

The Greatest Story I Ever Told

Once upon a time I realized there was a story that needed to be told. I wasn't exactly sure how I was going to tell it, so I just started writing. It is one thing to know the story; it is another to tell it. It is one thing to tell a story, and it is another thing to live it.

This story should start at a point where someone is wondering why they are here? If you aren't wondering about the answer to that question, then you might not even want to read the story.

There seems to be only two main camps that would have an answer to that question. Either there was intelligent design that created everything that we know anything about, or there was a big cosmic fart that started it all. If you choose to believe the fart narrative, then I wish you good luck with the rest of your life. I really have no interest in that story.

If on the other hand you would entertain the idea of an all-powerful loving intelligence that created everything out of nothing, you might be interested in continuing.

Let's suppose that the main purpose of living is to live forever. What if your entry into eternity is already taken care of? You did not have to do anything. Would that be Good News? Would that sound too good to be true? If it sounds too good to be true, it usually is. But, there are exceptions to every rule.

Most organized religions create rules that you are supposed to comply with. Do this, do that, do the other thing. That is a bunch of doo doo. The alternative to religion is relationship. Right relationships.

Okay, I do not know how to keep it secret anymore. We all need a right relationship with God!

Matthew 6:33 “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

The cool thing about this relationship is that it is unilateral. It's a one way relationship. Eventually, if you choose to accept it, you will do your part, but not because you have to, it's because you want to.

Originally, it is all about God. He started it, and he will finish it. His Word is good. His Word is also Jesus. He who has begun a good work in you will be faithful to complete it.

Philippians 1:6 “And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.”

Let's go to the very beginning. In the beginning God created the Heaven and the Earth. "Ex nihilo" meaning "created out of nothing". This is the predominant Christian view. There is a minority view that He created this world from pre-existing matter.

After creating the Earth and the known Universe, God said it was good.

Genesis 1:31 "And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day."

At this point we need to know one of God's names. God is Love!

1 John 4:16 "We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him."

Love never fails.

1 Corinthians 13:8 "Love never fails."

Love never lies.

Numbers 23:19 "God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent; Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?"

So, if God said His creation is good, then it is good. More on this later.

Meanwhile back in the book of Genesis, God is getting with one of His created men named Abram. Abram's name is changed to Abraham. The Abrahamic Covenant is described in Genesis 12:1-3 and is an unconditional covenant.

Genesis 12:1 "Now the LORD said to Abram, go forth from your country and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you;

Genesis 12:2 And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing;

Genesis 12:3 And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."

A unilateral statement. There are no conditions attached to it (no "if" clauses, suggesting its fulfillment is dependent on man). It is unilateral. It is God simply saying this is what I God am going to do. By myself. I do not need any help from my creation. So, this is basically the Gospel (the Good News) verbalized by God in the Old Testament. He is telling all of us that he is going

to save us. He is putting a plan in place to bring us all back home to Him. And He does not need our help.

Galatians 3:8 "The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, All the nations will be blessed in you."

Several years later Abraham's descendants (also known as the House of Israel), have been violating all the laws that they have agreed to keep through the Prophet Moses. The Mosaic Law included over six hundred provisions. The most famous of these laws are known as the Ten Commandments. Good thing for the House of Israel, and for that matter all of us, that God's promise to Abraham was not based on our obeying the laws.

The Prophet Ezekiel shares with us what God is continuing to do.

Ezekiel 36:20 "When they came to the nations, wherever they went, they profaned My holy name—when they said of them, These are the people of the LORD, and yet they have gone out of His land."

Ezekiel 36:21 "But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations wherever they went."

Ezekiel 36:22 "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: I do not do this for your sake, O house of Israel, but for My holy name's sake, which you have profaned among the nations wherever you went.'

Ezekiel 36:23 "And I will sanctify My great name, which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst; and the nations shall know that I am the LORD, says the Lord GOD."

Ezekiel 36:36 "Then the nations which are left all around you shall know that I, the LORD, have rebuilt the ruined places and planted what was desolate. I, the LORD, have spoken it, and I will do it."

A few years later through the Prophet Jeremiah God spoke and further proclaimed what He would do.

Jeremiah 31:31 "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah"

Jeremiah 31:32 "Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD."

Jeremiah 31:33 "But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

Jeremiah 31:34 "No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

It sounds to me as if God is saying that He will write His law onto our hearts. Instinctively we will know what is right. He will give us His truth.

John 14:6 "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."

In case you have not noticed it yet, I am mostly reporting His story, which is History. I am not making this up. I am simply reporting the facts as I understand them. I am quoting God.

So, that wraps up the period known as the Old Testament. In case you were wondering, Jesus is our only Prophet in these last days.

Hebrews 1:1 "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

Hebrews 1:2 "Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds."

He is the only name by which we might be saved.

Acts 4:12 "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

John 3:17 "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

Ephesians 2:8 "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."

Ephesians 2:9 "Not of works, lest any man should boast."

The bottom line is eternal life (immortal life) is a free gift! All you have to do is accept the work on the cross that has already been done for you. The work is finished, the price has been paid. The only work you have to do is ask God/Jesus for the faith that would enable you to believe it is for real. Humble yourself and admit you are not capable of doing the work necessary to achieve immortal life by yourself.

You might be saying to yourself, this sounds like one of those too good to be true deals. It really does sound too good to be true. The Good News is that it is not too good to be true!

It is too good to believe that a human being would come up with this plan. For the most part we are selfish and we do not like pain and suffering. Why would we come up with a plan that says the only way it can work is for one of us to be brutally beaten and crucified in the most painful way ever developed, namely hanging on a cross? Furthermore, it was not just Jesus the son, but God the Father was hanging there with Him.

2 Corinthians 5:19 “God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.”

This truly is “The Greatest Story I Ever Told!”

This might be a good time to get back to God saying it was good. Knowing that God himself would have to be crucified as a man to pay the price for His creation to be able to spend eternity with Himself (God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit). How can that be called good?

Isaiah 55:8 “For my thoughts [are] not your thoughts, neither [are] your ways my ways, saith the LORD.”

Isaiah 55:9 “For [as] the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

We are not capable of totally comprehending God. We do not have the proper equipment. We do not have the brain power, or the computer power, or any other means of truly being able to figure out God.

Job 38:1 “Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said,

Job 38:4 “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding.”

So, once again, this is where faith comes in. No matter what belief system we choose to adopt concerning the origin of life and the hereafter, it is based on faith. My faith is based on getting as much logical, factual, believable, information as I can, and then choosing to believe by faith the parts that cannot be proven by a scientific method.

I am sure there are not enough books in the world to convince you of the truthfulness of this story if you do not want to believe it. However, I would like to point out some things that at one time or another I used to believe, that kept me from fully embracing this narrative.

1) I can't believe in a God that is going to send a major portion of His creation to Hell, fire and damnation for eternity.

I can't either! I don't know such a God. If there is one, he certainly is not the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Just on the face of it, it does not add up. We have already established that God is Love. What part of Love burns a good portion of His creation forever! What crime would merit eternal wailing and gnashing and separation and burning and torment? Punishment, that after one thousand trillion years, has only just begun. If there ever was such a concept it was and is pagan in nature. It certainly might help parents to raise compliant children if the children thought Mom and Dad had such power. Or it might help King James to keep his subjects in line if he could convince the translators of the King James Version of the Bible to interpret something like this.

The truth of the matter is, the original Hebrew and Greek manuscripts have not been translated correctly. In the Old Testament, the original Hebrew word Olam has been used to mean forever and eternal, when it could simply mean a period of time. In the New Testament the Greek word Aion and Aionios have been translated in a similar fashion. The most correct way to translate these words is as an "age". Possibly an "eon". Definitely a period of time, but in no way does it have to be forever. For a ton of material on this subject go to www.tentmaker.org. Also, a couple of really good books to read are "Hope Beyond Hell" by Gerry Beauchemin and "Love Wins" by Rob Bell.

I could literally write an entire book on just the subject of Hell, fire and damnation, and how wrong the traditional Christian communities have gotten it. My point is not to damn the "Body of Christ" to Hell, but to simply show how God has allowed His messengers to get it wrong on certain parts of the message. I do not believe He ever allowed them to screw it up so badly that we could not figure out how to get back home.

To go along with the error of Hell being forever, there is also the error of a major amount of God's kids not even making it to Heaven. In the aforementioned website and books there are voluminous amounts of information making a really good case for what I believe, called "Ultimate Reconciliation", which simply means that when it is all said and done, God will reconcile all His creation back to Himself. It does not get any better than that. Can you say Good News? God will determine how much discipline and for how long, each of us need.

2 Peter 3:9 "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

There are hundreds of scriptures with a similar message. God is not willing that any of His creation should perish. He is going to fix it. He is going to do whatever it takes to get us home! Some would say it is because of man's free will that man chooses to go to Hell. Then I guess man's will trumps God's will.

2) I cannot believe in a God who will help somebody find their car keys, but will not help a poor woman that is being raped. You can fill in the blank with any number of other scenarios. How could a God that is supposed to be about Love allow war? Or tiny children to be in the cancer/burn or other wards of hospitals?

These are really good questions. Just because we do not have iron clad perfect answers, does not mean there is no God, or that God is bad. It simply means that we are not God! We do not understand the mind of God, and we were not there when God hung the stars.

What if when it is all said and done, and God has brought most/or all of His creation back to Heaven forever, that the short period of time that we suffered here on planet Earth would be worth it?

2 Corinthians 4:17 "For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison,"

2 Corinthians 4:18 "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal."

What if God becoming a man and coming into His creation, living a perfect, sinless life and allowing Himself to be brutally beaten and crucified to pay for any and all wrong doing that you could think of committing, might have paid for whatever happens on this planet.

1 John 1:7 "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

3) What if I fell for some teaching from some religious denomination, or organization that claimed to have the truth, and it turned out not to be true? Should I stop believing in God altogether and become atheist or agnostic?

Galatians 1:6 "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel."

Galatians 1:8 "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

The bottom line is that we can believe anything that we choose to. Remember free will/agency? However, there are consequences that go along with our beliefs/actions.

Galatians 6:7 “Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

Galatians 6:8 “For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.”

The True Gospel says that at some point and time, of God’s choosing, every knee will bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Philippians 2:9 “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.”

Philippians 2:10 “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.”

Philippians 2:11 “And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Philippians 2:12 “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.”

Philippians 2:13 “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”

Rom 10:20 RSV Then Isaiah is so bold as to say, "I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me."

So, you are going to accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior at some point in time. The only question is when? I would recommend sooner rather than later. It’s kind of like paying something that you owe. You can pay it sooner with no interest added on, or you can pay it later with God only knows how much interest.

4) What if I decide I will just call Jesus a good teacher, or prophet like Moses?

Once again, you can do what you want, but do not be so foolish as to think Jesus could possibly be just a good teacher or prophet. If Jesus is not who He said He is, “God”, then He is a lunatic and a liar.

John 20:28 “Thomas answered and said to Him, My Lord and my God!”

5) I am pretty sure there would be some other minor mistranslations in the Bible, if that is what you are looking for. There are other doctrines/beliefs that various denominations will argue about, pre-tribulation rapture, evolution, young/old earth, trinity etc. These are not salvation issues. God made sure that the foundational planks of His Gospel have always been intact in His Word. As the apostle Paul sums it up:

1 Corinthians 2:2 “For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.”

That pretty much covers it. There is more information out there than you can shake a stick at. Just remember some common sense stuff, like, if it is not Good News, then it is not Gospel. The very definition of the word Gospel equals Good News. Also, be honest with yourself. You can fool all of the people some of the time, but you can't ever fool God. Just ask God/Jesus/Holy Spirit to help you find the truth.

John 16:13 “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.”

If you have a greater story than this, please share it with me. I know there are lots of people throughout the ages who have told some interesting stories. I do not know of anyone who has told a story that even comes close to this one. Not because I am telling it, because I have tried to get out of the way and let God tell it through His Word.

The really Good News is that we are all going to make it. Hallelujah!

1 Timothy 2:3 “For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour.”

1 Timothy 2:4 “Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”

The only variable is how much stuff do you have to go through before you figure out you need some supernatural help?

I hope your decision is soon and that you will be able to have joy in your life that only He can give. Do not base your belief on what you see other followers of God doing. We are all on our own individual journey. We will all end up at the same place. Some of us will just take a more scenic route.

The apostle Paul, who wrote probably two thirds of the New Testament said of himself, “I am the Chiefest of Sinners”. Since he already claimed that title, I chose to be the “Chiefest of Hypocrites”. You figure out your own title. There was only one guy who was able to do this thing perfect so we named it after Him.

God Bless,
Foxy Larry

P.S. The next page contains the most important scripture in the Bible!

I spoke with my dad a lot about things that he might want to share at his memorial service. The top thing on his list would be to make sure that everyone would know how much he loved Romans 11:32. He felt that it is the penultimate verse in the whole Bible.

Romans 11:32 (RSV) “For God has consigned all men to disobedience, that he may have mercy upon all.”

Romans 11:32 (NET) “For God has consigned all people to disobedience so that he may show mercy to them all.”

So, Romans 11:32 says that “God may have mercy on **ALL** of us.”

Then he loved to point out James 2:13 (NKJV) where it says: “For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. **Mercy triumphs over judgment.**”