



Sunday, March 15, 2015

ZWTF

Volume 4, Issue 11

Martin Zender Zapping You Whenever Thoughts Flow

The Era is Limited Part 3



Now this I am averring, brethren, the era is limited; that, furthermore, those also having wives may be as not having them, and those lamenting as not lamenting, and those rejoicing as not rejoicing, and those buying as not retaining, and those using this world as not using it up. For the fashion of this world is passing by. Now I want you to be without worry. —1 Cor. 7:29-32

How would you like to live in a world without worry? Sign me up. No need for signatures, however. Life in this kind of world arrives without paper, pen, or a notary

public. Paul is telling us how to live it. We will wring this passage dry, then enact its principles. Paul does not pull his advice out of the air or from a black velvet pouch. He bases this instruction on the death of the old humanity (Romans 6:6), on the new creation that arrived when Jesus Christ rose from the dead (2 Corinthians 5:17), and on the fact that this era in which we live is quickly dissolving to nothing—right before it implodes completely. In fact, for us, it may be gone by this afternoon, to the strains of “Good riddance.”

What if you knew that you had only one hour to live?

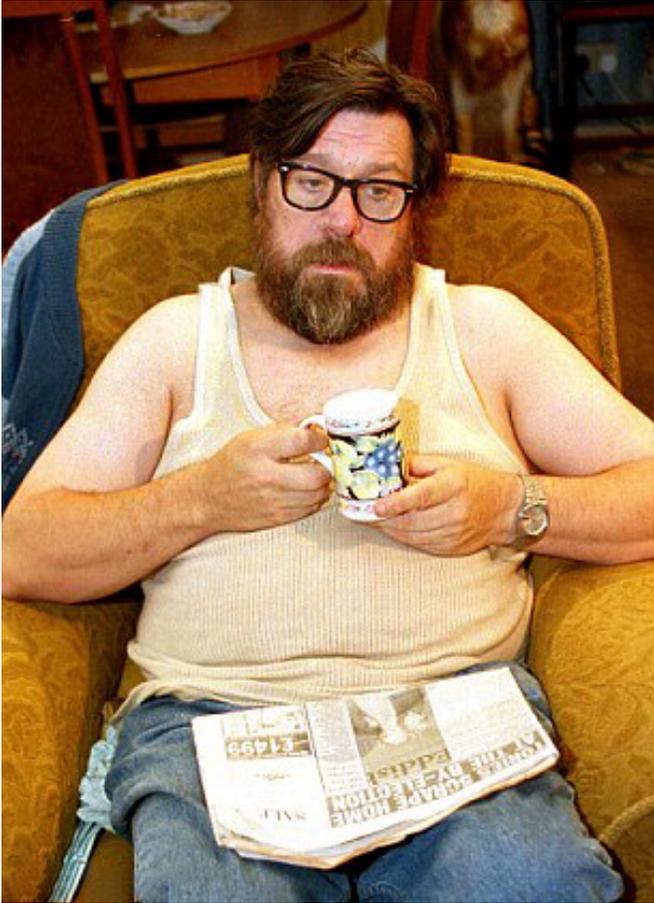
That’s my point.

You have only one hour to live.

ON THE BRINK

I started this series with the Jesus people in Acts who, with good reason, believed that the one-thousand year kingdom would be arriving that Thursday. They happily broke bread with friends and held all things in common. What did they have to lose? Nothing. The things of the world, for them, had grown strangely dim. We know now that the kingdom did not come then, but this is not the point. The people lived as though the kingdom were at the door, and it was. They were told repeatedly by both John the Baptist and their Lord that “Near is the kingdom of the heavens” (Matthew 3:2; 10:7)

When Jesus was about to leave this earth following His resurrection from the dead, His disciples asked Him, “Are you at this time restoring the kingdom to Israel?” (Acts 1:6). This question was more than legitimate. All the kingdom ducks had lined up. The desire of the disciples’ hearts was for Israel to finally assume the promise God gave to Abraham: his seed (Israel, them) would shepherd all the other nations of the earth (Genesis 22:18). Now the Messiah was here



and had fulfilled every Old Testament type. What could stop the kingdom?

The Lord answered them, saying, “Not yours is it to know times or eras which the Father placed in His own jurisdiction” (Acts 1:7). I think that Jesus knew there would be an intervening time period called, “The era of the nations” that would postpone the kingdom. He didn’t tell them this. Think of how it would have demoralized them. The disciples would have all returned home forlorn to watch television, read the newspaper and drink hot chocolate. Jesus needed an impassioned testimony from the twelve at Pentecost, testifying to the nearness of the kingdom. This wouldn’t have worked had the disciples been told, “It’s two-thousand years away.” The populace of Jerusalem needed to hum with excitement over the prospect of world dominion. The Sanhedrin must truly fear the loss of their spiritual monopoly. Humanly speaking, had the Jerusalem leadership accepted the testimony of the twelve at Pentecost, the kingdom would have come in those days. Confetti would have fallen from heaven and lions would have licked lambs to sleep.

The nearness of the kingdom had to be real, and it

was. It wasn’t a trick. You can’t blame Jesus for knowing everything and refusing to reveal everything He knew. Thank God He didn’t. Events that must occur, must occur; they must proceed along their course in the “now.” Who wants to know the date of his or her death? God mercifully withholds this deadly information. Likewise, Jesus refused to tell the disciples of the future postponement of the kingdom. He appreciates the value of an-

“The disciples would have all returned home forlorn to watch television, read the newspaper and drink hot chocolate.”

icipation. Therefore, miracles flourished in and out of Jerusalem then. At this special time in history, therefore, Israelites cared little about property, weddings, personal ambitions, or car insurance. All of that melted in the heat of the grand expectation of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David rising from the dead and marching into Jerusalem to oust the Romans; now *there* was a prospect to spring you from your sleeping mat in the morning.

The Sanhedrin also had to be on record as rejecting something real. This will stand against them at the great white throne judgment. The millennial kingdom then was as real as Israel of old standing at the door of Canaan, an afternoon’s walk away. Israel was so close to the realization of her fondest dreams that she could smell the milk and honey. The Promised Land was so close that anyone with a decent arm could throw a stone across the Jordan and hit an Amorite. But because of fear, unbelief, and a distrust of the Deity, God turned His people around and sent them on a forty-year wander through the desert. Nearly everyone died without having ever set a foot in Canaan. For the last two-thousand years, the majority of the Jewish progeny has been likewise treading useless circles.

THINK OF SOMETHING QUICK

Even when the door of the kingdom slammed shut for Israel in the first century and was put on temporary hold, God did not leave His people without an expectation. Paul wrote the book of Hebrews to explain to the Hebrews what had happened to the kingdom. They should not despair, for God’s promise was sure. In the

meantime, something new had come. The writing of Hebrews exemplified God's care for the Israelite mental state. Paul gave the Hebrews many, many helps to foster pleasant(er) dispositions. God is not unaware of the problem of deferred expectation. He knows the mental frames and mechanics of humans. He knows how discouraged we can get; He invented discouragement. He knows that we know how to tie nooses and jump from bridges so He better think of something quick—and He does.

We all know this life is hard. After all, it kills people. Man is born to trouble (Job 5:7), and God Himself invents the trouble (Isaiah 45:7). The mistake is thinking that God is high above our plight, sitting up in heaven in His giant swivel-chair smoking expensive cigars while we slog, sweat, and droop through another day of eonian misery. But no. Look what He does for His people, the Israelites. Even though they're an enraging ensemble of sinning sots, He cuts them regular breaks; it's their own fault if they don't take them.



When Satan made me go to St. Joan of Arc Catholic Grade School school in Canton, Ohio, I lived for Friday nights. I hated school, and Friday was my Promised Land, when school would stop for two magical days and no one would make me walk in a straight line or hit me with a ruler. “The Brady Bunch” was cleverly choreographed by an astute TV exec to air on Friday nights, when school kids would be already high on the buzz of a

two-day hell stoppage and would therefore easily stare at pretty much anything without blinking, including the exploits of a man named “Brady” and his “lovely lady,” as well as whatever the network wanted to sell us, including the Playtex Living Bra and Primatene Bronchial Mist, which could restore free breathing in as little as fifteen seconds.

The Jews' equivalent of “The Brady Bunch” was the Sabbath. Funny thing, they both hit you on Friday evening. The word “sabbath” doesn't mean “rest,” it means “stop.” God didn't need to rest on the seventh day; He didn't get tired. Creating everything actually refreshed and rejuvenated God; He was just warming up. Still, He looked around for something else to create and couldn't find anything, so He quit. That's right: God is a quitter. I sometimes imitate God in this capacity (Ephesians 5:1). I have a saying that says, “When all else fails, quit.” This is what Israel gets to do once a week. This should tell us that God knows how brutal the prospect of going more than six days without a happy little thing dangling from heaven before one's nose that isn't a noose.

On top of this, God gave Israel even bigger times of celebration three times a year when they gathered by clans and ventured to Jerusalem to saturate their souls. If you think that these God-ordained Jewish festivals (Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles) sucked more eggs than a Methodist church service, you had better watch Clyde Pilkington's video, “Things I Didn't Learn in Sunday School.” This is Clyde's most popular video—for a reason. Watch Israel indulge her collective soul at God's gracious invitation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YQKrSPv7BNA>

On top of this, every seven years God whisked into the calendar the sabbatical year, when Israelites were to ignore their fields and pretty much watch network reruns for 360 days.

Let's talk about the Jubilee year, which occurred once every fifty years and was a stroke of social genius drafted by none other than the God of Israel, otherwise known as Yahweh. Better yet, let's let someone else talk about it. From defendproclaimthefait.org:

Every 50 years was to be a year of Jubilee throughout all the land. The Jubilee year had huge economic, social and family implications. During the Jubilee, slaves were to be set free. The land was to be restored to its original owner, and families were to be reunited. The year of Jubilee would restore the families and free the land from the bondage of debt

as all mortgages were canceled. The purpose of this year was to break the oppression over the people.

The Jubilee would put an end to financial oppression. Slaves were set free and mortgages canceled. All bondage was broken and the people would be free to start fresh. It was also a year of agricultural rest as there would be no farming during this year. God promised to abundantly bless the crops and orchards, and the people were to rest from their labor. It was a year to focus on God and not farming, money and social problems. It was a time of restoration (Leviticus 25:13). The Jubilee was a type or forerunner of what it would be under the reign of King Messiah. The Jubilee was to set the stage for the coming of King Messiah as His reign would be one continual Jubilee.

Speaking of the reign of Messiah, the *crème de la crème* of Israelite expectation was resurrection into the millennial kingdom, where Jews would rise from the dead to meet heroes of faith such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Steven Spielberg. From Jerusalem, the Jews would administer a kingdom wherein all the nations of the world would lay tribute at their feet and vote for their favorite actors and actresses.

Let us review:

1) Life is hard

2) God, being aware of this, sets forth His chosen people as a demonstration/model for the rest of the world, highlighting His diligence in arranging for regular times of rejuvenation/expectation wherein people would pull encouragement to keep living from food, drink, fellowship, top-drawer network television, and a refreshing lack of militant nuns.

3) These regular times of rejuvenation/expectation included:

a) the weekly Sabbath

b) a year off every seventh year (Sabbatical Year)

c) a cancellation of all debt public and private (the Jubilee, every fifty years)

d) expectation of resurrection into the 1,000 year kingdom of pure soulful delight at *matinée* prices

WHICH BRINGS US BACK TO/UP TO PAUL

We all know that the millennial kingdom of Israel receded into the future when the Jerusalem leadership rejected the testimony of Peter and his friends. The rest is history. A new dispensation of grace infiltrated the stony brain of our apostle Paul from the glorified Christ.

Now we are on the “front burner” of God’s calendar while Israel simmers somewhere behind the lima beans. The time soon comes, however, when God finishes with us and resumes with Israel. Paul describes the coming transfer of divine attention in Romans 11:25—

For I am not willing for you to be ignorant of this secret, brethren, lest you may be passing for prudent among yourselves, that callousness, in part, on Israel has come, until the complement of the nations may be entering.

The entering of the complement of the nations means that, at any moment, Christ will call the last member of His body into the fold. At this occurrence (God knows the precise time of it), the body of Christ is transferred bodily to a celestial realm in precision-like accordance with Paul’s plain description of the event in 1 Thessalonians, chapter 4. Besides the snatching away of the body of Christ, no lengthy or even snappy prophetic event lies between God’s finish with us and His resumption of the “kingdom clock” with Israel. In other words, the snatching away (commonly but erroneously referred to as “the rapture”) is the next big event on God’s prophetic timetable. This will occur *before* the final seven years of Daniel’s seventy sevens of years, prophesied by him in the ninth chapter of the book bearing his name.

“QUIT GIFTS”

Besides a general expectation of rising to meet Christ in the air and reconciling the universe to God from a place of privilege at His right hand, what times and seasons of respite engage the Body of Christ that even remotely approximate the many gracious “quit gifts” given Israel to help them lead a manageable, nooseless life aboard this decrepit planet? Where is our Sabbath? Where is our Sabbatical year? Where is our Jubilee? My God, they even cancelled “The Brady Bunch.” God knows that His people need significant mental off-ramps to survive the trauma of Eon 3. Are we not also His people? Ours is a different evangel, yes, but are we not as corruptible and depression-prone as they? Do we not know as well as they how to tie knots and kick away chairs?

We frequently speak of how much greater our evangel and expectation is than that of the Jews: we have a celestial expectation, theirs is terrestrial; we will be seated at the right hand of God, their future centers around Jerusalem; they will administer law, ours is a dispensa-



tion of grace. They have the earth at their feet, we the heavens. In light of this, would it be too much to expect one or more times or even seasons of refreshment when we may temporarily “cash out” of the world and indulge some trouble-free thinking? Due to the nature of our call, would it be very far out of line to expect, perhaps, even greater relief in this department than given to the people of the covenant? I mean—our call is *so* radical; everyone thinks we’re *so* crazy—crazier even than Israel. Not even the Jews understand our call; it was probably Jews who cancelled “The Brady Bunch.”

So again, where are our feasts? Where is our divinely-sanctioned day off (the Sabbath)? Where is our year off (the Sabbatical year)? When do all our debts get canceled for a fresh financial start (the Jubilee)? I could almost say, with Peter, “Look, we have left everything and followed you. What is that going to be worth to us?” (Matthew 19:27, J.B. Phillips paraphrase.)

Ah, friends. This is where the happy shock enters, stage left. God has not let His celestial darlings dangle. As our expectation of eonian glory is exponentially higher than Israel’s terrestrial hope, so *does* our means of mental escape far exceed theirs. God *did* provide something for us

along this lovely line that not even Israel—imbibing of her best wines—could have imagined. Our blessed escape lasts not for a day only, or even a month, or even a year. Rather, every breath taken into these mortal frames can and will fuel a relief so real and rare that Paul himself takes pains to not only prove but produce it. It is real, and it is here. Its most far-reaching promises hinge, not upon signs, seasons and eras, but upon the whim of a God Who, Himself, stands on tip-toe for it to happen.

Next week: “The Era is Limited, Part 4.”

MY APOLOGIES

As I do not always deliver in precise detail what I promise (no God-complex here), I should never tell you ahead of time what I plan to write the following week. I promised last week to describe the remarkable experience introducing Paul to the new creation, and I also imagined in my lame brain that this edition of the ZWTF would detail the practical ways outlined by Paul that a new-creation-type person lives. I also thought that this would be the final installment of “The Era is Limited” series. My mistake. My apologies as well to those

anxious to return to the Romans Series. I am hearing from many of you that this “Era is Limited” side-trail is just what the doctor (medical and otherwise) ordered. Very well. I will stick with the inspiration and finish this series until God dictates a quit. I am confident that as I pursue and persist that even richer veins of truth will open to us.

Thank you for your patience, and for your letters detailing for me how this series has revitalized your earthly disposition.

I remain your servant and fellow-sufferer in Christ,

Martin

Martin, you have been a balm for many of my emotional wounds on many occasions by now, so I owe you quite a bit. Even when I meet Christ in the air and give him a big hug for His grace and love towards me, I’ll be looking over His shoulder to see if I can spot you next. You have been both a brother to me over the last couple of years since I stared paying attention to you, and though we would be nothing without Paul’s letters to guide us, your way of explaining things has taken me a lot further in less time. Thanks for all the hard work, even though works suck compared to Grace.



Blessings in Christ my friend. You now have yet another person who loves you and appreciates your struggles, your flaws, and your infirmities. Cheers! —Jill

Just got done reading *The Era is Limited Part 2*. Oh my GOD! What a blessing! I’ve been going thru a real knot-in-my stomach, sleep-depriving, “thing” for a while concerning a financial decision gone awry. You know, one of those decisions that seemed so right at the time. Of course, I was building my kingdom at that time and had just come to the realization of God’s salvation for all but knew nothing else...for example; like asking God for wisdom before making decisions. The gift of ignorance, huh?

Anyway, reading George Addair’s, *The Sovereignty of God* and Clyde Pilkington’s, *Being Okay With Not Being OK* has proved to be a powerful 1-2 punch in my battle with depression, but the “round house hay-maker” you wrote is the final blow to help me win the victory. I have been trying to get the victory over this from the wrong side of the cross! No more, brother. I’ve read your *First Idiot In Heaven* a few times and do firmly believe in the two gospels, yet never got a handle on the cross thing until your article. Hell, I’d been pushing on a “pull” door all this time!



Z, when you wrote concerning Abraham not yet fathering any children, let alone nations, and yet God spoke to him as though he had, well, lemme tell ya, I got off that boxing stool, took my battered ass out for the next round and kicked some serious booty! It felt so good! I’m gonna get this victory ‘cause I know by faith I’ve got it (thru Christ that

strengthens me).

Thanks to your choice of words, the victory is mine because God has said it. It’s the good fight of faith, right? How can one lose when one’s already won? The fight is fixed!

Can’t even begin to thank you enough for everything over these years. You hang in there. And remember, God is on our side.

Luv ya! —Ray

Continued →

Martin,

Bravo again for your “The Era is Limited, Part 2.” Thanks for helping us better understand the situation in which we believers have been placed. We all struggle to cope with the madness of this wicked eon when we should just relax and revel in the new creation we are and the glorious reality that is imminent.

Once again, you have given us helpful, thought-provoking and inspiring teaching, brilliantly written.

The highest complement I can give you is this: your writing opens my mind and makes me happy.

Thanks again, Martin.

Peace, —William

* * *

Just finished today’s masterpiece (“The Era is Limited, Part 2”) and I must say, Martin, I got a glimpse into what the meaning of your suffering is. At least to me!

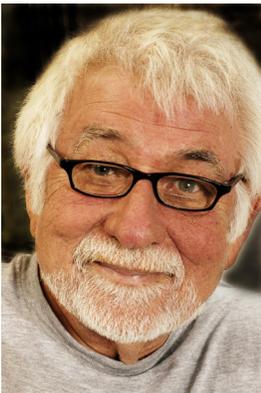
Normal, pre-aware minds might say of you, “What is Martin’s problem? He handles the truth of God’s word so beautifully. He is right on. Shouldn’t he be happier than he seems to be?”

I know of this question because I have asked it. This evening, in the car, with a blazing sun on my southern side, foretelling a long awaited Spring, this thought came to me:

I will try to express it. Thoughts that are noble and true are birthed of minds willing to take on the suffering of birth. Lincoln and the Gettysburg Address, Paul, who longed so deeply for love in the body of Christ could only write 1Cor.13’s radical truth. Somehow, it is our Father’s plan to birth his truth amidst insanity, ignorance, evil and decay.

I understand your suffering for us as you birth Paul’s truth in this generation. My father often would say that knowledge makes a bloody entrance. As I track truth in your writing, word by word, phrase by phrase, example by example, color by color, picture by picture I say of a truth - this work of Martin’s could not be done without suffering. It would not be able to seep into our minds without the struggle in Martin’s mind. God knows that it must be rephrased, refined, re-prepared, re-matured for each generation and for those whom The Lord would call to hear it and blessed to live it.

I, for one Martin, owe you. I am mindful of it. You are worthy of your hire. Thank you. I will be in touch! —Brian



As long as I’ve known you, I should get by now that when you “go dark” like you did last week it’s because you’re going through one of your un-public times. I can totally relate to not even being in a “shades-wearing” place. But finding the motivation and wherewithal during those periods to churn out truth bomb after truth bomb is beyond me. And how can you write stuff like “The Era Is Limited,” Part 1 & 2 ... Inconceivable. Those newsletters are ... I am speechless. You kick Mark Twain’s ass.



Wanna hear something crazy? I keep getting this idea—this “gut message,” if you will—that if only I speak my truth, finally speak God’s truth to my mom and dad, that the snatching away will occur. As though it were some magic formula that it’s up to me to solve, or a magic key that I’m supposed to turn which unlocks the door to the magic Kingdom.

How embarrassing, I can’t believe I tell you this. It’s just that every time my dad sees me listening to one of your’s or another believer’s messages, or reading your books, he gets irritable with me. I gave him my spare copy of the CLNT several months ago and I got zero feedback. And my mom’s even worse. When she witnesses me being exposed to you truth-tellers, she gets all religious on my ass and starts shoving Christian literature and ritual shit down my throat. She’s actually funny in a very sick way. And here I hold universal secrets to blow the doors wide open inside me yet I keep quiet as a church mouse. What the flying f*** is this all about?! When is passion going to trump fear?

I’m such a failure! But I’m God’s special failure. And He’s finishing the work He began in me. I’ll say this though. I feel myself getting closer and closer to “blow time.” I feel the words welling farther and farther up my throat, my mouth, on the verge of unhinging. Unhinging to unleash the truth, in love. And when I do, maybe it won’t activate “go time.”

Maybe it’ll just change *me*. —Renee