

Postscript

As I reviewed and contemplated what is written in this book, a few additional thoughts, sort of odds and ends, came to me that I wanted to share. So, here are some random thoughts.

First, But our God is in the heavens; He does whatever He pleases (Psalm 115:3 NASB).

No matter how much we think Scripture reveals to us on any one subject, we must acknowledge that at the end of the day, God is Sovereign and He does whatever He pleases. Man tries to do this, but it often does not turn out so good. However, all that God does is good and right. He works out all things for good in accordance with His purpose. God is love, and all His actions are done in love that never fails. He is *the* redemptive, restorative, reconciliatory, reformatory, and revisiting God beyond measure.

So, when Scripture says that God does whatever He pleases, we must see this as a glorious attribute of our God and one in which we can take great joy and comfort.

However, it must also be noted that it seems as if God has established universal principles or laws that He will not violate in dealing with man. Although we must acknowledge that He does as He pleases, we must also acknowledge that He also operates according to His principles or laws, which are a reflection of who He is, in dealing with us. If, for a reason known only to God, He does something outside the box of our understanding, then so be it. After all, He is the Potter and we are the clay, and it is His creation to do with as He pleases. Besides, just because His actions might not make sense to us does not mean He is breaking His own rules. It just means we do not understand them fully. We need more revelation.

Second, many of the Lord's people have visions and dreams, something that Scripture states we are to have in the last days (Acts 2:17). Some are visions and dreams of heaven and hell that many see as proofs that we die and go to heaven or to hell. But are these visions and dreams actual proofs of these things, or do they signify something else? Are we to build doctrine on extra-biblical visions and dreams that are open to all sorts of interpretation, including misinterpretation? It is often said that visions and dreams must not conflict with Scripture. This is a must!

However, what are we to do when people believe that billions of people created to be in the image of God are in an eternal place of literal fire called *hell* when Scripture seems to indicate otherwise? Are we to accept and hold to a dream of hell as proof of its existence, at least as conveyed in the dream, when it can be proven by Scripture that it does not exist as interpreted from the dream?

The thought is this: Having visions and dreams is biblical but their interpretation may not be. They must not be used to settle doctrinal differences. The only way we can and must settle doctrinal differences or, if you will, different interpretations, is through a healthy study of

Scripture under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is all that God has given us to go on in this age.

Perhaps, He is writing a third testament in our age, but He has not revealed to us at this point what it is and where it is to be found. Actually, I believe it is being written on our hearts, so that when we attain to our new immortal bodies, there will be no more debate or dispute over His truth. Simply, we will know His laws and be an expression of them. Personally, I believe the Body of Christ is destined to be the Third Testament, the living expression and witness of Jesus.

Third, spirit and truth are inseparable. Jesus said that we must worship in spirit and truth (John 4:23-24), and the Holy Spirit is *the Spirit of Truth* (John 15:26; 16:13). Truth by itself does not produce life, especially if it becomes the letter. **For the letter kills, but the Spirit makes alive** (2 Corinthians 3:6 LITV). As I see it, the Holy Spirit takes truth and breathes life into it so that it produces life in those who receive it. In this way, we become life-giving spirits to others.

I do not pretend to believe that somehow I have captured all the truth on this subject or that I have seen or interpreted everything correctly. But I can say that I have given it my all in trying. At this point, all I can do is leave it to the Holy Spirit to breathe life upon that which is spiritual truth and to reveal all that is not.

I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.... (Ephesians 1:18 NASB)

Fourth, Paul wrote: So also it has been written, "The first man, Adam, became a living soul"; the last Adam a life-giving Spirit" (1 Corinthians 15:45).

A good friend and brother in Christ often quotes to me the last part of this verse, reminding me that we are destined to be life-giving spirits. Frankly, at first, I didn't get it. How could we be life-giving spirits? Isn't this reserved for the Lord alone? As I have thought about it, I have asked: Why not? After all, we are New Creations in Christ destined to be like Him. Once we have the fullness of the Spirit of God residing in us instead of an earnest of the Spirit, isn't it possible that we too will be life-givers to others? I think so! But then again, to the measure we have the Holy Spirit abiding in us today, aren't we to some degree life-giving spirits even now? Perhaps, so!

You might be wondering what this has to do with the subject of this book. Well, think about it; if God has purposed to be All in all new, and we are Christ's Complement, His Body, charged with subjecting all things under the feet of Christ, then does it not follow that our charge will be to be life-giving spirits in *fullness* once we have been transfigured into the image of Christ?

This surely adds purpose to God's investment in us who believe and gives us a mighty powerful work for us to do in the future. Sure beats walking on golden streets all day long.

Fifth, does this mean that everything is in the future; what about today?

Admittedly, much of what I have written in this book is about the future. I openly admit that I am a dreamer and get excited about the prospects of the future Kingdom of God when glory is truly manifested for all to see, experience, and enjoy.

The other day, I began to picture the sun and moon melding with the earth to form one new huge orb that will be the light of the universe. Is this fanciful thinking or a dream put into my heart by the Spirit of God?

When the Lord broke into my life, He revealed Himself to me as the King and that He is coming again to establish His Kingdom on earth. I believe the Lord has put in my heart a longing and a desire for the next age, so I usually gravitate to this glorious topic.

However, I recognize that it is not all about the future.

Is the Kingdom of Christ being manifested on earth in our day? Most definitely! It is manifested in those that have sanctified Christ as Lord in their hearts (1 Peter 3:15). Is His Kingdom near or at hand in our day? Yes. How do we know? We know because people are getting healed, and some miraculously (Luke 10:9).

Is God not all in all today? Yes. Although Paul states in 1 Corinthians 15 that God will be all in all at the consummation of the eons, he also declares that God is so today: ***There is one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all*** (Ephesians 4:6).

Scripture is full of truths that are presented as in operation now and will be in operation in the future. Some people focus on the now and others focus on the future, so we often see two camps that are sometimes at odds with each other. But are they?

If we would simply listen to each other, we might actually begin to truly understand God's plan and purpose; how He is working it out in our day, and how He will bring it to fruition in the days and ages ahead.

Sixth, I liken the many, and often at-odds, interpretations of Scripture to a kaleidoscope, which is "a tubelike instrument containing loose bits of glass reflected by mirrors so that various symmetrical patterns appear as the instrument is rotated." The view changes as one turns the cylinder of the kaleidoscope.

Christian understanding, emphasis, or doctrine (choose whatever term you like) is much like this instrument. We all might start off with the same view, but then we start turning the instrument to the left and to the right and see different pictures. Soon, we begin to think our view is better than someone else's view. But is it? We are all using the same instrument, and the same loose bits of glass are within it. The only difference is that they are arranged differently.

Of course, there are limitations to this analogy. Some might turn the instrument so far in one direction as to come up with error or a distorted picture of the truth.

What I am proposing in this example is that we might see things that are not at odds with each other; they are simply different facets of God's truth, much like some truths are for now and others are for the future. This leads to the next point.

Seventh, our view of scriptural truth is often based on the template we use to study or teach Scripture.

A template is a pattern. For the most part, the ecclesia of Christ is pretty solid on the foundational truth of Jesus the Christ, the Son of God. Where we often differ is what we build upon Christ. This is what I call the template, which could be a set of doctrinal truths, an emphasis, a purpose, a theme, or whatever is the primary thing or identity of a particular Christian group. It is the lens through which we view Scripture.

If one is totally focused on getting the lost saved and nothing else, then all Scripture related to this subject is interpreted with this template. If one believes in hell as an eternal place of torment and torture, then all Scripture related to this subject is interpreted through this lens. If one sees all things related to the Kingdom as yet future, then all Scripture related to this subject is interpreted with this template. If one sees the Kingdom now and a great harvest and revival coming in our present age, then all Scripture related to this subject is interpreted through this lens. I trust you get the point.

Back to the analogy of the kaleidoscope, even within groups holding to a particular template, some might turn the template much like the kaleidoscope to produce a variation on the theme.

All of this can get very confusing. What are we to do? Seek the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth! He will guide us into all truth and reveal to us what is to come.

Eighth, sometimes our differences are simply differences over semantics or definitions, not so much over truth. Take the word *heaven* as an example; it is safe to say that most see heaven spatially as a place with a city of golden streets. However, I see heaven not so much as a place but as a realm. So, when I hear people talking about going to a heaven with physical attributes, I think of entering into a new realm with attributes that can only be experienced and understood in spirit. I also think of heaven coming to earth, not us going to it. Does this mean we are in total disagreement? Well, at least at a *certain* level, the answer is no.

Ninth, I believe that the greatest challenge and stumbling block to the All of God is in one's view of free will and an *eternal* hell. Admittedly, this is the most controversial and critical part of my book. Unless the concept of free will, as it relates to salvation, and the modern-day concept of a hell that lasts forever are smashed on the rocks of truth, one will have a difficult time accepting the conclusion that God's ultimate purpose is ALL.

I won't repeat my argument about free will, but I must repeat this one point: The problem that I see with free will is that it leads believers to a boast that they had a part in saving themselves. I recognize that many might adamantly, even vehemently, disagree with me on this point as if it is gospel set in epoxy. This is precisely my point. It is so ingrained in Christian teaching that for many it just cannot be any other way. Free will demands that we have a say in the matter. If we have a say in it, then I contend salvation is dependent on man and not on God Who is the Savior of all mankind. This is the real danger of the concept of free will.

When I listen to believers, more times than not, I hear them taking *some* credit for their salvation experience. The spirit of boasting is so subtle that I doubt many detect it in their words. Paul had no such experience and no such boast.

(30) But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, (31) so that, just as it is written, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD." (1 Corinthians 1:30-31 NASB)

But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. (Galatians 6:14 NASB)

In regard to hell, if it were defined based on its benign primitive meaning, then the matter would be easily resolved. However, today, it has anything but a benign meaning. In the heart and mind of God's people, the concept of an eternal hell based on penal judgment needs to be replaced with the truth of eonian chastisement based on corrective love. Only in this way will the truth of the lake of fire and God's judgment be properly and gloriously understood.

Add free will to the modern-day concept of hell as eternal judgment [torture], and the two together become a powerful formula for denying that the word *all* truly means all in the most inclusive sense. Here is how the formula works: "I had some say in my salvation (i.e., free will); after all, I asked Jesus into my heart; therefore, I deserve to go to heaven. Ones who do not ask Him into their heart (did not exercise their free will like I did), do not deserve heaven, so they must go to hell. It's only fair."

The problem is that salvation is not about fairness; it is about grace and mercy. But God!

The reality is that God's people must be set free from the modern-day concepts of free will and an eternal hell before they can come into the inclusiveness of God's ultimate purpose.

Tenth, I am convinced that the Holy Spirit is speaking through well-known pastor-teachers of our day about the salvation of all mankind, and they do not even know it. As I listen to or read what some of these pastor-teachers are saying, I am often amazed at how close they are to the truth that I have presented in this book without coming all the way into it.

I'll give an example without divulging names, which is generally my unwritten rule.

A very well-known pastor in some circles of the ecclesia of God stated that God is the God of second chances. When I heard this, my ears perked up. Of course, he was referring to second chances for believers. But when I heard it, it was as if the Holy Spirit was speaking God's heart through him to God's people. I heard the word *ALL*. Perhaps, the Holy Spirit is laying the groundwork in this brother's heart to come into the light of the salvation of all.

As he continued on, I heard nothing specific that indicated he had come to this revelation. Along the way, he did mention *hell* without any elaboration. However, later, he really got my attention when he stated that all men (mankind) are created in God's image and all are given gifts, and as such, all are to be honored. This is a most profound statement; one that we would expect out of someone who holds to the salvation of all.

This leads to the restoration of *all things*, which is probably the *re* word closest to the heart of God's ultimate purpose. There are many in our day that have a sincere heart for restoration and work hard to bring it about in this age. Yet, they do not seem to have revelation on the inclusiveness of all things in the oncoming ages, or what I will now coin as the ***eonian allness of God***. They seem to come so close to the true meaning of *all things* without coming to the rightful conclusion of *all things*. Mind you, I am not being critical; I am simply stating an observation based on what I have seen and heard.

It is almost as if they have climbed a great mountain to get to the top, but they just can't take the last few steps to reach the top and proclaim with a mighty voice what their spiritual heart is telling them or what their mind might be saying is the only rightful conclusion of *all things*.

Having said this, sometimes I ask myself: Do some of these pastor-teachers know the truth but are not willing to go all the way for fear of the repercussions? Are they holding back because they know the heat they will get and the cost they might pay? Are they afraid of losing their ministry? Again, I am not accusing anyone of this; these are just questions without answers.

If you have been convicted in your spirit over what has been presented in this book, you are encouraged to press on to the top of the mountain, which, by the way, signifies the Gospel of the Kingdom of God.

Ask the Holy Spirit: Is God's ultimate purpose truly ALL, none excluded? If the answer is yes, then be a pioneer and shout it from the mountain top! I'll meet you there and shout with you.