

saying, "Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!"

Matthew 26:53—"Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?"

Psalms 88:1-18— ". . . I am reckoned among those who go down to the pit; I have become like a man without strength, forsaken among the dead, like the slain who lie in the grave, whom You remember no more, and they are cut off from Your hand. You have put me in the lowest pit, in dark places, in the depths. Your wrath has rested upon me, and You have afflicted me with all Your waves. Selah . . . "

NIV John 17:25-26—"Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you. . . . I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."

NIV Colossians 2:15—And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

The Message I Corinthians 13—

If I speak with human eloquence and angelic ecstasy but don't love, I'm nothing but the creaking of a rusty gate.

If I speak God's Word with power, revealing all His mysteries and making everything plain as day, and if I have faith that says to a mountain, "Jump," and it jumps, but I don't love, I'm nothing.

If I give everything I own to the poor and even go to the stake to be burned as a martyr, but I don't love, I've gotten nowhere. So, no matter what I say, what I believe, and what I do, I'm bankrupt without love.

Love never gives up.

Love cares more for others than for self.

Love doesn't want what it doesn't have.

Love doesn't strut,

Doesn't have a swelled head,

Doesn't force itself on others,

Isn't always "me first,"

Doesn't fly off the handle,

Doesn't keep score of the sins of others,

Doesn't revel when others grovel,

Takes pleasure in the flowering of truth,

Puts up with anything,

Trusts God always,

Always looks for the best,

Never looks back,

But keeps going to the end.

Love never dies. Inspired speech will be over some day; praying in tongues will end; understanding will reach its limit. We know only a portion of the truth, and what we say about God is always incomplete. But when the Complete arrives, our incompletes will be canceled.

When I was an infant at my mother's breast, I gurgled and cooed like any infant. When I grew up, I left those infant ways for good.

We don't yet see things clearly. We're squinting in a fog, peering through a mist. But it won't be long before the weather clears and the sun shines bright! We'll see it all then, see it all as clearly as God sees us, knowing him directly just as he knows us!

But for right now, until that completeness, we have three things to do to lead us toward that consummation: Trust steadily in God, hope unswervingly, love extravagantly. And the best of the three is love.


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THE AWAKENING

By Love is Love Awakened

THEISM 1: God's solution to our misunderstanding of His character (which leads to our rebellion, shame and guilt that make living in His presence impossible) was to voluntarily forgive our trespass. His forgiveness would 1) reveal His true character to us, 2) win us at a heart level from rebellion to love, and 3) remove our guilt and shame (enabling us to live in His presence once again). But in order to be just, genuine forgiveness must be willingly and voluntarily initiated by the one who was wronged, because it always comes at a price paid by the one violated.

KJV Luke 7:42—"And when they [two debtors] had nothing to pay, he [their creditor] frankly forgave them both"

John 10:30—"I and the Father are one."

NIV John 14:10—"Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in Me? The words I say to you are not just My own. Rather, it is the Father, living in Me, who is doing His work."

John 14:9—Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father."

2 Corinthians 5:19—God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them.

Ephesians 4:32—Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

THEISM 2: This forgiveness, rooted in the heart of God and revealed through Jesus' death will, if believed by the sinner, cleanse our conscience, setting us free from the guilt of our sin, to love and serve God from a new beginning.

Matthew 1:21—" [Mary] will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

Isaiah 59:2—But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you.

Ephesians 1:7—In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.

NLT Isaiah 53:11—Because of what He has experienced, My righteous servant will make it possible for many to be [justified—KJV], for He will bear all their sins.

NKJ Romans 5:1, 8-10—Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled,

"God is Love." —1 John 4:8

*All Scripture References are from the updated New American Standard Bible unless otherwise noted.

we shall be saved by His life.

Hebrews 9:14—How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

RSV 1 Peter 3:21—[In Noah's day eight persons were saved through water.] Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a clear conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

THEISM 3: The forgiveness of Calvary not only saves us from the guilt of our sins, it effectively dispels our darkened image of what God is really like by illuminating His love. This love awakens in us a reciprocating and resonating response, winning us at a heart level from rebellion to loving service.

NKJ Luke 2:35—“(Yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”

1 John 3:8—The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.

John 1:18—No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

John 12:27-28—“Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, ‘Father, save Me from this hour?’ But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name.”

John 17:1-3—“Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You. . . . This is eternal life, that they may know You.”

Acts 4:27-28—“For truly in this city there were gathered together against Your holy servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur.”

Acts 2:23—“This Man, delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.”

John 18:11—So Jesus said to Peter, “Put the sword into the sheath; the cup which the Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?”

NLT Luke 22:21—“But here at this table, sitting among us as a friend, is the man who will betray Me.”

Matthew 26:28—“This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.”

Matthew 26:27—And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you.”

Matthew 26:41—“Keep watching and praying, that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”

Luke 22:50-51—And one of them struck the slave of the high priest and cut off his right ear. But Jesus answered and said, “Stop! No more of this.” And He touched his ear and healed him.

Matthew 26:67—Then they spat in His face and beat Him with their fists; and others slapped Him.

Luke 22:60-62—Immediately, while [Peter] was still speaking, a rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered. . . . And he went out and wept bitterly.

John 19:1—Pilate then took Jesus and scourged Him.

John 19:8-11—Therefore when Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid; and he entered into the Praetorium again and said to Jesus, “Where are You from?” But Jesus gave him no answer. So Pilate said to Him, “You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?” Jesus answered, “You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.”

Luke 23:28—But Jesus turning to them said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.”

Luke 23:40-42—But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don't you fear God . . . ? We are punished justly. . . . But this man has done nothing wrong.” Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

Luke 23:43—Jesus answered him, “Today I tell you the truth, you will be with Me in paradise” [Personal Paraphrase].

Luke 23:33-34—When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him. . . . But Jesus was saying, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.”

Isaiah 53:3-5—He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. Surely our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried; yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions [NJB—“rebellion”], He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed.

NKJ 1 Peter 2:23-24—Who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten . . . who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.

Psalms 130:3-4—If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You.

NLT John 10:18—“No one can take My life from Me. I lay down My life voluntarily. For I have the right to lay it down when I want to and also the power to take it again. For My Father has given Me this command.”

NJB John 10:18—No one takes it from me; I lay it down of my own free will, and as I have power to lay it down, so I have power to take it up again; and this is the command I have received from my Father.

Matthew 27:46—About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani?” that is, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”

2 Corinthians 5:19—God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

Luke 23:36-39—The soldiers also mocked Him, coming up to Him, offering Him sour wine, and saying, “If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself!” . . . One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him,