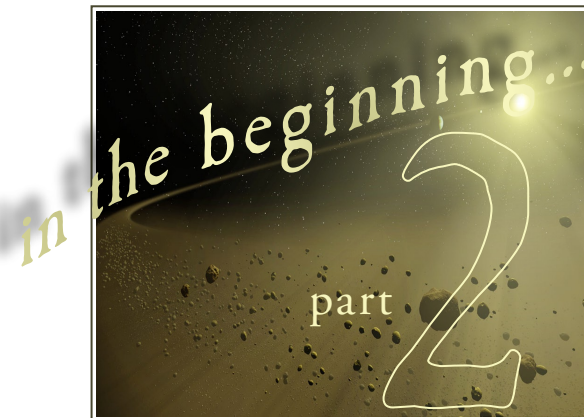


In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. **All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.** In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

(John 1:1-5)



The Beginning of it All

Why did He bother?

Haven't you ever asked yourself that question? Open the newspaper, or listen to the nightly news about all the bad things being trumpeted as normal; travel the highways and byways and say hello to all your friends and neighbors rushing here and there to something so terribly, terribly important; watch the typical television drama and be entertained by desperately costumed women, pretty men who forgot where they laid their razor, and families populated by worldly wise children and hapless (or absent) parents; open a magazine and learn how to smell better; spend a few moments traversing the threads of the internet and be regaled by the latest incarnations of the snake-oil salesman, the fan dancer, and the freak show—do just about anything, and invariably you are left wondering, *Why did He bother? Why did God bother creating this strange and confused place?*

Private Kingdom

When I was a little boy I built for myself a tree house. As these things go, it wasn't much of a tree house. Unlike the majestic and heavy limbed oak, hackberry trees really aren't designed for cradling such things, so in this case it was more of a *stilt*-house than a tree house—a triangular platform supported in one corner by the tree, and in the other two by long poles that reached all the way down to the ground. The whole affair was rather rickety and unstable—even the climb up and down: The trunk of the tree was so small that I couldn't nail the 2x4 cleats at their ends, but could only nail each of them in the middle—which meant that stepping on them anywhere but dead center would propel the climber's foot (hence, entire person) off into thin air.

But I didn't care how slapdash its construction. That tree house was *mine*—my private little kingdom where I made the rules and I

decided who could or could not ascend into its dizzying heights. I had made it the way I did—and that was that.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

(Colossians 1:15-17)

While our feet still tread the soil of this earth we may never know why Jesus made this world, and all that is in it, the way He did. But He did, and since Jesus is God, and God does not make mistakes, we *can* know that He has His reasons—and that is all we need to know.

Jesus made this world for Himself. Though it is our temporary dwelling place, it was not made for us, but for Him. It is His kingdom.

As He Sees It

We must come to see this world in which we live through Christ's eyes. Yes, through eyes of grace, compassion, and forgiveness. But beyond that we must see this world as He sees it: fleeting. This world as we know it plays just one part in His magnificent cosmic, timeless panoply. We are, indeed, precious to Him, but in the full scope of the little we know through Scripture, our small moment in time is but a single thread in His vast tapestry.

Acknowledging that the Son of God made this world, and living in accordance with that knowledge, brings a profound and enduring peace to believers who must, for a while, live in its madness. Those who do not share this faith live unsteadily from day to day, never knowing what they will do with tomorrow, never knowing who—if anyone—is in charge, believing either that man himself is all-powerful, or that man is no more significant than the soil-digesting worm beneath his feet.

The believer, however, understands that only the one who created the world is all-powerful, and that we are in subjection to His will. Even so, this all-powerful Creator has bestowed on His children the privilege of adoption into his eternal family—

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name...

(John 1:12)

—and the honor of ruling at His side:

"Then the sovereignty, the dominion and the greatness of all the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be given to the people of the saints of the Highest One; His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all the dominions will serve and obey Him."

(Daniel 7:27)

A New Earth

My old tree house was of grossly imperfect construction, but I made it, and I loved it. Just so, right now Christ's once-perfect creation—this world and all therein—is grossly imperfect, but He made it, and He loves it. The entrance of sin through Adam has corrupted what once was paradise; every child born knows instinctively how to sin, for it is in his genes. And man, in his sin, has corrupted the rest of God's creation, so that there will come a time when God will have to do something He did at least once before: wipe it all out and start again:

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer

any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.

(Revelation 21:1-2)

In eternity past the Son of God looked down on the corruption and knew that the time had come. Man could not save himself—Adam had seen to that. So there would have to be a final offering made; the spotless Lamb would have to be sacrificed for the sins of the world. And for that sacrifice, the Lamb would have to be flesh.

But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of

death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings.

(Hebrews 2:9-10)

So the Son of God became flesh in the person of Jesus and dwelt, for a while, with the imperfection. The one who made it all, stepped down from His throne and came as a helpless babe to live with His people.

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