

Martyn Lloyd-Jones

The Gospel in Genesis

Chapter One

THE MESSAGE OF THE BIBLE



Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

* G E N E S I S 3 : 1

I call your attention to Genesis 3 in order that we may consider together the essential message of this book that we call the Bible. In various ways we have felt the need to do so and have felt it to be right.

We are all conscious of problems in this world—problems in our own personal lives and in the world at large. There is no such thing as complete and perfect happiness. No one is without difficulties. Everyone knows what it is to be weary, to be disappointed, and to struggle. We find conflict within ourselves. We find conflict round and about us. That is the experience of every human being. There is always a fly in the ointment. There is no such thing as unmixed pleasure. We have all discovered—and no matter how young we are, we have discovered this—that life does involve us in difficulties, in problematical situations. And we have a feeling that we were not meant for this. We do not like it; we want to be delivered from it. That is ultimately the cause of all quests in the lives of men and women. We are all searching for some solution to the problems of

THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS

life. There are difficulties; there are such things as heart searchings and disappointments; we are all somehow or other seeking for some way out of some impasse.

We are face-to-face, then, with tribulation and trial, with wretchedness and unhappiness, not only in ourselves but in the world at large. We are always being reminded of this. You cannot pick up a newspaper without seeing it. You never hear the news on the radio without being conscious that life is full of perplexities. Quite apart from major world wars, there is always some misunderstanding and discord, people working at cross-purposes, pulling against one another, rivalries, jealousies, sects and parties. The whole world seems to be nothing but a repetition on a grand scale of what we all experience in our personal lives. That is why it has often been said that man is a sort of microcosm. In and of himself, he is a picture of what is true of the whole cosmos. There seems to be this clash, and as the poet has put it, we see "Nature, red in tooth and claw."¹ There always seems to be struggle—struggle for existence, struggle for power, struggle for mastery.

That is the situation that we meet together to consider, and that in itself is important because many people still think that religion is purely intellectual. Some insist that this book called the Bible, far from being practical, is really very remote from life. They say, if you are interested in the Bible, you can take it up as you take up any other kind of study—music, for instance, or literature—as a kind of hobby. It is something that you do in a detached manner, more or less as a spectator, in your leisure time.

Now all that is a complete fallacy, and I want to try to show you what a terrible fallacy it is. Nothing in the world is as practical as the teaching of the Bible. Indeed, the whole purpose of that book is to come to us with its instruction and its enlightenment concerning the very situation in which we find ourselves. That is what it is for. That is what it is about. From that standpoint, it is in a sense the most human book in the world because from beginning to end it deals with men and women. But for that very reason the Bible is

a baffling book to many people. They think of it, as I have said, as just some kind of theoretical textbook offering a certain point of view or line of thought.

Now the Bible does contain massive thought, mighty philosophy, exceptional teaching, and yet the whole time it is also a history book. You cannot get away from men and women—Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, David and other kings, Jesus of Nazareth, apostles with names, Paul, the servant of Jesus Christ. The Bible keeps on putting its truth to us in terms of these people—what they did, what they said, what happened to them, and so on. And it does that, it seems to me, just to bring home to us this very point that I am emphasizing—that it is a practical book about life. It is a textbook of the soul. It comes to us with a message about the very position in which we find ourselves.

So look at the Bible either as an individual or in terms of the world. Are you unhappy? Is that why you are thinking about what I am saying? Well, the Bible talks to you about your unhappiness. The question is, why are you unhappy? What is the cause of your unhappiness? Why should anybody be unhappy? Why should life not be a perpetual holiday? Why do we have to work by the sweat of our brow? Those are the questions with which the Bible deals. Why do things go wrong? Why is there illness and sickness? Why should there be death? These are the major problems of life.

How important it is that we should realize that this is the starting point. So often when people come to discuss religion they say, "Ah, this is going to be interesting. What about miracles?" And off they go at once. "But science says this and that." And there they are, discussing something far away from themselves, something entirely theoretical. But that is not how the Bible approaches us. The Bible comes to us exactly where we are; it speaks to us in the very position that we are in at this moment. Indeed, it always insists upon doing that. It says, "I am interested in you, and I want to talk to you about yourself."

So we are not going to have a detached, theoretical discussion

THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS

about some points of philosophy. We are going to talk about you and about me, about all of us in this world and the whole state of the world in which we live. I want to show you what the Bible has to say about all this because in the last analysis there are only two views about life and the world and why things are as they are: we either accept this biblical view, or we accept some other view. These are the classifications that the Bible recognizes—its message and all other messages. I do not care what the other message is. All other messages belong to the same category because they are not based upon the Bible. The Bible is not in a series with the others. It stands absolutely alone. It claims an utter uniqueness. It makes claims for itself that no other book in the world can.

I shall not go into that now because I want to give you the message of the Bible. But were I disposed to do so, I could give you the proofs that the Bible itself provides for its unique and divine inspiration. And on top of that I could give you further proofs that we can deduce from the subsequent course of human history. But for now I am just making the assertion that the only view of men and women and life in the world that really meets the facts, the only view that explains why we are individually as we are at this moment, why the world is as it is and why history has been as it has been, is found in the pages of the Bible. I am here to assert that this book alone has an adequate explanation. If you take up any other view, you will find that it will fail you at some point or other. The Bible, I repeat, claims to be a unique book, a book given by God through men in various ways and brought into one. And what it does, of course, is to give us an account of the things that are vital and primary and fundamental.

Now I want to put all this in general at this point. I am doing this quite deliberately. The Bible is full of a great mass of detail, and my usual custom is to take one verse perhaps, or even less than that, and try to expound it. This is right. We must do that. And yet I believe it is good at times to look at the message as a whole, for I increasingly find that many people have never really seen the

whole case put forward by the Bible. They have stumbled at some particular thing; they have stopped at one point. They have missed the whole because they have been over-immersed in one part. They have looked so much at individual trees that they have not seen the forest. So I am going to put this message in terms of the forest, in terms of the general statement of the Bible as it meets us in life as it is today and as it speaks to us. And as I do so, I think we shall see that all along the line the Bible is in blank contradiction to what is so generally and so popularly believed and assumed at the present time.

Certain truths that the Bible tells us are absolute essentials if we are to understand ourselves and the world in which we live. So what does it have to tell us? Well, the whole case is put in the first three chapters of the book of Genesis. We have here the complete biblical view of history and of humanity. We need not go any further; it is all here. So what is it? What am I to make of life? How am I to understand myself, my problems, my disappointments, my unhappiness? How can I face all that? That is the question, is it not? And it is a perfectly fair and right question. But what am I to say about it?

Well, the Bible, in a most extraordinary way, starts like this: "In the beginning God . . ." It starts with God. And at once I have shown you the ultimate distinction with respect to the views that are held about life. Because of necessity, before I begin to ask any questions about myself and my problems, I ought to ask questions like this: Where did the world come from? Where have I come from? What is life itself? What is its origin?

The tragedy of the world today is that it starts too near to its problems. The poet says, "The world is too much with us."² That, he says, is our trouble. We are right in the midst of it, and we cannot see it because we are too near it. There are times when to see a thing you must get away from it.

*And what should they know of England
Who only England know?*

Rudyard Kipling, "The English Flag"

THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS

If you want to know England truly, travel abroad. If you want to appreciate your own country, go to another. If you simply stay in and walk about the streets of London, in the end you will know very little about London. You need a larger perspective, a distant view. You need to see the thing as a whole. Similarly, do not merely concentrate at once on your problem. Go back. Put it into its context.

To me, that is of the very essence. If you consult mathematicians or chemists—analytical chemists, in particular, or anybody who is having to deal with problems in these realms—and ask them, “How do you tackle a problem?” I think you will find invariably that they will tell you they never start directly with the thing itself. They first of all put it into a group and then into a larger group.

Take a chemist trying to discover what a given substance is. How does he do it? Well, first of all he employs certain broad tests. He eliminates a number of possibilities, and he gradually narrows these down and down and down until he comes to the essential properties of the substance. A physician making a diagnosis has to do exactly the same thing. He must not immediately concentrate on the particular symptom about which the patient is talking. No; the way to discover the cause is to start on a broader base, on a bigger canvas, as it were, and gradually narrow it down. You put certain things out of court and then others.

I once heard a notable physician talking about the way in which he diagnoses a patient. First, he listens to what the patient has to say. Then he examines the patient. So now he has a number of data. He has the patient's symptoms and complaints, and in addition he has his own investigation and discoveries. Then he said, “What I do is this: I say to myself, what are the possible ailments that can include and cover all this? And I put up all the possibilities as though I were putting up a number of pins. Then I stand back and throw several bowling balls at the pins. The pin that's left standing is the right diagnosis.” That was his method.

I am trying to tell you that the same method should be applied in the whole question of your particular personal problems and mine.

You come to me and say, "I'm unhappy. I'm conscious of a conflict. I'm in a crisis. What's the matter with me?" And the Bible says, "In the beginning God . . ." as if it has forgotten all about you. But it has not! The only way to understand yourself or your life is to start with God. And right at the very beginning the Bible takes us there. If you are not clear about this, you will go wrong everywhere else.

It is of vital importance to every one of us, therefore, that we know whether or not there is a God. Is everything that exists the result of the activity of God, or is there some blind, impersonal force or energy or power behind everything? Am I face-to-face with a Being and with a Person? Or am I the victim of blind chance, of some accidental meeting of atoms or powers that are without personality, without mind, without reason, without understanding? Is it all blind, or is it all purposeful?

You must come to that. The diagnosis depends essentially upon that. So the Bible, there at the very beginning, starts with that. But the modern panaceas never do that, do they? The psychologist starts with you and ends with you, and so do all the others. They suggest things to you and do certain things to you. They try to bring forces and factors to play upon you. And it is you the whole time. That is why the world is as it is. But you cannot understand life, says the Bible, unless you realize that there, at the back of everything, before everything, is God.

We cannot define God. We cannot understand God. "Canst thou by searching find out God?" (Job 11:7). "The world by wisdom knew not God" (1 Corinthians 1:21). The mightiest Greek philosophers could not attain unto him. But the Bible asserts him. It says this is the revelation that God has given of himself. Now we must agree about this before we can go any further. We either agree that this great eternal God has been pleased to tell us about himself and to reveal and manifest himself—that here is the revelation, and it is in nature and creation also—or else we do not accept it.

The Bible tells us that God is and that God is eternal. Oh, we cannot understand that. Our minds are too small. We cannot con-

THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS

ceive of God or eternity. We are so impure that we cannot imagine a Being of whom it can be said, "[he] is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5) and that he is "a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:29), that he is absolutely holy in every respect, that he knows all and sees all and is all-powerful. Such truth boggles our minds. We do not understand. We were never meant to understand. If we could, we would be bigger than God. If my mind could go around all these things and I could put them on paper in my little philosophy, I would be god, and God would merely be a subject I am handling.

But the Bible says, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground" (Exodus 3:5). We are confronted by one who addresses us with the words, "I AM THAT I AM" (Exodus 3:14)—Jehovah, the eternal God. Now if that is true, it will make a difference all along the line. You cannot reason with blind force. You cannot pray to energy. You cannot put your case and voice your plea to some great impersonal mass. But if God is God, our whole outlook is changed at once. God is personal—"I AM." God is the Father. God is the Son. God is the Holy Spirit. Three Persons in glory. That is the beginning.

But let us go on. The Bible tells us that the world came into being because the eternal God made it. It tells us that God is the Creator. You see, we are still talking about you, are we not? Yes, but we are not just looking at you and your symptoms; we are looking at your whole context. We are asking, where have you come from? How have you come into being? What is it all about?

"Ah," you say, "but what about this pain I want to get rid of?"

Yes, my dear friend, I want to get rid of your pain, but I want to make a diagnosis first. I am not trying to issue an opiate. I do not simply want to give you a drug. We do not gather in church simply to sing and to persuade ourselves that all is well and to feel a little happier. Religion is not escapism. Everything else is escapism, but this is realism. So the Bible tells you that God made the world. It asserts creation. It says that God made everything out of nothing,

that he said, "Let there be light: and there was light" (Genesis 1:3). He made everything there is out of nothing by his own power, and he made it perfect. He looked at it, and he saw that it was good, and it was called paradise.

Is the world God's creation, or is it the result of some impersonal, accidental, evolutionary process? I think you can see again how this is a vital matter as we consider our problems in this world. You must believe one or the other of these two ideas: There is no other possibility. Either you believe that God created the world, or you believe the talk that gases—nobody knows how or where they came from—suddenly solidified and formed some primitive slime, and though there is no mind, no understanding, no law, no order, no purpose in anything, somehow or other blind, hidden forces so worked and manipulated and reacted against one another that from a very primitive kind of undefined life they developed into human beings with their brain and power, they produced to the complexity of the flower, the extraordinary instrument that we call the eye, and all the astounding things that happen in creation.

The birds are migrating. They are leaving this country and going back to warmer climes. What makes them do it? Why do they do it? How do they do it? Is it all accident? Is it all chance? Or is there a mind, a Creator, at the back of it all? You see, you cannot begin really to discuss your problems, your personal problems, your personal needs and difficulties, truly and well unless you somehow take all that in. And the Bible makes you do that. It reasons with you. The Bible does not say, "Just come to Jesus and all will be well." Not at all. It starts in Genesis. It starts with creation. It wants you to know and to understand why you are what you are and why God is proposing what he proposes.

So the Bible tells us that the world is not accidental. It tells us that history is not without a beginning. It tells us that there was a time when there was no world and no history and that God deliberately, according to the counsel of his own eternal will, decided to create and form a world and to start the historical process. You

THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS

and I are in history, and it behooves us to know something about this very process. The Bible asserts that God made the world. It was perfect. It was paradise. He set it going upon its course.

Very well, let us move on. We are coming nearer to ourselves. The next step, of course, is man. We find ourselves members of the human race. Oh yes, I am very concerned about myself. I am an individualist, and I want the solution to my problems. Yes, but I cannot help knowing that there are all these other people like myself in this great world with its teeming masses. "The proper study of mankind is Man."³ And I am suggesting that it is equally true to say that the proper study of man is mankind. Both propositions are true.

So, then, where do human beings come from? And there again we confront the same great divide. According to the biblical assertion, man is a special creation of God. The Bible tells us, "God created man in his own image" (Genesis 1:27). It does not say that about anything else, only about human beings. In other words, when I am confronting this modern world with all its tragedy and all its pain and all of my own difficulties and problems, I say, what am I, what is man?

Now there was a time when man was perfect. The world was not always as it is now. Man was made in the image of God. Man was made righteous. Man was made holy. He was made *by* God, *for* God. He spoke to God. He walked with God. He communed with God. He enjoyed God. He lived with God. He was upright. There was that in him that could respond to God. And his life was one of perfect bliss.

And in your attempt to understand and solve your problems, you either believe that or else you believe that man, after all, is nothing but an animal—a reasoning animal, if you like, an animal endowed with a higher reason—and that the only difference between him and the other animals is that the forepart of his brain has become more complex, more developed. You believe that man never was perfect and that he is as he is now because he has not yet reached perfection, but he has worked his way up slowly through

countless millennia of time—a claim that cannot be proved—until he has arrived at his present state and condition. And you believe that he is slowly improving and developing—he is becoming better, getting rid of things and shedding things that are harmful and inimical to his well-being, and in many, many, many more millennia he will arrive at perfection and will have solved all his problems, and there will be no more troubles.

It is one or the other. You either believe that the human nature you possess has come out of the hands of God and was made by God for himself, or else you take that other view, that purely materialistic view, that man is nothing but an animal. And the Bible, I emphasize, asserts that the second view is wrong. It says that man was made by God and was placed in paradise and there lived his life of perfect enjoyment.

Very well. We now come to the very center of our problem. If all that is true, then why am I what I am? Why is the world what it is? Why the misery and wretchedness? That is our problem, is it not? We have seen what we are, essentially and originally. Why, then, are we what we are now? And here comes the great divide. Notice what the Bible says:

Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? (Genesis 3:1)

People say, "We're not interested in your doctrine." Modern men and women say, "We want a little bit of help. We want a little bit of comfort. Can't you say something to lift us out of our troubles? But there you go, talking theology!"

But, my dear friend, it is only as you believe this theology that you will ever know deliverance. The biblical account of man and of the world and of history is theological, which means that it starts with God. Theology is the science of the knowledge of God, and of all in relationship to God. And this is what theology says at this point—that into this perfect world made by God, in which man lived

THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS

in a state of paradise, there entered another power, another force. Something came that was opposed to God and opposed to man, and it was bent upon one thing only—wrecking God's perfect work.

Now we come into a realm that no one can possibly understand. And the Bible does not give us ultimate explanations. What it does tell us is that there is a world besides this one, a world that is spiritual, a world of spirits. It tells us that God not only made man but that he made creatures called angels, who are not physical but spiritual beings, and that God endowed them with great and notable and remarkable powers and uses them as his servants. God made these great, powerful, angelic beings. But one of them, we are told, rebelled against God and persuaded others to follow him. He defied God and stood against God, and God smote him, and he fell. And the Bible tells us that this terrible, dread spiritual power, called Satan or the Devil, entered into this world, into God's perfect creation, and by tempting the man and the woman whom God had made brought to pass everything bad that you and I know.

Now let me put that more generally in this way: why are things as they are? Why does any one of us ever desire that which is harmful for us? Why would we ever want to do things that we know to be absolutely wrong? Why are there jealousy and envy and discord and misunderstanding? Why lust and passion? Why are homes and marriages broken? Why do little children suffer? Why all the agony and the pain of life?

That is the problem, is it not? And here is the biblical answer. It is because there is this other power in the world that has dragged man down. There is evil, headed up by this person called Satan, who came and tempted Adam and Eve, and they fell. That is why man is no longer what he once was and has become something entirely different. That is the biblical explanation. You will find it in the Bible from beginning to end. You will find that when the Son of God came into this world, he was tempted by the Devil in the wilderness for forty days. He struggled with him. The Devil tried to get him down. He came and said in essence, "If you are the Son of God, do this, do

that. I will give you all the kingdoms of this world if only you will bow down and worship me."

That is what confronts you and me. And if that is true, how hopelessly and utterly inadequate are all the remedies that are being offered apart from the Bible. If that is the problem, if there are these unseen powers, if there are what the apostle Paul calls "principalities . . . powers . . . the rulers of the darkness of this world . . . spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12), if we are confronted with all that, then we need a power that is greater than that. But the Bible tells us that as the result of that original sin, all of us are in the grip of this evil power. We are dominated by the Devil, "the god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:4), who comes to us and tempts us.

Have we not all experienced this? The moment you wake up in the morning, before you have had time to start thinking, thoughts come to you. And they are sometimes ugly, foul thoughts, unworthy thoughts. Where have they come from? First thing in the morning, last thing at night, they assault you. You may be reading your Bible, or you may be on your knees in prayer, and you are conscious of being attacked. There are things that drag you down, suggestions and insinuations. Where does it all come from? Here is where it all comes from, says the Bible. And if this is true, how vital it is that you should realize it.

Satan and evil. Original sin and the Fall. We are victims of evil powers greater than ourselves. It is either that, or else you take the other view, so popular today, that the real problem is that man has not had sufficient time to shake off these negative thoughts, that there is still a good deal of the beast in him. He has gone through various stages—fish, reptile, mammal, and so on—and because these animals are creatures of lusts and passions and fight one another and are self-centered and selfish, human beings are still like that. Of course, we are told, we are getting better and every year will continue to get better and better. We are altogether better now than we were two thousand years ago, it is claimed.

"But," you ask, "why are people still fighting?"

THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS

"Well," comes the answer, "we haven't had enough time yet."

What about a man coveting another man's wife? Men did that two thousand years ago, and they are still doing it. Where is the improvement? Where is the advance? I do not see it. I see things exactly as they were. I go back and read an early story in the book of Genesis. I see a man named Cain who was so jealous of his brother that he murdered him. I see men still doing that in spite of the fact that probably at least six thousand years have passed.

My friends, the Bible is realistic, is it not? The Bible tells us that we are what we are and things are as they are because of this thing called sin that comes from Satan, that comes from evil, that comes from opposition to God and enmity against God, with man turning himself into a king and a lord and asserting himself. Man's rebellion against God—that is the explanation.

But the Bible goes further and says that man, as the result of all this, is quite helpless, that he has brought a curse upon himself and cannot escape it. He would like to, but he cannot. Man has been trying to get back into Eden ever since he went out of it. That is the whole history of civilization. That is the whole meaning of philosophy and all political thought and all the blueprints of utopias at all times and in all places—man trying to get back into paradise.

But he never will. Why? The flaming sword and the cherubim have been put there by God, and they bar the way! There is also the constant activity of the god of this world, who encourages men and women to try to save themselves because he knows the futility of that and knows it is still nothing but an expression of their self-assertion and opposition to God. So the Devil will encourage godless culture for all he is worth, for while people trust in culture, they will never see their need of the Savior.

But the Bible shows us Adam and Eve thrust out of the garden, miserable, frightened, and alarmed, face-to-face with new problems that were not there before—thorns and thistles, illnesses and diseases, problems on all sides. It has all come upon them. There they are, and they are immersed in it, and they are helpless.

And it is worse than that. Man is under the judgment of God. He thought that he could forget God and that there would be no risk involved. He did not realize that the law of God is absolute. It was there at the beginning, and it is still the same. Both man as an individual and the whole world, according to the Bible, are under the judgment of God. As I understand the Bible, what is happening in the present is that God is manifesting his judgment. He manifested it back there in the garden too. You see, Adam and Eve thought they could eat the forbidden fruit and all would be well. Not at all! Then they heard the voice of the Lord God in the garden in the cool of the evening. God had arrived on the scene, and they cowered and were frightened. Judgment had come, and they were thrust out.

Oh, read your Bible! Read it through, my friend. I am pleading with you. Read your Bible through in the way that I am trying to give you in outline, and you will see how the judgments of God came. They came more than once in the history of mankind. They came at the Flood, upon Sodom and Gomorrah, in the destruction of Jerusalem. And so it has gone on. God is in the heavens, and when man rises up, God judges him. When the people built their Tower of Babel, God smashed it and scattered them, and the result was the division into races and the different languages and so on. There is the history of the world.

Do you see how vital it is to recognize this? I either believe that my life is going on to death and after death the judgment, when I must stand before God, or else I believe that when I come to die, that is just the end, there is nothing more, and when I die it is just like a beast dying, like a flower dying. I have been here, I have gone, and that is all. Can you not see how vital it is to be clear about this matter? Can you not see how it will affect your whole life and all your actions? The Bible asserts that man, though he has turned his back on God, still exists before him.

And it is because of this that I keep preaching. It is because I believe that all who die in their sins not only go to judgment but go to hell that I keep proclaiming the message. If I believed that when

THE GOSPEL IN GENESIS

we all die, that is just the end of it, that our bodies just dissolve and become part of the earth and that is all, then there would be no need of a gospel. But "it is appointed unto men"—all men—"once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). Death is not the end. We go on, and we go on for all eternity. The judgment is announced; judgment is pronounced.

But, thank God, man is fallen, condemned, miserable, and helpless, but God intervenes! God comes into the wreckage. God visits man and calls him by name and addresses him. God, even at the moment of rebellion, tells man that he has a way to rescue him and to redeem him: "It [the seed of the woman] shall bruise thy [the serpent's] head" (Genesis 3:15). The serpent, the archenemy, the power with which we cannot deal, the god of this world who is too strong for us, can only be mastered by one, and he has come—the seed of the woman, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God. "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 3:16). Christ, the Son of God, came into this world, took on our human nature, entered into our very situation, and smote our enemy. He conquered the foe and can set us free. He received judgment for us. He bore our sins and their punishment in his own body on a cruel cross. God dealt with him there and pardons us, and our enemy is conquered. So the way to paradise is open, and it is open for you.

Your misery, all your problems, all your needs, arise from the fact of sin. They arise because you are in this terrible position face-to-face with God. That is the cause of all ill. And there is but one solution to the problem, the solution that God himself has provided in the person of his only begotten Son. "... that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And that life begins here and now—a knowledge of God, assurance that you are right with God, that God will bless you and smile upon you and give you what you need, that he will strengthen you and enable you to overcome your enemies, that he will take you through death

and announce in the judgment that you are already pardoned and forgiven, that he will say to you, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant . . . inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:21, 34).

My dear friend, that is your problem, and that is the answer to your problem. Believe it. Accept it here and now. Go to that great God, almighty beyond conception and understanding, who existed from eternity and who made all out of nothing. Cast yourself before him. Acknowledge your ignorant, arrogant sinning against him, and thank him for his eternal love in sending his only Son to rescue you and to redeem you by dying for you on Calvary's hill, and ask him to give you life anew. And he will. I say that on the authority of his only Son who stated, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). He cast out man in sin and rebellion. Go back to him in repentance, and he will not cast you out. He will receive you and bless you.