

GOOD NEWS

Unlimited



The Light That Shines In The Dark
CHRIST ALONE • GRACE ALONE • FAITH ALONE • SCRIPTURE ALONE

EDITORIAL . . .

“Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33)

Jesus spoke these words when he was about to leave his disciples. Though the first dark clouds of a terrible storm were looming over him, his love for those who put their faith in him stimulated him to take care of their fears as they began to be anxious.

In order to console and encourage them, Jesus bade the disciples focus, not on their own uncertain reserves of courage and resolve, but on himself. There is no support; no succor, like Christ. Nowhere else is there to be found such encouragement; such inspiration; such incitement to boldness, perseverance, and hope.

“I have overcome the world,” said Jesus. One cannot read such words, nor imagine anyone saying them and getting away with it, but Christ. In any other’s mouth they would be ridiculous, arrogant. The most admirable among our friends and acquaintances, who dared a similar utterance, would fetch from us a cynical smile! Yet, Christ claims to overcome the world, and somehow we think he has a right to speak so.

What is this ‘world’ that Jesus thinks he has conquered? It is evil in all its forms. It is evil manifest in Satan who is called the ‘god of this world.’ It is the spirit of rebellion against God’s reign, that has seeped and soaked its way into every soul. It is a fundamental enmity against God, expressed in all human cultures and customs. It has been passed into law in legislative chambers. It shows its many faces in fashions, music, art, and sport. It is taught in universities, published in books, preached and proliferated in media. In war, it abandons its subtleties; and, in a carnival of self-indulgence, rolls thunderously across the human landscape, leaving blood and sorrow in its train.

When Jesus spoke of the world, he signified the human scene arranged and conducted according to spiritual forces which lurk unseen, and immensely influence human behavior. Paul spoke of these forces in Ephesians 6:12: “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.”



Ron Allen

The ‘world’ is formidable, not merely as the enemy without. It has found a way into our own house; our family; our own heart. This is why life can be so pernicious; so disastrous. Every effort to build Utopia founders, because even as the foundations are laid, the world in all its balefulness is there. Every Camelot has its Lancelot and Guinevere.

The ‘world’ spoils the human lot. Every idea, every sentiment, every plan, every device, every effort, every hope is tainted with a spirit that refuses to be ruled by God. The blighted nature of existence has its roots in this tragic fact. We are all accomplices in a sad tangle of harm done to one another.

All of this—and more—Jesus overcame. This is part of what we celebrate at Christmas. Christ’s ‘overcoming’ means that there is an answer to every problem, every difficulty. It means that all is not in vain; that grief and pain have a resolution; that life is worth the effort since there is Someone who is greater than the worst thing that could happen.

May Christ’s words bring peace, cheer, and hope this festive season.

Ron J. Allen.

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The Light That Shines in the Dark

By Ron Allen

“The light shines on in the dark, and the darkness has never mastered it.”
(John 1:5)

When human beings have thought and spoken about the dark, it has mostly been associated with what is threatening or frightening. Perhaps this is because for most of history we have had no way of seeing in the dark, and are thereby made more vulnerable.

John’s prologue recalls the language of creation—*“In the beginning.”* The world takes form in a drama that sees light emerging over against a preceding darkness. John sees Jesus as a new beginning. So the “word” takes form as “light” in what otherwise would have remained darkness.


With just a few sentences, John introduces us to some of the major themes of his gospel. Jesus is ‘light’ and ‘life’ (John 8:12). People are urged to believe in the words: *“Put your trust in the light”* (John 12:36). Parallel to John’s presentation of Jesus as ‘light,’ is the thought that without him, people are left with the bleak alternative of having to live in the dark. *“He that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life”* (John 8:12).

In the fourth gospel, darkness is the arena of hazard and fate. The person who walks in the dark *“does not know where he is going”* (John 12:35). In the darkness, men and women are ignorant of God. *“When a man looks at me he sees the one who sent me, so that he doesn’t stay in the darkness”* (John 12:45+46). The darkness is the dim apprehension of God to which all mankind was confined before Christ. It includes the shadowy typology of the Jewish religion, and the blurry expectations of the prophets. It embraces the obstinacy of people who *“love darkness rather than light”* (John 3:19). It is realized in the unhappy state of relationships, where men and women do not love each other, but live in a settled state of hatred. *“Whoever hates his brother walks in the darkness”* (1 John 2:9-11). *“But if we walk in the light we have fellowship with one another”* (1 John 2:7).

The darkness, then, is ignorance of God, hostility to him; the dysfunctional state of human relationships in which people squabble and fail to care for one another. It is a disordered state; an unruly abyss, symbolized by the situation before the world was made.

According to our Scripture, the light has shone, and continues to do so. Christmas has come to pass because the world now stands bathed in the illumination of a one splendid LIFE. *“In him was life, and that life was the light of men”* (John 1:4). In Jesus, God has shone upon us, and he is shining still.

The first Christmas marked the beginning of a special era of enlightenment for the inhabitants of the world, but Christ had shone before that time, too. The Jewish people saw his predawn gleaming in their own history. The wise men from the East are an example of some outside Judaism who glimpsed the light. Others can be named: Melchizedek, of Salem, was one. Ruth the Moabitess, another. The widow of Zarephath; Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon; the Queen of Sheba. Each of these persons encountered at least one other person, in whom the light of God was manifest. Melchizedek met Abraham. Ruth met Boaz. The widow of Zarephath met Elijah the prophet. Nebuchadnezzar met Daniel. The queen of Sheba met Solomon. The light came to them in human form. It was just a faint glow, but enough for them to know they had encountered the divine. They were witnessing premonitions of Christ. The light of life was shining on them.

When Jesus came, that which had been in others a faint glimmer, became in him the Sun of righteousness. The myriad indications of God, that had sparked here and there, through time and tide, were now concentrated in one brilliant manifestation. The world has not been the same since. The darkness that brooded over humanity before Christ has been forced back. There are still many murky places, but wherever Christ has become known; wherever he is loved; the shadows are in retreat. *“The light has shone and the darkness has not been able to master it.”* 

When Jesus came, that which had been in others a faint glimmer, became in him the Sun of righteousness.

2

The Light That Shines in the Dark

By Ron Allen



“The light shines on in the dark and the darkness has never mastered it.”
(John 1:5)

Jesus is the light of the world. In all that is fine and uplifting in every religion and every culture, Jesus has shone. Even though there are many gloomy and sinister forces, they have not been able to put out the light of Christ.

There are days when the darkness is palpable. In Tasmania, a man with a history of mental illness takes a high-powered rifle to a tourist area, and with cold precision, guns down 37 people before the carnage is stopped. A young man loses his wife and all his children in the massacre, but the whole nation is drawn to him because he finds a way to face his loss without bitterness; even with compassion for the perpetrator. The light shines in the dark.

Yitzsak Rabin was a warrior; a man of blood. By force of arms he sought to defend his land and people. In the last part of his life he became a man of peace. He was willing to give up some of the spoils of war, in order that his family might not live under threat of being blown to bits, or maimed. He was assassinated by one of his own people. But he lit a spiritual flame for peace, in the hearts of many. The light shines in the dark.

Lou March was a student in religious studies at Yale. He became dissatisfied with academia. He left school and went to work for the people of East Harlem. He infiltrated and won the confidence of youths in a gang called the Untouchables. One night a 'rumble' began between the Untouchables and another gang called the Playboys. Lou mediated and violence was averted; life and limb were spared. But some resented Lou's interference. He was set upon by gang members and beaten to death. Darkness closed in. It seemed complete. But later, at Lou's funeral, hundreds came to mourn. They testified that they had seen a light in Lou, and they resolved to perpetuate the values he had lived and died for. The light shines in the dark.

Years ago, a Chinese girl became a Christian. Her parents were Confucian, and they were wealthy. Soon after this girl's

conversion to Christ, her father lost all his money. Things were very bleak for the family. One day another wealthy businessman came to their home. He placed a large sum of his money on the table and said to the girl's father, "I will give you all this money, if you will give me your daughter as my secondary wife." The father was very willing to comply, but he would not force his daughter. He looked at her hoping she would agree. It was a terrible strain for her; to have the material welfare of her parents at her disposal. But she refused. She kept her sacred self; she maintained her integrity. The light shines in the dark.


During the war in the Pacific, many thousands of British and Australian troops were captured and held by the Japanese army. Many of them were forced to work on the construction of the Burma railway line.

Some of the worst human suffering of the war occurred there.

Towards war's end, allied POWs were waiting at a railhead, when a train pulled in. It was loaded with Japanese soldiers. They were crammed into the cars like cattle.

They were all in various stages of dysentery and other sicknesses. Allied prisoners were amazed that the Japanese high command would treat its own men in this fashion. Though they were weak and sore from inhumanities they had themselves endured, they walked over to the Japanese and did what they could to relieve their sufferings. The light shines in the dark.

All over the world, in every nation, every era, every tradition, no matter how overcast with despair, Christ has shone, and he shines still. Jesus may be the Son of David, but he does not belong alone to the Hebrews. He is the son of man. He belongs to humanity. Just as his law was written in the story of the Jews, so he reveals himself in human life wherever it is. Not one 'jot or tittle' of his shining has been eclipsed.

Jesus stands for a level of human life that exceeds the common. It towers above what is usual and ordinary. His life is LIFE. Life as revealed by Jesus is Godly. We feel that God is near when we see the Christlife. John, and others who were with him, saw Jesus, and they said: "We have seen the life. *“and the life was the light of men”* (John 1:4). 

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3

The Light That Shines in the Dark


By Ron Allen

Jesus brightened the world when he taught that the highest reality is spiritual. Though he had no money or property, he was notoriously fulfilled, and happy in himself. He was radiant with the consciousness of God. In him was light.

Jesus brought light when he taught that it is divine to serve. Some religions do not have that. For example, in Hinduism the highest man must be like Brahma, who does not serve. The greatest man is the one who sits apart, separate from other lives. Jesus taught that there is self-giving in the heart of God. He was among us as one who serves. In him was light.

Jesus drove back the shadows when he took love to inconceivable heights. For him love was much more than the

elemental drive to possess another person. He spoke of love in terms of bearing other people's pain. For Jesus, "Love suffers long, and is kind. Love never gives up. Love bears all things; endures all things, believes all things." After seeing love enacted by Jesus, John said, "God is love" (1 John 4:8). "Whoever lives in love lives in God" (1 John 4:16). "This is how we know what love is: Jesus laid down his life for us" (1 John 3:16).

Those who produced the New Testament obtained their ideas about God from Jesus. After being with him, they developed the conviction that they had seen the light; they had beheld the glory of God in the face of Jesus. 

A Time for Gratitude

It is worth considering, that at the very time Napoleon was squandering thousands of lives on his battlefields, William Wilberforce was wearing himself out trying to kill the trade in African slaves. With feeble health, and surrounded by bitter antagonism, Wilberforce waged a noble battle, which he won at a time when Napoleon was still at the height of his glory.

The tombs of the two heroes advertise their differences. Napoleon's symbolizes pomp and pride, while Wilberforce's memorial remembers one "who removed from England the guilt of the African slave trade."

Napoleon saw life as an opportunity for self-enlargement. Wilberforce saw in life a chance for self-giving. Napoleon treated the world as if it owed him plenty. Wilberforce assumed he owed the world everything he could give.

The Christmas season offers us an opportunity to reflect on our privileges. Do we have any? If so, what are they? Those who live in the Christian tradition have more to be thankful for than most. The familiar images of the Christ child that abound in pageant and store windows at this time of the year, ought not fail to remind us that the gifts of life are not such as have been dropped on us by accident. It is not as if they have come fortuitously, and cost nothing.

We, who are surrounded by the advantages of technology, civic liberties, cultural gains and legacies,

physical comforts, a rich spiritual tradition, are the inheritors of privileges that were purchased at the supreme price. "No blessings trail can be traced far back without running upon blood. At the end of every road down which a benediction comes there stands a cross" (H.E. Fosdick).

It is far too easy to take for granted the goodness that permeate our lives, simply because Christ has been preached among us for all of our history. Think on it now. Has Christ enriched you through the good news of his everlasting mercy, and his justifying righteousness? In spite of difficulties common to all men and women, do you face the future with certainty and hope? Is your daily round of work and domestic duty filled with joy? Have you been set free? And if religion was once for you a dirge, is it now a song?

We are so used to receiving. The grace of our Lord Jesus is such a mountain of gifts compared to that which we have returned to him. Good News Unlimited is grateful for the thankfulness expressed in gifts to its ministries. Not all can give the same amount, but all can give in the same spirit. During this festive season, will you consider again GNU and the preaching of the gospel, as you distribute your gifts?

May God bless you.
Ron J. Allen

4

The Light That Shines in the Dark

By Ron Allen



“The light shines on in the dark, and the darkness has never mastered it.”

(John 1:5)

That is, the light has shone, and is shining still. Then John goes on to say, “The darkness has never mastered it.” There is a change of tense between the ‘shining,’ and what the darkness could not do. Whereas the shining is continuous, the tense of the verb ‘to master,’ is that of a single action. It has a oneness to it. Therefore, John 1:4+5 may be understood this way: Whereas the light of God has shone—and continues to shine in Christ—in a critical encounter between the two, darkness was unable to put the light out. There has been a decisive contest in which darkness was unable to subvert the light and turn it into an instrument of darkness. John is very likely thinking of the cross, and the resurrection that followed it. The thought is not unlike that of Revelation, where Calvary is painted with an apocalyptic’s brush. “Michael and his angels fought against the dragon. And the dragon fought and his angels: *But he was not strong enough*” (Revelation 12:7+8).

It was the conviction of the first Christian communities, that the decisive battle of history had been fought at the cross of Christ. There, darkness had trained all its weaponry upon the Light of the world—envy, pride, greed, lust for power, deceit, and political expediency. Added to this deadly array, and to heighten their lethal capacity was the fact that they were given a religious dress. The attack was launched in the name of God. When the moment came for the blow to be struck, all hell broke loose in an orgy of torture, floggings, brutal acts and brutal language. Hate bared its fangs. Violence bullied, swaggered, strutted, and blustered.


On the other side of the field, the royal law of love

marshaled its forces. Its weapons seemed weak and ineffective. We can name some of them. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter—that’s one. He was reviled, but he reviled not again—that’s another. He was rich, yet for our sakes he was made poor; he took on him the form of a servant; “father forgive them, for they know not what they do.” What brand of munitions can be used to fight this? While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. What could darkness do against these blazing armaments?

As darkness moved in for the kill, the Light spoke, as if he had already conquered. To the thief beside him, he said: “You will be with me in paradise.” Love beamed out from the cross, and the darkness could not master it.

What does this mean to us now? It means that no matter what shadows are cast across your path, they cannot forever remain. You may be worried about your job. You may be worried because you think you will lose your job, or that you already have no job. You may be anxious because your job is to you a daily horror of great darkness. You may be suffering because you are ill, or because one you love is ill. You may be in a relationship that is bringing you nothing but pain. Some days, the darkness about you may be so thick that you wish you were dead.

The good news is that all of these black enemies are part of a legion that has already played its last card—and lost. All that is somber and obscure, concentrated itself on Jesus the day he died. Nothing that is negative, cruel, unjust, grievous, or lonely, that anyone is suffering right now, is destined to remain as a permanent feature of the human condition.

Christmas means that the darkness has been irreversibly pierced. The Light has appeared, and the human story is moving slowly but surely to a consummation described in Scripture’s last pages with the words: “*There will be no more night.*” 

**... the light of God has shone—
and continues to shine in Christ—
in a critical encounter between
the two, darkness was unable
to put the light out.**

WHEN HEAVEN CAME TO EARTH

By Desmond Ford

Heaven was never nearer to men than when God the Son walked on earth. But it is important to notice that he did not come to bring a new law or gospel. The “everlasting gospel” does not change, and those who think the Gospel writers present something contrary to the New Testament are certainly in error. The attentive student of the Gospels will find constant illustrations of Christ’s own words: “*Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfill*” (Matthew 5:17). He offered to men the same prescriptions for their ills that he had held out to them through the ages by the prophets.

The evidence for this is not hard to find. First, hardly a paragraph recording the words of our Lord does not have its roots in the Old Testament. Second, from the opening of each Gospel narrative, the writer draws upon the substance, and even the wording of the Old Testament. All are familiar with the way in which John’s account begins with the opening words of Genesis: “*In the beginning,*” but not all have noticed that the other Gospels all seem to be pointing back to Genesis. Matthew 1:1 reminds one of Genesis 5:1, a genealogy beginning and ending with those whom the New Testament declares to be types of Christ (see Romans 5:14).

The story of Israel in exile in Egypt and her subsequent return and desert wandering—including the tarrying by Mount Sinai—the Gospel narrative mirrors as it chronicles the childhood exile, the wilderness temptation, and the Sermon on the Mount. Some scholars contend that the purposeful restriction of the genealogy at the commencement of the New Testament to forty-two names, is an allusion to the forty-two stations in the wilderness pilgrimage of Israel, and to the forty-two years of wandering. Certainly, the same Matthew does not hesitate to draw from statements about the holy nation of old when referring to experiences of its newborn King. Matthew 2:20 is an allusion to Exodus 2:23 and 4:19, where we read of the death of the king that sought to slay Moses, and who had been responsible for his flight and exile.

The Sermon on the Mount, itself, offers proof that the New Testament message harmonizes with the Old, and that the Lawgiver is also the Savior in both Testaments. Christ’s Sermon magnifies the Torah in all its implications, so much so that when we read immediately following, of a leper kneeling at the feet of Jesus and requesting healing, we sense its complete appropriateness. Which of us can read the Sermon without being aware that Isaiah’s portrayal of the leprosy of sin fits us all? “*The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds and bruises, and putrefying sores*” (Isaiah 1:5+6).

Did the great Teacher echo the principles of substitution, imputation, and representation that he had taught with the Old

Testament sanctuary service? Scholars often say that Christ came to make the atonement rather than explain it. . . . Nevertheless, we do find, in the sayings of Christ, positive evidence of his advocacy of the redemption principles, first set forth in the writings of Moses. Consider his words to Nicodemus: “*As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life*” (John 3:14+15). Christ thus asserts that he is to be treated as Satan deserves, as sin itself, as a substitute for the race.

The record of his temptation in the wilderness purposefully alludes to the temptation of the first Adam in order for us to perceive that here we have the second Representative of the race. The statement of Matthew 10:41—“*He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet’s reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man’s reward*”—I believe, implies the principle of imputation, in which one person

receives what is due another, and agrees with Jesus’ words to Nicodemus suggesting that he would suffer because of imputed guilt, that men might be saved through imputed righteousness.

Even more clearly do we perceive the healing gospel in Christ’s acceptance of penitent sinners. He opens the kingdom of heaven to all such by his first official pronouncement at the ordination of the twelve: “*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. . . .*” Blessed also are all who mourn because of their sins and who “*hunger and thirst after righteousness*” (Matthew 5:3-6).

In answer to an accusation, “*This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them,*” Christ endorsed the charge by the three parables of the restoration of the lost. And not only his parables, but every miracle of healing prefigured the gospel at work.

The gospel is ever under attack. Satan intends to poison the one effective medicine for the world. Some would limit the meaning of Christ’s cross to a display, only, of the love of God. But the New Testament asserts his actual bearing of the guilt of the race, and suffering under the wrath of God, that God might be shown to be just, as well as the justifier of believers. To those tempted to deny substitution, we would suggest meditating on the records of Gethsemane and Calvary, particularly the account of the sinless one sweating great drops of blood as he contemplated the abyss made by sin, and then the ultimate cry, “*My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?*” Only the traditional understanding of the Christian church, that Christ was being treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as he deserves, explains those cryptic Scriptures. Note the words of scholar Leon Morris:

We must not water down an unpalatable saying. Vincent

***The Sermon
on the Mount, itself,
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Continued on page 8

THE DELAYS OF LOVE

By Desmond Ford

Franz Kafka pictures a man whose life is suddenly invaded by government officials. He finds himself facing problems for which he doesn't feel at all responsible. Again and again he goes to the authorities to try and have this thing settled. Why all these problems? What is the charge? Is he not innocent? Why all this trouble? But he can never find satisfaction or explanation. He can never find the meaning of his troubles. The story closes with this troubled, harassed man looking towards the government building. Suddenly, he sees a figure leaning out from an upper story window with arms outstretched. He wonders, "Is that God?" "Has he a message of truth, of love, of comfort?" "What does it mean?" And the story ceases.

Kafka is a European novelist whose books have great appeal to many because they picture the enigmatic nature of existence—as some would say, "The hell of existence." All his stories picture life as overwhelmingly difficult. He is trying to say that life is problematic; to say the least, that life for many people, at times, is sheer agony and hell.

From the moment we leave the womb, everything we do or say or think is an endeavor to get back there. We long for the warmth, comfort, ease, and sufficiency of our mother's body. It had no rough edges. But life is full of rough edges.

Only the Bible with its emphasis on faith, hope, and love, has the full truth about psychosomatic medicine. A broken heart can mean a broken life, and bring death. Scripture says, "A cheerful heart is a good medicine, but a downcast spirit dries up the bones" (Proverbs 17:22). The Old Testament speaks about God appearing in a thornbush to Moses. That is tremendously encouraging. All of us are seen by some people as thornbushes. So life can be rough.

Every Christian would like to believe that God is as harmless as a koala bear, as yielding as Santa Claus, as warm, as sufficient, as painless as the mother's womb, but he is not. In the beginning, we were ejected from a place of security because God wanted us to grow. He wasn't content with us just being a mass of cells that were not contributing. So we were


thrown out into the cold, into a hard and often cruel world, in order that we might grow.

There is not a Christian who has not prayed for years for certain things that God has not granted. We all have desires we think legitimate, yet God seems to ignore our requests. We all have burdens we would like lifted—maybe connected with health, maybe with family. It could be something to do with our lifework, some thorn in the flesh which we beseech the Lord each hour to lift, but he does not.

In the first verses of John 11, we read a story that casts a light on our predicament:

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, in the village of Mary and her sister Martha. It was Mary that anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent to him saying, "Lord, he whom you love, is ill." But when Jesus heard of it he said, "This illness is not unto death; it is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by means of it." Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister, and Lazarus. So when he heard that he, (Lazarus), was ill, Jesus stayed two days longer in the place where he was. Then after this he said to his disciples, "Let us go into Judea again."

What a strange story! "Lord, he whom thou lovest, is ill." And Jesus said, "Yes, so let's stay here." And the record says that he said it because he loved them so much. Here is the mystery of divine delays, the mystery of protracted pain for people whom Jesus loves. Christians should never think that if they are Christians they will never have any troubles. If that were true, no Christians would die, no Christians would get gray hair or need dentures or eyeglasses. And who wouldn't want to be a Christian under those conditions?

If Hezekiah could get ill, if the thief on the cross could suffer the agony of his legs being broken after being promised Paradise, if Job, the most perfect man in the East, could be covered with boils from head to feet, if Lazarus, whom Jesus loved, was ill, we should never find it strange that affliction is inevitable for all believers. Life is not a warm comfortable womb. Life is a growing place, and we grow best in pain. 

WHEN HEAVEN CAME TO EARTH

(Continued from page 7)

Taylor examines the passage and says (in my judgment, rightly),

It appears to be an inescapable inference that Jesus closely identified himself with sinners, and experienced the horror of sin to such a degree, that for a time, the closeness of his communion with the Father was obscured. The cry of dereliction must be considered in conjunction with the agony in Gethsemane. There, as Jesus prayed, his soul was in veritable torment. "he began to be greatly amazed, and sore troubled" (Mark 14:33). This is very forceful language. Of the word translated 'sore troubled,' J.B. Lightfoot says it 'describes the confused, restless, half-distracted state, which is produced by physical derangement, or by mental distress, such as grief,

shame, disappointment. . . . The death that Jesus died was full of horror, and no understanding of the atonement can be satisfactory which does not reckon with that. (The Cross in the New Testament pp. 47-49)

It is not true, as the moral influence theory of the atonement suggests, that Christ, by revealing the love of God, saves us. Rather, it is by saving us that he reveals divine love. The problem with the human race is not ignorance, but guilt, and only as a solution to that problem does the cross make sense.

The cross did not change God's feelings towards sinners, but it did change his relationship to them. We, ourselves, could not accept forgiveness unless first given by atonement. Since the cross both God and the believer can say, "Thou, O Christ, art all I want."

GNU CHAT ROOM

Sirs,

I have a question. In fact the particular verse that generated this question has been stuck in my head for years. It goes something like this: "Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one. . . ." (Galatians 3:20).

In spite of Titus 2:5, which has Christ as the mediator between two parties, I tend to see the context of the first quote, as a contrast between the first and second covenants. It seems to me that the new covenant is basically between the father and Christ, the Representative Man, so that both parties are in the one Christ. A covenant of one, for God is one, and God himself makes this covenant and meets the conditions. Kind of like God providing himself a lamb for sacrifice, and himself as the lamb of sacrifice.

A.A.

Here's my take on Galatians 3:20. The statement has specific reference to Israel's reception of the law through Moses. Because Israel was a multitude, it had to receive the law through a mediator (Moses). In contrast God acted for himself.

If Paul had wanted to make the point that a mediator is needed when there are two parties, he would have said something like: "A mediator does not represent one party but two." But the giving of the law at Sinai was not that kind of transaction. The angels that are mentioned were not God's representatives. God acted alone.

Because Moses was not acting just for himself, he is not one but many, as compared to God who is one. God is sovereign, but not Moses. This point seems to have been made by Paul as part of an answer to the question: "What then was the purpose of the law?" The law's purpose can be understood in its subordination to the promise (v8,17). Though God is the sovereign disposer in both law and promise, law is seen as inferior since it is transmitted through Moses the intermediary. The promise was given to Abraham directly by God.

To Paul and his Jewish Christian contemporaries, Moses stood for law, and Christ stood for grace, or in this context, promise. The superiority of the new covenant over the old, is expressed in Christ's ascendancy over Moses, or in law's subservience to promise. Throughout the whole chapter (Galatians 3), the gospel shines in all its lustre, against the backdrop of the Mosaic revelation. Salvation, with all its blessings comes only as the law is the servant of gospel, and not the other way about.

Most of the above accords with your own perceptions. Thanks for the opportunity to correspond.

Ed.

****Question:** If Jesus secured our salvation at Calvary, why and for what is he interceding for us in the courts of heaven? I find from Scripture that he is, but I can't put a handle on why. Could you help me please?
B.F.

Ans. In the New Testament, Christ's work is expressed almost entirely in the language of the Jewish system of sacrifice and priesthood. It was inevitable that those who first began to understand Christ's achievements, find metaphors for the new covenant, in the old one. So, Jesus is "the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29); the "sacrifice of atonement" (Romans 3:25); and "our great high priest" (Hebrews 4:16).

The Jewish religion gave the first Christians a way of understanding the greatness of the salvation brought by Christ. Through their familiarity with the notions of sacrifice and priestly intercession, they learned that Jesus had accomplished once, what their religion had only aspired to do. Namely, bring worshipers into safe and permanent fellowship with God. (See Hebrews 7:19, 8:7, 9:1+2).

The ineffectuality of the Hebrew religion was never more apparent in the fact that those who were charged with the responsibility of achieving, for the people, a settled and inviolate relationship with God, could not do so because their priesthood was interrupted by their death (Hebrews 7:25). "He ever lives to make intercession," simply celebrates the fact that though Christ did die, his priesthood was not terminated by his death. Therefore, he is the one and only true priest. All that he has procured for us in death is eternally available to mankind because he lives. If Christ was still in his tomb, all that he had won for us would be locked up there with him. Only the one who was dead, and who is alive forevermore, can be our Savior, and the Savior of all who have been, or who will come after us.
Ed.

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CHRIST WAS RAISED TO LIFE!

By Roy Gee



“The Holy Spirit will come and help you, because the Father will send the Spirit to take my place.” (John 14:26 CEV)

In 1 Corinthians 15, the apostle Paul explains how we are to understand death and resurrection. He explains by showing the meaning of the death and resurrection of Christ. In Article One, we learned that the resurrection of Christ declares that the death of Christ was special and unique. It brought the forgiveness of sins. Now we learn that Christ is alive and available to every believer; and we, too, will be raised to life.

SECOND: THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST MEANS THAT CHRIST IS ALIVE Christ was the first to be raised to life (1 Corinthians 15:23)

Some say that because the Christian faith is 2,000 years old, it is outdated.

But only the dead are locked in the past. It is the living who are contemporary and up-to-date. The resurrection of Christ tells us that Jesus is as contemporary as we are—he is alive!

Christ with you through Spirit

During his ministry here on earth, Jesus could be in only one place at a time. He had to travel from Nazareth to Capernaum, or Bethany to Jerusalem.

Now, through the gift of the Holy Spirit, Christ is available to every believer wherever you might be. Jesus told his disciples:

Gospel and the Holy Spirit

The Spirit of God—the Spirit of Christ—is the **Holy** Spirit. The **Holy** Spirit cannot abide with that which is unholy. Only because of the gospel of Christ’s work on our behalf are we able to receive that **Holy** Spirit. In the gospel, we are declared as holy as Christ. His perfect righteousness is credited to us.

This is the only way fallen humans can receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Now, through the gospel, the living Christ is available to every believer.

Jesus is alive, and is your Savior, Shepherd, Friend, Companion, Guardian, Guide, and Rest.

C.S. Lewis compared the church and the secular government:

It is easy to think that the church has a lot of different objects—education, building, missions, holding services. Just as it is easy to think that the state has a lot of different objects—military, political, economic, and what not. But in a way things are much simpler than that. The state exists simply to promote and to protect the ordinary happiness of human beings in this life. A husband and wife chatting over a fire, a couple of friends having a game of darts . . . , a man reading a book in his own room or digging in his own garden—that is what the state is there for. And unless they are helping to increase and prolong and protect such moments, all the laws, parliaments, armies, courts, police, economics, etc., are simply a waste of time. In the same way the church exists for nothing else but to draw men into Christ. . . . If they are not doing that, all the cathedrals, clergy, missions, sermons, even the Bible, itself, are simply a waste of time. [C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*.]

Lewis suggests that “the church exists for nothing else but to draw men [people] into Christ.” Obviously, we can only draw people into Christ if Christ is alive.

Christ’s resurrection tells us that he is alive!

THIRD: THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST MEANS WE WILL BE RAISED His people will be raised to life when he returns (1 Corinthians 15:23)

In “Singin’ in the Rain” Gene Kelly sings to Debbie Reynolds, “You opened Heaven’s portal / Here on earth / For this poor mortal” (*You Are My Lucky Star*).

That’s quite a romantic line, but it also contains a great Christian truth.

Jesus, through his death and resurrection here on earth, has opened heaven to us poor mortals.

First of many

Though Jesus suffered, died, and rose alone, what he did, he did for others.

Jesus had no intention of keeping resurrection to himself.

In certain Christian traditions in the West, we tend to individualize salvation. But what Jesus did, he did for all his people—the community of believers.

He is the First of **many**. The general resurrection has already begun! Our final resurrection is absolutely sure because of the resurrection of Jesus.

Theologian at a movie

Thomas Long teaches theology in Atlanta, GA. He and his wife tiptoed away from the busy campus one afternoon to take in a movie.

They settled down with a large tub of popcorn between them (the \$32.50 size).

Just then, a gaggle of teens jostled into the row behind them. They were talking, teasing, and laughing together. When the coming attractions were showing, the kids were even more lively, as they loudly judged what was good and what was not.

Tom would turn and look at them good-naturedly once in a while to let them know they should not get too rowdy. When the feature began, the teens grew quiet, and Tom was comforted.

All suspense gone

But one of the teens had seen the movie already. She appointed herself official commentator.

“Omigosh,” she cried when the male star made his first appearance. “He is going to fall for her so-o-o hard!”

Tom and his wife suspected that there might be a romantic spark between the male and female stars—now it was confirmed for them.

“Look, look,” she cried a few moments later. “He forgot to put the key back under the mat. Did’ja see that? That’s how the cops are gonna catch him!”

Why bother watching any more? All dramatic suspense had swooshed out of the theater.

Drama of our resurrection remains

Professor Long says the Bible often injects comments on its

own stories. The Gospel of John often lets us know ahead of time what is to follow. “Make a note of Lazarus. His being raised is a prequel to Christ’s resurrection.” “Look out for that Judas. He’s a traitor.”

Paul tells us:

Just as we will die because of Adam, we will be raised to life because of Christ. Adam brought death to all of us, and Christ will bring life to all of us. But we must each wait our turn. Christ was the first to be raised to life, and his people will be raised to life when he returns.

(1 Corinthians 15:21-23 CEV)

All suspense is gone. We now know how the ending will turn out.

Yet the drama remains. What could be more exciting than this happy ending to human history?

We and all our loved ones—every brother and sister in Christ throughout all history—will be raised to life. Because Jesus was first raised to life there is going to be a day of reunion and joy that will stretch our senses beyond anything we’ve ever known!

Let’s order a pizza

Lee is a theology student. Some of his studies at seminary require that he assist at urban churches.

Lee’s father is a pastor of an inner-city church. Lee was recently home, and went jogging with his father in their urban neighborhood.

As they jogged, they shared experiences.

When they reached the park, it was time to run around the path once, then walk back home, cooling down.

Lee’s father said, “Hey, let’s order a pizza! There’s a phone here in the park. I can call ahead, and it will be delivered right after we get home.”

“Great,” said Lee, and they began to walk toward the phone in the park.

Take what you need

Suddenly, a homeless man stood in front of them. “Spare some change?” he asked.

Father reached into the pockets of his sweat pants and pulled out two handfuls of coins. He spread open his hands and said, “Here, take what you need.”

It was the homeless man’s lucky day. “I’ll take it all,” he said, and scooped up the coins.

As he walked away, Lee’s father realized he now had no change for the phone. “Pardon me,” he called to the retreating homeless man. “I need to make a call. Can you spare some change?”

The homeless man turned and spread open his two hands, revealing the coins. “Take what you need.”

Christ’s nail-scarred hands

In the death and resurrection of Christ, God is holding out both of his hands to us. “Take what you need.”

To those of us who most assuredly will dine with death, the living Jesus holds out his nail-scarred hands:

Christ has been raised to life!

. . . and Christ will bring life to all of us.

(1 Corinthians 15:20 & 22 CEV)



gracEmail

from Edward Fudge

GOD'S PLAN FOR OUR LIVES

A sister in New Mexico asks for comment concerning Psalm 139:16, in which the Psalmist writes: "Thine eyes have seen my unformed substance. In Thy book they were all written, the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them."

This ancient text assures us that God who made us also knows us intimately. God knows the number of our days and our months (Job 14:5). Our times are in his hand (Ps. 31:15). We were known to God before we were born -- even by name, according to some biblical examples. God knows those who take refuge in him (Nahum 1:7). Everything in our lives is under the Creator's sovereignty and control. I find great comfort in this assurance.

The person who hopes in God may confidently say, "The LORD will accomplish what concerns me," assured that God's "lovingkindness is everlasting" and that God will "not forsake" the person he himself has made (Ps. 138:8). He gives us sleep and he wakes us again (Ps. 3:5; 4:8). He protects us according to his own will and he gives us any success which we enjoy (Ps. 127:1-2). All health comes from God, and all healing (Ps. 103:1-5).

There are no "accidents" with God and there is no such thing as "luck." Nothing can happen to one of God's children without his permission and loving awareness. He grieves with us when we grieve. Sometimes he sorrows for us quite alone -- for he knows what is best for us even when we choose the ways and things that are not. "God works everything together for good for those who love him, who are called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28). In context, this statement looks back to God's choosing us before the world began, and it looks forward to his keeping us until eternity to come (Rom. 8:29-32).

None of this destroys our accountability, diminishes our responsibility or deprives us of the need and obligation to make right choices. Yet, in some way which we can believe although we do not fully understand, God is sovereign over our decisions and he empowers us to choose. These are truths for accepting, not for arguing, for praising, not for disputing. There are many things we do not know. But we know enough to thank and to worship God, who knows us so very well and who loves us so very much!

[Contact Edward Fudge at <Edward@EdwardFudge.com>
www.EdwardFudge.com/gracemail/subscribe.html <

Edward Fudge is the author of the modern classic on conditional immortality, *The Fire that Consumes*.

WAITING FOR HEAVEN

The adventure continues.

Gill, and her cats, Topsi and Turvi, are moving to Australia from the United States.

What seems like a simple thing proves to be full of difficulties and waiting.

Topsi's and Turvi's experience is just like ours: In all of life's difficulties we are waiting for Jesus to return.

Between September 2000 and March 2001, Topsi and Turvi, Gill's two American cats were waiting to go to Caloundra. Caloundra was to be their new home in Queensland, Australia, and Gill and the cats were emigrating. You couldn't just get on a plane and go and live in Australia if you weren't an Australian citizen. Dr. Ford was already there. He was Australian by birth, so it was easy for him to go.

Gill was born in England, so she was a British citizen. It didn't matter that she had lived in Australia for ten years and married an Australian while there. She had to emigrate just like the cats. There was a lot of paperwork to get all of them over there. One big difference was that Gill didn't have to have a rabies shot. But she did have to be tested for AIDS, tuberculosis, and hepatitis B.

Gill Goes Ahead

In October 2000, Gill went to Australia to help Dr. Ford unpack. Their shipping container had arrived in September. Dr. Ford and his son, Paul, and friends had unpacked it, and you may remember that Dr. Ford got sick from the methyl bromide they sprayed the container with to kill any bugs. It made him tired all the time. By the time Gill wrote this story, Dr. Ford was better again.

Gill was in Caloundra till December 2000, and it was during this time that she wrote all the stories about her new Australian cat called Jasper. Then she came back to the USA because she had to be outside of Australia to get permission to emigrate.

While Gill was in Caloundra with Jasper, Topsi and Turvi went to stay with their Auntie Grethe.

Topsi and Turvi at Grethe's
Grethe lives up in the wine country near Napa, California. Grethe has several acres of land alongside her house, and, at the last count, she has

twelve cats and a couple of dogs. Grethe is very tenderhearted and a bit of a pushover about animals. Local people know that if they are moving and can't take their animal, Grethe will take the pet in.

Living at Grethe's was the height of luxury for these animals. Nothing was too good for them. Gill knew Grethe would be very good to Topsy and Turvi.

Grethe has a fancy outside cage the size of a small room. She had it specially cleaned out for T & T. The pets could see out and watch the other cats and the deer and the trees. They had a shelf up on top so they could go there and hide if they wished. There were steps inside the cage to help them do this.

Grethe found a dead manzanita bush. She had someone wedge it into a big pot so it wouldn't move around. Turvi loved that tree. He climbed up and down it and loved to sharpen his claws on it.

Topsi was happy to just jump in and out of the cardboard boxes Grethe put in the cage. Did you know that cats love to hop in and out of boxes?



The cats stayed there for two months. They had three kinds of food and lots of it, and became really fat from sitting still. But they never tried to escape.

Life was wonderful at Grethe's.

But where was mum?

Gill Comes Back

About Christmas 2000, Gill came back to California to complete immigration for herself and the pets. She also had to finish off all the loose ends of moving house and ending work. When she first saw Topsy and Turvi, she thought they were bloated monsters. They were so big, and she couldn't tell the difference between them. Their faces were fat; their cheeks were chubby. It was a lesson in how you put on weight if you don't move. Even cats do.

When they got home to Newcastle, she put T & T on restricted rations for a while, but they soon lost weight from running around outside.

They loved Grethe's cage, but they loved running outside even more.

Planning the Final Trip

There was a great deal to do to make the final move. Taking the cats was a big item.

Gill received permission to enter Australia on a permanent visa. So did the cats. Gill went to the vet, and they worked out what had to be done before the pets left for Australia.

There was so much to do before putting T & T on the plane, and it was all so complicated that Gill got on the Internet and found a place in Los Angeles that took care of the final steps. This company called Jet Set 'n Pets (there are others) specializes in sending animals to Australia.

Gary is the owner, and Gill talked to him many times before the actual trip. Gary took the cats to the vet appointments in Los Angeles, got the appropriate cages for travel, bought the plane tickets, and put the pets on the plane.

Going to Los Angeles

But before that, Grethe and Rick John came and took the pets back to Angwin so Gill could get everything finished off.

Grethe and Rick John said they would drive Gill down to Los Angeles. She couldn't have managed it without them.

When it was time to leave, Gill drove over to Grethe's and left her car there.

The pets had to have worm tablets on the inside and stuff to get rid of fleas on the outside just before they left.

Grethe, Rick John, Gill, and T & T left for Los Angeles on February 27, 2001 at 3:00 in the morning. T & T were in a large cat carrier, but Gill had them out one at a time on her lap.

It was a long trip, and the pets did well considering. They all arrived in Los Angeles at 1:30 p.m.

At 5:00 p.m., Gary arrived with new, special cages. They were bright yellow. Gill thought that was a good color for the Sunshine Coast (the part of the Queensland coast where Caloundra is).

Gill and Grethe and Rick John said good-bye to Topsy and Turvi. T & T were very quiet. We can only guess how scared they were going off with a stranger.

Flying Out

Pets fly international in a special place in the plane called Manifest Cargo. It is air-conditioned and heated just like the part where humans go. The cats were in their cages, and the cages were sealed shut so that not a paw, a claw, a tail, or a nose could stick out. Food was not allowed in the cage, only water. That was delivered from a bottle attached to the cage that filled a special saucer.

What a day it had been. T & T had seen quite a bit of Los Angeles. They had been to two vets. The second was the government vet who had to do the final approval. That was a bit scary. What if they failed? But they passed the test.

Gary took the pets to the Cargo department, so Gill did not see the pets again until she visited them in quarantine in Sydney. She wondered what was happening.

The Flight is Canceled

Grethe and Rick John took Gill to LAX airport to the Qantas section. When they arrived, they found out that the plane Gill and the pets were going on was canceled. Gill had to go via Melbourne instead of Sydney. She supposed T & T were going on another Sydney flight, and that's what happened.

When you are on a plane, you can't hear the animals in Manifest Cargo. But Gary told her once he put a Siberian husky on board an Alaska Air flight. Siberian huskies howl like wolves, and this one did, all the way to Alaska. All the passengers could hear him, and they were given free drinks to calm them down. Even the pilot went down to visit this dog.



As Gill tightened her seatbelt and the plane took off with a roar, she thought of T & T. They were just country cats, used to a quiet life. What must they have imagined as they were taken on a trolley across the airfield and heard the planes warming up? How did they react when the plane took off with a big noise? How would they stand the 12-hour trip? But no good worrying. There was nothing she could do about it now.

Arriving in Sydney

When the plane arrived in Sydney, quarantine had been notified and someone came to fetch Topsis and Turvi. What a lot of new experiences they were having.

"This must be Australia," said Turvi to Topsis.

"Boy, it's as busy as Los Angeles," said Topsis.

She didn't know that Australia didn't have as many people as America and you couldn't judge it by the city of Sydney.

Meanwhile, Gill had arrived in Melbourne and had to take another flight to Sydney. Because of the flight change, her friends missed her at the airport. They went back home and then had to come back again.

Gill could have gone by train but she had six pieces of luggage. When you immigrate to Australia, the government allows you to buy a one-time one-way ticket and take four pieces of baggage on board.

But, finally, Gill arrived at Avondale with her friends.

The next day she called quarantine. Yes, Topsis and Turvi had arrived. She was so relieved.

"I'll be down to visit them next Tuesday," she said.

Coming Again

Topsis and Turvi didn't really know what was going on. Here they were in prison in quarantine (you'll find out next time that it was really a hotel). Where were they? Were they convicts? What was the crime? Did they catch too many mice in America? Or was it that one bird that Turvi killed? They knew Australians had many exotic birds and even had a cat curfew to keep cats in at night in some places.

But most of all they wondered where was mum?

They would see Gill again. They would go and live in Caloundra. Gill had promised. But it was a bit scary waiting to see what would happen. Was it really true?

Jesus is Coming Again

The Bible says that Jesus is coming again. Jesus told us that about 2000 years ago. But it's been a long time coming, and sometimes we wonder, "Will he really come again?"


All the people who have died since Jesus came are sleeping and waiting for him to come. They don't know the passing of time, so the next minute they are aware, Jesus will be there.

It just seems a long time to us who are still alive, when we are waiting. When things go wrong, we'd like Jesus to come sooner. But he hasn't come yet. He has a special time, which he and God know about. It will be the right time.

Meanwhile, we are to live as though he's coming any minute, as though he's about to walk through the front door. It

takes faith to believe that because we can't see it. But Jesus gives us faith when we trust our lives to him.

"I will come again," he said. "And where I am you will be also."

Jesus meant what he said, and you can believe him. 

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A PRISON TESTIMONY

I asked Jesus to come into my heart, and save me, in a jail cell, as I was facing murder charges in 1992. Today I am on Florida's death row, under sentence of death. The wonderful thing is, I have one life, and that I have given to my Savior.

I can honestly tell you that I have more peace in my life today, than I ever had. Although I am physically in prison, I know that I am free. Why? Because the Spirit of God has come to dwell in my life.

As a child, I had an aunt and uncle who deeply loved the Lord. They often took me and my sibling to church, when we were around them. But this was not much because my mom moved us around a lot. Up to the age of thirteen, I did not start and finish a school year in the same school. My Mom used to send us to church on the Sunday school bus.

For the most part, though, I grew up with an understanding that God was someone you called on when in a lot of trouble. For example: "Oh God, if you get me out of this, I promise to do so and so." That was my understanding of God.

My parents were alcoholics. They thought that buying a beer was more important than buying food. My step-father was a very abusive man. As the oldest child, I received the brunt of his abuse. I cried out to God, asking him to get me out of this situation. Well, after I was beaten one night, I decided to go to the police station and report it. My prayer was answered when I was removed from my home and placed in a group home. My mom was told that if she left my step-father, I would be returned to her. For the next two years I heard nothing from her or my sibling. This experience was what started my rebellion.

Shortly after my fifteenth birthday, I was placed with my Christian aunt and uncle. I now see that God's hand was in this, and I am grateful for it. It was they who sowed the seed of faith in my life. About this time, my Mom reappeared. Needless to say, I was greatly confused and torn. In my heart I wanted to be with my mom, but I was still very angry with her. I moved in with my aunt and uncle, and they enrolled me in a Christian school. At that time in my life, every time the church doors were open, we were there. I felt that God was being

forced on me. I began experimenting with drugs, and on my sixteenth birthday, I ran away to be with my mom. This was the worst decision I could ever have made. From this point on, my life spiraled downward. I dropped out of school, started using drugs regularly, and did whatever I wanted to do. God's Spirit tried to speak to me, but I was running away from God.

By the time I was eighteen, I was the father of two children by two different women; neither of them living with me. I tried to fill the void in my life by moving one of my children and her mother in with me. With a family to care for, I decided I needed to get my hands on some money. This led to certain decisions which landed me on death row.

It was in 1992 when I asked Jesus into my life, but in many ways I fell back on that prayer. In 1996, when I grew tired of doing things my way, I asked the Lord to remove from my life, things that were not honoring him, and to fill me with a deep hunger and desire for his Word.

By no means has my life been perfect since then, for walking with the Lord is a matter of growing daily. But the Lord has filled my life with his grace and peace. I have learned what it means to be loved and to love. I now have such joy. I have no fear what man can do to me. The Lord has taught me to say, like Paul: "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

I do not know what is going on in your life, but we are all on death row, in a manner of speaking. If your spirit is empty today, and you are searching for peace like I was, turn to Jesus and put your trust in him. For without the grace of God, there is no peace. No matter what we fill our lives with, we will never find something to take God's place. Only he can fill what is missing in our life. I do not know what tomorrow will bring me. What I do know is that for the rest of my life, and throughout eternity I will worship and praise my Lord Jesus.

A servant and child of the most high,
Anthony Joseph Farina Jr.
U.C.I. P1204
PO Box 221
Raiford, Florida 32083-0221

The Picture Gallery

Lost and Found

By Dorothy O'Neill

STORY:

One day, when many tax collectors, and other outcasts came to listen to Jesus, the Pharisees and the teachers of the law started grumbling. "This man welcomes outcasts and even eats with them!" So Jesus told them this parable:

Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them—what does he do? He leaves the other ninety-nine sheep in the pasture, and goes looking for the one that got lost until he finds it. When he finds it, he is so happy that he puts it on his shoulders and carries it back home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together, and says to them, 'I am so happy I found my lost sheep. Let us celebrate!' (Luke 15:1-7)

PICTURE:

You are the lost sheep in the wilderness; stuck on a rocky shelf in a deep ravine. It is cold, and raining heavily. Below you, a river is roaring through the chasm. You are afraid, lonely, and isolated. If only you had not strayed from the flock!

Now you are in this dark place. You are tangled in briars; totally helpless. The more you struggle, the more tied up you become. Only the shepherd can help you now, but he has led his flock back to the fold where they are safe, warm, and fed.

You have almost given up hope when you hear a faint call, far away in the distance. The voice is like the shepherd's. Dare you hope? The voice is louder now. It IS the shepherd. You lift your head and give a last desperate bleat. Then you see him. Oh joy! He is coming down the side of the ravine, staff in hand. He sees your plight and bends to release you. His hands bleed as he wrests you from the thorns. Oh, the strength he brings as he pulls you to your feet and hoists you onto his shoulders.

It is so good to lie there, relaxed and safe. You are at peace. You are with the shepherd, and he is taking you back to the fold. As he strides forward, you sense his joy. Presently, he begins to sing.

CONVERSATION:

ME: Yes, there are times when I really am that sheep, Lord.

JESUS: Yes, my child.

ME: I stray away in my mind, nibbling the rank grass of



doubt;
letting fear
control me so that I
lose touch with your truth.
Or I rush ahead of you, going my own
way so that I no longer hear your voice.

JESUS: (sadly) Yes.

ME: Until I am in darkness and confusion, with no peace, and almost beyond hope. And my heart cries out to you, for I know there is no other who can save and restore me.

JESUS: None other under heaven.

ME: Please come to me now dearest Shepherd. Restore my soul as I wait upon you in total helplessness. Let your compassion light that flame of hope, and take me home to safety, warmth, and security.

JESUS: I will do so. Trust me. It is my father's will that you rest in me.

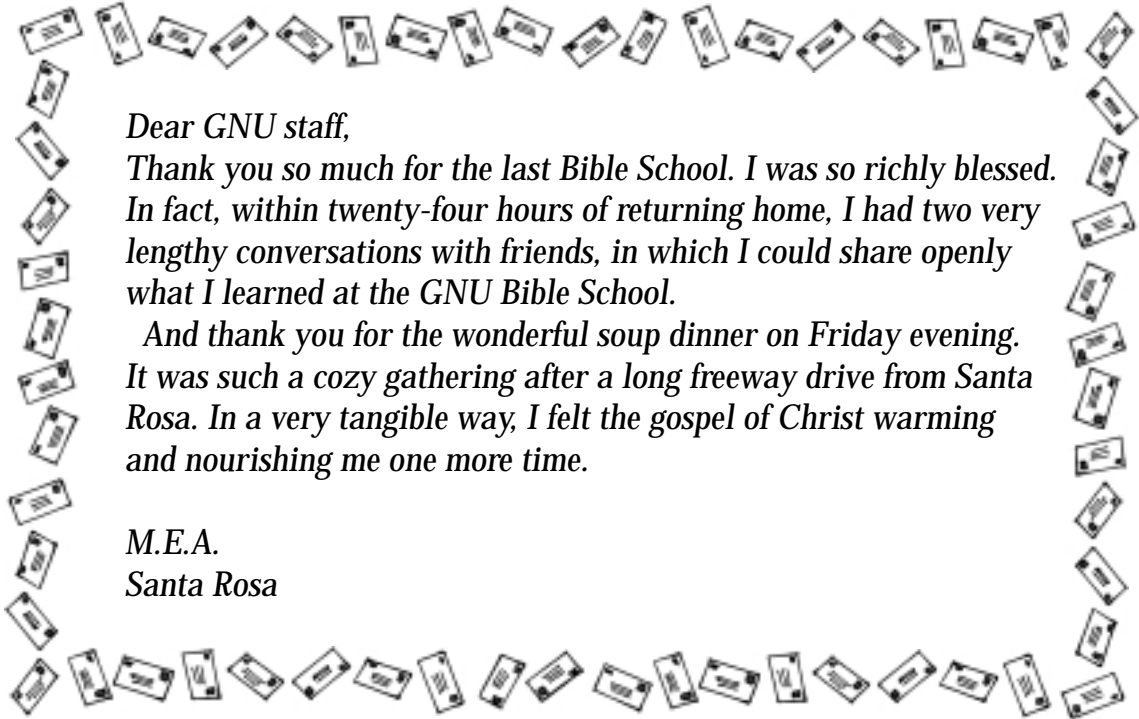
ME: Thank you Lord. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

JESUS: Shalom!

* REFLECTION:

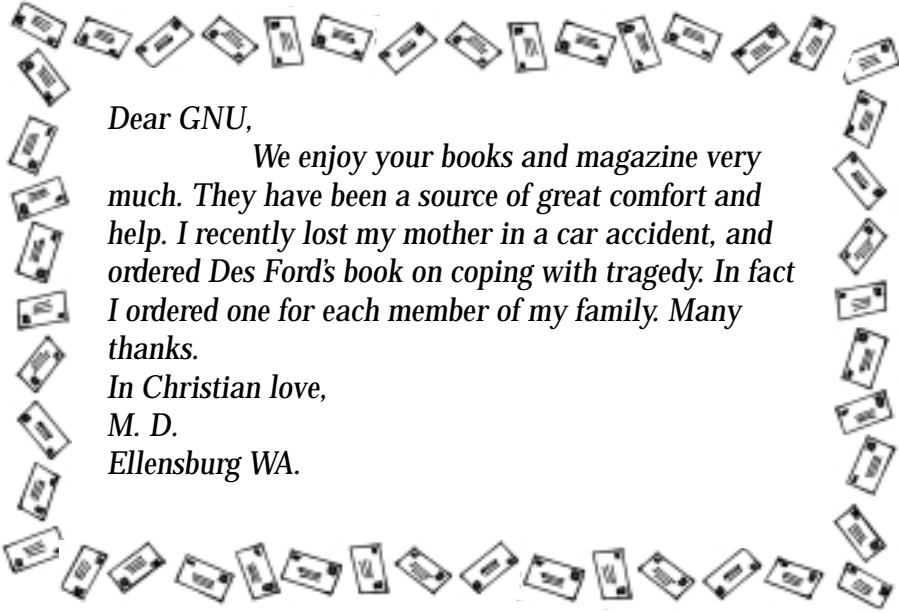
Lostness is estrangement—from God and from people. It can be caused by many things. Tragedies that descend upon our lives; bereavement and loss; neglect of the values of the kingdom. It can be caused by sins: jealousy, self-pity, fear, resentment. Part of oneself can be lost and lying—or a gift given by the Spirit. The Good Shepherd is willing and ready to restore you if you give him access to your loss.

Letters We Love



*Dear GNU staff,
Thank you so much for the last Bible School. I was so richly blessed. In fact, within twenty-four hours of returning home, I had two very lengthy conversations with friends, in which I could share openly what I learned at the GNU Bible School.
And thank you for the wonderful soup dinner on Friday evening. It was such a cozy gathering after a long freeway drive from Santa Rosa. In a very tangible way, I felt the gospel of Christ warming and nourishing me one more time.*

*M.E.A.
Santa Rosa*



*Dear GNU,
We enjoy your books and magazine very much. They have been a source of great comfort and help. I recently lost my mother in a car accident, and ordered Des Ford's book on coping with tragedy. In fact I ordered one for each member of my family. Many thanks.
In Christian love,
M. D.
Ellensburg WA.*



RADIO GUIDE USA

ARKANSAS
Little Rock
KAAY 1090AM
Monday-Friday 10:00 p.m.

CALIFORNIA
Sacramento
KFIA 710AM
Monday-Friday 5 a.m.
11 a.m.

HAWAII
Honolulu
KAIM 870AM
Monday-Friday 6:05 p.m.

OREGON
Milton-Freewater
KTEL 1490AM
Sunday 9:05 a.m.

WASHINGTON, D.C.
WFAX 1220AM
Monday-Friday 1:15 p.m.
7:30 p.m.

WASHINGTON
Blaine
KARI 550AM
Monday-Friday 12:15 p.m.
Saturday 8:30 a.m.
Sunday 1:00 p.m.

Spokane
KUDY 1280AM
Monday-Friday 11:45 a.m.

RADIO GUIDE CANADA

ALBERTA
Edmonton
The Light 9:30 a.m.
Sunday 5:00 p.m.

High River
(covers Red Deer to Lethbridge)
CHRB 1140AM
Sunday 5:00 p.m.

BRITISH COLUMBIA
100 Mile House
CKBX 840AM
Sunday 8:30 a.m.

Penticton
CIGV 101.7FM
Saturday 8:05 p.m.

Quesnel
CKCQ 920AM
Sunday 8:30 a.m.

Williams Lake
CKWL 570AM
Sunday 8:30 a.m.

Blaine, Washington
KARI 550AM
Monday-Friday 12:15 p.m.
Saturday 8:30 a.m.
Sunday 1:00 p.m.

MANITOBA
Winnipeg
CKJS 810AM
Sunday 11:30 a.m.

Dauphin
CKDM 730AM
Sunday 9:00 a.m.

NEW BRUNSWICK
Fredericton
CFNB 550AM
Sunday 7:30 a.m.

ONTARIO
Oakville
CHWO 1250AM
Sunday 7:30 a.m.

Oshawa
CKDO 1350AM
Sunday 7:00 a.m.

SASKATCHEWAN
Estevan
CJSL 1280AM
Sunday 7:00 a.m.

Weyburn
CFSL 1190AM
Sunday 9:00 a.m.

2001

19th GNU Bible School "Grace Alone"

*The kindness of God, in Christ,
brings you salvation.*

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This magazine is free upon request.

WEEKLY AT GNU

In the Sacramento-Auburn area over the weekend? Visit the GNU Fellowship for Bible study, gospel sermons and worship, and for good Christian company. GNUF meets at Alderson Hall, 11710 Education Street, Auburn CA 95602. (Call 530.823.9690.)

Meetings are:

Saturday 9:45 a.m.

Bible Study

Saturday 10:45 a.m.

Worship Service.



19th GNU Bible School

Grace *alone*

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