



Sunday August 24, 2014

ZWTF

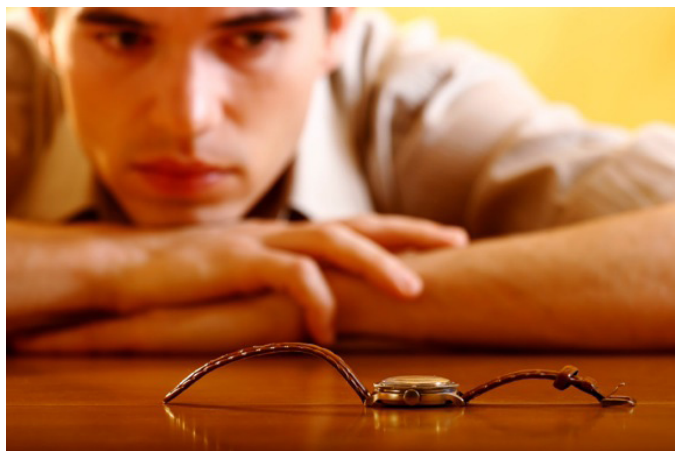
Zapping-you Whenever Thoughts Flow

Volume 3, Issue 30

Only Four Days Left

How to survive the remaining days of this evil eon without losing your mind.

Only four days remain until the snatching away of the body of Christ. This is my status report of the lateness of this eon, at least for us. But in fact, I am lying to you; I hope you don't mind. I live as though (and I actually believe) that there are only five minutes left until death and gravity (in that order) unhand their claim upon us and we rise to our inherent realm among the celestials. I am only saying "four days" because it seems a little more reasonable than five minutes and I don't want you to think I'm completely crazy.



Neither times nor seasons—neither wars nor rumors of wars—suggest or portend the timing of the snatching away of Christ's body. Blessedly for us, God refuses to disclose any clues pertaining to this event's imminence. With Israel, it is different. Jesus gave His disciples many signs that would announce the proximity of Israel's expecta-

tion. Many of these signs are listed in Matthew, chapter 24. If you are in Israelite or an Israelite wanna-be, hurry over to Matthew 24, read up, then start monitoring the news. If you are a member of the body of Christ, however, and you want immediate relief, then read on.

LAST COME, FIRST SERVED

Paul writes of a prior expectation in Christ for those who were previously without God in the world (Ephesians 1:12; 2:12). "Prior expectation" means that this change to immortality precedes that of Israel. Before Paul revealed details of the snatching away in 1 Corinthians 15:51-53 ("Behold, to you a secret am I telling ..."), this event was, in fact, a dead secret. This event cannot therefore be the prior expectation of Israel, because Daniel foretold that resurrection centuries before (Daniel 12:2). If Paul is heralding the same truth, how could he call it a secret?

God did us a great favor by refusing to peg the snatching away to any noticeable earth event. The joy that will accompany becoming one in Christ and escaping forever the pains and despair of this decrepit earth is meant to be a continual balm to our souls. How can it thus function if we're busily scanning the globe for some specific event (a cataclysmic earthquake; a one-world government; the rise of ten kings) that might be dozens or hundreds of years away?

Until he writes young Timothy his second letter from a Roman prison while facing imminent death, the apostle Paul believed that he would be snatched away alive. He, like me, reckoned this event to be five minutes on the horizon—at most, four days. Listen to him in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18—

Now we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are reposing, lest you may sorrow according as the rest, also, who have no expectation. For, if we are believing that Jesus died and

rose, thus also, those who are put to repose, will God, through Jesus, lead forth together with Him. For this we are saying to you by the word of the Lord, that *we, the living*, who are surviving to the presence of the Lord, should by no means outstrip those who are put to repose, for the Lord Himself will be descending from heaven with a shout of command, with the voice of the Chief Messenger, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ shall be rising first. Thereupon *we, the living* who are surviving, shall at the same time be snatched away together with them in clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. And thus shall we always be together with the Lord. So that, console one another with these words.

When Paul says, “we, the living,” I believe he means, “we, the living.” He includes himself in the group of living saints to be roused along with the dead to be transported to heaven. Had Paul advertised the event as hundreds or thousands of years away, it would surely have failed its consolatory purpose. True, there is a general consolation accompanying such truths as the salvation of all; but this event is so far off into the future (“the consummation” —1 Corinthians 15:26) that it appears a mere speck on the eonian horizon—like trying to see Neptune with the naked eye. The consolation of the snatching away of the body of Christ is far more immediate. The Corinthian saints had already received “salvation of all” truth; Romans 5:18-19 had already comforted them concerning the fate of those who had died without faith. This was a nearer, dearer consolation for those bereaved of believing loved ones.

TAKE WINE FOR EXAMPLE—IMMEDIATELY

I compare wine to the snatching away. Both get poured out; both are intoxicating; both alter you; both come from God; both are meant for consolation; both have to do with spirit (wine is called a spirit); both make the heart glad. Therefore, if I can convince you of a few things concerning fermented grape juice—a thing easily obtained, relatively inexpensive, and already employed and enjoyed by many of you—then I can make a few further points concerning our celestial expectation. I will have you toasting and drinking to the depths of God’s ever-present consolations in no time.

Did you know that God gave humanity wine specifically to help it bear the trials of a world He knew would be unbearable without some sort of cheap, easily obtained legal intoxicant? Psalm 104:14-15 says:

You are the One making grass sprout for the beasts, and herbage for the service of humanity, to bring forth bread from the earth. And wine that makes the heart of a mortal rejoice, to make the face lustrous with oil, and bread that braces the heart of mortal man.

The same God who “brings forth” bread, brings forth wine. Whoever would take moral issue with wine must also look down his or her nose upon those companies grinding various flours and baking them into delicious, edible loafs. And yet it simply does not happen. What do you know; the world is full of Scripture-vacant hypocrites.

The grass for the beasts does not sprout from the soil of its own accord. Rather, God “[is] making grass sprout.” He forces grass to grow. I love this truth. Nothing happens without God. God throws all His mental powers into making a dead seed rise from the dirt. Not one farmer on the face of this planet knows how anything grows. All the farmer knows is that seeds planted in the soil need water and sunlight. Fertilizer helps. Then the farmer simply steps out of the way and prays. After this, God concentrates mightily and the dead seed resurrects. It springs from the ground—like Lazarus from the cave—in a radically different form. The farmer then goes and picks it, forgetting he’s harvesting a miracle.

The cows are happy, too. The cows probably have more of a clue how things grow than the farmer. The cows eat the grass and herbage “for the service of humanity.” The grass and herbage keep livestock alive and, by extension, provide us with delicious food such as rib-eye steaks, meatballs and beef stew.



SHOW ME THE BREAD

Back to wheat. If you know how to raise people from the dead, then you also know how to make wheat grow. It's the same resurrection power—identical. In both instances, humans stare dumbly at it. Unfortunately, farmers don't have the time or inclination to stare anymore. Adam did, but he was the last one of his kind to do so. Every farmer since Adam takes for granted the process of dead seeds turning into plants. Farmers should stare as dumbly at a stalk of wheat as the mourners in Bethany stared at Lazarus stumbling their way from the entrance of his putrid little burial cave. But no.



“Lazarus has just come forth in the form of wheat, but we ignore the former corpse and take all the credit for a loaf of pumpernickel.”

So out comes a warm and wonderful creation of man and God that “braces the heart of mortal man,” and we think we are geniuses because we have ground it into powder, kneaded it, shoved it into ovens with giant wooden paddles, and raised it into bread. We're so tickled with and tricked by our accomplishment that we produce cooking shows and write books titled, *101 Ways to Make Frickin' Bread*. No one mentions the mir-

acle. Lazarus has just come forth in the form of wheat, but we ignore the former corpse and take all the credit for a loaf of pumpernickel.

Food such as bread alters our mood, making us want to continue living and concentrating once more on our life's work. This is the meaning of, “braces the heart of mortal man.” Without food, our moods take a dive. We become irritable and eventually want to die. Without food, we eventually do die—although reports exist of people receiving nourishment solely from the sun. Apart from that, bread and other foods—especially the Mexican variety—brace our hearts.

For this, I recommend Maalox.

FROM VINE TO WINE

Note that God “brings forth bread from the earth.” Isn't this technically incorrect? I have not known bread to sprout directly from the earth, already baked and ready to eat. As just noted, humans have to grind it, yeast it, and paddle it into ovens. Never mind the human intermediaries for now. God so wanted and so willed bread to emerge from wheat that He speaks as though He produces the end-product, skipping the middle-man entirely. He says that He is the One Who “brings forth bread from the earth.” I, for one, give Him credit for it. I love the active verbs here. He “makes,” and He “brings forth.”

Here is where people start condemning other people, so stay with me. The same God making the grass sprout and bringing forth bread from the earth, makes wine. He *makes* wine. He so badly wants wine to happen that He takes credit for making it, just as He does bread. He “brings forth” wine. Yay for God; screw the middle-man. God intended for this to happen to grapes. He invented grapes with this in mind—not to mention raisins. God loves wine. Did He ask for grapes as part of the Old Testament offering? Heck no. He asked specifically for wine. (See Exodus 29:38-40).

In a similar end-product pattern, not one anointed priest or prophet was ever anointed with olives—in which case that person would instead be *pelted* with olives. Rather, men of God were anointed with the oil pressed by humans from the olives. Wine, olive oil and bread are works of God performed by God in conjunction with human preparation, the mention of which can and often is omitted in the text and attributed directly to the Deity.

HERE COMES THE “GLAD” PART

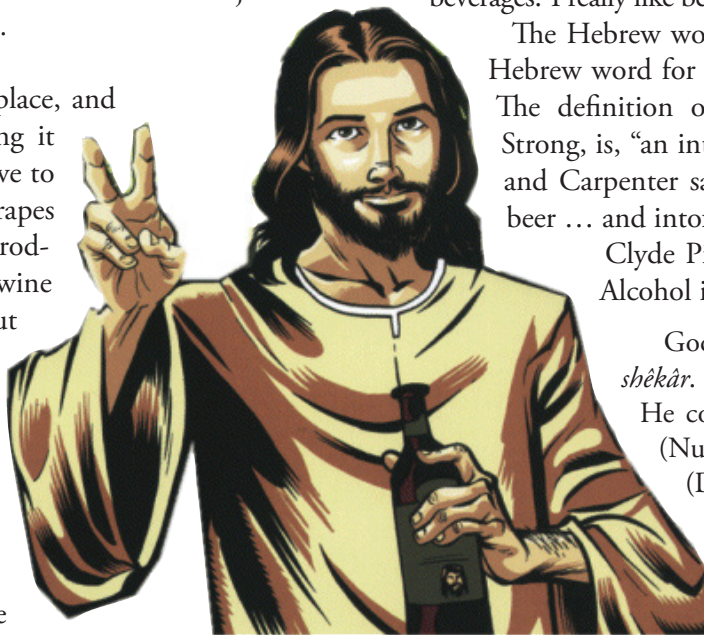
Wine is supposed to make you tipsy, which in turn makes you feel better about this %\$#@! planet. (The planet is eventually going to tip anyway, so we may as well get a head start on it.) God gave it for that reason. This is the characteristic—the wonderful and miraculous intoxicating property—that makes wine different from grape juice. Wine is not grape juice. Some Baptists believe that Jesus turned water into grape juice. This is too idiotic of a supposition to comment upon, but I will exercise all my patience and comment upon it anyway.

The celebrants at the wedding feast in Cana were astounded when they tasted the wine produced by Jesus. They said, “Every man is placing the ideal wine first, and whenever they should be made drunk, then the inferior. Yet you have kept the ideal wine hitherto” (John 2:10, CLNT). No one at that Cana shin-dig was getting drunk on grape juice. Neither did anyone tasting Jesus’ wine confused it with grape juice. Had the “wine” Jesus served been grape juice, not a single guest would have said, “This is even better than what we were just drinking!” Please. They would have spit it out and said, “What th—!”

Jesus drank wine all the time. In Luke 7:33-35, Jesus is speaking to the Pharisees and comparing Himself to John the Baptist:

For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and you say, “He has a devil.” The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and you say, “Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!” But wisdom is justified of all her children.

The world is a hard place, and here is something making it easier to bear. All you have to do is let a handful of grapes ferment, then drink the product. So beautiful. Sure, wine costs a little money, but so do psychiatrists and handguns. Don’t make the mistake of showing up in heaven and complaining to God about how hard life was, and having God roll His eyes at you because you were



too religious to drink wine. God is going to say, “I gave you a really awesome drink to dull some of the pain. It’s a natural medicine. Why the hell didn’t you drink it?” And you will say, “I just didn’t think it was right. My church told me it was evil. Some people I know are alcoholics.” Then God will shake His head and say, “Whatever.”

Don’t let this happen to you.

When I was going through a really tough spell in my life, I took to drinking three glasses of wine every evening. (I bought very cheap wine.) At this time, a friend who was a psychologist told me, “Martin, don’t use alcohol to medicate,” to which I answered, “Why not? That’s what it’s for.” To me, hearing those words was like someone telling me not to take aspirin for a headache: “Martin, don’t use Bayer to medicate.” But, dude. It’s *medicine*.

King Solomon exhorts his readers:

Go then, eat your bread in happiness, and drink your wine with a cheerful heart; for God has already approved your works (Ecclesiastes 9:7).

Where has *that* verse been all my life?

Isaiah compares the mercy of God to the receiving of free wine:

Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost (55:1).

Ho! Where do I sign up?

“STRONG DRINK”

You may ask, “But Martin. What about other alcoholic beverages? I really like beer.” So did Martin Luther.

The Hebrew word for wine is *yayin*, while the Hebrew word for strong drink (liquor) is *shêkâr*. The definition of *shêkâr*, according to James Strong, is, “an intensely alcoholic liquor.” Baker and Carpenter say, “Referring to strong drink; beer ... and intoxicating drink.

Clyde Pilkington writes in “A Look at Alcohol in the Scriptures”:

God never prohibits or discourages *shêkâr*. Quite the contrary, like *yayin*, He commands it as a drink offering (Numbers 28:7), as well as a tithe (Deuteronomy 14:22-26). This clearly demonstrates divine approval, as *shêkâr* is encouraged to be enjoyed “before the Lord” (:26).

I like Proverbs 31:6 here—

Give strong drink (*shékâr*) to him who is ready to perish, and wine (*yayin*) to those who are of heavy hearts.

ME AND FERMENTED GRAPES

I never drank any alcohol until around 2009. Then I started drinking wine, and I thought, *Oh, so this is what all these people have been talking about all these years*. It was kind of like the first time I went to Florida during an Ohio winter. I used to make fun of people who went to Florida during the winter. Then I went to Florida during the winter, and the brilliance of going to Florida during the winter dawned on me. Suddenly, all the people who went to Florida during the winter were the geniuses, and I was the lifelong idiot who never left Ohio from January through March. It was the same deal with alcohol. I used to condemn and look down on people who drank it. I thought they were weak and/or stupid, and/or worldly. They were, “a bunch of drunks.” Genius me, I would have said the same thing about Jesus. (Of course, I would have been holier than Jesus.) But then I finally drank wine, and I was like, “Oh! Now I see what has been going on all this time!” and then suddenly all these people I looked down on were actually the geniuses—even if they were a little blurry.

I recommend wine to you. I recommend it because God recommends it. If your heart is not glad, try wine. God gave it for the purpose of making your heart glad. If you don't believe me, believe God. He said through His right-hand man David in Psalm 104:15 that wine makes the hearts of mortals glad. Are you a mortal? All right then; why are you staring at me? Does your heart need to be made glad? All right then; what are you waiting for? “But Martin, I hate the taste.” So do I. But I don't drink wine for the taste, but rather for the effect. It makes my heart glad(der). Sometimes all it takes is one glass to make a person happy(ier). Three glasses might make one tipsy, depending on how much food one is eating. Try mixing the wine with a little pumpernickel and a few meatballs.

THE WEAK CONSCIENCE

If you can't drink wine because you've had it drilled into your head that it is evil and that you will be sinning if you do, then don't drink it. In this case, you have a conscience issue. If you think it's sin, then for you it's sin. Paul writes in Romans 14:23, “Now he who is doubting if he should be

eating is condemned, seeing that it is not out of faith.” If you think that sharpening a pencil is sin, then sharpening a pencil is sin to you and you shouldn't do it. I can sharpen a pencil and feel great about it, but only because I have great faith in the department of properly-prepared writing tools. I can drink two or three glasses of wine and feel great about it and thank God for the mind-altering properties of fermented grapes. Again, it's a faith and conscience issue. I am not asking you to violate your faith or conscience. If I can help you grow your conscience, I will. But I will not destroy you by forcing you to do something that clashes with the inner voice telling you that fermented grape juice is of the devil.

ABUSE

It is the abuse of alcohol, not the use of it, that is prohibited in Scripture. People assume that, as soon as they drink a single glass of wine, they will become alcoholics. I believe any addiction to be a result of religious prohibition. If you want to create an alcoholic, tell that person, “Thou shalt not, under any circumstance, let alcohol touch your lips.” If you want to seal the deal, attach the condemnation of God to it. It is true—I suppose—that some people have addictive personalities. I am not convinced of it, however. Is it an addictive personality, or rather a social conditioning that labels alcohol “sinful,” thus ratcheting up desire for the forbidden fruit?

We must always distinguish alcohol use from alcohol abuse. I am not recommending getting drunk. It is drunkenness that is prohibited in Scripture, not drinking. People wonder at what point drunkenness occurs. It's when you don't know what you're doing. A good standard for knowing whether or not you are drunk is the standard of Lot in Genesis, chapter 19:30-36—



Lot went up from Zoar, and stayed in the mountains, and his two daughters with him; for he was afraid to stay in Zoar; and he stayed in a cave, he and his two daughters. Then the firstborn said to the younger, "Our father is old, and there is not a man on earth to come in to us after the manner of the earth. Come, let us make our father drink wine, and let us lie with him that we may preserve our family through our father." So they made their father drink wine that night, and the firstborn went in and lay with her father; and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose. On the following day, the firstborn said to the younger, "Behold, I lay last night with my father; let us make him drink wine tonight also; then you go in and lie with him, that we may preserve our family through our father." So they made their father drink wine that night also, and the younger arose and lay with him; and he did not know when she lay down or when she arose. Thus both the daughters of Lot were with child by their father.

If you find yourself inadvertently impregnating your daughters, I would cut back.

SNATCH ME, BABY

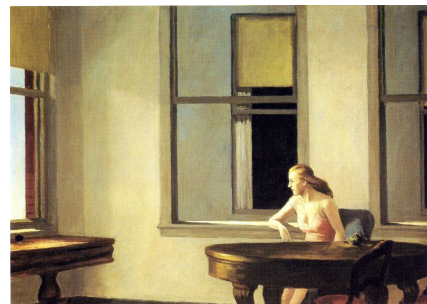
The snatching away is even more effective as an antidote to the hopelessness of this world. The hopelessness of the world is about to radically change. You are about to be made immortal, to be released from gravity, and to see Jesus Christ's face. You will then see a bunch of formerly dead people and will be taken to your celestial home, which is full of spiritual beings who can't wait to see you, touch you, smell you, talk to you, revere you, and ask for your autograph. When this thing I am describing happens, our world and its trials will seem like a dream in the night. The glory will be so blinding that we will barely remember being mortal. All our problems and trials will be over forever.—gone in an instant.

Jesus will look at us and say, "It's over." These words will sound unbelievable to us. "You made it," He will then say to us. "That will never happen again." We are so used to trial, hassle and disappointment in this life, that these will be the most stunning words ever to fall upon our ears. We will probably ask Him, "Are you sure?" He will say, "Yes. It's over. You did it. This is what that was all for ..." and then He will show us our celestial allotments. At this point—I promise you—we will wish we had gone through more in this life. We will—for the briefest, most bittersweet moment—miss the wonder of how so few trials here (relatively) bought us such a transcendent weight of glory. "My God," we will say. "All the Scriptures were

true." Jesus will smile. Part of us will feel stupid for ever doubting the reality set before us by Paul, that is, the value of trial here (2 Corinthians 4:17). We may kick ourselves a little for not thinking upon the glory as often as we could have. When staring the glory in the face, we will wonder why we chose to think upon mean, silly, petty, and relatively worthless things. "We had this all along," we'll say to Jesus. "Why didn't we think on it more?" Jesus will say, "It was what it was. I told Paul to tell you to think about it."

Concerning the snatching away, Paul said, in 1 Thesalonians 4, "Therefore, comfort one another with these words." The thought of leaving here in a blinding flash of glory is meant to sustain and even thrill us. It is meant to be mind candy, a drug, a strong drink. Wine costs money, but this is free. Just think on it; that's all you have to do. No need to cut foil or screw a cork. (Even better: think on it while drinking wine.) Every bad thing here is going away. Let your disposition be changed by the renewing of your mind. Think on these things, think on these things, think on these things.

Let the dregs of this world run off your back. As soon as some trouble starts sticking, remember how temporary it is. One of my favorite sayings is, "It came to pass." It did not come to stay, it came to pass. Nothing here is permanent. Nothing. Only what we learn from these nasty experiences sticks and rides on with us into the afterlife; the nasty experiences go away. Everything will have a rosy glow then. The pleasant lesson is retained while the horror producing



it falls away into the blackness, never to re-emerge. Think of the stages of a Saturn V rocket. As the manned capsule ascends to the celestials, the rockets propelling it fulfill their purpose and fall away. All that

eventually remains is what continues to the higher spheres: the tiny capsule where the humans live. Same with us. We are the humans, and the mind of Christ is our tiny capsule. We continue into our celestial homes with the memories of what brought us there, but not the substance. The evil substance is gone for good. Anticipate the divine reality: wave good-bye to your troubles.

Look up; your redemption draws nigh. —MZ

(To be continued.)