

Have You Ever Considered God as a Storyteller?

In case you weren't aware, God is an author. He wrote a book.

Not only that, His book is a best-seller. In fact, the Bible is on record as the all-time best-seller in publishing history. If you haven't read it, you should check it out. It has everything you need in a good story: action, adventure, romance, intrigue, betrayal, death, rebirth, the salvation of the whole world—His book is seriously epic. It's so good, in fact, that God never felt the need to write a sequel. His one and only book is pure perfection.

Being an author and professional storyteller myself (although slightly less successful than God), I see His book through a lens that's different from a lot of other people's lenses. While it is certainly the Word of God—and I stake my entire life on what is written on those pages—still, I cannot separate myself from the fact that it is also ... well ... a book.

While countless others have ruminated on the meanings of the stories, concepts and applications of His book, I want to take a look at it from a slightly different perspective. I want to understand more about the Author based on His decisions and actions within the book. Let me explain what I mean.

As every storyteller will confirm, countless hours go into a composition to make sure that it is accurate and entertaining. But beyond that, we also work hard on every nuance to make sure that the story says exactly what we want it to say. This is because a story reveals as much about its author as it does about the characters created within. I always tell my students that they can't hide their true selves from me: All I need to do is read their stories.

I believe that all stories carry various levels of this

“author-stamping,” as I call it. Every story I write, for instance, no matter what it is about, will always wind up being about redemption. That is because this is what means the most to me in life. Along the way, I might write about things that push the boundaries of what some Christians deem “acceptable.” I am not afraid to write a swear word, for instance. Nor am I afraid to paint a realistic picture of a terrible act, even if it might upset someone.

This is a reflection of my upbringing more than anything else. I was raised in the home of an artist and taught from a very young age that the status quo is not something I am to strive for. Great art meets people and moves people right where they are. When I write something, I want to explore the tensions of faith and the human experience. My work as a storyteller involves careful crafting, certainly, but it is also both an artistic decision and a window into my soul.

It is my contention, then, that God, who is the greatest artist of all time, reveals much of Himself in His story. And since He is such a complete artist, I could spend my lifetime searching His book and continue to come up with new revelations of His character hidden inside. The fact is, God basically begs us to pick apart His book in this way, as He not only writes about a wide variety of characters, lowlifes and outlaws, but actually goes so far as *to enter His own story physically*. Only God could dare do such a thing.

Everything we will study here hangs on that assumption—that God is revealing His own character through His interaction with the characters He has created and what He chose to write about that interaction.

I think, for instance, it’s a fairly safe assumption that God had more interaction and conversations with Moses than are recorded in the Bible. One can only conclude that He had a good reason for what He kept and what He cut.

Or what about Enoch? I think that Enoch is one of the top five most fascinating characters in the Bible, and God basically gives us a couple of sentences about the guy! “Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and then he was no more because God took him away.” That’s it? Enoch is one dude I will be making a beeline for as soon as I get to heaven. I guarantee you that he has some stories that will make your hair stand on end.

But why doesn’t God tell any of them to us? Anyone who walks with God for 300 years with that kind of intimacy has to have seen some wild stuff. The only other person in the Bible to get that kind of an exit is Elijah, and next to Jesus, he takes the cake for wacky miraculous encounters.

So why is God silent on Enoch? You might have different interpretations of many of the things we discuss in this book—which is what makes God that much greater a storyteller! But in the case of Enoch, I wonder if God is showing us that sometimes He wants things to be just between us and Him.

If God has shown us anything, it’s that He is a God who yearns to be intimate with us. That is the whole reason He sent His Son here. He wants a relationship with us, but we are such idiots, so dirty and sinful, that in order for that to happen, someone had to pay for our idiocy. That He sent His own Son to do it reveals much of His character.

*Excerpted from Finding God in the Bible. **Darren Wilson** is the founder of Wanderlust Productions. He has an MFA in screenwriting from Regent University. Wilson is currently the artist-in-residence at Judson University, and he speaks at churches and conferences with increasing regularity. He is the director of the feature films Finger of God, Furious Love, and Father of Lights.*