



ZWTF

Zapping You Whenever Thoughts Flow

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Taster-spoons of glory.

If we just look around, there are hints of future glory everywhere.



Life as we know it will soon significantly change. Shortly, we will wonder how we ever survived a minute in these vessels of humiliation. A caterpillar turning into a butterfly is a fair yet dim analogy of the change awaiting us. God will transform us from earth-based dirt-eaters to flitting lightnesses transparent to the sun.

I wish I could remember the day I was born. What was it like to first see light and trade the embrace of warm mucous for the cold hospital? A new mode of living comes instantly at birth; there is no preparation; you either make the transfer from mucous to oxygen, or you die.

That's a bad analogy because, to me, it's almost reverse metamorphosis—going from a safe, warm place into a world of medical practitioners who probe you with Q-Tips. I only wanted you to appreciate the shock of change we've endured; birth is the biggest one, and the one we mercifully cannot remember. (I contradict myself by saying I wish I could remember it.) The coming change will be the best bombshell ever to hit us. Q-Tips will belong to a former life.

In our near future, death will not be an option. Can you imagine a time when ceasing to live will be impossible? I can; I try to imagine it daily. Nothing will be risky then; there will be no more looking over one's shoulder for the boom to drop. No more car accidents, no cancer, and full cell phone coverage. All will be sure. Weariness, risk, and walking will be hazy memories from the caterpillar days. It is *this* present life that I cannot imagine. Another day of it seems undoable apart from the divine working of yet another 24-hour miracle of endurance.

I thank God that I have not seen the third heaven. Who can return from that Wonderland with a shred of patience for the pre-cocoon experience? Only one of us managed it, but God gave that man supreme powers of endurance. The apostle Paul's experience was another reverse metamorphosis; he was changed, briefly, to a butterfly, then returned to the status of a caterpillar.

I'll wait for the permanent change, thanks.

TOO HIGH FOR MORTALS

Paul's sneak peek into the next world was so high that he thought he might be God Himself; I do not exaggerate. The only other time in Scripture that the phrase "lifted up" is used (Paul said that his peek into heaven threatened to "lift [him] up" beyond measure"—2 Cor. 12:7) is when it is said of the man of lawlessness in the temple, who "lifts himself up" over everyone termed a god and who says—due to some American Idol complex—that he

is God (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). The rush that overcame Paul in the third heaven was that stupendous. Flesh and blood cannot shoulder such glory, so when Paul returned to Earth he needed humbled. Do you really want a sneak preview into the deity you will soon become? Why? Isn't God humbling you enough?

CHANGED IN THE CASTING OF AN EYE

We all, indeed, shall not be put to repose, yet we all shall be changed, in an instant, in the casting of an eye, at the last trump (1 Corinthians 15:51-52).

The dead "await" the trumpet of God, but light is faster than sound. We, the living, shall be snatched away together with the formerly-dead in an instant; "instant" is the common denominator for the living and the dead. The dead are awakened by the trump of God, but we, the living, are prepared for change by the casting of an eye; we will sense the Lord's presence and will desperately want to see Him. When we see Him, we shall be



like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Light is faster than sound, which is why change for the living comes by seeing, not hearing.

Here is the Dabhar Translation. Here is an ultra-literal and beautifully-worded passage:

Perceive! I tell you a mystery: we—who abide—will not all be made slumbering, but we all will be changed, in an uncutting, in the flinging of the eye, in the trumpeting of the last trumpet; for it will trumpet, and the died ones will be awakened as incorruptible ones, and we, yea we, will be changed.

In my opinion, "twinkle" is the poorest translation in the *Concordant Literal New Testament*. Elsewhere, A.E. Knoch translated *rhipe* and its word family, "tossing" and "casting." We will cast and toss our eyes desperately toward where Christ appears, which will be in the air. This is the only passage where Knoch translated *rhipe* "twinkle." What is a twinkle as applied to the snatching away? No one knows for sure, not even A.E. Knoch. He conceded to the poor KJV rendering, apparently, because "twinkle" was a word too precious (and cute?) for him to sacrifice.

I don't like it.

Is a twinkle fast? A.E. Knoch thought so. "Twinkle, twinkle, little star, how I wonder what was going through A.E. Knoch's mind when he translated *rhipe* 'twinkle.'" All the speed we need for the coming change is captured in the word "instant," which is *atomos*—"UN-CUT." It's the shortest possible time segment. My question is: How can superlative speed (*atomos*) be qualified by some lesser word ("twinkle"), *presumed* to be speed, but best kept to nursery rhymes? *Rhipe* isn't speed in the first place.

Rather, it speaks of the desperate motion of our eyes toward the previously unseeable Jesus Christ, Who is the Creator of Everything Except God. Every occurrence of "casting" or "tossing" involves desperation; I've looked up every occurrence. In this case, *rhipe* speaks of our sudden desperation for imminent deliverance, in the person of our Savior.

LET'S GET OUT OF HERE

Why do you think that we, as a people, go on vacations? We need a change of scenery. Why do some people *not* go on vacations? They are stuck in killing ruts; they don't mind dying in their easy chairs.

Some people never leave the places in which they were born and raised. Sameness comforts some people right into the old pine box; they will never even try something so risky as a different flavored Pop Tart. Sameness and fear keep people put, and I doubt whether such folk even care to hear gravity-defying doctrine. They don't have time for it; their favorite TV show is about to start.

Redundancy is the killing machine of human existence. Because of it, Solomon wrote Ecclesiastes. *There is nothing new under the sun*, Solomon said. The eye longs for something new to see, the ear for an auditory novelty. (Solomon says, *nope, everything is the same*.) This underscores the

longing of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers on Mars Hill in Acts, chapter 17. They were bored and just wanted to hear something new (Acts 17:21). We are similarly disposed, if we care to admit it. We condemn these philosophers too quickly. I credit their honesty; they craved variety.

Dissatisfaction is the mother of needing change—any change. (Are you completely satisfied with your life? I hope not.) God placed it in our breast to want more: more life, more love, more light. Fueling the dissatisfaction is a general malaise toward life's assassinating, repetitive mechanics, otherwise known as “despairing of the status quo.” Don't begrudge this. This common disposition drives us toward our expectation. Solomon knew this, too. This dual-ended pressure (wanting out, but not being able to get there) whets our appetite for the change of all changes: the transfer from mortality to deathlessness.

LITTLE CHANGES REHEARSE “THE BIG ONE”

If you push your eyeballs in toward your skull while closing them, you can see different colors, sparks, stars, fireworks, roving optical satellites, and other ocular marvels. Sometimes, you can see things floating around in there, which may be blood vessels detached from the retina at birth that never go away. I like to see this stuff, so I'll rub my eyes; I'll just shimmy those balls to and fro. It's a different world in there, boy. All I have to do is close my eyes, push them in, and rub the beejesus out of them. It's a free trip into a weird, different world.

When you drink alcohol, you feel differently afterward. I think people drink wine and even ride rollercoasters because they want to be changed; they want to alter their state. I think people walk through funhouses for the same reasons. (There are probably some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers in the funhouses; look for somber dudes in togas.) Some people smoke marijuana and take drugs.

God planted this tendency toward malaise and the desire for change in the human breast—as I've explained—but some people reach too hard for it, preempting the divine fulfillment. Having said that, God *does* plant the artificial replacements for glory (literally), and lets some of our race experiment with the plants. If we're lucky, some of these adventurers write about it or compose popular songs under the influence of psychotropic substances. This enables the rest of us to take the trip vicariously through the lens of a three-minute musical track. (I'm thinking of *Tomorrow Never Knows*, my favorite Beatles song. It is linked below; if you ever wanted to know what the sound track inside my head generally sounds like, this is it.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pHNbHn3i9S4>

All drugs are a premature pass to heaven's outskirts, though with various levels of illicitness attached. I'm unsure what makes alcohol and tobacco legal, but marijuana not. We should base illegality, I think, on whatever degree of hell follows in the wake of the drug's abuse. Were it not for the overuse havoc wrought by our “best” mind-altering substances (cocaine, heroin), everyone would do it, and no one would yearn for the real thing prepared for us by God.

As just explained, plants created by God Himself render this premature change: cannabis; the coca plant; opium; poppy, some mushrooms. God made these. Isn't He fun? (Hmm.) Doesn't He let some among us experiment? He certainly does. Are the experimenters seeing into some truths? I think so. God made the cocoa bean, too, did He not? I experimented with some Hershey products the other day and lived to tell about it. God also made rice and popcorn. Isn't that something? The God of Everything created the raw material for cocaine and popcorn on the same day. Cocaine vs. popcorn; euphoria vs. sitting on the sofa watching *Zoolander*; the letdown of hell versus, “That was actually a pretty good movie.”



To watch a 1950's housewife trying LSD, click here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pHNbHn3i9S4>

“OH, GOD!”

Then there is sex—another spectacular invention of God. Everyone says, “Oh, God!” during sex for a reason. (Even Amish people say this, I believe. Even atheists say it, I’ve been told.) The orgasm is change. Well, during an orgasm, your life changes, doesn’t it? Where do you go during an orgasm? Somewhere else, for damn sure. You sure don’t stay here. No, but you definitely go *there*, wherever “there” is. I wish I could tell you where it is, but there isn’t enough time to pin it down; the orgasm



is much too fleeting for that. Just when you peek into the light, the door slams shut. God wisely (some would say “frustratingly”) gives the orgasm a skimpy lifespan; fruit flies are durable by comparison.

For a span of a few seconds, the surfer on the wave of orgasm grasps more truth than a pot-smoking monk. Then—wham!—the screen door bangs shut and chases away the light. The trip is short, yes, but so exhausting it needs recovered from. One must “come down.” The eyes need time to refocus, and the heart to recalibrate. All this to say that the orgasm is a God-given anticipation into the ultimate physical, soulish, spiritual fulfillment of Everything We Long For—The Big Change. It is, for the most part (there are exceptions), a legal gift of divine origin; a foretaste of the biggest change you will ever experience.

CELESTIAL SAINT: God, you never gave us even a hint of our future glory.

GOD: You weren’t paying attention.

♪ “All you need is lysergic acid diethylamide” ♪

When Paul McCartney first took LSD, he said he was shown a secret of universal truth. While high, he asked for a piece of paper and scribbled down what had come

to him. He stuffed the paper into his pocket, forgetting about it. The next day, when road manager Mal Evans reminded him of what he’d done, Paul withdrew the paper. The writing said: “There are five levels.” Paul was probably seeing into the five eons. He eventually stopped taking LSD and never pursued the Greek Scriptures or www.martinzender.com, although there is still time for both things. I suspect the Cute One’s drug-induced hunch was at least obliquely in accord with God. Call me crazy; others have.

I don’t recommend the ingestion of illegal substances. I don’t use them myself. I do use the legal ones—the ones with the less hellish letdowns. I just want change, is all. Something needs to be different. *Now*.

PRIMITIVE MAN

Eight summers ago I walked a mile across the Great Salt Desert of Utah, naked. I may have already told you about this, but here we go again. It was nearly midnight under a clear black sky. What a time. The only terrestrial lights were three halogen bulbs at the faraway rest area, and the city of Wendover, Nevada on the western reach. I had never done this before. Have you? I recommend it. I was primitive man between an ancient salt bed and the eternal heavens. A woman accompanied me at the time and carried my clothes. This was helpful, liberating, and probably aligned with the duties of a Proverbs 31 wife. As short-lived as the ramble was, the change impressed me deeply enough to embed each step into my memory. The letdown was bad enough, though not hellish. “Sad” describes the process of re-clothing fifty yards from the halogen bulbs. Because of the greatness of this revelation, God humbled me; you should have seen the hotel room in Wendover.

NO MORE THEORIES

I’m tired of considering the snatching away theoretically. I’ve wearied myself for too long of making it a mere teaching. I have for some time now considered The Big Change, just that—a big change—and a centerpiece of practical encouragement. In other words, I’ve graduated from doctrine to cerebral funhouse. I think about it a lot; I play with it; I imagine what it’s going to be like when it happens. Paul (the apostle, not McCartney) taught the snatching away to the saints living in Thessalonica (vexed, as are we, by sameness and futility), and then said, “Therefore, comfort one another with these words.” The very thought of The Big Change was supposed to make the Greeks happy. It was a shot of dark chocolate, without the

calories. The Greeks were supposed to think about it often and get a charge—a happy, heaven-based jolt of endorphins that could see them through another dull day.

Therefore, I strain against this body of humiliation. I am not at home, either here on this earth, or in this body. I'm a man who belongs in the air, for my realm is inherent there. I am actually thinking of taking up hang gliding.

“AND HE’S BUYING AN ESCALATOR TO HEAVEN”

Which brings me to Dulles International Airport outside of Washington, D.C.—six years ago—on my way back from Florida. I was tired, and in a daze. Paul went to the third heaven on the heels of being stoned in Lystra (this was the original meaning of “stoned”—when you actually got rocks thrown at you; the effect is pretty much the same, I would think), so our apostle occupied a “halfway house” between life and death. I was not that far gone—I wasn't gone at all—but was transitioning from the heat and sun of the Florida sea to the icicle midnight awaiting me in western Pennsylvania, where I lived at the time.

There came, then, an escalator.

Someone designed the Dulles International Airport strangely, I think. The planner—may he rest in peace—separated the concourses by walkways the length of several football fields, but without first-down markers. Between most of these passages are escalators. Many airports have escalators. The better stores at the mall have them as well. I like escalators. I went up and down them as a kid—when I could get away with it. I traveled several miles without going anywhere. Escalators take us higher without us trying. Airplanes do that, too, but escalators do it slower so that we can feel the ascension in smaller increments. The slow speed allows us to think—that is, if we are astute enough to ruminate on an escalator.

Some of the escalators at Dulles International Airport sport large metal rivets along the sides of the black rubber railing—the railing that moves with the metal steps.

At Dulles International Airport, strange bulbs reflect light onto the high ceilings, so that as one progresses from the bottom to the top of the escalator, one simultaneously transcends from darkness to light, or—for more weary, “stoned” souls—from the abyss to the empyrean.

The large rivets that I have chosen to call “rivets” must not be called “rivets,” for they hold nothing together; they are decorative. They measure in size between the lid of a Skippy peanut butter jar and a Frisbee. Someone polished these things very nicely indeed, and, as one ascends, these

things that are not rivets appear at regular intervals, bur-nished to a high sheen.

The Jetsons lived high on the technological hog; pardon me for stating the obvious. In my learned opinion, the Dulles International Airport smacks of the Jetson world. Let me be completely honest here: *All* escalators smack of the Jetson world. There. I said it.

I ascended the escalator, marveling that a stairway moved beneath my feet. You know this about me already, I think: I never get over certain thrills that others take for granted and even come to despise. For instance, I am still dumbfounded by indoor running water flowing from pipes when I turn a spigot. I am equally mesmerized by indoor showers and can stand inside them for protracted periods. I have a tall metal box here in my cottage that keeps my carton of eggs cold, even when the room is hot. I have seen, in other places, appliances able to metamorphose bread into toast, making it suitable for strong applications of butter.



Maybe you can better appreciate now why the escalators at the Dulles International Airport—with their ridiculous, wonderful “rivets”—became a portal to me into another world on the night to which I refer.

I felt as though I were rising toward spectacular newness. Every new thing entering my vision smacked of an unborn spectacle. The “rivets”, especially, seemed otherworldly. Where did such an escalator come from? Surely not from the regular world of Pennsylvania, or from any other world I'd partaken of before here on Earth, including Canton, Ohio, Colorado Springs and

São Paulo, Brazil. How often do we travel upon escalators, and yet once in a long while, God sprinkles “fairy dust” upon it; He mats and frames it, and then uses you (or me) to paint a masterpiece.

At first, I was uncertain what awaited me at the top. All I could see was a slight curve at the final stage of the ascent. Soon enough, I realized: The conveyance was taking me to another world—to my *true* world.

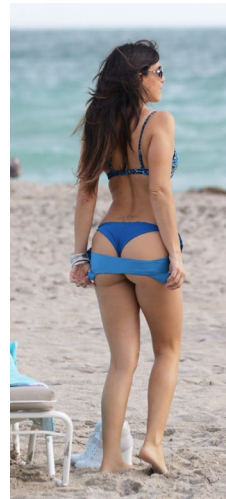
According to unofficial estimates, what happened next lasted about 12 seconds. The escalator at Dulles International Airport, outside Washington, D.C., had become a vehicle to the third heaven. Now I knew: God was transcending me—in body, but out of mind—into my expectation. Because, at the top of this ride, I would behold the Glorified Christ and His Kingdom.

Then—it happened. Every evil I had ever suffered became justified. Completely. No trauma mattered more than what I was now experiencing, and what I was about to see. Nothing mattered more than seeing Jesus Christ, glorified. My heaviest, most certain thought was: I do not remember any evil God has ever subjected me to.



The worst experiences of my life fell to insignificance in light of the present awareness, and the glory that I was poised to behold.

I knew, then, how impossible was the joy of miraculous change apart from everything I’d ever been through. Every single life experience, from the shocking slippage through my mother’s womb, to stuttering most of my life, to being raised on sugar, to being loved by my mother and father, to



riding a red Apple Krate Sting Ray bicycle in 1967, to the love of my life abandoning me, to my near-death car crash in 1991, to my unsound sleep the night before this trip, to the beach in South Florida and the girl in the blue bikini, to the death of my parents—every single event, good and bad, had brought me to this moment.

What magnificence! What a permanent sun!

Twelve seconds passes more quickly than it ought. What a shot of hard drug, though: espresso in a thimble; whisky in a thumbnail sketch. But as the angel says in *Family Man*: “It’s only a glimpse.”

And so it ended. At the top of the escalator was not Jesus Christ, but rather another passage toward another escalator; another nominal conveyance bearing weary travelers home and about.

The night passed into insignificance. Writing this, I cannot remember what happened next, except that it involved snow, ice, freezing rain, and my flight being delayed twelve hours. God determined long before conian times that I should book an overpriced hotel room in Chantilly, Virginia this night, arriving home the following morning. No matter. The trial became another to endure until such dress rehearsals morph into the sought-after reality.

If every evil of one’s life becomes practically insignificant with so small a glimpse into glory, what happens when these glimpses give way to the real thing?

I pray that the reality happens soon. I don’t know how much more of this good-time rock and roll I can stand.

The truth is, I can stand as much as God has in store.

In the meantime, God gives us people to love, and those who will love us unconditionally. This is the greatest gift of all in this vast, universal interval between light and darkness, between descent and the heights of heaven. —MZ