



ZWTF

Zapping You Whenever Thoughts Flow

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The History of the Universe, Chapter 6.

God is at least as smart as Stanley Kubrick.



God is smarter than human scriptwriters and directors. Nevertheless, He does the same thing that they do. In fact, one of the reasons that we have scriptwriters and directors (both stage and screen) down here is so that God can point to them and say, “See? That’s what *I* do. It’s what I did. I just did it on a bigger scale. Same thing, just raise the viewpoint. And I’m *doing* it on a bigger scale, even as you read this. But the principle is the same. Think about it.”

Yes, let’s. What if everything is planned? What if there are no accidents? What if all action upon this stage called Earth was scripted ahead of time? What if everything has meaning? What if everything is as it’s supposed to be, and everyone is *where* they’re supposed to be, doing what

they’re supposed to be doing? What if even the bad things that happen have a purpose and, as people like to say, “work out in the end”? What if, truly, there *is* a reason for all things that occur? And what if the ending of the great production that we call *Life* is guaranteed to be happy for everyone? This would be *better* than even our best films and plays. Wouldn’t it? And what if this “everything is planned” notion could be shown to be the very case—and this from a single statement of God in Scripture? And what if, when the script has been produced and played out, every single player in the production will look back and say, “As *this* is the result—unspeakable beauty, order, happiness and unending love in all and for all—I can see why everything had to happen the way it did, including my role in the great drama”?

I set forth in the last chapter the absurdity of a film or stage production having no script. Of the players simply showing up and ad-libbing everything. Of random scenes, random conversations, every actor and actress simply doing whatever he or she wants. Never has such a thing happened in the history of human film or stage production. Why? Because it would royally suck and no one would pay to see it. No one would even enter a theater to have the mess dished up gratuitously. Now I ask you: would God have done something that not even the least-gifted human creators among us would do or have ever done? Is God less wise than those who stumble into their underpants each morning and over-caffeinate themselves en route to their computers and word processing programs?

THE END FROM THE BEGINNING

I am God, and there is no other;

I am God, and there is no one like Me,
declaring the end from the beginning,

and from ancient times the things that are not yet

done, saying,
 “My counsel shall stand,
 and I will do all My good pleasure.”
 Indeed, I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass.
 I have purposed it; I will also do it.

—*Isaiah 46:10-11*

I have put this passage from the prophet Isaiah into poetry form because it becomes one of the most beautiful poems I have read. Would anyone be aghast to hear screenwriter/director Stanley Kubrick say of his critically acclaimed film, *2001: A Space Odyssey*, “I planned the end from the beginning. I decided what things should be done, before they were even done. Whatever I wrote was brought to pass.” How would that be incredible? It wouldn’t. Every screenwriter does it. It’s such a given that it’s stupid to even mention it. Why should anyone be taken aback, then, that the ultimate Scriptwriter—God—did the same thing with this, the ultimate, critically-acclaimed production known as *Life*? Is God less intelligent than Stanley Kubrick?

TIME GAMES

Notice that God says He declares the end *from* the beginning. Of course. It’s what all scriptwriters do. God doesn’t declare the end because He somehow looked *ahead* to the end to see what was going to happen (employing a giant, magic time-telescope), then came back to His time and wrote what He saw into the script. He declares the end from the beginning not because He went to the end

but because He knows what He wants from the beginning. To insist on the magic time-telescope scenario would be as ridiculous as insisting that Stanley Kubrick threw actors and actresses out on a stage, told them to do whatever they wanted—without even a hint as to what *he* wanted—wrote down what they did, returned to his writing desk, recorded what he saw, called it “an original screenplay,” reproduced it on a sound stage, then filmed it for soon-to-be-appalled audiences around the world. *Please*. Action, dialogue and plot emerge from a writer’s head before anyone even decides who will play what roles and where the drama will be filmed. The writing comes first and only then are the actors and actresses told what to do and what to say.

Players on the stage do what they do because of the script, and not vice versa. There is a name for “Everything has been planned ahead of time.” It’s called, “God is at least as smart as Stanley Kubrick.”

CINDY AND BILL

Before theater patrons set foot in a theater, the end of whatever drama or comedy they’re attending is already known—not by *them*, but by the writer, director and players. It is already known what the players will say. It is already known who will laugh, who will cry, who will live and who will die. When BILL “walks menacingly” over to the kitchen counter to confront CINDY, it’s because it’s in the script. When Bill says, “Damn you, Cindy!” it’s because the writer wrote that for Bill to say a year before the scene was staged. When Bill shoots and kills Cindy because she confirmed for him that she cheated on him with the insurance salesman, it’s because this is what is supposed to happen. It’s Scene 4 of Act 2. It is no accident, therefore, that Bill finds a gun in the silverware drawer. In the story, Bill placed it there himself. Beyond the stage, the gun was placed there by the prop master.

Thus also this master-production that we call *Life*. Stage and screen productions here on earth are such a perfect analogy to the divine Plan at so many points that one need only highlight the key difference. The key difference between *Life* and the New York or Hollywood staging is that, for the most part, *Life*’s players are unaware that they are part of a pre-conceived, pre-written, pre-cast script. This ignorance is due to the fact that the Writer and Director is not only offstage, but He is invisible. The script, for the most part, is hidden. (Where the script is in plain view, we call it “prophecy.”) The players on the great stage of *Life* feel no compulsion whatsoever to do what they do. We know, however, that there is nothing but compulsion at



play. Every circumstance of *Life* acts upon the cast of *Life*: their genetics, their birthplace, the stars under which they were born, their race, their gender, their mood, what they ate for breakfast and billions of other controlled environmental triggers that make people do what they do. The only time that hilarity enters the scene is when people fancy themselves free of any or all of these circumstances.

I'M NOT A ROBOT, I'M AN ACTOR

Many actors on the stage of *Life* are offended whenever it is told them that they are acting out a script. Human pride generally stiff-arms such a revelation. People like to think that they are their own gods. The common objection



is, “We are not robots.” Who said anything about robots? The actors in Kubrick’s *2001* didn’t say, “We are robots.” They were aware of following a script. They were aware that Kubrick was just offstage telling them where to go and what to do. In spite of this, the actors liked what they were doing. They were all getting paid. The script kept them from having to be clever. It was better than sitting at home by themselves not making money and not getting more famous.

I have acted in some of my son’s films. Even though Gabe tells me what to do and say, I love it. I am not a robot. I am flesh and blood. I breathe, and my heart beats. I’d like to see a robot claim either thing. I like doing what Gabe wants me to do. A robot feels none of this. Has a robot yet

drawn a breath? Felt pleasure at taking direction? Been pleased at the result of a work of art that will titillate the senses of many viewers? I am not a robot, I am an actor. As an actor in *Life*, I’m simply unaware of what must occur in the next moment. I have not been made privy to every detail of the script—thank God. I know my exact dialogue only after I have uttered it. After I utter it, *then* I know the pre-written dialogue. But not before. This information has been kept from me, and from all of us. For this, I am grateful. Knowing every detail of what we call “the future” would overwhelm us. We could not possibly process or bear such a burden. Only God is up to it.

THE BLISS OF IGNORANCE

What is beautifully built into God’s script—for the sake of every player—is ignorance. This ignorance is vital to both the enjoyment and/or challenge of the moment, as well as the education that ensues from sweating through the production. I am perhaps one of the few people (until now) aware of the fact that every detail, every word, every event of *Life* has already been written by God. God told the end from the beginning. In Psalm 139:16, God gave King David a good way of describing this—

My days, all of them, were written up on Your scroll;
the days, they were formed when there was not one of them.

This perfectly gels with Isaiah 46:10-11. God does not know the future because He looks into the future; He knows the future because He declared the future when there was not yet a thing *as* the future. As I’ve said, I have known this for a long time. I am not always consciously aware of it, but I am always intellectually aware of it.

I remember getting out of bed one morning about twenty years ago, completely aware that my every move had been written beforehand and that I was merely acting it out in real-time. It felt fine. I wasn’t angry about it at all. I did not resent it. I might have resented it had, say, some “script enforcer” been standing at the foot of my bed yelling, “Put your right leg over the mattress! Put your right leg on the floor! Swing your left leg over! Yawn! Stumble to the bathroom! Breathe!” In such a case I would have resented the intrusion. But since God was the One directing the details, and since I knew Him to be benevolent, and since He was silent and *not* yelling at me every second, then I could simply breathe “on my own” and do the very things I was supposed to do. God

grants me, and all of us, the happy magic of *feeling* as though we are acting independently of Him. But I, for one, never let this lack of feeling undo the certainty that every single move of my life was written beforehand.

He Himself gives to all life and breath and all.

—Acts 17:25

BEFORE AND AFTER

It is the ignorance of the next moment that keeps me, and all of us, from feeling like a robot. I *like* acting out a production that I know has great purpose and is executed with impeccable staging. I like acting out a production in which, absolutely speaking, there are no mistakes. Who in the world wants mistakes? Accidents? Even what we would call accidents are but relative accidents and not the absolute variety. What could be more interesting or engaging than knowing that God has written a part for me in the greatest drama ever produced? What is not to like? I fail to understand why anyone would have a problem with it. On second thought, I know precisely why such a truth is resisted: pride.

I would have been a good actor. This is why I like acting in my son's movies. I don't need to be god; I like *having* a God. It takes pressure off of me. I still try to do my best in every circumstance. Not knowing what must occur in the next moment keeps me engaged, keeps me making plans, keeps me trying to do right things. When I fail, that's when it's comforting knowing that whatever happened was in the script. I could not have avoided it. Knowing that there *is* a script helps tremendously *after* something happens, because then I assure myself that things could not have gone otherwise. *Before* something happens, I live as though I am under no compulsion whatsoever and I try to do everything right. *After* something happens, I comfort myself in the knowledge that what just happened, *had* to happen—even if it was “wrong.”

LAYING THE CONCRETE

We all know that the past is set in concrete. It does not require genius to understand this. No one can change the date that Lincoln was shot. No one can change the day of their birth. These things are called “the past,” and we all know that, once the past happens, it can't be undone. It is now set in concrete. But wait a minute. What if the future is *also* set in concrete, but the reason we don't consider it to be such is because it hasn't happened yet? As soon as it happens, *then* we say,

“Well, that's set in concrete.”

Welcome to the truth. The future *is* set in concrete. The only reason that the future seems fluid and “full of possibility” to us is that we don't know what it is. And the only reason that the past is obviously “set in concrete” is because we *do* know what it is. But we just learned that God declares the end from the beginning. This means that everything that happens was set in concrete before it came into being. The only difference, then—to us—between the future and the past is this current moment. But look! The current moment just slipped into the past, and now there's another current moment. In other words, the future just became the past. Why did that thing that just occurred seem to be, so recently, a current moment? Because I was ignorant of it right up until it happened. (This is otherwise known as “the present.”) But as soon as the thing happened, I knew it. “I know it,” therefore, is present; “I knew it” is past; “I don't know it” is future. But since God knows everything, then none of these borders exist for Him. First John 3:20 says, “God knows all.” No one wants a God Who doesn't know all. Such a God would hardly be worthy of the title.



There is no such thing, to God, as future and past. This is the “trick” of prophecy. Prophecy, in Scripture, seems like such an amazing feat until one realizes that God wrote the script. He cheated. When you realize this, prophecy makes perfect sense and doesn't seem so spectacular. It's no more fantastic that Steven Spielberg telling you what's going to happen at the 1 hour, 21 minute mark of *Schindler's List*. That's what knowing everything will do for you.

God doesn't experience the liability of an ignorance of the future. Lucky Him. Well, let me rethink that. Do any

of us really want to know the day that we're destined to die? Nope. I'll take my little bubble of ignorance, thanks.

BE STILL MY BEATING HEART

Does this knowledge that God is no less intelligent than Stanley Kubrick and wrote the script of *Life* ahead of time make me a fatalist? It does not. I know very well that "whatever will be, will be," but the blessed bubble of ignorance keeps me swinging, hoping and dreaming. We are all exercised in the bubble of ignorance. It's where we learn everything, especially patience.

God knows exactly how many times each human heart will beat in one's lifetime. Jesus said that the hairs on our head are numbered (Luke 12:7), so why shouldn't heartbeats fall into the same category? I heard a story of some

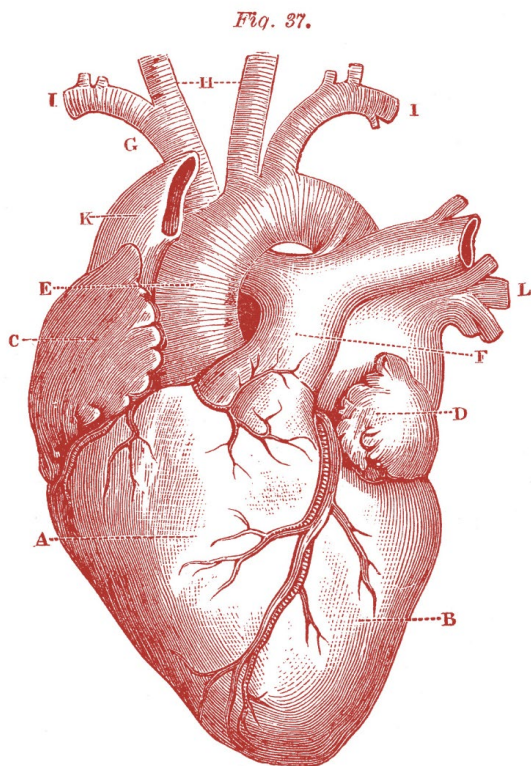
such stupidity is specific to or the exclusive property of the Middle Ages.

No matter the strenuousness of your daily routine—whether you sit in a chair or watch porn all day—you will live up to your precisely scripted number of heartbeats. The secret to this, again, is the blessed bubble of ignorance. (You will generally find me using the adjective "blessed" before "bubble of ignorance.") Since you don't know how many heartbeats have been apportioned to you, you simply live. You do your thing and let the heartbeats play out. Thank *God* that you don't know how many heartbeats God has given you. How is this complicated? How does the knowledge that everything is scripted wreck anyone's happiness? It enhances mine, and I wish the same for you. Such knowledge wrecks pride, yes, but pride is famous for coming before falls, and I like standing on my feet rather than squirming in puddles of regret.

PRAYERALLELOGRAMS

The truth that God declared the end from the beginning wrecks the Christian concept of prayer. I like it when this happens. It doesn't wreck true prayer, but only the Christian concept of it. Christians believe that prayer changes things. They think that they can actually talk God into doing what they want Him to do. To think this way, the Christians must believe that God is sitting on the edge of His seat right along with His creation to see what will happen next. God's ready to give in to the highest bidder. He's open to suggestions. He's stroking His long white beard, carefully weighing each proposal and the worthiness of each petitioner. In their attempts to influence God to do what *they* want Him to do, these silly little supplicants form themselves into prayer circles—because we all know that God never acknowledges prayer squares; these are an affront to Him. God scoffs at anything that does not have rounded edges—the only exception, of course, being the parallelogram, which gobsmacks Him. God is practically helpless against *prayerallelograms*, but no one in the Christian prayer warrior camp really knows what a prayerallelogram is, and so they've never been able to properly form one—for which we should all be eonially grateful.

The only way that prayer could change things is if God lied when telling Isaiah that He declared the end from the beginning, and when telling King David that all our days were formed when there was not yet one of them. If everything is set in stone, then how *could* prayer change anything? It couldn't. It doesn't. Can you pray like



goofs back in the Middle Ages who realized that God had numbered their heartbeats but who determined to not do anything too strenuous because they did not want to use up their apportioned beats faster than necessary. So these numbnuts sat in rocking chairs all day and refused to even rock in them. They walked around ever so slowly, hoping to preserve their set number of heartbeats. They rarely had sex, these people, and never watched porn. They were dumb as dirt, these individuals. But I don't think that

mad and change the date of the signing of the Declaration of Independence? No? Then neither can you pray like mad and make the Green Bay Packers beat the Dallas Cowboys next Sunday—God decided in favor of the Cowboys eons ago.

THE SPORTING GOD

I always wondered how God handled these sports dilemmas. One bunch of praying fans knocks out a prayer circle, praying for the Cowboys to win, and the other side does the same thing for the Packers. What is God supposed to do? Is any one of the groups forming a perfect prayerallelogram? If only. But no; they don't know how. Thus, God finds Himself in a holy pickle. Is one group of prayers more sincere than the other? Are their faces more contorted? Have the Packers fans read their Bibles the previous week more than Cowboy fans? Have they behaved better? (This is not at all likely.) Has anyone stopped eating? (God is *very* impressed when people contort their faces *and* stop eating—in conjunction with creative geometric designs.)

The truth is that God already decided before there was even a humanity upon the earth who would win the Packers-Cowboys conflict. (It was the Cowboys.) He even decided the score (27-10). He wrote in the script who would start at quarterback for the Cowboys and the color of underwear of everyone in the stands. He wrote into the script the price of a hot dog and a beer. The number of people deciding to get up and buy a hot dog and beer at halftime—God put that into the screenplay as well.

So what is prayer? Prayer is telling God what you want and then leaving it in His hands. Obviously you might not get what you want because you don't know the script. But you might get what you want—if it's in the script. Romans 8:26 well illustrates the infirmity inherent in human prayer—

What we should be praying for, *to accord with what must be*, we are not aware.

Notice: there are things that *must* be. Why? Because God declared them from the beginning. They are pre-scripted. Since we are blissfully and thankfully unaware of what must be, our prayers are necessarily happy dan-

delions blown into the wind. Nevertheless, God wants to be petitioned. He likes being talked to. He's into floating dandelion seeds. The right way to pray is to tell God what you want, but then end the prayer as Jesus did, with, "Not my will but Your will be done." If this was good enough for Jesus, it ought to be good enough for anyone. This is the sanest way to end any prayer. One may as well just say it this way because God's will is going to be done anyway. (And thank God it is, because human prayer, realized, would send Earth off its axis; most people pray for short term benefit rather than long term wisdom. Human beings confined in their blessed bubbles of ignorance simply do not possess the



wisdom to know what to pray for. There is a term for those who think that they *do* have this wisdom, and that term is "Christians.") In the prayer department, human beings are wise to go with the flow—God's flow. It does feel good to make one's feelings and desires known to the Deity, however. As I said, God understands this and, honestly, wants to hear it. This does not mean He's going to change the script to accommodate it.

Remember that God condescends to go through time with His creation. So sometimes, in Scripture, He comes across as thinking about things, mulling things over, telling His people to pray for things. He wants people to participate in the great drama, and He Himself sometimes comes across as participating. (Remember, this is a figure of speech known as "Condescension.") But prayer is God letting petitioners put their hands on the steering wheel of His car. My dad used to do that with me, and he actually had me believing that I was driving the freaking car.

So here I am today, touching the steering wheel of *Life*, thanking God all along that the destination is not ultimately in my hands, and that if the car wrecks, neither is that absolutely my fault. Everything works out in the end. If it's not working out, then it's not the end.

VASES AND PIPES

I said in the last chapter that God casts different people for different roles. Some people get cast as the heavies and they can't do anything about it. Judas was one of the heavies. He couldn't have been anything else, but he didn't know his role until it happened. (After it happened, he hanged himself.) This is why any one of the apostles could have said to Judas beforehand, "Don't do anything stupid." Who knows, maybe they did. None of them knew what Judas was pre-cast to do. There was a Scripture prophesying it, but the Scripture didn't name Judas specifically. Jesus knew the role written for Judas, but He cast him as a disciple anyway and loved Him through it. (In fact, the need of a betrayer was *why* Jesus cast Judas as a disciple.) Not saying it was easy. Jesus knew that it had to happen but that it wasn't the ultimate end either for Him or for Judas. The ultimate end is Judas' restoration. (We already know how things worked out for Jesus.) If Judas is not ultimately restored to friendship with God, then God's casting of him as a heavy is not only unworkable, but cruel and insane, because then we would have to say that God pre-casts people to be tormented in hell for eternity. This is a lie. The teaching of Eternal Torment is a Christian myth. Some verses appear to teach it, but those verses that do are almost always translation issues. Remember? Everything returns to God. I will prove this to your satisfaction later in the book.

Judas is known in Scripture as "a vessel of dishonor," or, in the paraphrase below, "a pipe for sewage." In God's great production of *Life*, there are vessels of honor and vessels of dishonor. Here is the passage in Scripture describing God's behind-the-scenes casting procedure—

When a craftsman makes anything, he doesn't expect it to turn round and say, "Why did you make me like this?" The

potter, for instance, is always assumed to have complete control over the clay, making with one part of the lump a lovely vase, and with another a pipe for sewage. Can we not assume that God has the same control over human clay? (*Romans 9:20-21; J.B. Phillips Paraphrase.*)

This shocks a majority of people, but I can't help that. What I want to do with this book is swell the ranks of the present minority who understand and accept the concept that God is God. And that a God unaware of the future would be a poser of the worst sort and not the Deity at all.

As I told you in the last chapter, every nail-biting production requires good guys and bad guys. God does not leave these roles to chance. There is no such thing, in the universe, as chance. God takes the same lump of clay (the same humanity) and makes some lumps into vases, and some into sewage pipes. (The literal translations say "vessels of honor" and "vessels of dishonor.") Neither the vase nor the pipe has any choice in the matter. This is where the drama called *Life* differs from human-scripted dramas.

Here on Earth, actors and actresses can either accept or reject their roles. No one required Margaret Hamilton to take the role of the Wicked Witch of the West in *The Wizard of Oz*, but she did. Somehow, it suited her. In *Life*, it is God Who writes the script and casts whomever He wants into whatever role He wants. When I came to realize this, you can't imagine how happy and thankful I was to have been made a vessel of honor.

I thought I already knew about grace, but I didn't. It was only then that I truly realized what grace was. I knew then that grace was the only reason I was not created Adolph Hitler. Or Joel Osteen. You've heard the saying, "I am what I am by the grace of God." This saying is literal, and it's from the Bible. The apostle Paul said it—the same guy who used to be the killer Pharisee, Saul of Tarsus.

This is when grace kicked in for me, when I saw that the vase and the sewer pipe both came from the same lump of humanity. It wasn't like there was a fine lump of clay over here, and a crappy lump over there. No. The varying vessels came from the same lump. I realized then that



my role was totally God's decision and that it never once depended on my being a good person, or auditioning for God as though God were some sort of celestial Simon Cowell, waiting to see what I would do. Christians still don't know what grace is (in spite of their insistence and the use of the word in so many of their hymns) because they think that their bubble of ignorance is actually a bubble of independent action and that they auditioned for God and God found them to be "stellar performers; stellar, really; great job, just remarkable" and that's why they're vessels of honor. They think they earned their roles. They have codified this stupidity and called it, "There isn't a script at all; everything is random, especially us." Some of them like to call this stupidity "free will." The bottom line is that they think they're worthy of what God has made them. This is why Christians look down their noses at the rest of us and love the false teaching of eternal torment. The ultimate evidence that God is a God of grace and that salvation truly depends on Jesus Christ on the cross and not the worthiness or acceptability of



"You mean to tell me that Jesus Christ saved *Hitler*?"

human beings is that Christians, too, will eventually be saved. A woman once said to me, "You mean to tell me that Jesus Christ saved *Hitler*?" I said to her, "I have some even more remarkable news for you: Jesus Christ saved *you*, you self-righteous hypocrite."

This does not mean that sewage pipes should not try to become vases. You may be saying, "Yes, this *is* what it means; it means *exactly* that." I see your point, but no one knows if someone is a vase or a pipe—for *the record*—until the final card is played. Take the apostle Paul, for instance. He used to be a fanatical killer when he was known as Saul the Pharisee. Anyone could have said of him, "There goes one hell of a sewage pipe." But then God changed the man and he became a vase. So you see? Sewage pipes can become vases, but this change is written into the script. It still comes down to a wholesale ignorance of the script. Who knows who will change? If

a person dies a pipe, then we know that this was their chief role. If they were a pipe but then became a vase, then we know that, wow, Rocky Balboa has become a champion; he wasn't a *true* vessel of dishonor (a no-good bum from Philadelphia) after all. This kind of thing happens all the time. It's still God working the common clay of humanity, making it what He wants it to be. My advice to you is simply to not make any radical judgments—including upon yourself—until the last card of *Life* is played. Never cease your attempts to talk sewage pipes out of conducting shit unless, after several attempts at reform, it appears that this is their eonian destiny.

HAPPY ENDING

Which inspires me to comment briefly upon the next life. In the end, everyone ends up with God, happy. I'm talking the *end* end. This is promised with the phrase "God becomes all in all" in 1 Corinthians 15:28. It is also inherent in the passage hammered out in the last chapter, Romans 11:36, namely, "All is out of God, through God, and into God." At that distant time in eonian history, God retires the roles that He gave to each human. Each human will have fulfilled his or her part in the great drama. It is at that time that the Scarecrow will sit down with the Wicked Witch of the West and talk about old times. It's when Moses will sit down with Pharaoh and discuss the good old days. Players get judged, yes. Some people ask, "If God casts the actors, then how can He judge anyone for being what He made them?" Such objectors assume judgment is necessarily a kick in the pants to satisfy the Kicker. It's not. It may be a kick in the pants, yes, but it's for the sake of the judge-ee. It's adjustment. God's judgment is remedial rather than punitive. All of God's judgments are righteous, with the view of bringing every creature ever created into perfect harmony with Him. That's how it works out in the end—in the *end* end.

In the meantime, Hitler is a jerk and the Cowboys beat the Packers. Don't blame me; I didn't write it. I like the Packers. But when we see how this thing ends, we will wish to hell that we *could* have taken credit for it. Because God has promised that the end is going to be so awe-inspiringly wonderful that none of us can even approach imagining it now. Will it be better than the end of *Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*? Yeah, just a hair.

But *way* better than *Thelma and Louise*. —MZ