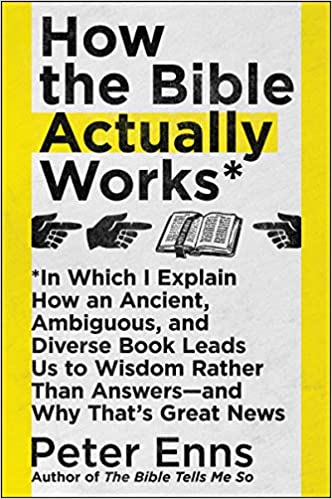
皮特·恩斯（Peter Enns）的這本新書副標題是：「在本書中我解釋了這古舊、含糊且多元化的書是如何引導我們獲得智慧而不是獲得答案的，以及爲什麼這就是大好消息。」 書皮的封面畫有三隻娛樂性質的小手指向一本聖經，這樣的做作正好與這本書閒聊式的、異想天開的描述相匹配。書皮的背面則承諾道：「以一個革命性的新方法理解聖經的使命。」



在《聖經該如何解釋》（How the Bible Actually Works）這本書中，皮特·恩斯（美國賓夕法尼亞州聖·戴維斯市東部大學的聖經研究教授）論述道：聖經的使命顛覆了幾個世紀以來大多數相信聖經的基督徒們對聖經的理解。如果你是這樣一位基督徒，你可能會覺得聖經能夠回答你的疑問。不，相反地，聖經重塑了你要問的問題。你可能會覺得耶穌成全了舊約。不，新約作者只是在以一種激進方式重構猶太人的祖傳的神，並且把對耶穌的信仰歸咎於祂。你可能會覺得聖經是在告訴你,神是怎樣的。不，新約只是講述了其他人在其他時間地點裡對神的思考。

恩斯認爲，神之於我們，只是出於我們的想像。祂只能是那樣，因爲我們被我們的理念和文化的侷限性所限制，然而神超越所有人類的認知。

陳腐的理念世界

歡迎來到這個被康德（(Immanuel Kant 1724-1804）200年前帶來的猛烈衝擊深深影響了的西方理念世界。不清楚爲什麼恩斯會給人們一種他剛剛發現這一觀點的印象。其實從兩百多年前起，基督徒們就已經開始持續抵制由康德造成的，甚至至今仍然留存的方法論上的無神論（暨聖經研究中的刻意的去神化，譯註），**恩斯只是單純地相信這一觀點：聖經裡神的話語必然，也無非是古人想強調無法言喻的東西所做的（嚴重修改美化後的）無用努力。**

全世界的基督徒，尤其是像在非洲、亞洲和拉丁美洲這樣基督教正在逐步興起的地方，都堅持認爲聖經反對這種論點，他們宣稱聖經作者是有從神而來的啓示；並且儘管聖經的行文具有文化侷限性，但其內容卻是超越的真理。 然而你從恩斯的處理手法中卻無法看到這種全球基督徒們堅信聖經是既有文化處境，同時也是從上而來的啓示寫作而成的這一信念。

「數十年來好像從沒有一個人對聖經的解釋是可以幫助到我、我的家人、我的朋友們、我的學生們，還有其他許許多多的人。」 (P17頁) 如果恩斯的這一發現是對的，那這書確實是一本有需要的書。恩斯提出這樣的觀點向愚昧的基督世界（就是無法有效解釋自己的聖經的基督教世界）扔出了救生圈： 「我在聖經中所讀到的上帝，他不是上帝真正的樣子——是一些永恆的抽象概念，僅此而已。上帝是人所想像出來的，並被古時那些有信心的人在他們的時間和空間中再重構 (124-125頁) 。所以我們有著 「神聖的使命......就是在此時此地重新構想這個上帝以跟隨聖經的帶領」 (125頁) 。恩斯又補充到： 「好了，以上基本上總結了整本書的內容」 (125頁) 。

恩斯通過偷換概念的方式來證明對他的書的需要。比如說，在上述的引用中，有誰通過讀聖經來思考上帝只是「永恆的抽象概念，僅此而已」？從創世記到啓示錄，聖經都很明確的說了上帝是位格性的存在，不是亞里士多德的不動的推動者（ Aristotle’s Unmoved Mover，指亞里士多德哲學體系中的引起運動而自身不被推動的本體，譯註）。還有，也不是大部分的人費勁地打開聖經去讀只是爲了否定上帝，也沒有誰認爲聖經是「包含規則和一成不變信息的一勞永逸之書」（167頁）。最核心的福音信息是：得救是因著信、靠著恩典，不是遵守律法。聖經本身不支持對律法的無條件順服（彌迦書 6:6-7；馬太福音23:23）。聖經關於救贖的信息一直存在於整個敘事中，而不是神來之筆般的「一成不變信息」。

時代的產物

另一方面，若聖經內容單單只是古時人的想法，那它就只是「一成不變的資料」而已，那麼對於後來的人也就沒有任何讀它的意義了。可憐的耶穌，他將自己的生命全部賭在了他所讀所行的舊約上，然後作了上帝又真又活的見證（所有的這些在恩斯眼裡只是受限於文化背景下的隱喻）。

如果我們濾除偷換概念的部分、錯誤的二分法、對存敬畏之心的聖經讀者誇張演繹的形像，恩斯在這本書中還是有一些有根據的觀點的。是的，基督對於那些知道他、愛他和追隨他的人來說就是智慧（哥林多前書1:30，參見書中11、13、205頁）。但是不幸的是，至少在這本書中，基督對於關乎實際的想法和人生決定所起到的作用好像比基督的聖潔和對於救贖的事奉更顯眼。而且既然恩斯如此的輕視聖經在當下社會的權威性，那麼已經沒有那麼多的「智慧」可以用來定義根據聖經的直接教導的「基督就是智慧」是什麼意思了。

讀者可能通過這本書適度地去推斷：所謂「基督」，應當要認爲是我們在經歷各樣掙扎後也能最終達到的那種好且必然的「智慧」。基於這個觀點，按照它所表達的智慧，那麼基督不再是聖經中所說的我們個人的救主，也不是爲我們被釘死在十字架上又從死裡復活、現今坐在天父右邊的中保了。我發現恩斯試圖塑造的好處是，我們變得在道德上、還有可能是認知上更好。但因著恩斯所認爲聖經中的智慧，是出於對基督徒所宣信的聖經的懷疑主義，因此恩斯貶低的「智慧」，其實是和基督教歷史中的眾多懷疑主義所以爲的基督等同。

「我們所有關於神的語言，包括那些聖經作者，都無可避免地被人當下處境中怎麼思想怎麼談論給深深地影響——即使他們所談論的是不被時間空間所束縛的那一位」（276頁）。那就奇怪了，我們爲什麼還需要聖經。畢竟，即使是說到耶穌，諸如 「主、救主、帶來和平和恩典的好消息的人」 這樣的術語，也只不過是 「（模仿了）羅馬帝國爲了捧高榮耀的凱撒而對他說的語言」 (276頁) 。

使徒保羅聲稱到：「**人被聖靈感動，說出神的話來**」 （彼得後書1:21）。恩斯則固執己見地認爲，作者只是在模仿他們文化下的語言。

這本書對於它所反駁的內容表現的很不尊重（對於認識神的知識，在關鍵知識上都是有目擊者所確定，並亞伯拉罕一族的集體記憶，絕大部分都是被忠實且壯闊地記錄在聖經中）並且對於它所斷定的事表達膚淺：「不管我們任何人是否覺得聖經是上帝啓示性的話語，我們都應該退一步去想一想聖經所描繪的無限的神是基於受限於文化下的思想」 （276頁）。

**能想像到的最受限於文化的想法就是在閱讀聖經時，卻視它不超過後現代懷疑主義聖經學的許可。**如果把這個學問傳授給天真且容易受騙的大一新生等級的聽眾是這本書的目的的話，那麼這本書很有效的傳達了它所包含的信息。

編注：皮特·恩斯曾是費城威斯敏斯特神學院（WTS）的舊約教授、副教務長，因立場和著作否定聖經的權威性與無誤性在2008年遭到停職，後執教於東部大學（一所神學上屬自由派的的基督教大學）。　譯：Aisheng；校：JFX。

https://tc.tgcchinese.org/article/bible-actually-works-peter-enns

If This Is How the Bible Works, the Bible Doesn’t Work at All

　　Here is the subtitle to Peter Enns’s new book: In Which I Explain How An Ancient, Ambiguous, and Diverse Book Leads Us to Wisdom Rather Than Answers—and Why That’s Great News. That rambling, whimsical description fits with the hokey front dust jacket, which sports three little hands pointing to a “Holy Bible.” The back cover promises “A Revolutionary New Way of Understanding the Mission of the Bible.”

　　In How the Bible Actually Works, Enns—professor of biblical studies at Eastern University, St. Davids, Pennsylvania—argues that the mission of the Bible is to subvert much of what Bible-believing Christians through the centuries have thought about the Bible. If you’re such a Christian, you may think the Bible has answers to your questions. No, it rather reshapes the questions you ask. You may think Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament. No, New Testament writers just radically reimagined the Jews’ ancestral God and imputed beliefs about Jesus to him. You may think the Bible tells you what God is like. No, it just recounts what other people in other places and times thought about God.

　　“God” to us is who we imagine him to be. That’s all he can be, because we’re bound by our conceptual and cultural limitations, while God is beyond all human knowing.

Threadbare Conceptual World

　　Welcome to the conceptual world ushered in with a vengeance in the West more than 200 years ago with Immanuel Kant (1724–1804). It’s not clear why Enns gives the impression that he has just discovered this outlook. Since that time Christians have been pushing back against what became, and in Kant’s train remains today, methodological atheism in biblical studies. Enns simply embraces the thesis that the Bible’s God-talk is necessarily no more than futile ancient efforts (heavily redacted and embellished) to articulate the ineffable.

Christians the world over, especially in Africa and Asia and Latin America where Christianity is growing, hold that the Bible defies this thesis by claiming revelatory insights for its writers and culturally conditioned but transcendentally informed truth for its contents. But you won’t find in Enns’s treatment the international fellowship of robust Christian belief in Scripture as both a culturally located and also heavenly originated compilation of writings.

This a book that certainly needed writing, if Enns’s observation is true: “No one seems to be explaining the Bible in ways that would have helped me, my family, my friends, my students, and many others I have known over the last few decades” (17). Enns throws the benighted world of Christianity (which can’t explain its own Bible helpfully) a life ring in the form of this insight: “The God I read about in the Bible is not what God is like—in some timeless abstraction, and that’s that—but how God was imagined and then reimagined by ancient people of faith living in real times and places” (124–25, italics original). So we have “the sacred responsibility . . . to follow this biblical lead by reimagining God in our time and place” (125, italics original). Enns adds, “There. That pretty much sums up the entire book” (125).

Enns justifies the need for this book by setting up straw men. For example, in the quote above, who reads the Bible to think of God “in some timeless abstraction, and that’s that”? The Bible from Genesis to Revelation is clear that God is a person, not Aristotle’s Unmoved Mover. Nor do most people go to the trouble to open a Bible and read about God just to dismiss him. Or who views the Bible as “a once-for-all book of rules and static information” (167)? The core gospel message is that salvation is by grace through faith, not by keeping rules. The Bible itself polemicizes against sterile compliance with regulations (Mic. 6:6–7; Matt. 23:23). The Bible’s saving message is borne along on narrative, not plopped down as “static information.”

Product of Its Times

On the other hand, the Bible instantly becomes “static information” if it depicts no more than what ancient people thought, with no necessary authority for anyone reading it thereafter. Pity Jesus, who staked so much on what he read and applied from the Old Testament as the true and living written testimony of God (all just culturally bound metaphors for Enns).

If we strain out the straw men, false dichotomies, and parodied images of God-fearing Bible readers, Enns makes some valid points. Yes, Christ is wisdom (1 Cor. 1:30; see 11, 13, 205) to those who know, love, and follow him. Unfortunately, at least in this book, Christ’s contribution to practical thought and life decisions seems to overshadow his divine being and soteriological ministry. And since Enns downplays so much of the Bible as authoritative for the present, there isn’t much sure “wisdom” left there to define what “Christ is wisdom” might mean based on the Bible’s direct teachings.

Readers may reasonably infer from this book that “Christ” should now be thought of as the good and necessary “wisdom” we eventually arrive at in our struggles. On this view, the Bible doesn’t so much give us “Christ” understood as our personal Lord, our crucified and risen mediator at the right hand of God the heavenly Father, as it imparts a certain wisdom. The benefit I observe Enns trying to model is that we become ethically and perhaps cognitively more adept. But since so much of the wisdom Enns finds in Scripture arises from skepticism about what Christians have believed it to say, Enns has reduced the “wisdom” that he equates with Christ to skepticism toward (too) much found in historic Christianity.

“All our language of God, including that of the biblical writers, is inescapably enmeshed with how people of any time think and talk about anything—even as they speak of One who is not bound by time and place” (276). One wonders, then, why we even bother with the Bible. After all, even when it comes to Jesus, terms like “Lord, Savior, and bringer of the Good News of peace and grace,” just “[mimic] the language of the Roman Empire to speak of glorious Caesar as a means of pointing beyond Caesar” (276).

The apostle Peter claimed: “men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet. 1:21). Enns holds: writers just mimicked the language of their culture.

This book is flippant with respect to what it dismisses (cognitive knowledge of God confirmed at key points by eyewitnesses and the social memory of the Abrahamic heritage, much of it faithfully and spectacularly recorded as Scripture) and shallow with respect to what it affirms: “Whatever any of us think about the Bible as God’s inspired word, it should make us step back and reflect for a moment that scripture itself portrays the boundless God in culturally bound ways of thinking” (276).

The most culturally bound thinking imaginable is to look at the Bible and see no more in it than postmodern skeptical biblical scholarship permits. If conveying that scholarship to a naïve and gullible college-freshman-level audience is the goal, the book communicates its message effectively.

https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/reviews/bible-actually-works-peter-enns/