

# DESTINY BULLETIN

A commentary sent to the supporters of the ministry of Christian Destiny.

Dear “Special Friend” of Christian Destiny,

February 2006

## THE DIVINE INITIATIVE

Love is performing its ultimate function when reaching across a chasm of estrangement.

By disobedience Adam and Eve did great harm to themselves and to their Creator—in whose image they were created; they unwittingly unleashed upon all their human children the twin tidal waves of despair and love. All the forms of heartbreak that mankind has endured through history come to us as a result of Adam’s disobedience. Far from proving Himself a cruel tyrant, however, God initiated in this moment the ever-broadening revelation of the essence of His being; namely, that God is love.

God!

Who is this Being who presides above the destinies of the universe?

The difficulty of defining the Person of God in any total or meaningful sense should be apparent to us all. A definition is subject to human words, traversing the circuits of human minds within the limits of human logic. God obviously stands above all of these and, therefore, can hardly be contained within the limitation of a human definition. The same limitations are apparent when describing a skyscraper to an aborigine, or the process of reproduction to a six-year-old child. An account of an astronaut orbiting in space would have been just as incomprehensible to nearly everyone fifty years ago as modern jet aircraft would have been to the crew members of the Santa Maria. This generation, however, lives more in the midst of incomprehensible things than any other, and so it is used to definitions in terms of what a thing does against what a thing is. Electricity, light, gamma rays and such like are usually defined to us in terms of their external manifestations, for their essential nature is as yet unknown to any of us. No one should, therefore, be dismayed at the difficulty in defining that Person and power which is the ultimate source of all things both visible and invisible.

So it is that the Bible gives us several definitions of God, no one of which fully encompasses His being, but all of which give helpful clues as to His nature. So we read that “*God is Spirit,*” “*God is love,*” “*God is light,*” “*God is a consuming fire,*” *God is the “everlasting Father.”* Christian thinkers have attempted to give form to a definition of God by saying that God is that personal being who created the universe and who is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. He is all-powerful, He is all-knowing, and He is everywhere present at the same time. We are sure, therefore, that God is always right, always just and never fails to act in a manner that is entirely consistent with the nature of His being. The great attribute of God is holiness; His great characteristic is love.

A moment’s contemplation of this awesome being, who is before and above His universe, makes more astonishing than ever the message of the Bible that we are both made in the image of God and are the object of His love. To be loved by another human being is something, but to be loved by the Creator of the universe! Is this not everything? This very God makes available to us His definition of love when He says,

*“Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,*

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*Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth” (I Cor. 13:4-8).*

Here is the highest form of favor from the highest being of the universe, the love of God which passes knowledge. With infinite perfection and yet with infinite love, God now moved in the direction of estranged man.

So came the divine initiative. Even as Adam experienced the early devastations of sin working in his being, he heard the call of his Creator, as before, in the cool of the evening. Adam, “*Where art thou?*” Certainly Adam had said within himself, *Surely God is finished with me, I have passed beyond the door of hope.*

No voice from within speaks to us with more irrefutable logic, and yet is more wrong, than the voice of despair. Like a moving spiral staircase, it propels us downward, despite our best efforts, further into the abyss of hopelessness. When in despair, we find it impossible to convince ourselves that God cares, God understands. Believable when our emotions are cooperating, these declarations of God’s kind solicitude appear as mockery when regarded with the cynicism that is wrought of despair.

Far from being mockery, however, the assertion that “*God is love*” represents exactly the facts of the matter. The story of the Bible is the account of the progressive unfolding by our Creator of the truth of His love for lost humanity. Love takes the initiative in reconciliation. Indeed, this is the subject of the Bible, the account of divine initiative. God’s first step in taking the initiative with mankind, in condescending to man’s low estate, was His appearance in the garden to walk with Adam as He had in the days of his innocence. The somber warning that had been given to Adam and Eve by God, “*The day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,*” had now been fulfilled. The essence of death, spiritually, is separation of the person and his God, and the sense of shameful separation was fully in the mind of our human parents when they hid in the dark foliage from the loving voice that called them. Being spiritually dead—that is, being separated from God by a measureless chasm of moral shortcoming—Adam and Eve now preferred darkness rather than light.

They simply could not face the painful difference between the now shattered image of God which they bore in their life and the shining perfection of the holiness of their Creator. The first fearful penalty of sin is now apparent, the shame of man being separated from his God. It is inevitable in that point that God must move in terms of His primary attribute, that of holiness.

Holiness is moral perfection, it is the uncompromising, unequivocal rightness of an utterly astute God. It is that razor-sharp perfection that cannot be negotiated. It is the universe-wide moral construction under which right is right and wrong is wrong and a promise is a promise. It is that all-pervading reliability, changeless and eternal, without which the universe would instantly collapse into indescribable anarchy. It is the reason why sin must be judged before it can be forgiven; indeed the reason why sin is never “forgiven” but rather must be “atoned for” in every case without exception.

So it is that the Lord, the righteous Judge of the universe, decreed His punishment upon the three participants in this early triangle of rebellion against Him. The serpent was cursed and made to crawl in the dust all the days of his life. The woman was made subservient to the man and told that she would bring forth her children in sorrow. The man was sentenced to hard labor amidst the pain and problems of surviving in a cursed and hostile environment. He was also sentenced to suffering and physical death, his body to return to the dust from which it came.

To this day, men ask the question “Why do the innocent suffer?” Stated more elaborately this

problem usually is, “If God is all-powerful and He is also a God of love why is there so much suffering and pain in the world, even among the apparently innocent?” This question is occasionally asked by those who would be detractors from the truth of God but is not infrequently posed by His own children.

First of all, there is no question about the fact that God is all-powerful and that He is also a God of love. Knowing this we can be sure that the apparent contradiction between the harshness of life around us and the will of a benevolent God are exactly that—apparent but not real.

The punishment that God meted out to a world as a result of Adam’s sin was, in fact, an act of His love more than an act of vengeance. The presence of pain and sickness and death in our world is a valuable thing. It serves to label this earth for what it really is, namely a deadly battleground in the great conflict between good and evil. Were it not for pain and problems, for thorns and briars, we would be tempted easily to believe that this world was not infected with the contagion of sin.

Suffering is, in effect, the label that says “Poison” on the bottle, and it is that label which prevents us from drinking deeply of the elixir of eternal destruction. Happy is the stab of pain if it reminds us to be sober and vigilant, remembering that our adversary, the devil, goes about seeking whom he may devour. Even on the human level the father who spares the rod hates his child. From God, light affliction which is but for a moment may well work *“for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”* The knife that is avoided because it painfully scratches the skin may thereby be prevented from fatally stabbing the heart. So Christ said, *“It is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire” (Matt. 18:8).*

Happy is the temporal suffering which leads a man to flee from eternal damnation. Physical death, which need not be fatal, is the ultimate human illustration of spiritual and everlasting death, which is fatal indeed.

God took the initiative in calling Adam to step up and out from the dark jungle of sin and take his medicine. The love of God was first expressed by the tender entreaty, “Adam, where art thou?”

This was just the beginning! The call of God to Adam in the Garden of Eden was the first loving work by God in calling rebellious humanity to return to Him. This act began the patient years of history in which God the Creator has, with tender compassion, earnestly entreated His human family to return to Him. As mankind has progressed further out into the darkness, God has moved in ever-widening circles to encompass him with His boundless love. No one account could contain the myriad ways in which God has moved to protect man from the fatal results of his sin and to call him back to Himself. The entire sweep of Old Testament history is the story of a loving Creator working to induce an immature and rebellious humanity to return to Him.

God took the initiative in making coats of skin for the covering of Adam and Eve. So it was possible, by reason of the sacrifice of an animal, for Adam and Eve to approach the divine presence.

In the lives of Adam’s forgetful posterity God took the initiative in sending Noah, a preacher of righteousness, to remind a wandering world of the love of God that passes the knowledge of man.

God took the initiative in sending a flood to purify the earth and to renew the potential of a corrupt humanity that had given its mind to thoughts that were only evil continually.

God took the initiative in sending confusion of languages to disburse the human complex that aspired to escalate itself into the presence of God by building the Tower of Babel, efforts which could only result in its own destruction.

God took the initiative in calling the nation of Israel as a people to His own name. This nation was to witness to the reality of the living God to a world in continuous rebellion against Him.

God took the initiative in calling from that nation clear prophetic voices that promised future judgment but extended the call to repentance and reunion with the God of creation.

God took the initiative by representing Himself in a thousand ways to the gross and insensate mind of Adam's race that continued to ignore Him through Old Testament history. By miracles, by signs, by prophets, by scrolls of revelation and fires of judgment, God moved, sometimes mysteriously, sometimes openly, to turn a subverted world from the folly of its devilish course.

Through the story of Old Testament history a strange and beautiful note is sounded. It is there when we read of the decline and fall of the nation of Israel as it moved from its moment of glory under David and Solomon to disaster and destruction at the hands of the Babylonians and Assyrians. It is there in the messages of the prophets, ringing through Isaiah's wild measure or Jeremiah's tearful lamentations. We notice it in the poetry of the psalmist and of the sweet singers of Israel. From Genesis to Malachi it is there. It is a note of promise. Promise indeed! The entire Old Testament seems to present itself as the prelude to something more, something better. More than something, it is in fact *someone* to whom these yellowing scrolls point with longing and anticipation.

*"Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel, Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings" (Isaiah 7:14-16).*

Isaiah says further, *"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this" (Isaiah 9:6-7).*

The nations of the world wax and wane. Israel is herself invaded, conquered and enslaved. But the promise remains.

Finally, with the word *curse* He ends the stupendous saga of Old Testament history. God at this point came finally to the place where He had completed the preparation of the world for His greater revelation. There was nothing more for the prophets to say. The ministry of these men who had *told* the world *about* God came to its end. The world—every human being of which had participated willfully in Adam's sin—had now wandered a near infinite distance from God. The blind and preoccupied children of Adam would turn aside for no less than someone who could fulfill the demands of the question, *"Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us" (John 14:8).*

From the writings of Dave Breese



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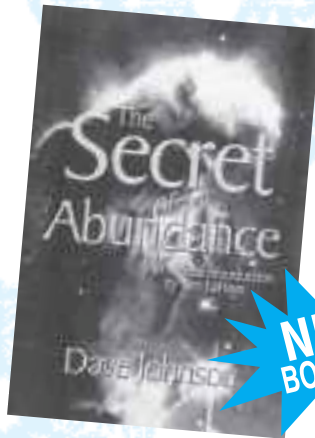


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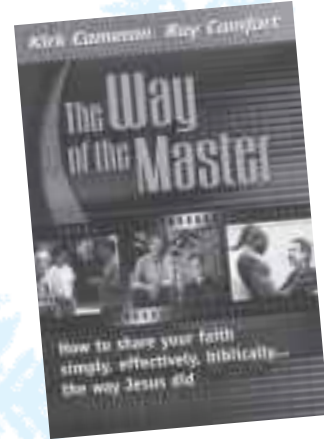


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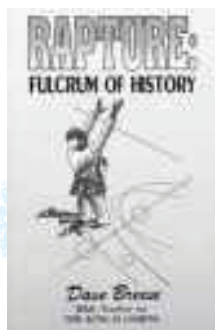
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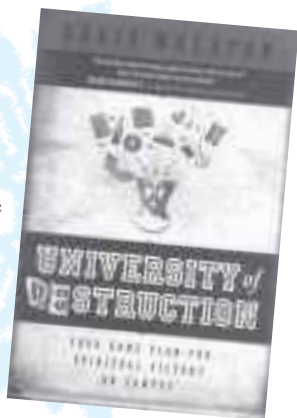
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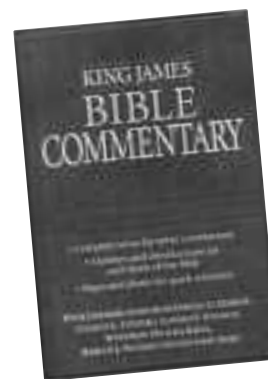
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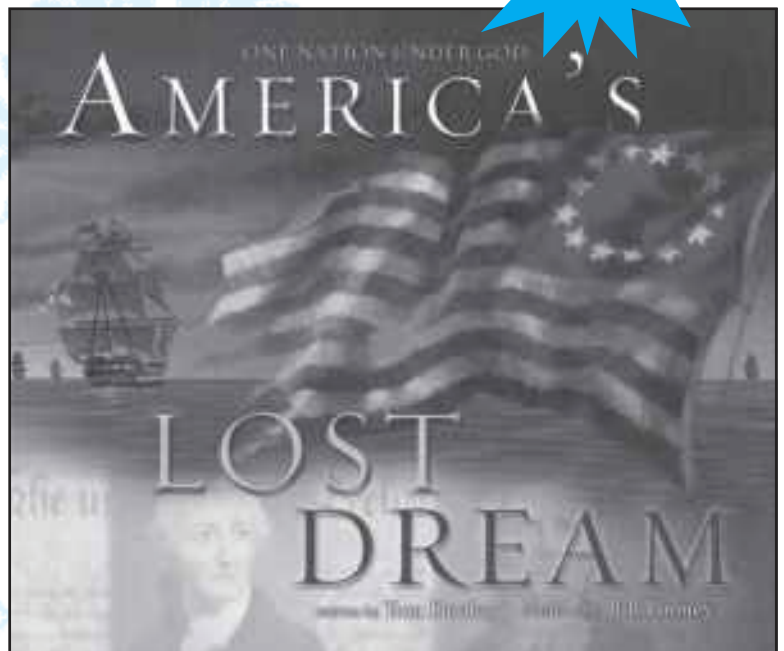
## AMERICA'S LOST DREAM

*Written by Tom Dooley*  
*Illustrated by Bill Looney*



Throughout this nation's history, many of its greatest leaders believed that America's future was inextricably linked to America's faith in God. This mighty nation, now known as The United States of America, was born from the dream of people who envisioned a sovereign state where people could be free and only God would be their king.

This intriguing and artful, **8"x10" hardcover book** will re-awaken the original dream within the hearts of young and old alike. Filled cover to cover with **exquisite artwork** depicting the original scenes, along with in-depth historical facts woven throughout, this book will enlighten and educate all to the wonderful and rich history of this "One Nation Under God." Discover the real story!



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