

What Have I Gotten Myself Into? Worth More Than Everything

God Spoke

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Psalm 19:1

Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name. Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing. Isaiah 40:26

Either half of my colleagues are enormously stupid, or else the science of Darwinism is fully compatible with conventional religious belief – and equally compatible with atheism. Stephen Jay Gould...late Harvard Scientist and Evolutionist

We have this very solid conclusion that the universe had an origin, the Big Bang. The universe began with an unimaginable bright flash of energy from an infinitesimally small point. That implies that before that there was nothing. I can't imagine how nature, in this case the universe, could have created itself. And the very fact that the universe had a beginning implies that someone was able to begin it. And it seems to me that had to be outside of nature. Francis Collins...physician-geneticist- believer

Shalom...the perfect, harmonious interdependence among all parts of creation allowing for a whole, full, joyful, flourishing life.

We Fell

We were made to know and treasure the glory of God above all things; and when we trade that treasure for images, everything is disordered. John Piper

The devastating loss of shalom through sin is described in Genesis 3. We are told that as soon as we determined to serve ourselves instead of God – as soon as we abandoned living for and enjoying God as our highest good – the entire created world became broken. We have lost God's shalom – physically, spiritually, socially, psychologically, culturally. Tim Keller

...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God... Romans 3:23

...the essence of sin is not primarily the violation of laws but a wrecked relationship with God, one another and the whole created order. All sins are attempts to fill voids. Because we cannot stand the God-shaped hole inside of us, we try stuffing it full of all sorts of things, but only God may fill it. Barbara Taylor Brown

He Showed Up

⁸But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last forever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom. ⁹You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy." ¹⁰He also says, "In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. Hebrews 1:8-10

¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. ¹⁷He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. Colossians 1:15-17

We Didn't Believe Him

³⁹"Abraham is our father," they answered. "If you were Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then you would do the things Abraham did. ⁴⁰As it is, you are determined to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things. ⁴¹You are doing the things your own father does."

"We are not illegitimate children," they protested. "The only Father we have is God himself." John 8:39-41

¹⁸For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' ¹⁹The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and "sinners." ' But wisdom is proved right by her actions." Matthew 11:18-19

We Killed Him

The wounds swelled about the rough nails and the torn and lacerated tendons and nerves caused excruciating agony. The arteries of the head and stomach were surcharged with blood and a terrific throbbing headache ensued...The victim of crucifixion literally died a thousand deaths...The suffering was so frightful that even among the raging passions of war pity was sometimes excited. Josephus – Jewish historian

²Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:2

He Freed Us

³⁶So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. John 8:36

¹Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ²because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. ³For what the law was

powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, ⁴in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit. Romans 8:1-4

...the death of Jesus nullified the damning effect of sin for all who trust Christ. The weapon of soul-destroying sin and guilt is taken out of Satan's hand. He is disarmed of the single weapon that can condemn us – unforgiven sin. We see this in 1 Corinthians 15:55-57: O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Why is sin the sting of death? Because only unforgiven sin can condemn the soul and make death a door to hell, not heaven. Therefore the way that Satan can destroy the soul is not by séances or apparitions or sickness or persecution, but only by securing the guild for our sin. If our sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, Satan has no damning weapon against us. He can hurt us, and even kill us, but he cannot condemn us. John Piper

And that's just the beginning. Now we have...

An unexplainable joy...

¹And now, brothers, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. ²Out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. 2 Corinthians 8:1-2

³³Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. ³⁴You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions. Hebrews 10:33-35

His power in witness...

¹⁸Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20

But you will receive **power** when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8

For to be sure, he was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God's **power**. Likewise, we are weak in him, yet by God's **power** we will live with him to serve you. ⁵Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test? 2 Corinthians 13:4-5

Each Other...

Therefore encourage **one another** and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing. 1 Thessalonians 5:11

Finally, Christian marriage and Christian friendship is so rich that I cannot imagine living without it
J.P. Moreland

The certainty of Heaven...

¹Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ²I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ⁴He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

Revelation 21:1-4

Him.

⁴⁴"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Matthew 13:44