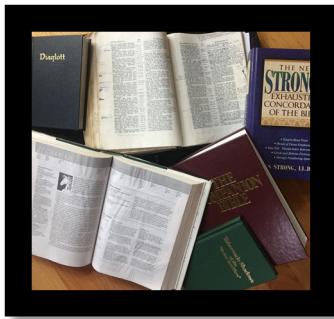




Why Didn't God Make the Bible Easy to Understand? Part II

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.



A few weeks ago, we began a conversation about the Bible and its inherent challenges of understanding and interpretation. As we discussed the book in all of its complexity, we suggested a very straightforward and simple conclusion - the Bible is difficult to understand because it was purposely written to be difficult to understand! Such a conclusion really disturbs most common Christian thinking about converting the world here and now. As we continue to lay out what we believe to be the reasons for such an avoidance of world appeal by the Scriptures, we now turn our focus to the really big question of results. Why would God, why *did* God set up a plan where everyone does NOT get a fair chance to come to an understanding of the Bible in our present environment? What good could possibly come from such a strategy? (To review, please see Part I from September 18, 2017)

The Scriptures are written beyond how we feel. We do not want to limit the Bible. It provides for an eternal plan that takes a long time to unfold.

Peter builds on prophecy and explains the role that Jesus' followers will play in relation to the rest of humanity: 1 Peter 2:9-12: The true followers of Jesus play a pivotal role in God's plan. A *holy nation* - wasn't Israel God's holy nation? There is the physical, earthly nation of Israel, which has played, does play and will play an important role in the plan of God. There is also the spiritual aspect of Israel which also has an important role. These two parts are connected.

Remember when God promised to Abraham that in his seed *all families of the earth would be blessed?* He described the seed in two parts: like the stars of heaven (the heavenly/spiritual part) and like the sand on the seashore (the earthly/natural part). Genesis 22:17

A *holy nation* here is talking about spiritual Israel, true followers of Jesus, who will work in conjunction with natural Israel in the future kingdom.

Peter ends with the impact that the true followers of Christ will have on the world not now but later! The Apostle Peter is writing to the true followers of Christ. If you are not one of those people called to follow Jesus' footsteps and live a life of sacrifice, and you are reading the letters of the New Testament, you are reading someone else's mail. You can learn things from it, but everything may not make sense. *Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles* - your goodness will shine forth later. They will learn from your example after they are resurrected in the kingdom. Eventually all will glorify God!

To many, the idea that God only cares about a select few is an easy conclusion to draw, for we are looking at a plan that has taken all of human history to unfold and it is still not manifest. To see the future, to see what care God has preplanned for all of mankind, we must first look back into the past and focus our eyes to see through the window of Bible prophecy.

Prophecy acknowledges that most will simply mock and laugh at the unfolding of God's plan: 2 Peter 3:3-4

Prophecy also shows us the secrecy of God's plan: Isaiah 29:11-16: One cannot have understanding of a book that has been sealed. God's word is out of reach to the capable as well as all others *when it is in the state of being sealed*. Even Christianity sometimes does not get it. It also shows us the hypocrisy and lack on the part of God's creation to truly acknowledge Him.

Their reverence consists of things they have memorized, but God is looking for heart reverence, not mind reverence or just lip service. Unfortunately, this reminds us of a lot of people who "do the Christian thing" because it can be a big money maker. Preachers say what people want to hear instead of what people should be hearing.

God's way is missed by those who merely go through the actions and those who use the Bible as a tool for their own purpose.



There are so many layers to the Bible that it was not possible to have it all understood all at once. Sin had to unfold. Israel had to make its mistakes. Jesus had to come. The prophecies had to come to fruition. Jesus had to be crucified and raised, etc.

Finally, prophecy shows us how easily we elevate ourselves beyond our appropriate station: ¹⁶*You turn things around! Shall the potter be considered as equal with the clay, that what is made would say to its maker, He did not make me; or what is formed say to him who formed it, He has no understanding?*

Idolatry is taking that which is created and making it something to worship instead of the Creator. It is too easy to misread the Scriptures and to be misled by those who misuse them.

In spite of these challenges, prophecy also shows us glimpses of God's plan for us: Isaiah 29:18-20,22-24: *That day* - when the book is finally opened - *that day* will be different, as the mysteries of God's plan will begin to come into focus. All previous challenges will now become surmountable.

¹⁹*The afflicted also will increase their gladness in the LORD, and the needy of mankind will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.* ²⁰*For the ruthless will come to an end and the scorner will be finished, indeed all who are intent on doing evil will be cut off...*

There is a dramatic, 180 degree turnaround from the beginning of this prophecy. Those who could not see can now open the book and see. The ruthless and scorners have no place. The order and details of God's plan will unfold.

Jacob (Israel) shall not now be ashamed, nor shall his face now turn pale - Israel is the centerpiece. This is the end result of that book being sealed. There will be no more embarrassment or guilt for not accepting Messiah.

Prophecy takes time to unfold because things have to be allowed to run their course.

²⁴*Those who err in mind will know the truth, and those who criticize will accept instruction.*

Bible Understanding Key: Prophecy paints a picture of God's plan. Accepting prophecy is the first step in appreciating the artistry of God!

When "that Day" comes, the "Good Book" will remain the "Good Book." There will not be a new Bible issued. What will change is the heart and mind of mankind as they will learn to accept and understand its messages. One of the primary tools for change will be those whose hearts and minds were already changed. Those faithful lives of those few (Jesus' footstep followers) that will shine a light for all to see.

God's plan unfolds over time. There are so many layers to accomplish because this is a plan set up to work for eternity. If you are going to design such a plan with the best results, you cannot rush the details. God desires all to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:4) For a plan like this, it will be worth the wait!

God DID make a way for the Bible to be understood by some before it is opened up to all: Habakkuk 2:1-3: God said to Habakkuk that His plan takes time. It will look overdue but will be exactly on time.

Who are those who run? 1 Corinthians 9:24: The runners are true Christians. The hidden truths of the Bible get revealed to the runner. They are given the opportunity and responsibility of understanding. One of their jobs is to prove it can be done.

When does the Bible begin to be deeply and widely understood by those who run?

Daniel 12:1,4: *At that time* - when we get to that time, something happens. *Michael (Jesus) ...will arise. A time of distress such as never occurred since there was a nation* - a time of trouble unparalleled in history. *Until that time* - a unique period of time. We think we are close to that time. When Michael stands up, there is a great time of trouble. *Seal up the book until the end of (that) time* - the book begins to be understood. During this time, *many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall be increased.* (King James Version) Clearly we have seen uncanny increases in all aspects of knowledge. Compare our world to even 100 years ago. We went from a horse and buggy to rockets traveling faster than the speed of sound.

Bible Understanding Key: Jesus is THE absolute foundation of God's plan. To understand and embrace this is the beginning of true scriptural knowledge!



It is here revealed that the obscurity of God's word will begin to be lifted! Who will begin to see it? Those who run! Matthew 7:14: The called-out ones of Jesus are relatively few in number compared to those who claim the name of Christianity and even more so compared to the rest in the world.

Jesus made it clear that those who would truly follow him would be blessed with special hardships: Luke 9:23-24

Jesus also made it clear that their hardships would be things that he proved faithful in: John 15:18-20: Why do the footprint followers of Jesus have to go through a sacrificial life in such a unique way? To prove it can be done.

Anything we go through, Jesus went through something similar and more. If we are his followers, we need to walk in his steps relying on the grace of God through Jesus. It is not because we are so great.

God calls special people for a special purpose, to prove to the rest of the world that it can be done. After they are resurrected and finally come to a full knowledge of truth, they will have to walk up the highway of holiness. They will walk by sight, not by faith like we do now. They will realize that if the called-out ones could be faithful under such adverse conditions in this lifetime, they can do it in God's perfect kingdom.

Bible Understanding Key: The faithfulness under trial of Jesus' true disciples paves the way for the world's practical ability to see how to apply scriptural knowledge.

It is so important to know your allies - in this case they are the faithful footprint followers of Jesus. It is also important to know your enemies. We will touch on three basic hindrances that will challenge the world's future ability to grasp the Bible's meaning. These can be summed up with one phrase: Old habits die hard!

The first and perhaps the greatest obstacle to world conversion is the power and liberty of Satan. 2 Corinthians 4:3-4: If God allowed Satan to blind peoples' minds, how can they be held accountable for eternity if their minds were blinded by one so much more powerful than they? Justice would not allow that. His eternal plan allows for Satan to have his will and his way to blind the minds of billions...for now.

God's power and plan handle this obstacle: Revelation 20:1-3: Satan will be bound and thrown into a sealed abyss. Remember what happened when the book was sealed? No one could open it. The same principle works here - if he is sealed in the abyss for this judgement period of time, he cannot escape. This will be long enough for resurrected mankind to have the opportunity to live without him.

The second great obstacle to mankind's conversion is ignorance. Isaiah 60:2-3: Spiritually most of the world is in utter darkness. Satan's power brings this darkness, but God's power eliminates it in the future with the brilliant light of truth. The light of God will shine through his chosen ones. Previously those footprint followers of Jesus had to prove being faithful could be done. They had to be *faithful unto death* (Revelation 2:10). Here this shows one of the results - *Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.*

After being resurrected, preconceived ideas or false notions (ignorance) may take a while to push that out of the way. Say you are a Christian taught you were going to heaven but you end up being resurrected on the earth. "Why aren't I in heaven and where is my harp?" We all carry the baggage of preconceived notions. The day of resurrection/the day of judgment will be a time to undo all of that and learn the truth of God.

God will wipe away ignorance! He will see His covenant able to be written upon their hearts: Jeremiah 31:33-34: This great promise begins with Israel and then will be passed on to the rest of the world.

The third great obstacle to mankind's conversion is his inherited imperfection.

Jeremiah 31:29: *In those days it will not be inherited imperfection that will keep someone from being able to succeed.* God, as a result of the sacrifice of Jesus, will remove that inherited sin. Jesus is the centerpiece of everything! He died for the sins of Adam. He died so that we, having inherited the sins of Adam, can inherit the grace of God through Jesus. That grace cancels out the sin of Adam. Isaiah 25:7-9: *We all want the opportunity to live life in*



peace and happiness and to be able to flourish. Here it is! This is the environment in which the world will have the opportunity to be converted. It is not now...the prophecy shows us it comes later. If you know this, isn't it worth waiting for? There will be no mental or physical infirmities holding anyone back from understanding God's truth.

Bible Understanding Key: Mankind's conversion opportunity will be full and fair and require effort!

One of the many amazing aspects regarding the complex wisdom and truth brought out in the Bible is that every possibility has already been factored in. When God gave humanity a free will, He was fully aware of its pitfalls and designed a plan that would use those pitfalls for His eternal glory!

Let's take a look at how God arranges to truly read men's hearts: Psalms 18:44: (KJV) As soon as they hear of me they shall obey me. The strangers shall **submit <3584>** themselves unto me. At first glance this looks like full and immediate obedience. However, let's take another look:

Submit: Strongs # **#3584** to be untrue in word, to lie, feign, disown, to disappoint, fail, cringe, deceive, deny, dissemble, fail, deal falsely, liars, lie, lying

Outward action and inward heart do not always match - God knows this and uses it to His glory: Psalms 66:3-4: (NASB) ³Say to God, how awesome are Your works! Because of the greatness of Your power, Your enemies will **give feigned obedience <3584>** to You. ⁴All the earth will worship You, and will sing praises to You; they will sing praises to Your name. Selah.

For many, learning from the "outside in" will be the first part of their conversion. As with children, they will need to be able to do the right things even before they understand and embrace why they are doing those right things.

God will test this once every human has had ample opportunities: Revelation 20:7-8: After all the obstacles - Satan, ignorance and inherited sin - have been removed so everyone can learn the necessary lessons without interference, then they will be tested. Why didn't God make the Bible easy to understand? The details we have talked about are remarkable in laying out how God's plan works. He started working with individuals, then families, then the nation of Israel, then with called-out spiritual Israel. In the kingdom He will work with the whole world. As He goes up those steps, sometimes the rules or methods change, but the end result is that every human being will have an opportunity to pass that final test.

Bible Understanding Key: Mankind's conversion will be genuinely and thoroughly tested to assure that it is sincere, deep and permanent.

God is planning for eternity. His plan does take a (relatively) long time to put into place, because it is worth waiting for.

The final results - humanity will finally and fully learn of God and His plan and flock to His worship: Zechariah 8:20-23: This sounds a little like a modern-day flash mob! Remember we talked about natural Israel and spiritual Israel working together? Spiritual Israel is proving it can be done in this age. Here we see the role natural Israel will play in the goodness of the kingdom of God. They will be the first to be blessed. Watch Israel! When you see it begin to rise above all other nations, know it is God's plan and God's way. Every human being will have the opportunity to bring the full disclosure of truth home into their hearts. **The final result - God's righteousness, love and wisdom will prevail:** Psalms 145:17-21: This is a panorama of how God reacts with His beloved creation and it is magnificent! The end result? *All flesh will bless His holy name forever and ever.*

Bible Understanding Key: The chaos and confusion in which we presently view God's Holy Book serves God's eternal purposes and will, according to that book, be ended so all of the human family will be able to live and thrive in peace and harmony!

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