22: (NASB) *It is He who sits above the circle of the earth, and its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, who stretches out the heavens like a curtain and spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.*

Isaiah 42:5: (NASB) *Thus says God the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and its offspring, Who gives breath to the people on it And spirit to those who walk in it,*

Isaiah 45:12: (NASB) *It is I who made the earth, and created man upon it. I stretched out the heavens with My hands and I ordained all their host.*

All of this shows the testimony of science to the effect that our universe appears to be fine-tuned for the existing of man, called the Anthropic Principle.

(Source: Fred Hoyle (British astrophysicist) “A common sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a super-intellect has monkeyed with physics, as well as with chemistry and biology, and that there are no blind forces worth speaking about in nature. The numbers once calculated from the facts seem to me so overwhelming as to put this conclusion almost beyond question.”