



ZWTF

Zapping You Whenever Thoughts Flow

Volume 8, Issue 15

The History of the Universe, Chapter 11

The spirit of God vibrates upon the Earth, Part 2.



God's acts are the ones that we are most interested in. And why shouldn't they be. After all, He is running the universe and we are not. I'm not saying that our acts are irrelevant, but that we're merely passengers on this train. God is the conductor. If we, as passengers, inebriate ourselves, we will still arrive at our destination. If the conductor gets drunk, we're all screwed.

Without a knowledge of the discernible pattern that I am making you aware of (God creates; God wrecks; God redeems), God could easily be perceived as a drunken, absentee madman. Where the hell is He? Doesn't He know what's going on down here? He seems to be the very definition of the strong, silent type. Has He started this globe spinning only to leave the scene of the accident?

IMPLORING THE DEITY

Let's start with this casual observation of mine: so many things "go wrong" in the world and in our lives that sometimes it's a wonder we're all still here. (The reason I put "go wrong" in quotation marks is that things are going wrong only relatively. Absolutely speaking, everything is going right. The script is being followed to a T. It's why we're all still here.) No one besides Tiny Tim has ever described this life as a tiptoe through the tulips—but Tiny Tim was nuts. Thus, we naturally look to heaven and cuss. Perhaps I should speak for myself.

Several times over the past forty years I have become discomfited enough to shake my fist into heaven and tell the Deity to go do something sexually impossible to Himself. I have also made disparaging comments about the shape of His hindquarters and His lack of a tan. My heaven-aimed expletives are an emotional response to difficulty. When I find myself still alive and calmer afterward, I wonder why I freaked. I apologize to God. "Your ass isn't really *that* big and white," I say. God has no shape or color at all. He's not a man. Does it matter?

I look up expecting Him to understand, and He does. He hasn't minded anything I've said to Him thus far. I have found God's shoulders to be broad. In fact, God likes being held accountable more than He dislikes the "f" word.

Just as I understand crying babies, God understands crying Martin. It is poor form to throw a crying baby against a wall. No one should do it. The baby doesn't know any better; it is merely *waaahing* its mind. The baby is unaware of social convention or polite society. Very well then. God's society is the highest. Thus, God understands my plight and refuses to hurl *me* against a wall.

Even knowing the pattern as I do, life is still hard. *Without* knowing the pattern, suicide must be regularly contemplated. We know that it is, and more. That more people don't kill themselves every day must be due to the fact that most people are optimists. Most people realize that things will get better. Or that things are not as bad as they seem. This is a God-implanted instinct. It is one hell of a hearty instinct because it endures and survives in the face of the popular religious doom and gloom.

GOSPEL FROM HELL

Christianity insists that the inhabitants of earth are running things *absolutely* (they all have free wills that God cannot touch, let alone control), and that the majority of the population will burn in hell for eternity. I wonder if that hurts. I wonder if eight billion uncontrollable humans is a problem to God. Not only will most Earthlings be tortured in flames for eternity, but they will be forced to watch Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker reruns (Jim and Tammy Faye themselves will be forced to watch themselves) while baking. I think that, while most people might give lip service to the horrible teaching of eternal torment, the majority roll an inward eye at it. It is this roll of the inward eye (another God-given instinct) that saves them. Thank God that eyes are made to behave in this way. I think that sane people (speaking now of those who have dodged the bullet of organized religion) understand that God simply cannot be as nuts as mainstream religion makes Him out to be. He can't be.

CATCHING GOD'S DRIFT

Yelling at God is in fact a good start in dealing with the stress that comes at one's initial attempts to grasp the history of the universe. Those who yell at God are at least acknowledging that the answer is "up there," outside of

themselves. Such yellers tacitly admit that nothing down here is big enough or smart enough to handle the biggest questions: *Why are we here? Where are we going? How many teeth does Joel Osteen actually have?* But when the cry goes up to heaven and the silence is deafening, then souls down here seethe. Mine once did the same.

The History of the Universe is a response to this cry. I hope it has been working so far. God is, in fact, *not* silent. At least not to me. His vociferous Scriptural confessions



are why I'm writing to you. I'm catching God's drift and reporting it to you. It is just that religion has pretty much sound-proofed God out of existence. Churchgoers talk and talk and pray until they're hoarse, drowning out the Deity. They can't quit singing about Him long enough to listen to Him. God thus speaks through friends who are by necessity outside of the mainstream assembly, where it's quiet. Out in the woods, people know how to shut up long enough to discern divine patterns. I am one of these friends. This is no credit to me; God chooses the unwise, weak, ignoble and stupid of the world (1 Corinthians 1:26-27) to disgrace the so-called wise ones.

DIPLOMA-FREE

It is not as though I have a hotline to heaven. I don't. I receive no audible answers to prayers. God answers my prayers the same way He answers yours: dead silence. It's not that He's not listening, but that He answers through circumstance and Scripture.

No, God does not impart to me any special information to which you, yourself, have no access to. I am simply a locator and organizer of the readily available information. I am neither an apostle nor a prophet. I am a guy in Ft. Lau-

derdale. What God *has* given me is the gift of analyzing His Word without the filter of orthodoxy. Dodging formal religious education sets me apart. Sometimes people say to me, “How can I listen to you? You don’t have a theological degree.” My response is, “You ought to listen to me *because* I don’t have a theological degree.” This is now part of my pitch: “I am able to think for myself without having to answer to a board of directors. I am not a cut-out denominational cookie. I can’t be fired for opposing the denominational line. No one calls me into the office to rearrange my chocolate chips. What some would think as my greatest weakness is therefore my greatest strength. Hi. My name is Martin Zender. I make sense for a living.” I then point to my empty wall: “See? No fucking diplomas.”

TRUE COLORS

I mooned God the other night. I probably shouldn’t have done it. Maybe I shouldn’t mention it, except that it may help someone. Before I delve into the unveiling, it will help you to know that I have been reading the Scriptures on my own for forty years. The more I look, the more I see what has been there all along. Because of my lack of an institutional tint, colors come from God as He created them: blues are blue; greens are green; orange remains that way. I watch the principles and patterns emerge directly from God’s mind without human interference. I have seen the redemption—time and again—at the end of the processes of creation and breaking.

The breakings of God are never without a purpose. I have yet to find one instance in Scripture where God does not redeem what He first creates and then chases up a tree. And I never will, because I know the end of this story. I

have found all judgment and all discipline to be productive rather than destructive. The destruction lasts but for a season and always rehabilitates. I have found it to ever be remedial rather than punitive. Nothing I have read or seen in God’s Word or in creation has ever contradicted this. Thus, I find the orthodox insistence that destruction and loss are God’s *endgames* to be not only unworkable,

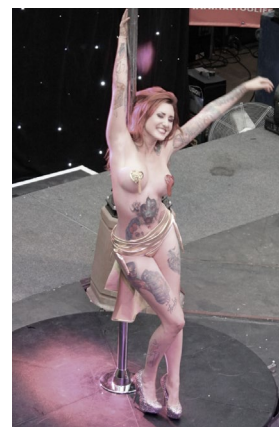


Proofreader: Matt Rohrbach

but insane. It’s all based on faulty translations catering to twisted minds. Only evil people bent toward cruel and unusual retributions can swallow teachings such as eternal torment and then sleep at night. Such strange individuals don’t even want to see Scriptural evidence disproving it. They block their ears and hum church songs. There are plenty of these people around, and they all gravitate toward religion because religion is the home of the pedestal at the bottom of which is engraved, “God’s gonna get you if you don’t belong to *us*.”

LUNAR ECLIPSE

I probably shouldn’t have mooned God, but I did. It was one o’clock in the morning and I couldn’t sleep. I couldn’t sleep because I knew that there was evil in the world and that the primary source of it was religion. The religion oozed out of churches—not out of bars or gambling houses or strip clubs, but churches. No one leaves a strip club hating God. In fact, God is extolled frequently and vehemently in places where women bare their bodies. Where do people learn guilt? Where do they learn hate? Where do they learn condemnation? Where do they learn that God is a Stephen King version of Santa Claus who finds out whether you are naughty or nice and then, instead of leaving coal and a



switch to all the naughties, sends them to hell for eternity? Where do people learn this? Certainly not at strip clubs. So imagine my predicament. I’m set up to fight this evil, and have been thus engaged for twenty-five years. It’s my job. I wake up in the morning thinking of how better to do it. It’s nothing, really. It’s nothing more than a gnat banging its head up against the Babylonian Empire.

God gave me a Bible, some writing ability, satire, and shitloads of faith. Apart from this, I’m unarmed. Thus stripped and yet divinely endued and protected (the weapons of my warfare—apart from the occasional cigarette—are invisible), God has sent me up against the behemoth of organized religion. “Take ‘er down,” He says.

As far as organized religion goes, God has armed *it* to the teeth. And it has lots of teeth. God loves the David and Goliath syndrome. This is another one of His

Photo credit: The Dame; <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>

big, fat, hairy, glorious predictable ruts that I should have mentioned before now. He regularly sets underdogs upon monsters. This is to prove that, when the underdogs win (and they always do; this is part of the rut), it's the power of God and not the power of the underdogs.

So God makes organized religion into a holy Disney World and drops a World on every street corner. Then He puts nuts like Joel Osteen in charge of it, gives Osteen an inordinate amount of teeth, inserts him into an ex basketball arena—the Compaq Center—draws more crowds to him than what followed Jesus, gives him his own television show, rolls out mainstream publishers at his feet (people desperately need to know—apparently—how to make every day a Friday), then makes the cash flow so fast into Osteenian coffers that Joel and his gorgeous, mega-toothed wife, Victoria, have to fly away to the Bahamas in a Gulfstream G550 just to escape the paper cuts.

Then He sends me in after it.

Back in the day, Goliath was nine foot nine inches tall and mean as a whale's dick. His armor weighed more than a Buick LeSabre. He had a bad childhood. He hated Israel. He growled, even in his sleep. He was known in his day as "the Champion of the Philistines." He pissed beer. The entire army of Israel feared him. Who stood up to fight Goliath? A seventeen year-old kid named David. Saul, king of Israel—who should have been arrested for child abuse—tried to put his armor on David, but David said, "I can't go with this. I'm not used to it" (1 Samuel

17:39). So he shucked it. He approached the Champion of the Philistines with a loincloth and a slingshot.

I'm David. I've been lightened of many worldly goods except for a computer, a microphone, an electric fan, an iPhone and some books. I do have a car. God took away my wife of twenty-five years (my soulmate), sent me into two more disastrous relationships, housed me for a couple years with friends, and now has me renting a laundry room/office/bedroom at an Airbnb in Ft. Lauderdale, having stiff-armed several promising New York book deals, and so now He tells me, "All right, kid. Now you're set. Go get 'em." I say, "Okay I will," because I'm ordinarily game for improbable enterprises. But then God says, "No, wait. You're too strong." I say, "Don't you mean I'm too weak? You must have misspoken there, God." And God says, "No, I didn't misspeak. You're too strong." And so He laid on me a depression that tastes like stale chocolate milk every day. "*That* should do it for now," God said.

I guess it was the "*That* should do it for now" part (especially the italic placement) that got to me. First, I cursed Satan. Most people are afraid of Satan. These people are probably smart. I told Satan that he could go do an impossible sexual thing with himself and take his loser demons with him. I know Satan's game plan. I know why he was created, and that he has basically already done an impossible sexual thing to himself by thinking that killing Christ would wreck God's plan instead of fulfilling it. He is short-sighted, this one, and I told him so. "You're not too bright," I told him. "You're short-sighted. And I'm not



afraid of you. *At all.*” The “at all” part at the end (especially with the italics) gave away my fear, so I thought that, for a safety measure, I better use the name of Jesus Christ. I knew he didn’t like that name. So I said, “I hear you don’t like the name of Jesus Christ. Well then, take this: *Jesus Christ*. Do you like apples? How do you like *them* apples?”

I then turned to God and told Him that I had a very special treat for Him, and so I went outside (it was probably two in the morning by this time; it takes a while to insult and belittle Satan), and I did the thing that I already referenced. The air felt cool and fresh. It was not at all unpleasant. I waited for the lightning bolt, which of course did not come. I knew it wouldn’t. It did not come because God has pronounced me righteous through Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ died for my sins. He died for my ass, too. Since I take that literally, I don’t worry about any of my sins, or my ass. I try not to sin and mostly succeed. But when I do screw up, I don’t worry about it. I say, “I’m sorry, God” and move on. I probably don’t even have to say, “I’m sorry,” but I say it anyway because it makes *me* feel better.

God liked my display, I could tell. I sighed about it, though. God wasn’t mad. Maybe He shook His head a little bit. At least I had come directly to Him, apart from intermediaries. But He also got the point. He’s not distant, this God. He knows the pain because He experienced it vicariously through His Son. I knew then that He was going to sustain me, and that He liked that I took my pants off directly to Him. Not too many people do that, I don’t think. I think many people would be afraid to do it. God likes the boldness, though. In fact, He loves it. He said, “You know you’re going to win, right?” And I said, “Yes, I know. Thank you.” I’ve felt even closer to Him since then. I got back to work the next day with the same taste of stale chocolate milk in my mouth but refreshed in my tasks. Sort of.

PROCESSES VS. GOALS

Without fail, I have found God’s hard things to be processes and not goals. The goals shine forth from Scripture for anyone gifted to rid them of the denominational filters long enough to see it: God will have mercy on all (Romans 11:32). He will give to all a life that never again dies (1 Corinthians 15:28). He will yet justify all the sons and daughters of the first human (Romans 5:18-19). He will reconcile to Himself every single thing that has been created (Colossians 1:16-20). The consistent aspect of all of these wonders is that wreckage invariably precedes the redemption. Invariably. In the Romans 11:32 example—“God locks up all together *in stubbornness* that He should be having mercy upon all”—the wholesale lock-up precedes

the wholesale mercy. In the 1 Corinthians example, the never-again-dying for *anyone* is preceded by the death of *everyone*. In the Romans 5:18-19 example, condemnation precedes justification—as it must. And in Colossians 1:16-20, the reconciliation of all that is created comes via blood: *His* blood.

SANS ALTAR CALLS

I realize that not everyone I am writing to has a personal relationship with God. It’s not like I haven’t thought of that. It’s okay. I told you a little about my personal relationship with God so that you can know me better and, by extension, maybe gain further insight into God. I’m not asking you to have a personal relationship with God. There will be no altar call at the end of this book. I’m just recording the facts as I see them and with as much honesty as I can muster. I’m making it as real as I can. It’s already real, I just have to keep it there. If God wants to make you an intimate of His, then He will. You’ll know it. You don’t have to feel it, only know it. You may be knowing it now. If not, don’t worry. Everyone is included in God’s big happy family—in the end. This is because of Jesus Christ and the terrible things He suffered on the cross. He went through such pain and humiliation for the sake of the future happy family. He took away all sin at that place outside Jerusalem, including the sin of unbelief. That’s the kicker that you never hear: not even a refusal to believe in Jesus Christ in this life keeps one from the happy family forever. Otherwise, Jesus Christ did not die for the sins of the world—

For there is one God, and one Mediator of God and humanity, a Man, Christ Jesus, Who is giving Himself a correspondent Ransom for all, the testimony in its own eras (1 Timothy 2:4-6).

God does His best work in spite of humans, not because of them. But of course He uses humans to carry out His will and intentions.

Before I dissect the disruption of the world, let’s consider a few more places in Scripture where God’s big, fat, hairy, glorious, predictable rut holds true. When I get back to the disruption of the world and then to—of all things—the creation of the first human and the gorgeous creature known as Eve, then the thing that I must tell you will be that much easier to swallow. —MZ

(To be continued.)