



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Presenting every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Issue 144

Jesus in Our Brokenness

by – C. Baxter Kruger

Jesus knows the trauma of being human in a fallen world. He walked into the darkness, where we cower, where we fight to pretend all is right, where we busy ourselves to avoid hearing, where we frantically grasp at anything to find relief – and where we condemn any hint of our exposure. In the place where we can find no hope, no solace, where we see no possibility of tomorrow, He faced the sleepless demons and their accusing shadows. Staring into the lifeless eyes of the abyss, Jesus threw Himself headlong into the jaws of our greatest fear. Free-falling in the darkness of Adam's mind, Jesus found the unfailing arms of His Father.

Is there a place in our darkness that does not bear His footprints? Where could we go that He has not been? What pain could we suffer that He has not known, and learned the hope of His Father's love within? Think this through. Is there a wound so deep that it cannot be reached by Jesus with His knowledge of the Father? Is there an abuse of trauma, a betrayal so brutal, a rejection so personal as to be beyond the experience of Jesus Christ Himself and His healing light?

Are we unreachable in our brokenness? Is our darkness impenetrable? Is there a corner of the abyss of non-being that Jesus overlooked? What is there about our hell that is beyond Jesus Christ? What whisper has He not heard? What shame, what injustice, what rejection, what condemnation, has He not felt? Is there a single leaf in our broken and mythological world that Jesus has left unturned? Through living, through fire and trial, through hands-on experience of the great darkness, through suffering the abusive condemnation of

the human race, through finding His Father in the hell of human plight, Jesus has received the love of the Father into the fallen Adamic mind. He has received the anointing of the Spirit into every form of human brokenness ... Does He not know how to minister the Father's heart to us where we are? Is He not able to share His Spirit with us in the darkest corners of our fear?

The gospel is the news that Jesus became what we are, and within our fear-twisted world of whispers, of darkness and rejection, He fought His way forward into the vision of the Father's face and knows the unearthly assurance of His embrace, and the sheer joy of His heart ... But that is only the beginning of the gospel. For this Jesus, in His stunning grace, is now sharing what He knows with us. He is not huddling in the corner of the tent with His Father. Our hell has become His heaven. The darkness has become His light. He is free to be Himself as the Father's Son and the anointed One in our world of illusion.

"The light shineth in darkness ..." (John 1:5).

"... Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

Could God be this good? ... What if He is not

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Precious Ones, Beloved of the Father:

Rick & Lisa Lemons

Denis Durham

Our dear brother and sister in Christ, Rick and Lisa Lemons, came up from VA for a sweet and precious visit.

Rick is our associate editor, without whom many of you would not be able to enjoy the *BSN* because of the many errors that I would manage to bring its way. Lisa is also a wonderful photographer, whose work has graced three books that we have printed this past year (two reprints – William R. Newell's *Paul vs. Peter*, and Loyal Hurley's *The Outcome of Infinite Grace*; and one of mine my own – *I Choose!*).

Our fellowship goes back over 20 years. In fact, Rick was an editor on the very first issue of the *BSN*. Over the years we have enjoyed many opportunities of mutual refreshing fellowship. They are such a treasure to me!

Neal & Carolyn Locker

We were able to spend July 4th with other longtime friends, Neal and Carolyn Locker of Holidaysburg, PA. We have known them nearly thirty years. They have been such faithful friends through all my many difficult transitions (these transitions have not only been difficult for me, but for them as well!).

Our families spent a wonderful afternoon and evening together. They, along with their son Aaron, daughters Rebekah and Sarah, and son-in-law Marty, are always such gracious and warm hosts of family gatherings. They always put on an amazing fireworks display!

By the way, Sarah and Marty just celebrated their first wedding anniversary. What a sweet couple. It is a pleasure seeing them enjoying life together!

Speaking of pleasure, it is with *great* pleasure that I share with our readers the engagement of my dear friend, Denis Durham! This faithful and patient brother in Christ has found his "good thing!"

"Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor of the LORD" (Proverbs 18:22).

Denis is the author of the excellent work "*An Open Letter to Grace Believers*" which ran in *BSN* #84 (which can be read at www.StudyShelf.com, under "Online Articles.").

Denis had recent plans of spending a week with us, but he changed his plans in order to spend time with his "jewel."

"Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies" (Proverbs 31:10).

I commend him for an excellent choice! I sure did miss his visit, *BUT* I believe it is *always* the wise choice to invest our lives and time with our wives. Everything else is secondary.

Denis Gregg Durham and Denise Elizabeth Gregg are engaged to be married on August 23rd. If you would like to send Denis & Denise words joy and congratulations, they can be sent to:

Denis Durham
1541 E Buena Vista
Decatur, IL 62521

Your fellow,



Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Bible Student's Notebook

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This weekly publication (52 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7)
- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11)
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25)
- true freedom and liberty apart from the law (Galatians 5:1)
- the organic nature of the church, the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12)
- the distinct ministry of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13)
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15)
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13).
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with ...
 - total forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14)
 - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6)
 - adult sonship position (Galatians 4)

This publication is a joint effort of a few members of the body of Christ. It is a product of our individual lives and ministries together. We do not claim infallibility for its contents. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any "church," "denomination," "movement," "organization," "mission," "creed," "meeting," "school," "conference" or "fellowship."

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PATRIARCHS

Remember that it is our responsibility as husbands and fathers to take the truths we learn from God's Word, the truths that we hold dear, and impart them to our families.

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waiting for us to clean up our acts and invite Him into our world? What if He has already accepted us as we are, already met us in our shattered lives? What if He is already walking through our fallen minds, already sharing Himself with us? Could it be that there is far more going on in our lives than we ever dared dream? Could it be that we are now included in His knowledge of the Father?

The gospel is not the news that you can be involved with Jesus, if only you get your religion right. The gospel is not the news of what you *can be* at all. It is the news of what *is*. It is the news that you *are* involved. It is not a dream. Through bearing our rejection, Jesus has access to us in our darkness. Indeed, He used our rejection to establish a relationship with us at our very worst. The stunning truth is that Jesus exists in union with His Father ... *and with us in our darkness*. He has included us in His world, in His life and communion with His Father ... He is sharing His own heart, His own knowledge of the Father, His own assurance and hope and joy with us all. He is putting His communion with His Father inside our own endarkened souls.

It is not a question of whether or not we are worthy of such a gift or whether or not we have earned

His grace. It is a question of His abounding love ... to reach us in our darkness. He is an expert at knowing His Father in our hell. He accepts us and meets us where we are, and He is sharing Himself with us in our brokenness and sin.

Do you know who you are and what is going on in your life? Do you know that you are the one Jesus loves, you are the one the Father has determined to come to know His heart? It is not about you inviting Jesus into your life; it is about Jesus already including you in His. Through His suffering He has forged a living union between his communion with His Father and you in your darkness. Jesus dwells in your darkness. He is sharing Himself with you now. He already has been and always will. He will never stop giving Himself, His mind and heart and soul, to you. He is passionate about your coming to know His Father with Him and living life in the freedom of the Spirit of adoption. This is the non-negotiable grace of God.

Across All Worlds: Jesus Inside Our Darkness (2007), pages 41-43



The House of God

by – J.C. O’Hair (1876-1958)

God’s building a house, a Temple Divine;
Not a temple of stone, nor an earthly shrine;
Not a building of brick, with a steeple and
dome,
But a spiritual House, called God’s Home.

The Body of Christ this House is named,
By the Spirit of God this House is framed;
A place on earth for God to dwell;
Christ gave to Paul this Truth to tell.

God’s purpose in grace, His eternal plan,
The fullness of Christ, called “the One New
Man;”

The Mystery of God for centuries sealed,
Unknown, untold; but at last revealed.

Christ told it to Paul, unto Paul alone;
Now the Secret was his, to make it known.
In the heavens above, Christ has His seat;
There to remain till His Body’s complete.

One spirit, one flesh, saved and secure;
The foundation of God is standing sure;
Joined to Christ, Head over all,
The Mystery of God revealed to Paul.

Grace Poems

God's Forgotten Gift

Select Readings on Trials and Suffering

(Part 2)

"For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Philippians 1:29).

GOD'S WAYS

"Why is this happening to me?" the young man asked me after describing a crisis he was facing. "I've tried to be faithful in serving God. He knows what this means to me. Why would he let this happen?"

Questions that begin with "why" are common when problems come into our lives. Some Christians have suggested that it is wrong to ask "why?" but I don't think that is necessarily true. Jesus asked the question, "why?" from the cross in His final moments and we know He never said anything that displeases God.

The heart-attitude behind the question is the key. When we question why, is it a sincere question or an accusation against God? There's a big difference between the two.

The answer to questions about why is multifaceted, but there is one simple answer that often applies when we ask that question. It's this: *God's ways are not our ways.*

We look at things differently than the Sovereign God we serve. For instance, we think the three parts of the day are morning, afternoon and night. Not so with God. In Genesis, the Bible says that "the evening and morning were the first day." From God's perspective, new days begin when things start to get darker, not brighter. (Any orthodox Jew knows this, as evidenced by the fact that they begin to observe the Sabbath at sunset on Friday, not Saturday morning.) *God's ways aren't our ways.*

Consider another example: We believe we must be strong to be productive. God says that our need is to be weak, not strong. He doesn't choose the strong and mighty, but the weak to amaze the world (See I Corinthians 1:27). While we're trying to become stronger, God wants to make us weaker, more dependent on Him. *God's ways aren't our ways.*

Under God's rule, first comes darkness, then light. First comes weakness, then strength. The list could go on – first comes death, then life. First comes burst wine skins, then new ones. First comes losing our lives, then we find them. *God's ways aren't our ways.*

Will you choose, by faith, to forfeit the right to understand your circumstances and, instead, trust the One who does all things well? Thank God, His ways aren't our ways. Would you rather have your way? Or would you rather yield to the way of an omnipotent God who loves you so much that He gave His life to ensure that you would receive the best He has to offer?

Steve McVey
Grace Walk

TRUE SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Most of our true spiritual development comes through the dry and hard times.

Miles J. Stanford (1914-1999)
Principles of Spiritual Growth

CIRCUMSTANCES

Have circumstances caused you to feel beaten down? Are you tired? Spent? Weary? If so, you aren't alone. I've been there at times myself. When that happens, I often find out that the heart of my problem comes from wanting to be the one in control of my life and all the things and people associated with it. It's so easy to let ourselves become anxious about the situations of life.

While we want to feel our Father's loving embrace at moments like these, it is sometimes a challenge of our faith to even keep our focus on Him. We are so vulnerable to becoming preoccupied with the things that scream for attention. It's so easy to let our emotions be drained by other things, until we feel empty inside.

The answer isn't complicated. It is simply to trust Him. That's all you need. When you don't feel God's presence in the midst of your circumstances, He is there nonetheless, working out the details of your lifestyle in a way that is perfect and beautiful in His sight.

One day you will understand the intricate workings of your Father's hand in the details of your life. For now, your only response must be to know, even when you don't feel anything, you must know, that He only acts in ways that are for your good and His glory.

Choose to lean on your Father. Know that at every moment His arms are around you, sustaining you and holding you. That will never change. Though the world should fall around you, His arms will never let you go. He will protect, comfort and guide you all the days of your life. Choose to rest in Him. It's the only way to move beyond fatigue in your circumstances.

Calm your troubled heart with thoughts of His love and faithfulness, His goodness and Sovereignty. He will never leave or forsake you. He will work out all things for good, according to the perfect plan that He has for you. Those things that concern you concern Him and are under His absolute control

at every moment. Nothing escapes His attention; nothing lies beyond what His eyes can see and His hands can control.

Don't worry. All is well. When the winds blow and the waves toss your emotions and thoughts about, all is well. He is Lord of all things at all times. Rest in Him and find peace.

Steve McVey
Grace Walk

THE PURPOSE OF THE VALLEY

God gives us the vision [of the divine viewpoint of who we are, and of our walk before Him], then He takes us down to the valley to better us into the shape of the vision, and it is in the valley that so many of us will be made real if we will have patience ...

God has to take us into the valley and ... until we get to the place where He can trust us with the genuine reality ... The vision is not a castle in the air, but a vision of what God wants you to be. Let Him put you on His [potter's] wheel and whirl you as He likes, and as sure as God is God and you are you, you will turn out exactly in accordance with the vision. Don't lose heart in the process ... all noble things are difficult.

Every time you venture out in the life of faith, you will find something in your common-sense circumstances that flatly contradicts your faith. Common sense is not faith, and faith is not common sense; they stand in the relation of the natural and the spiritual. Can you trust Jesus Christ where your common sense cannot trust Him? Can you venture heroically on Jesus Christ's statements when the facts of your common-sense life shout – "It's a lie?" On the mount it is easy to say – "Oh, yes, I believe God can do it;" but you have to come down into the valley and meet with facts that laugh ironically at the whole of your mount-of-transfiguration belief. Every time my belief is clear to my own mind, I come across something that contradicts it. Let me say I believe God will supply all my need, and then let me run

dry, with no outlook, and see whether I will go through the trial of faith, or whether I will sink back to something lower.

Faith must be tested, because it can be turned into personal possession only through conflict ... The final thing is confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ. Believe steadfastly on Him and all you come up against will develop your faith. There is continual testing in the life of faith ... Faith is unutterable trust in God, trust which never dreams that He will not stand by us.

Oswald Chambers (1874-1917)
My Utmost for His Highest

TRUE SERVICE

“... Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ”
(Colossians 3:22-24).

Any serious-minded Christian may at some time find himself wondering whether the service he is giving to God is the best it could be. He may even have times of doubting, and fear that his toil is fruitless and his life empty ...

The church has marked out certain work and approved it as service acceptable to God ...

But it should be kept in mind that it is not the kind or quantity of work that makes it true service – it is the quality.

Before the judgment seat of Christ, very little will be heard of numbers or size ... It would be a shock to most of us to learn just what God thinks of our breathless activity, and a greater shock to many to find out the true quality of our service as God sees it. For not all religious activity is accepted of God, not even when it appears to produce results and get things done.

“... For the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).

A.W. Tozer (1897-1963)
The Next Chapter After the Last, pages 69-70

DISAPPOINTMENT

Everybody faces disappointment, but how are Christians to deal with it? The answer boils down to trust in Jesus Christ. That means not just professing our trust, but practicing it. When we know that He is Life, the sting of disappointment finds a healing salve in the truth of His Word.

I have found a particular verse in the Bible to be a good antidote to disappointment in my circumstances. It is found in Philippians 1:6, where Paul wrote: *“Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”* This verse is a reminder that the flow of our lives isn’t up to us, but rests on the shoulders of God Himself. This verse promises that He started His work in you and He will be the one to sustain it. At the risk of oversimplifying the matter, “God’s going to do what God’s going to do.”

We get into trouble when we think that our agenda has to be fulfilled in life. It isn’t up to us to fulfill our plans. That’s God’s business. Our role is simply to trust Him in every circumstance.

Are there disappointments you face in your own life today? Place them into the hands of a sovereign God who loves you and already has the details of life worked out for you. It’s okay to feel disappointment. That’s normal, but don’t be dominated by it. Instead, acknowledge your feelings to the Lord and then lay your expectations at His feet. Then move forward, being assured that He has your best interest at heart and will work out all things for your ultimate good and His highest glory.

Steve McVey
Grace Walk

WORRY

How many of your worries begin with the words, “What if?” ...

All my worries begin, “What if,” and then proceed to contemplate various future scenarios, none of which I have any control over, and all of which entice me to live tomorrow before I have finished trusting Christ for today. Worry assumes responsibility for something that is expressly in God’s job jar ...

It is appropriate to recognize the issues of tomorrow, but if we lose sight of what we know today, we have begun to worry ...

Malcolm Smith says worry is fearing that God is not sufficient ...

Worry is built upon a false supposition – that God is insufficient to handle your concerns.

Preston Gillham
Discipleship Journal (2006)

SEEING THROUGH FRUSTRATING APPEARANCES

Everybody must be hungry and dissatisfied until they have finally “come home” in God; but there is the old, old problem of thinking there must be self-improvement ...

So we each have to be “broken on the wheel” of vain self-effort, until the brokenness is complete enough for the darkness to be swallowed up in light. God will get us all there by one means or another, so I have to practice seeing through these frustrating appearances to God in hidden action!

Norman P. Grubb (1895-1993)
Notes from Norman

JIGSAW PUZZLE OF LIFE

Our experiences resemble a jigsaw puzzle ... When it is all ready, we shall find that the dark pieces of

the puzzle were as important in the completion of the full beauty of the pattern as the brightest sections. The dark background will only bring out in bolder and more gorgeous relief the figures in the picture, in the center of which will be His lovely face.

M.R. DeHaan (1891-1965)
Broken Things

BROKEN AND POURED OUT

“Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body’s sake” (Colossians 1:24).

This call has nothing to do with personal sanctification, but with being made broken bread and poured-out wine. God can never make us wine if we object to the fingers He uses to crush us with. If God would only use His own fingers, and make me broken bread and poured-out wine in a special way! But when He uses someone whom we dislike, or some set of circumstances to which we said we would never submit, and makes those the crushers, we object ... If ever we are going to be made into wine, we will have to be crushed; you cannot drink grapes. Grapes become wine only when they have been squeezed.

I wonder what kind of finger and thumb God has been using to squeeze you, and you have been like a marble and escaped? You are not ripe yet, and if God *had* squeezed you, the wine would have been remarkably bitter ... We have to be adjusted into God before we can be broken bread in His hands. Let Him do what He likes, and you will find that He is producing the kind of bread and wine that will benefit His other children.

Oswald Chambers
My Utmost for His Highest

HEARTACHE AND HAPPINESS

“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying

of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing” (James 1:2-4).

The best thing is neither to seek nor seek to avoid troubles but to follow Christ and take the bitter with the sweet as it may come ... We may safely leave with Him the incident of heartache or happiness. He will know how much we need of either or both.

A.W. Tozer (1897-1963)
We Travel an Appointed Way, page 80

SEEING HIM WHO IS INVISIBLE

“By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of pharaoh’s daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, AS SEEING HIM WHO IS INVISIBLE” (Hebrews 11:24-27).

Every man in the Bible who saw Him Who is invisible was a man of heartache. He was a man of loneliness. He was a man who bore reproach. These three things accompanied those in the Bible who saw him who is invisible.

Brethren, the times when I have seen Him Who is invisible were those times when my heart was broken. Those were good times. It seems the Lord has a wonderful way of turning heartache into victory, and times of loneliness and despair into victory.

Jack Hyles (1926-2001)
Seeing Him Who Is Invisible, pages 7-8

THE WHY OF TEMPTATION

Why are we not as consistent as we ought to be? Why are we tempted? And why also do we often fall into temptation? How does that fit in with this glorious position, “*by grace through faith*”

into which we’ve been introduced into this living relationship with Him? ...

We’re dwelling in a totally corrupt world – “*The whole world lies in wickedness.*” ... That, taken in balance with the fact that inwardly we are holy, we are purified, we are Christ-indwelt, accounts for temptation. And yet, although we are that inwardly in heart and spirit, we are constantly, unceasingly assaulted by temptation which is channeled through ... a personality which is open all the time to the corrupt environment in which we live ...

[I]t is the wrestling with and conquest of temptation that forces us further and further into Him.

Norman P. Grubb (1895-1993)
Temptation (1954)

TRIALS AND PAIN

“But He knows the way that I take; when He has tested me, I shall come forth as gold” (Job 23:10).

“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Galatians 6:9).

God has said He will exalt you in due time, but remember, He is referring to His time and not yours!

Some of you are actually in a fiery furnace right now. You are in a special kind of spiritual testing ... Others may not know it, but you have been praying and asking the Lord: “Why don’t you get me out of this?”

In God’s plan it is not yet “*due time.*” ... A saint of God does not have to be concerned about time when he is in the will of God.

A.W. Tozer (1897-1963)
I Call It Heresy!, pages 116-117

