



# ZWTF

Zapping You Whenever Thoughts Flow

Volume 8, Issue 22

## The snatching of Paul. (IN HIS OWN WORDS)



**I am acquainted with a man in Christ, fourteen years before this, (whether in a body I am not aware, or outside of the body, I am not aware—God is aware) such a one was snatched away to the third heaven. And I am acquainted with such a man (whether in a body or outside of the body I am not aware—God is aware) that he was snatched away into paradise and hears ineffable declarations, which it is not allowed a man to speak. Over such a one I shall be boasting; yet over myself I shall not be boasting, except in my infirmities.**

—Paul, *2 Corinthians 12:2-5*

Paul wrote 2 Corinthians around 57 A.D. 14 years before that was 43 AD. No one knows what Paul was doing in 43 AD. Paul might not even have known. Ellicott's Commentary says that 43 AD "coincides with the period of unrecorded activity between St. Paul's

departure from Jerusalem (Acts 9:30) and his arrival at Antioch (Acts 11:26)." Paul was "in the seam." He was secreted away in a room or in a wilderness away from the prying pen of Ellicott or anyone else. He dares everyone to find him. Not even A.E. Knoch can find him. Peter cannot find him. His ex-wife cannot find him. Bullinger cannot find him. Luther cannot find him. The only people savvy to his whereabouts then were the grocer and his barber. Possibly the coffee shop staff. To history, Paul is in a no-man's land. He has disappeared. Not a single scholar can link any event to "fourteen years before this," not even our most brilliant, prying minds. That's because there was no event. It was nothing. That's the event.

Now is where *I* come in. Since no one knows anything, I can know nothing better than anyone. Paul had returned home from the grocery store just mentioned. The grocer knew where he lived, possibly including even his address. Paul bought figs and bananas and chocolate and coconut water this day. He had to walk uphill to get back to his place. He lived by himself. The furniture in his apartment consisted of a table, a chair, and a large cabinet. That's it. There was lots of empty space where Paul could stare. Inside the cabinet were some clothes, four dishes (a plate, a bowl, a spoon, a cup; yes, Paul kept his clothes with his dishes), his scrolls, his groceries, his writing supplies; basically, everything he owned was in the cabinet. Barnabas had built the cabinet. In one corner of the room was a mat where Paul slept. At each end of the mat was a folded blanket; one of them served as Paul's pillow. Paul slept in the same room where he worked in the same room where he ate in the same room where he stared at the lit dust at noon, suspended in air and lit by the sun that came through his one window cut roughly through the room at chin-height.

The apostle was tired. Paul dropped the groceries onto the table. He could sort them later or leave them there. It didn't matter. It wasn't many groceries anyway. What was there to sort? That word should not even have come to



him. All he wanted now anyway was the coconut water. He poured some in his cup and took it to his mat. His mat was under the window. Some cool air—because of the evening—came in and fell on him. It felt good. He decided to feel it, and nothing but it. It hit him on his legs. It was fine. Now it was dusk and the sun was just going away. No one would come see him. He sighed. Where was his cat? It didn't matter. He barely knew where he was. It didn't matter. It was somewhere on earth. All that mattered was the coconut water and the fact that cool air sinks, and that the cool air coming through the rough-cut window sank and fell on his naked legs. But now he needed to be completely naked.

He didn't want to get up, so he rolled out of his clothes and threw them aside. Now it was better. The mat was rough-hewn and he usually put something on top of it unless he was naked, ironically, because he liked how the texture felt on his bare back and massaged his injuries. He could scratch himself on the mat and it felt good to his injuries behind him.

He looked down at himself without raising his head much. He put one arm underneath his head for this. This was enough to allow him to look down his body at his stomach. He ran his left hand over his stomach

muscles. He liked that he could see and feel his stomach muscles through his skin. He tensed briefly to make the stomach muscles come out more. The dying light was such that he could see the striations of his leg muscles, especially the great muscle of work. He could not reach it where he wanted to feel the muscle that looked like a plantain, so he put the bottom on his smooth hand in the smoothness between the middle of himself and his leg, then rubbed that area in the coolness of the air still falling from the window as gently as he could so that it was as though something alive and apart from him had landed there. These were the simple pleasures that made Paul smile in awareness of his vessel. Sometimes he was so aware of the Deity of God, and sometimes he just lived. Now he was aware and living at the same time, and it felt to him as good as the smoothness beside his stomach and the legs which had taken him so many places. and the great muscles of those legs rising in undulations.

It was in this peace of being nowhere and everywhere at the same time that the fatigue settled upon him like a bird in a busy tree, a tree busy with leaves. Paul could also hear leaves outside from a palm frond because maybe a storm was coming. Then he heard thunder and knew that the storm was coming, but that it would miss his

house and even his city. He did not know how he knew it would skirt the city, he just knew. It sometimes happened. This knowledge disappointed him because he so enjoyed the storms. This must have been where the cold air was coming from.

Every breath he knew was from God. Every thought was from God. The decision to feel the smooth place was of God, and how he had situated himself upon his mat and where the builders had decided to put the window—it was all of God. He looked over at his table at the bananas. He knew that the history of the bananas was of God. He stared at one banana. He felt as though the banana could speak to him. How absurd. Yet in this he smiled. He knew

“It was in this peace of being nowhere and everywhere at the same time that the fatigue settled upon him like a bird in a busy tree.”



that somehow his leg was connected to his hip, probably by means of a socket of some kind. The banana reminded him of this, which made no sense on the surface of things. In the next moment, it was him living. In the moment after that one, it was God making him move and breathe. These moments, though different, were the same to him. He liked this. He tried to explain it to people, but couldn't. Not even Peter could grasp how easily he could change the mind from the absolute thinking that God did everything to the relative thinking that he, Paul, did everything. Why was it so easy for him? Maybe he was a genius. But he didn't think so. But then he thought that maybe he was. He knew he had gifts. He was aware of how God had organized him to be who he was and that there was no combination like him anywhere on earth. Of course that could be said

of anyone. But still. He knew he was protected in this because it was such a rare and impossible combination for his particular use and God's use of him. Now he smoothed the hair mat above his pubic bone over and over as though petting a cat and breathed so that his belly rose, but not his chest. Now he closed his eyes and felt the top of the bone that seemed to link his hips on top of him—and that may have been when it happened, although it may not have been that moment at all. He thought about the last time he was whipped.

He never knew if he had fallen asleep or if he was awake. He did not even know if he took his body with him or if it was only his spirit that went while his body stayed on the mat in the precise position and attitude where he left it, including his right arm beneath his head. Jesus came for him. He had met the Jesus Who had arms and legs, before, in the Arabian desert, but this was different. He later called it “being snatched away.” He himself now writes:

When Christ first came to me it was the brightness of light that blinded me. I had also seen Him as a regular person. Now it was a different thing, a third thing. I could do nothing but see, yet this had nothing to do with my eyes, if even I had them; I was not aware of it. God is aware. I rose up in a rapture. I remember the ceiling of my room, that I passed through it. I passed through it as though it were nothing. When “I” passed through it, what is “I”? Now I was looking down at my place and my body and I saw that I was in the same position. This makes me think that I was outside of my body and if I had to say, it would be that. As I am not certain, I will not say either way. I don't know how anyone can feel or sense anything outside the body. I still do not know this. Even you do not know it because the knowledge of all time came upon me and this is where I “went.” God has given humanity much knowledge, but much more He has withheld. This is why I will not say either way but if you press me I have the sense that I left my body here and that He gave me a new body to experience where He was taking me. I may say that the new body was a loan to me and that I gave it up—or it was taken from me—when the travel was finished and He returned me to my mat.

From this time on (that is, going through the ceiling) there is no memory of “there” and “here.” The only thing I remember was my ceiling and that it became no hindrance. Then I was ahead in time. There was no

passage, understand. I did not travel through stars or see celestial bodies as some have assumed with great erring. They do not know. I, myself, barely know, but I do know that it was not that, for I came to be ahead in time to the third heaven. I was only aware of going out and above my house to see my body in that way. This I believe was so that I would know that this was a journey not of space but of time. It was only, then, the briefest of space travels to make me aware that I was being removed. After that, the travel aspects went black.

I heard voices and music. The voices were deep and comforting. The words I did not know, while at the same time grasping the meaning. I was to be given a glimpse of the body of Christ completed. As this began happening, the voices increased in volume. This I attribute to the number of voices adding to the previous chorus and not to the volume of individual voices. More beings spoke and sang as I “went.” The music was deep and wide and high and low all at the same time. It crashed like cymbals crashing. I somehow knew the words, and so I began singing. This is when the rapture began—when I knew the songs and I sang them—but all the songs came from somewhere besides my memory and they came out from somewhere besides my mouth, for I did not even know if I had a mouth. I joined in the chorus. But then I knew that it was all about me, and I stopped. Utter silence had come at the same time I stopped, and—

—and then I knew that everything had been prepared for me.

It was as though I were being shown a home, a treasure, a sea, a magnificent painting or possession of some great personage that no one else had ever seen. There was such anticipation of it all around me that the silence was the loudest thing I had ever heard. Then I heard a voice in my own language that said, “Come, come and see.” Then, my God, my God, my God! I saw it. I saw everyone. I saw them all perfected. The only one I remember distinctly was Chloe. She had taken my letter from Corinth to Rome, but I knew that they were all there. And then everyone. I saw everyone who would ever be called. They all gazed at me. It was every member of the body of Christ ever created, ever called, ever glorified. The old humanity was so long past. The history of it was long ago dimmed to every eye there. All that mattered was *now*—that moment. I knew that I was far into the future, even thousands of years after

the snatching away of the body of Christ. I knew that those I gazed upon and who gazed upon me had already witnessed the great white throne judgment. I sensed that the great white throne judgment was thousands of years in the past. I was aware of the second death. I was aware of it as real as a sound, though it were silent. How could I see them except they had bodies—speaking now of the members of His precious body? They all knew me. I knew them. Only one was of the past, Chloe, but all others were of a time beyond mine, for how many years I do not know. I do not know when they came, or from whence, for that was not shown me. What was shown me, and of what I was aware, was that they all stared at me and loved me with an unfathomable and indescribable love.

“I was to be given a glimpse of the body of Christ completed.”



I heard them say my name then, as in a chorus. I heard, “Paul,” but it was as though that sound traveled in the long chord of a song that begins in the mists of the past and travels along a tight line in which there is no bend or turn until what I would have called “the future” came, but that now had no meaning except that I was aware of how far away I was from all that I had ever known, both in time and in space, although my most pressing reality, as I have said, was time.

And then it happened again, but a far different thing. My God, my God, and my God! We were all, all of us then, taken by the presence of Christ, by Christ Himself, to Paradise. But this was Paradise, not of the earth, but of the heavens. I had not even known before this that there was a Paradise of the heavens. Now it was as though I were sworn to secrecy. I know every detail of it. I do. I

know it. I saw it. It beat in and out of me like the blood pushing through my body out of my heart. It still feels this way, though I know nothing. I knew then that I would forget every detail, but not the experience. I knew that the details would be erased from me, but not the experience. I knew this during the experience. It was the most wonderful, the most beautiful, the most sublime of all things I had ever experienced and seen. This much I am allowed to remember. We were all there, every member of the body of Christ. I heard names that I had never heard before. I heard every name. Every name was disclosed and announced to me, at the same time as the faces appeared, each one. The names were as strange as the voices that now rose above us all, all the members. But the faces I knew, though I had never seen them before.

Now I was aware of great and spiritual beings, numerous beyond measure, flying above us all, then below us, then circling us. We were at the center of everything. But now where was Christ? He was in the center of where we stood. And yet at the same time we were in the center of Him. The beings flew around us, countless beings, great beings, voices I had never heard at volumes I could never have imagined in all of my life, or any life. Then I heard the words, "Say nothing now," and at these words, everything faded. I did not know how terrible it was and I still do not know to this day because the terror of this ending was kept from me, that is except for the trailing edges of it which remain with me, though I know it is but a fragment, a remnant of the disappointment of leaving that most blessed time and place to return to my room and to the new storm...and there was the banana, in my hand, I was eating it, and how I came to be eating it I do not know, for I do not remember getting it. I will swear to you that I did not get it, but that it was brought to me. The storm that I thought would not come had now come, but the rains blew westward and away from my window so that I did not move except to eat, and now the peel of the banana was on my stomach and I watched it rise and fall, and how it got there I do not know, and for the first time in many months I laughed. I laughed until the tears came. When the tears came, I began crying. Then the wind shifted suddenly and the rain did come on me then, and I let it come.

It was all sealed then. What before was a "mere" spiritual intuition, was now the most obvious fact. I had not been shown it, I had seen it. It was done. Not even the banana peel rising with my breathing was more real. Now I could risk everything. Now I could laugh, finally. I could finally laugh at life, this life, with its petty arguments and dust



and trees and bantering and things rolling on wheels through the markets and the peoples struggling to adorn themselves in fronds, frocks, feathers—none of it mattered. The fowls of the air knew more of it than the people, and I had a stranger and deeper understanding of the animal kingdom after this. It no longer mattered then how many more times I was whipped—and it would be three more times. I would never feel another lash. I would never feel another rock. I felt them, but not as before. I disagreed with my brethren, but not as before. I was dead now, still dead. But I lived. I was not dead then, but I may as well have been for that is what the world had then become to me, and I to the world. For I lived from then to the end in accord with what I had seen before in the Celestial Paradise: the body of Christ completed. I wrote it to the saints in Corinth. Now I knew it was safe to part ways, safe to live, safe to risk everything. What I had seen and experienced could not be lost. This was a great gift.

I never could bring myself to even say it was me. “I know of a man,” is how I put it. Learn from that, if you learn anything. Learn from *that*. The new man is not me. The new creation is not me. Yet I live. No, living in me is Christ, the One dying and being roused for my sake, Who took me to see the completing of the One completing the all in all, even Him. I saw every detail too of the new home, of the kingdom, of the structures and even the buildings beyond, but it was all erased. My only memory is that I saw it and that the glory was superexcessive and impossible for me to contain, even in the body given me then. God knew what would come to humble me, and of course I know it now. The universe surrounded me then—and *you* surrounded me. Whoever is reading now surrounded me; *you* were there. I saw you. I know your name. They were all flying about us,

myriads. You do not know. The center of the universe, the center of everything. It is not enough to say, “It will happen.” That was the past. That is the point of it all. It has already happened. I went to a time when it had already happened. I saw you and if only I could convey the texture of that and the accompanying feelings; as real as cold rain through a window was it. The snatching away was millennia in the past—millennia.

They stoned me in Lystra shortly after that, when I had healed a lame man. The Jews became jealous. I felt the rocks, but in another way than I otherwise would have. This is how it would be. The mental sadness was always more for me after that, but not the physical. Before, it had been the other way around. For a brief time, I believe I inhabited my new body. That is the only thing I can think. Coming back to this body that now rots in the grave is what made me laugh. You would not think it so, but that is what happened. This was a mercy of God. The trials after that were heavy but not worthy to be compared with what I saw and heard. When I say I saw you it is true and cannot be otherwise, even though you fail to grasp the significance. As you read this, I am long dead. I received the details of this letter while a part of the third heaven, after my resurrection to immortality. For a brief time I existed far ahead of you, thousands of years ahead of you, yet at the same time not ahead of you because you were there. I am there with you, in spirit. We are the center of everything. I know this. I will rise to see you, and together we shall rise to be presented. I know what will happen then, for I was there before. For me, this part will be familiar. You will surround me and say my name. Then I will know all of you. He chose me for that, and for this. You say my name then. I know you. And you know me. I want you to be without worry, so therefore comfort one another with these words. ■

Paul

