

Through the Bible

ROMANS I

Zac Poonen

Illustrations by Vinay Kuruvilla



COPYRIGHT ZAC POONEN AND VINAY KURUVILLA

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

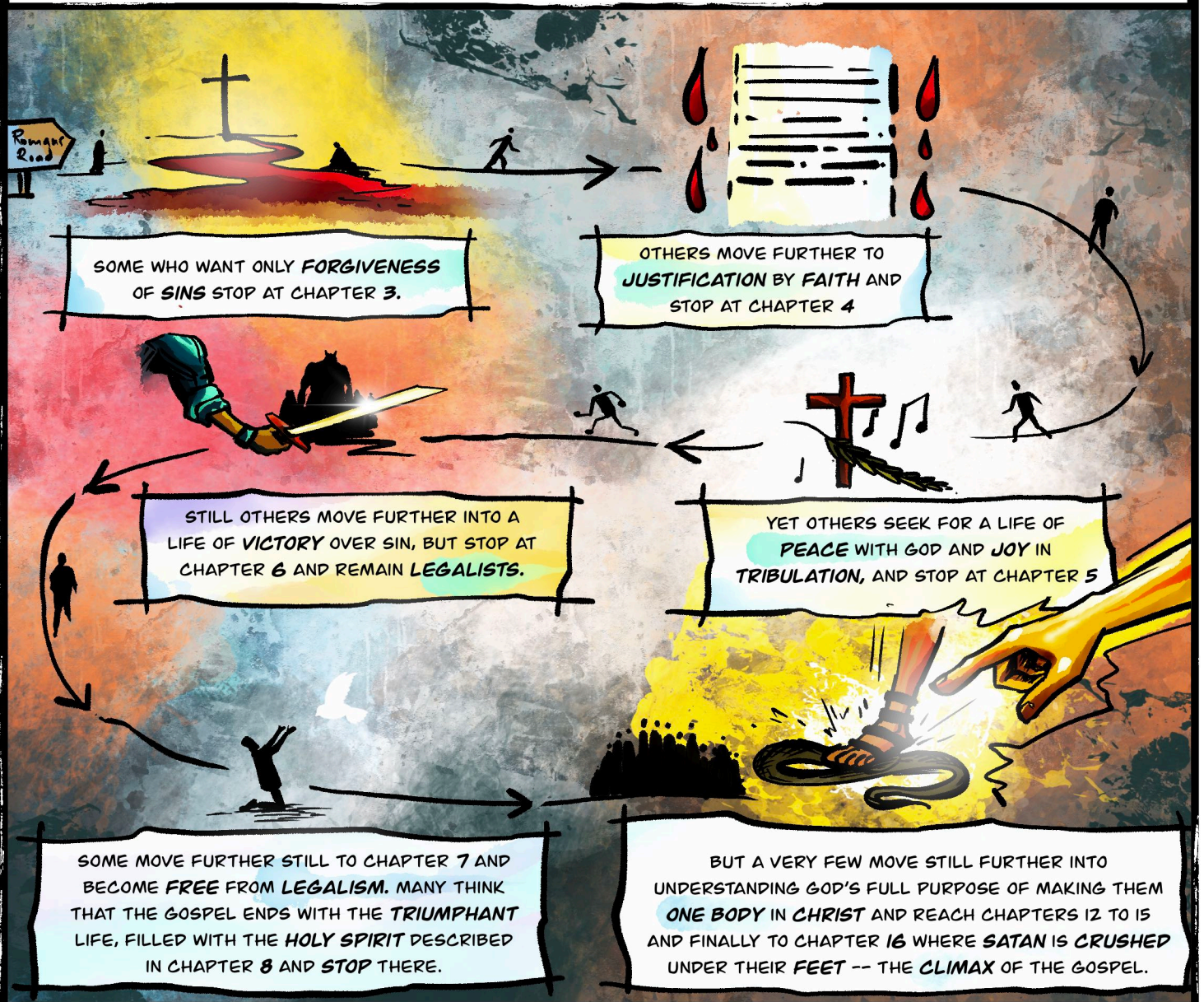
69, PARADISE ENCLAVE, BELAHALLI
KANNUR POST, BANGALORE - 562 149
INDIA

ROMANS



THE THEME OF *ROMANS* IS FOUND IN THE *FIRST* VERSE OF THIS LETTER: 'THE GOSPEL OF GOD.' THIS IS GOD'S GOOD NEWS THAT HE WANTS *EVERYONE* IN THE *WORLD* TO HEAR. AS WE GO THROUGH THIS BOOK, WE FIND *CHRISTIANS STOP AT DIFFERENT POINTS* ALONG THE WAY AND THAT *VERY FEW* REACH THE *ULTIMATE* GOAL THAT *GOD* HAS FOR THEM.

ROMANS IS THE MOST *ORDERLY, LOGICAL, STEP-BY-STEP* PRESENTATION OF THE GOSPEL FOUND ANYWHERE IN THE BIBLE. ALONG THIS WAY YOU CAN *STOP* AT WHICHEVER POINT YOU LIKE AND GO NO FURTHER.



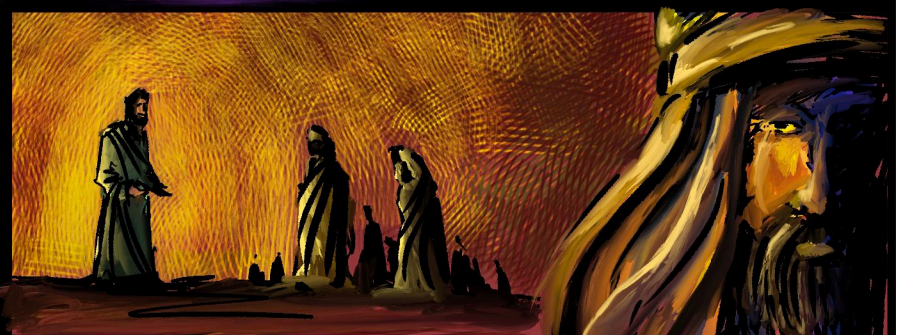


THE **GOOD NEWS** IN ROMANS IS FOR **SINNERS**. IT IS **NOT** FOR THOSE WHO **IMAGINE** THEMSELVES TO BE **RIGHTEOUS**. JESUS DID **NOT** COME TO CALL THE **RIGHTEOUS**, BUT **SINNERS** TO **REPENTANCE**. WE ARE ALL **SINNERS**. THAT IS WHAT PAUL SEEKS TO **ESTABLISH** IN THE FIRST **2 1/2** CHAPTERS. THERE ARE **TWO** TYPES OF **SINNERS** -- THE **GODLESS, WORLDLY** **SINNER** (DESCRIBED IN CHAPTER 1) AND THE **RELIGIOUS** **SINNER** WHO **IMAGINES** THAT HE IS **HOLY** (DESCRIBED IN CHAPTER 2).



JESUS PORTRAYED THESE **TWO** TYPES IN THE PARABLE OF THE **FATHER** WHO HAD **TWO** **SONS** (LUKE 15:11--32). THE **YOUNGER** **SON** THERE WAS **WORLDLY**, **WICKED**, **REBELLIOUS**, **GODLESS** AND **IMMORAL**. THE **ELDER** **SON**, HOWEVER, **THOUGHT** HE HAD DONE **NOTHING** **WRONG** AND THAT HE WAS **HOLY** AND **RIGHTEOUS**. IT WAS **DIFFICULT** FOR THE **ELDER** **SON** TO **RECOGNISE** THAT HE WAS A **SINNER**. IT IS **MORE** **DIFFICULT** FOR THOSE WHO HAVE GROWN UP IN **RELIGIOUS** **HOMES** TO **RECOGNISE** THAT THEY ARE **SINNERS**. "IT IS WITH **DIFFICULTY** THAT THE **RIGHTEOUS** IS **SAVED**" (1 PETER 4:18).

WHEN **JESUS** WAS ON **EARTH**, THE **PROSTITUTES** AND **THIEVES** EXPERIENCED **SALVATION** **EASILY**. BUT THE "**ELDER** **BROTHERS**" OF THAT TIME, THE **PHARISEES**, THE **SELF-RIGHTEOUS** **SINNERS**, **NEVER** CAME TO **JESUS** TO BE **SAVED**. JESUS TOLD THEM IN **MATTHEW** 21:31, THAT THE **GODLESS** **SINNER** WAS **MORE** **LIKELY** TO BE **SAVED** THAN THE **RELIGIOUS** **ONE**.





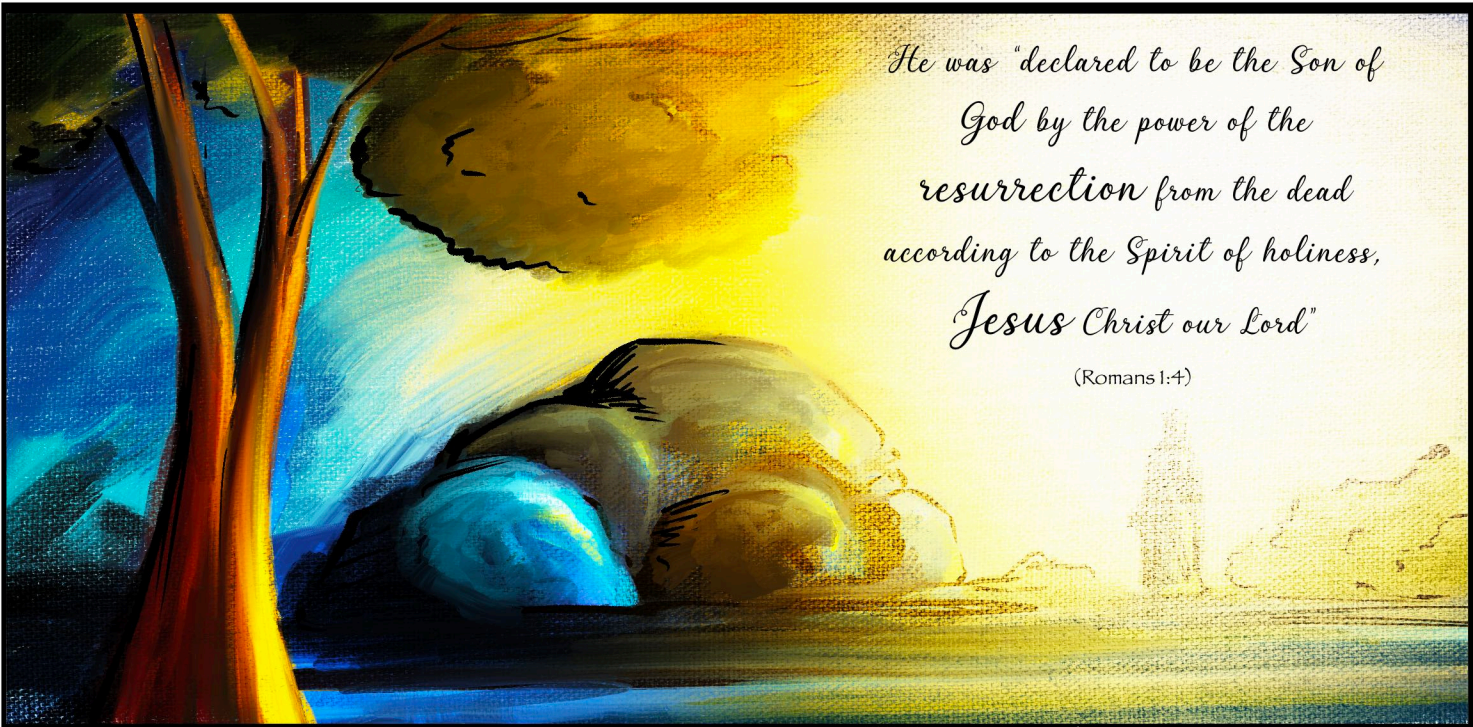
WE ARE TOLD IN 1:3 THAT THE GOSPEL OF GOD CONCERNS HIS SON WHO WAS BORN "OF THE SEED OF DAVID ACCORDING TO THE FLESH". THE HUMANITY OF JESUS IS STRESSED RIGHT AT THE BEGINNING OF ROMANS. JESUS WAS BORN THROUGH THE BODY OF MARY WHOSE ANCESTRY WENT BACK TO DAVID (LUKE 3:31). THE BODY OF JESUS WAS NOT CREATED FROM NOTHING INSIDE MARY'S WOMB. GOD COULD HAVE DONE THAT, BUT THEN JESUS WOULD NOT HAVE HAD THE PHYSICAL CONNECTION WITH ADAM'S RACE THAT WAS NECESSARY FOR HIM TO REDEEM US. JESUS WAS BORN WITH AN UMBILICAL CORD CONNECTED TO MARY. IT WAS ONLY THUS THAT HE COULD BRING US SALVATION AND BE AN EXAMPLE FOR US TO FOLLOW.



JUST BEFORE PAUL DIED, HE WROTE ONE LAST LETTER TO TIMOTHY AND THERE HE SAID, "CONSIDER WHAT I SAY, AND THE LORD WILL GIVE YOU UNDERSTANDING IN ALL THINGS. REMEMBER JESUS CHRIST WHO WAS BORN OF THE SEED OF DAVID AND RAISED FROM THE DEAD ACCORDING TO MY GOSPEL." (2 TIMOTHY 2:7, 8). PAUL ALWAYS THOUGHT OF THE GOSPEL AS BEING CONNECTED WITH JESUS CHRIST WHO LIVED ON EARTH AS A MAN.



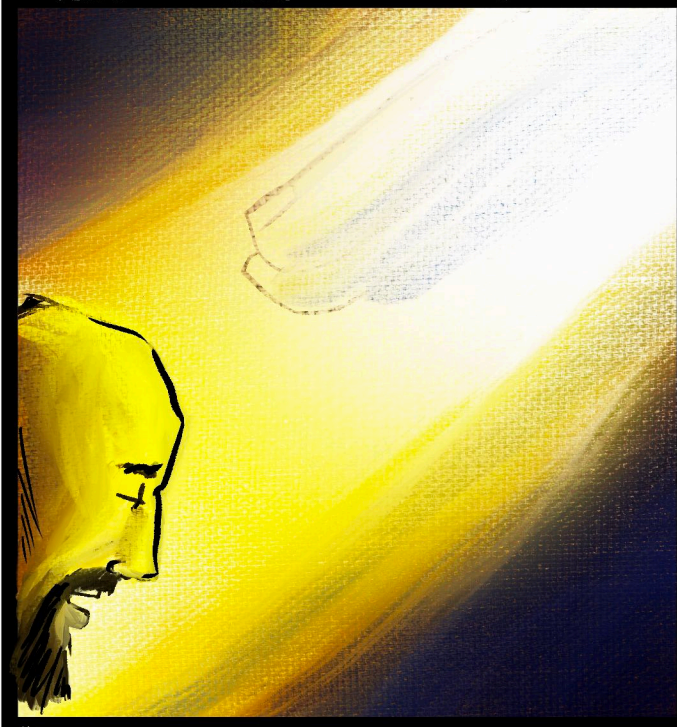
WHEN WE SEE THIS WONDERFUL TRUTH THAT JESUS "BECAME LIKE US IN ALL THINGS" AND "WAS TEMPTED LIKE US IN ALL POINTS AND YET DID NOT SIN" (HEBREWS 2:17; 4:15), IT WILL GIVE US A TOTALLY NEW UNDERSTANDING OF THE FULLNESS OF THE GOSPEL MESSAGE. THE GOSPEL IN ROMANS IS ABOUT BEING FREE FROM SIN. AND SO PAUL BEGINS WITH PRESENTING JESUS WHO NEVER SINNED -- AS A MAN.



He was "declared to be the Son of God by the power of the resurrection from the dead according to the Spirit of holiness, Jesus Christ our Lord"

(Romans 1:4)

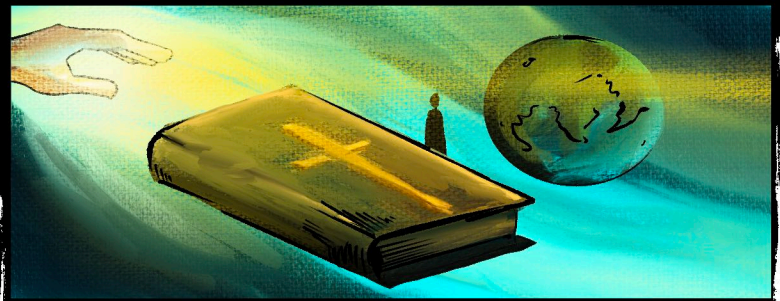
JESUS WAS OF THE SEED OF DAVID, BUT AT THE SAME TIME HE WAS (AND STILL IS) THE SECOND PERSON OF THE TRINITY -- THE SON OF GOD. GOD DEMONSTRATED TO THE WORLD THAT JESUS WAS THE SON OF GOD BY RAISING HIM FROM THE DEAD. HE WAS THE FIRST HUMAN BEING EVER TO RISE UP FROM THE DEAD, NEVER TO DIE AGAIN. ALL OTHERS WHO WERE RAISED FROM THE DEAD BEFORE HIM DIED AGAIN. GOD IS MAKING A NEW RACE FROM OUT OF THE OLD HUMAN RACE. THAT WORK HAS ALREADY BEGUN ON THE INSIDE OF MANY PEOPLE -- AND WILL BECOME MANIFEST EXTERNALLY AS WELL, ONE DAY.



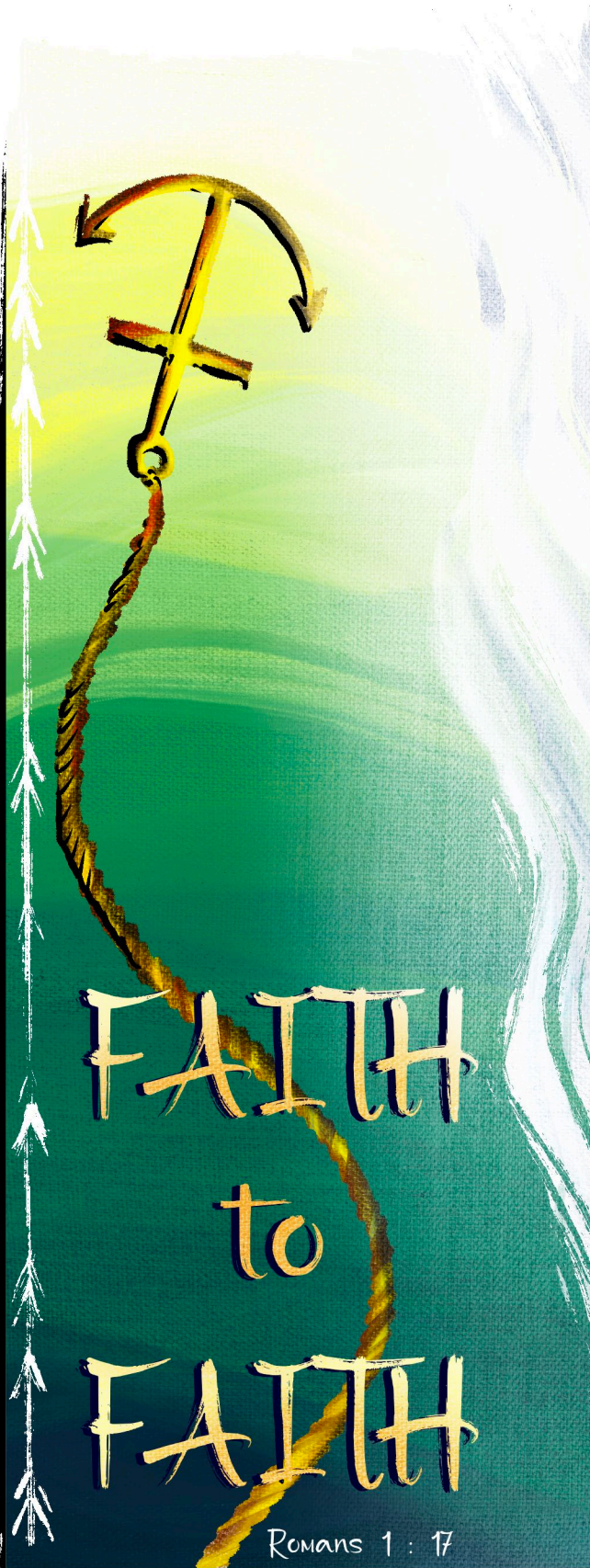
IN 1:5, PAUL SAYS THAT GOD HAS GIVEN HIM AN "APOSTLESHIP TO BRING ABOUT THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH AMONG ALL THE GENTILES FOR HIS NAME SAKE." ALL OF US ARE CALLED TO PROCLAIM THIS GOSPEL TO OTHERS. BUT GOD CALLS SOME (LESS THAN 1% OF BELIEVERS) TO DEVOTE ALL THEIR LIFE AND TIME TO PROCLAIM THIS GOSPEL. GOD CALLED ME WHEN I WAS 24 YEARS OLD TO SERVE HIM FULL-TIME - AND AS TIME HAS GONE ON, MY CALLING AS A SERVANT OF ALMIGHTY GOD HAS BECOME MORE AND MORE GLORIOUS IN MY EYES.



I HAVE HEARD SOME FULL-TIME CHRISTIAN WORKERS BOAST ABOUT THE SACRIFICES THEY HAVE MADE FOR THE LORD. SUCH PEOPLE HAVE NOT SEEN THE GLORY OF THEIR CALLING -- AND THAT IS WHY THEY THINK THEY HAVE SACRIFICED SOMETHING FOR THE LORD.



PAUL SAID, "I AM UNDER OBLIGATION.... I AM EAGER.... I AM NOT ASHAMED" (1:14--16). WHAT SORT OF A CHRISTIAN WOULD YOU BE IF YOU HAD BEEN GIVEN MONEY TO DISTRIBUTE TO EVERYONE IN YOUR TOWN AND YOU KEPT IT ALL YOURSELF. WOULDN'T IT BE RIGHT TO CALL YOU A THIEF? IT IS THE SAME WHEN WE DON'T SHARE THE GOOD NEWS OF THE GOSPEL WITH OTHERS.

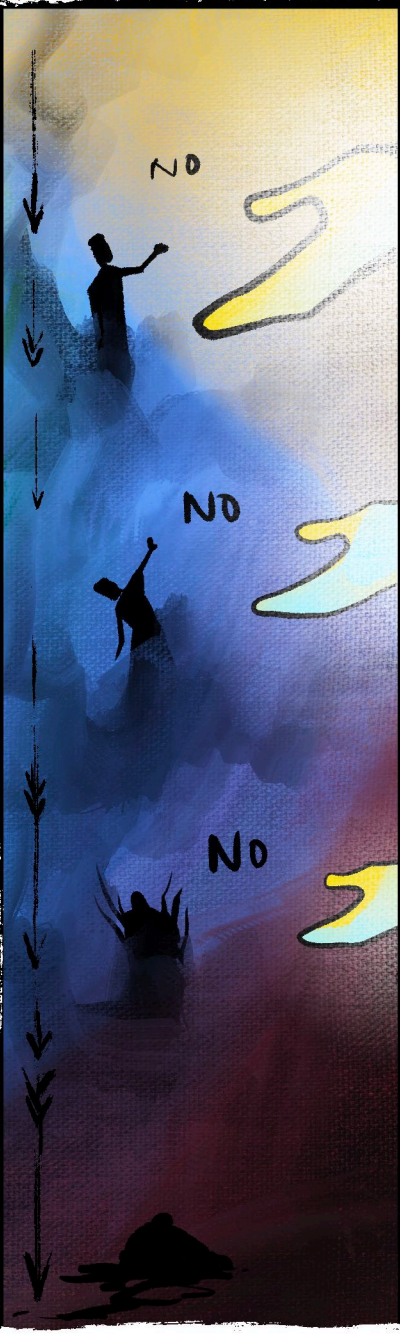


THE GOSPEL IS THE **POWER OF GOD** UNTO SALVATION -- NOT FOR EVERYONE BUT ONLY FOR THOSE WHO **BELIEVE** (1:16). YOU CAN EXPERIENCE THE POWER OF THIS GOSPEL ONLY IN THE **MEASURE** IN WHICH YOU **BELIEVE**. WE CAN **STOP** ANYWHERE ALONG THIS BOOK OR GO **ALL** THE WAY TO THE **END**. 'FAITH TO FAITH' (1:17) REFERS TO **LEVELS** OF FAITH. I WISH WE ALL HAVE **EAGERNESS** FOR **SPIRITUAL** THINGS, WHERE WE ARE **NEVER** SATISFIED WITH ANY **DEPTH** OF **KNOWING** GOD BUT WANT TO KNOW HIM EVEN MORE.

IN CHAPTER 1 WE SEE THAT SIN **BEGINS** WITH **UNTHANKFULNESS**, BUT IT **DOESN'T** END THERE. IT **PROGRESSES** **DOWNWARDS** TO SLANDERING, HATING GOD, **INSOLENCE**, **ARROGANCE**, **BOASTFULNESS**, **HARD-HEARTEDNESS** AND MANY OTHER THINGS LIKE THAT (1:29--31). **THRICE** IT SAYS HERE, "**GOD GAVE THEM UP**" (1:24, 26, 28). JUST AS THERE IS **GROWTH UPWARDS** "FROM FAITH TO FAITH", THERE IS ALSO A **DETERIORATION DOWNWARDS** "FROM EVIL TO EVIL". AND GOD GIVES UP ON A PERSON WHEN HE **REFUSES** TO **LISTEN** TO THE **CONVICTIONS** OF HIS **CONSCIENCE**.



GOD GIVES THEM UP TO VARIOUS **SEXUAL PERVERSIONS**, **WORSHIPPING** **CREATED** THINGS AND **NOT** THE **CREATOR**, ETC. AT ITS **ROOT**, EVERY SIN IS REALLY A **WORSHIP** OF **CREATED** THINGS **INSTEAD** OF THE **WORSHIP** OF **GOD**.

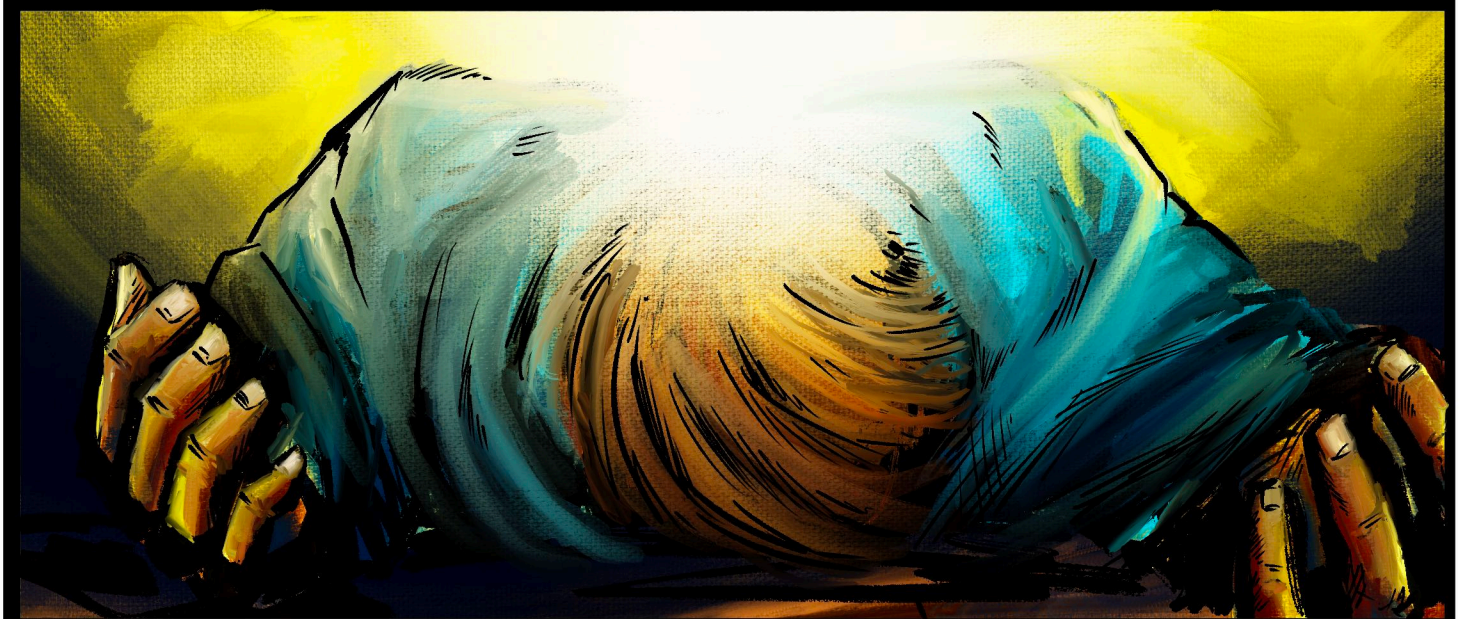


IN CHAPTER 2, PAUL GOES ON TO DESCRIBE THE **GUILT** OF THE **RELIGIOUS** MAN, WHO **JUDGES** THE **SINNERS** MENTIONED IN CHAPTER 1. "YOU WHO **PASS** **JUDGEMENT** ON OTHERS, DO YOU **JUDGE** **YOURSELF**, BECAUSE IN THE **THING** YOU **JUDGE** OTHER PEOPLE YOU **CONDEMN** **YOURSELF**?" (2:1).

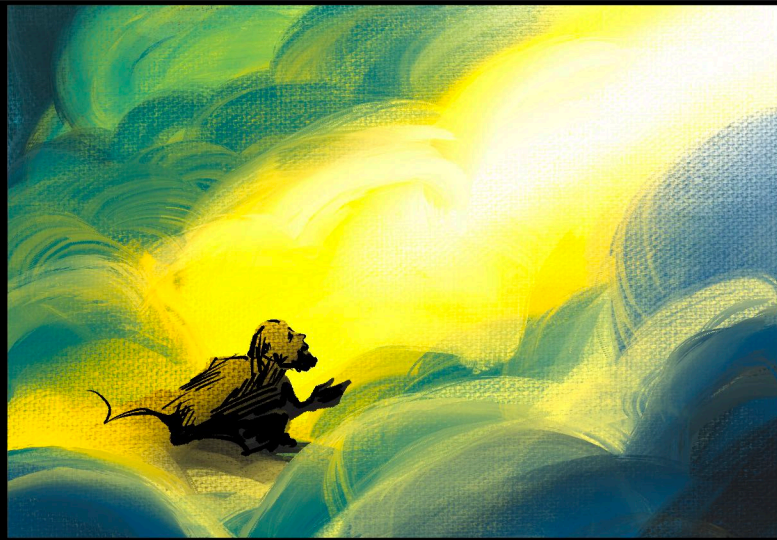


THIS WAS WHAT THE LORD TRIED TO **IMPRESS** UPON THE **PHARISEES**, "YOU HAVE CAUGHT THIS **WOMAN** IN **ADULTERY**. TELL ME, HOW MANY OF YOU HAVE **NOT** COMMITTED **ADULTERY** IN YOUR **HEART**? IF YOU HAVE **NOT** COMMITTED **ADULTERY** IN YOUR **HEART**, THROW A **STONE** AT THIS **WOMAN**" (JOHN 8:1--11). THEY **ALL** WENT AWAY FROM THE LORD BECAUSE **NOT ONE** OF THEM COULD STAND IN HIS PRESENCE -- IN THE **PRESENCE** OF **GOD'S LIGHT**. ONE SINS **OPENLY**, BUT THE OTHER, IN **SECRET**. **HYPOCRISY** AND **SPIRITUAL PRIDE** ARE AMONG THE **TOP TWO SINS** IN **GOD'S LIST** -- **ABOVE MURDER** AND **ADULTERY**.

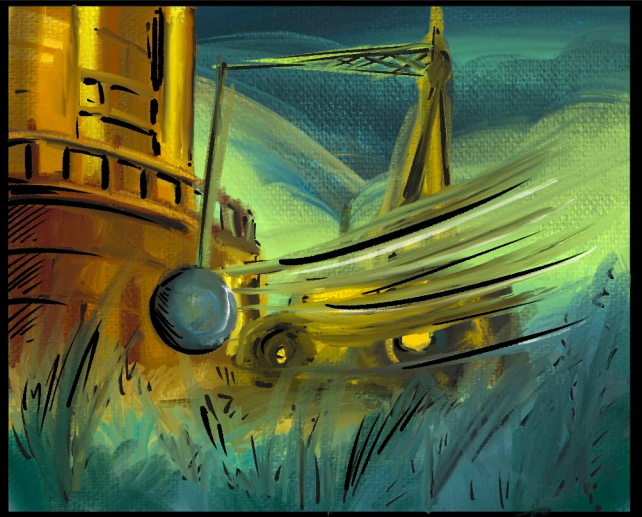
"WHAT SHALL WE SAY THEN? ARE WE BETTER THAN THEM? NOT AT ALL. ALL ARE UNDER **SIN**" (3:9). DO WE IMAGINE THAT WE SOUGHT AFTER **GOD**? IN 3:11 WE READ, "THERE IS **NO-ONE** WHO SEEKS AFTER **GOD**." IT IS HE WHO SEEKS AFTER US FIRST AND GIVES US THE DESIRE TO SEEK AFTER HIM. NONE OF US ARE BETTER THAN OR SUPERIOR TO ANY OTHER HUMAN BEING. ALL WE HAVE IS **100%** DUE TO **GOD'S GRACE** -- FROM **BEGINNING** TO **END**.



MANY BELIEVERS HAVE **NOT** UNDERSTOOD THE **GOSPEL PROPERLY** -- BECAUSE THEY LOOK **DOWN** ON OTHERS. ONE WHO HAS UNDERSTOOD THE FULL **GOSPEL** WILL **ALWAYS** KEEP HIS FACE IN THE **DUST**. MANY BELIEVERS, EVEN THOUGH THEY TALK ABOUT **GRACE**, HAVEN'T UNDERSTOOD WHAT **GRACE** IS. DEEP DOWN, THEY BELIEVE THEY HAVE DONE **SOMETHING** FOR THEIR **SALVATION**. IF YOU WANT TO EXPERIENCE THE FULL **GOSPEL**, YOU MUST FIRST **ACKNOWLEDGE** THIS: "LORD, I AM **NOT** **RIGHTEOUS**. I **DON'T** UNDERSTAND ANYTHING OF **SPIRITUAL TRUTH**. I HAVE **NEVER** SOUGHT AFTER YOU ON MY **OWN**. I HAVE **TURNT** ASIDE FROM YOUR WAY AND BECOME **USELESS**. I HAVE **NEVER** DONE ANY **GOOD** IN MY LIFE. MY **THROAT** IS AN **OPEN GRAVE**. MY MOUTH IS FULL OF **CURSING** AND **BITTERNESS**. I DO **NOT** KNOW THE **PATHWAY** OF **PEACE**" (3:10--18).



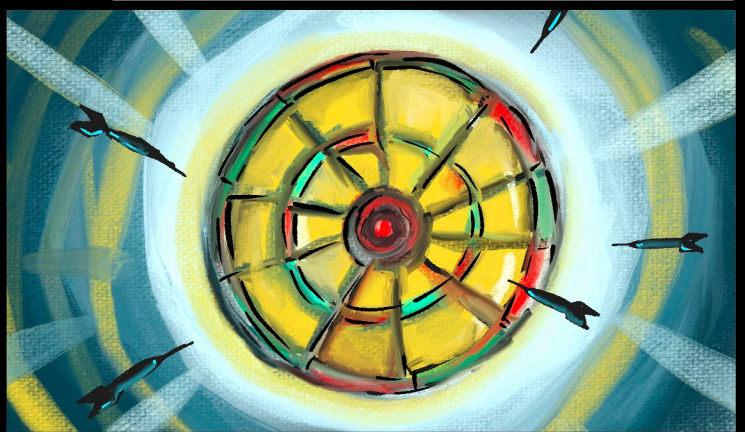
PAUL WAS ONE OF THE **HOLIEST** MEN ON EARTH IN HIS TIME.. BUT YET HE **SAW HIMSELF** AS "THE **CHIEF OF SINNERS**" (1 TIMOTHY 1:15). THIS WAS BECAUSE HE HAD SEEN THE **HOLINESS OF GOD**. IF WE HAVE NEVER FELT LIKE THAT EVEN ONCE, WE SHOULD SERIOUSLY **QUESTION** WHETHER WE HAVE **KNOWN GOD** AT ALL. WE MAY HAVE KNOWN ONLY **CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE** AND **NOT GOD** HIMSELF.



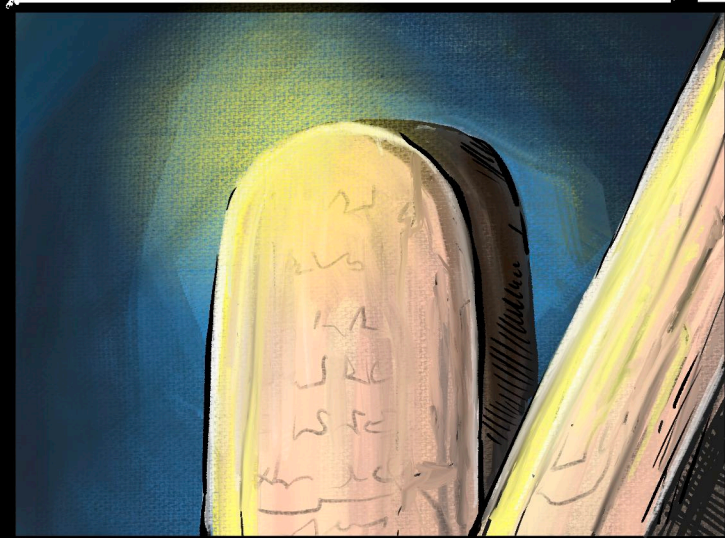
ONE WHO HAS **NO RIGHTEOUSNESS** OF HIS OWN TO **GLORY** IN, IS LIKE AN **EMPTY PLOT OF GROUND**. BUT ONE WHO HAS COME FROM A **GODLY HOME** AND WHO HAS LIVED A **GOOD LIFE** BEFORE HIS CONVERSION, HAS SO MUCH OF **PRIDE** IN HIS OWN **RIGHTEOUSNESS** TO BE **DEMOLISHED**, BEFORE THE **LORD** CAN **BUILD** ANYTHING **WORTHWHILE** IN HIS LIFE.



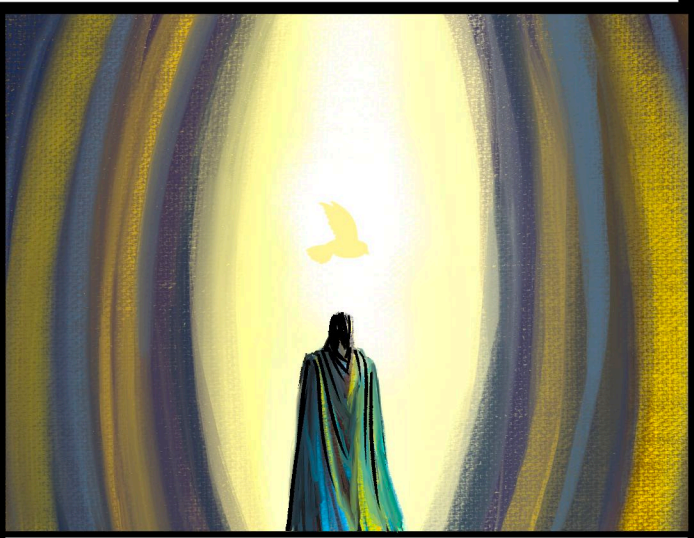
WITH **SELF-RIGHTEOUS** PEOPLE, WE HAVE TO USE A **BULLDOZER** AND **DYNAMITE** TO BLOW UP THEIR **PRIDE** -- AND THAT CAN TAKE A LONG TIME. MANY BELIEVERS **RESIST** THIS WORK OF **DEMOLITION**, AND THEREFORE **MUCH** OF THEIR **OLD BUILDING** REMAINS -- AND THEY HAVE **SPIRITUAL PROBLEMS** ALL THEIR LIVES.



THE **FINAL CONCLUSION** IS IN 3:23: "**ALL HAVE SINNED** AND COME **SHORT** OF THE **GLORY OF GOD**." **GODLESS SINNERS** AND **RELIGIOUS SINNERS** ARE BOTH **EQUALLY GUILTY**. **NEITHER** IS BETTER OR WORSE THAN THE **OTHER**



SIN IS **NOT** JUST BREAKING THE **TEN COMMANDMENTS**, NOR EVEN COMING **SHORT** OF THE **STANDARD JESUS** LAID DOWN IN THE **SERMON ON THE MOUNT** (MATTHEW 5 TO 7). IT IS **MORE** THAN THESE. IT IS COMING **SHORT** OF THE **GLORY OF GOD**.



WHAT IS THE **GLORY OF GOD**? "THE **WORD** BECAME **FLESH**, AND WE SAW HIS **GLORY**...FULL OF **GRACE** AND **TRUTH**" (JOHN 1:14). THE **GLORY OF GOD** WAS SEEN IN THE **LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST**. SIN IS ANYTHING **UNLIKE** CHRIST.



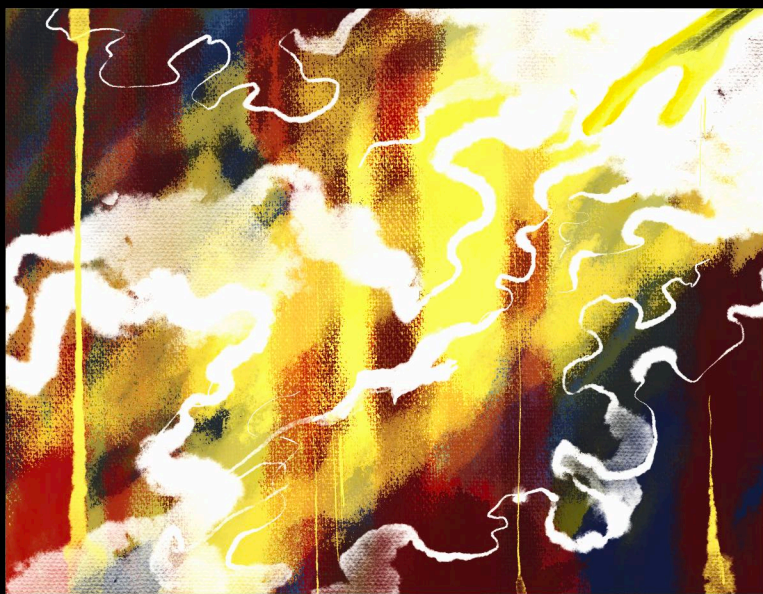
IT IS THOSE WHO LOWER THEIR DEFINITION OF SIN WHO IMAGINE THAT THEY ARE TOTALLY FREE FROM SIN. PASS-MARKS IN GOD'S KINGDOM IS NOT 40% BUT 100%. ANYTHING LESS THAN TOTAL LIKENESS TO CHRIST IS SIN. MANY BELIEVERS FEEL THAT THEY WERE NOT AS BAD SINNERS AS SOME OTHERS. BUT THAT WOULD BE LIKE A STUDENT WHO GOT 2% IN AN EXAMINATION CONSIDERING HIMSELF BETTER THAN ANOTHER STUDENT WHO GOT 1%. BUT BOTH OF THEM FAILED! EVEN IF YOU MANAGED TO GET 99% IN GOD'S KINGDOM, YOU WOULD BE IN THE SAME CLASS AS THE ONE WHO GOT ZERO. "THE PERSON WHO KEEPS EVERY LAW OF GOD BUT MAKES ONE LITTLE SLIP IS JUST AS GUILTY AS THE PERSON WHO HAS BROKEN EVERY LAW THERE IS" (JAMES 2:10).



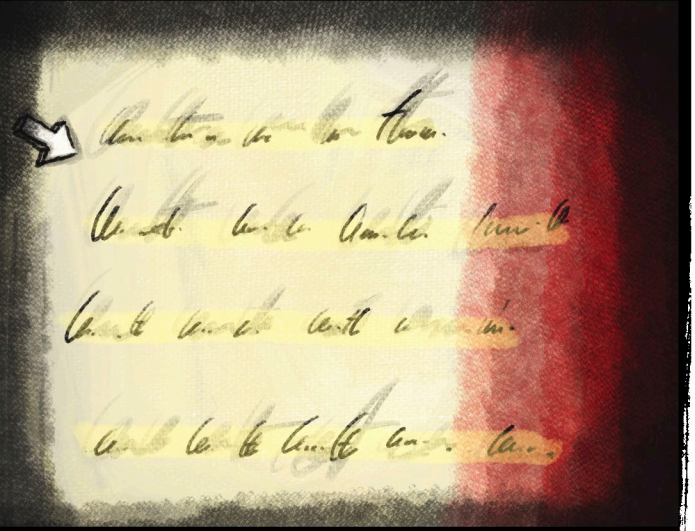
MANY PEOPLE AVOID SIN, FEARING THE PUNISHMENT THEY WILL GET. BUT WHEN GOD SEES PEOPLE SIN, HE THINKS OF THE GLORY THEY ARE MISSING. THERE IS A GLORY THAT YOU WILL MISS THROUGHOUT ETERNITY IF YOU TOLERATE ANY SIN IN YOUR LIFE. THE MEASURE IN WHICH YOU TOLERATE SIN IN YOUR LIFE WILL BE THE MEASURE OF THE GLORY THAT YOU WILL MISS.

THE SECOND PART OF THE GOSPEL IS TO RECOGNISE THAT EVERYTHING WE RECEIVE FROM GOD IS A FREE GIFT.

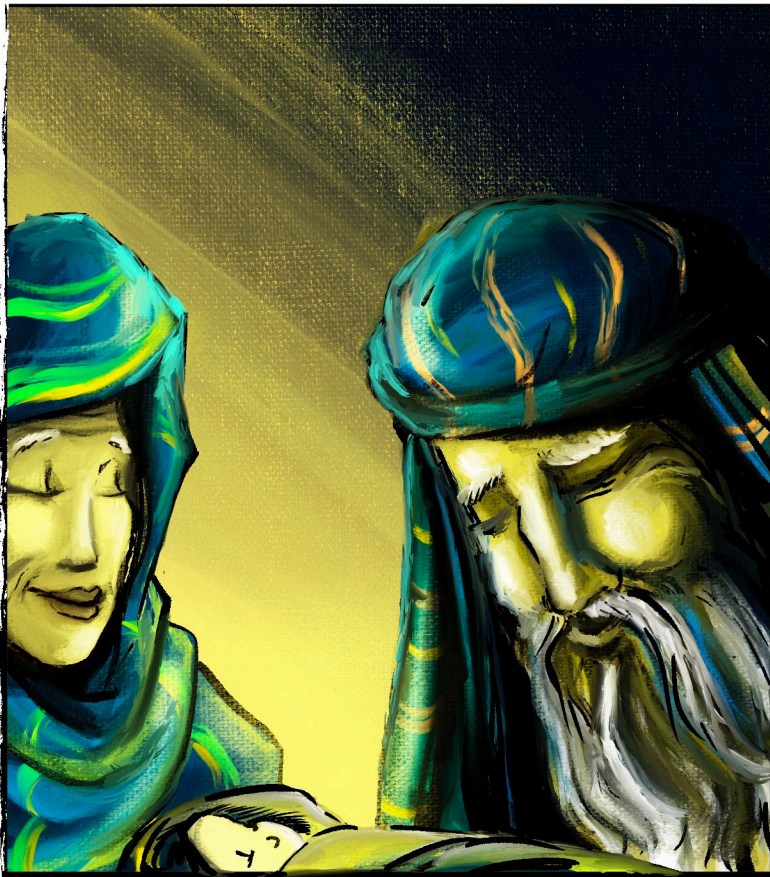
CHAPTER 4 IS ABOUT JUSTIFICATION.



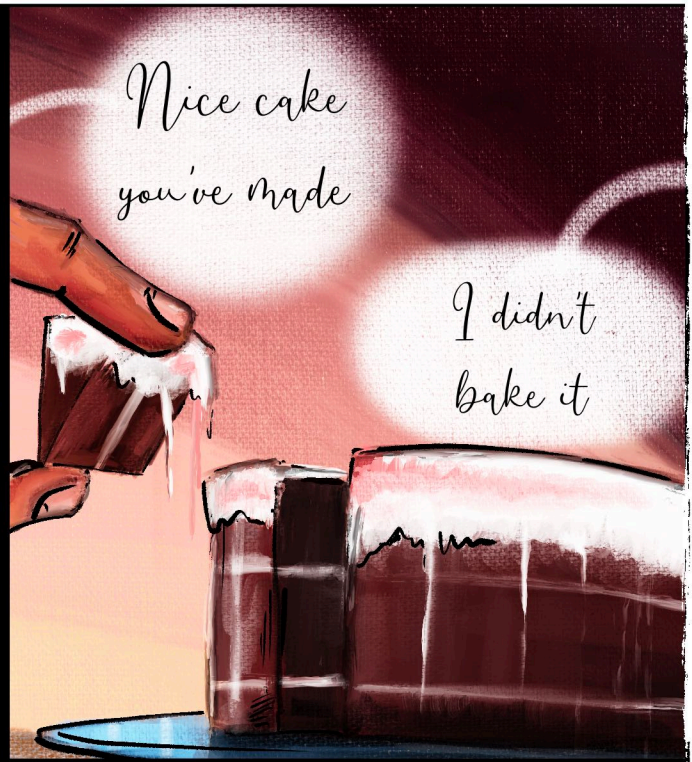
WE CANNOT MAKE OURSELVES RIGHTEOUS. SO GOD JUSTIFIES US FREELY (3:24). OUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN FREELY THROUGH THE BLOOD OF CHRIST (3:25). WE ARE JUSTIFIED FREELY. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS GIVEN TO US FREELY. AND GOD WRITES HIS LAWS UPON OUR HEART AND MIND FREELY TOO (HEBREWS 8:10).



LIKE A DOCUMENT ON THE COMPUTER, OUR LIVES ARE FULL OF JAGGED EDGES CAUSED BY SIN. EVERY LINE WE WROTE WITH OUR LIVES FROM THE DAY WE WERE BORN ENDED WITH A JAGGED EDGE. WHEN WE ACCEPT CHRIST, GOD HIGHLIGHTS OUR WHOLE LIFE AND DECLARES 'JUSTIFIED', LIKE YOU WOULD DO IN A COMPUTER! IT IS "JUST AS IF I'D" NEVER SINNED. THAT'S HOW GOD LOOKS AT US, WHEN WE ARE IN CHRIST.



JUSTIFICATION IS BY **FAITH**. HENCE PAUL USES THE EXAMPLE OF **ABRAHAM** BEING **JUSTIFIED** IN CHAPTER 4. **HOW** DID ABRAHAM GET A SON? DID HE **DESERVE** IT? WAS IT BECAUSE HE **STRUGGLED**? NO. HE HAD SOUGHT FOR **SO MANY YEARS** TO HAVE A SON AND HE **COULD NOT** HAVE ONE. HE **FINALLY** GOT A SON AS A **SHEER GIFT** FROM **GOD**. **JUSTIFICATION** IS EXACTLY LIKE THAT -- IT IS A **FREE GIFT** FROM **GOD**.

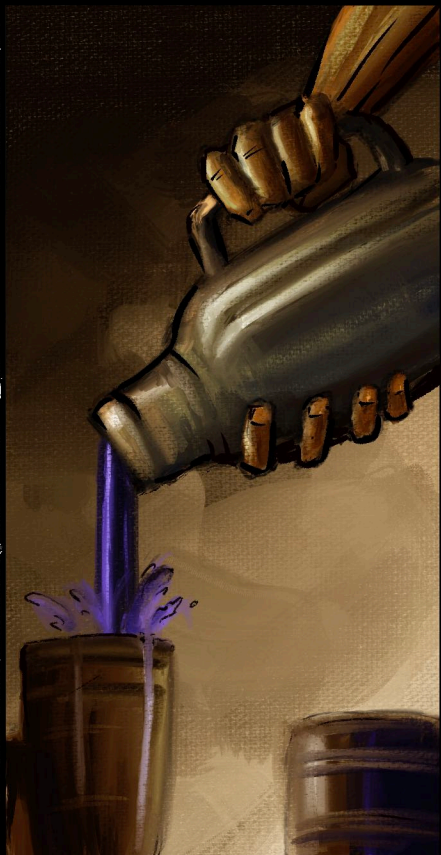


Nice cake
you've made

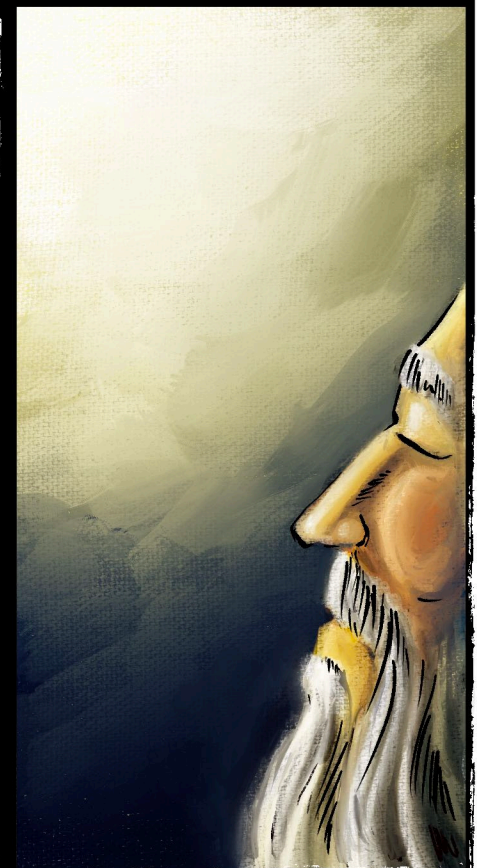
I didn't
bake it

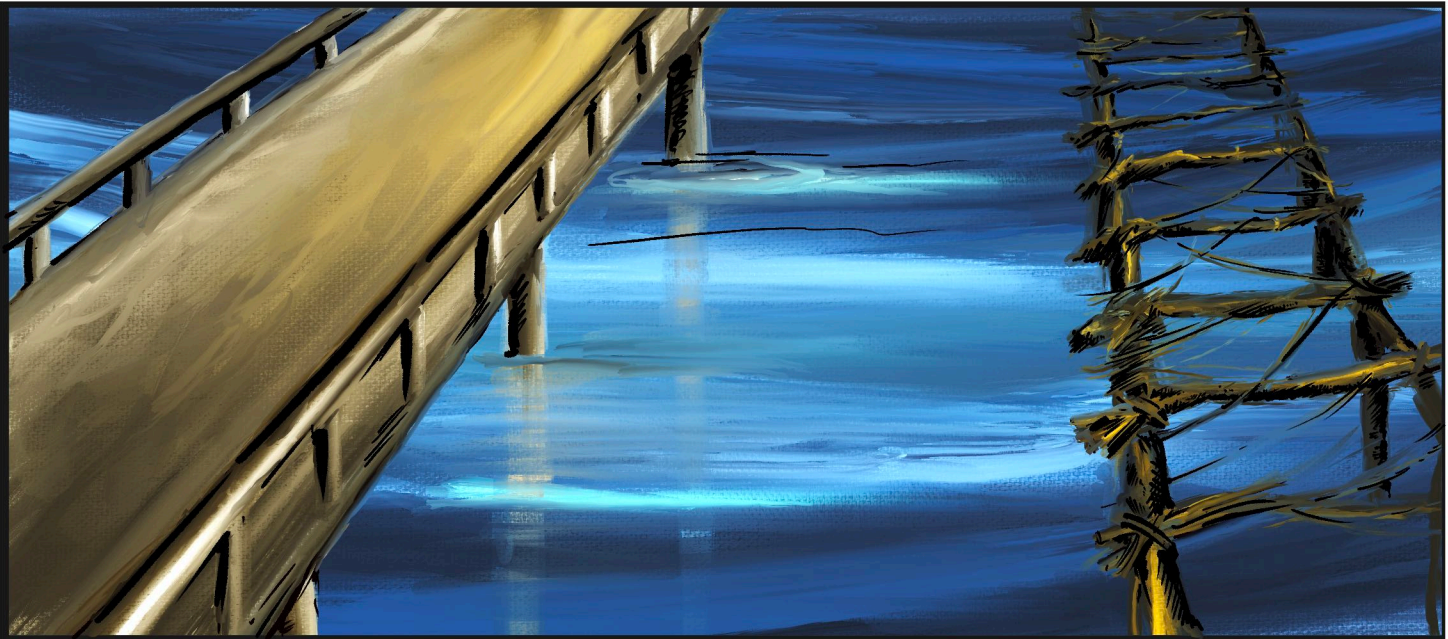
SUPPOSE I WERE TO BRING A **CAKE** IN HERE, BAKED BY AN **EXCELLENT COOK**. I **DIDN'T** BUY IT. I WAS GIVEN IT AND **ASKED** TO **DISTRIBUTE** IT TO EVERYONE HERE. SO I CUT IT AND PASS IT AROUND. YOU EAT IT, AND YOU SAY, "BROTHER ZAC, THIS IS A **FANTASTIC CAKE**." I CANNOT EVEN BE **TEMPTED** TO **PRIDE** ON HEARING **YOUR REMARKS** -- BECAUSE I **DIDN'T BAKE** THE CAKE. IF I **HAD BAKED** IT AND YOU HAD **EXPRESSED** YOUR APPRECIATION, THEN I WOULD BE **TEMPTED** TO FEEL **PROUD**. IF MY **HOLINESS** WAS **GIVEN** TO ME BY **GOD**, I **COULD NOT POSSIBLY** BE **PROUD** OF IT -- EVEN IF PEOPLE **PRaised** ME FOR IT.

DO YOU THINK THE **SERVANTS OF CANA** WERE **PROUD** WHEN THEY SERVED THE **NEW WINE** THAT JESUS HAD MADE (JOHN 2:1-12)? THEY WOULD HAVE **HUMBLY ACKNOWLEDGED**, "WE **DIDN'T** MAKE THIS. WE ARE JUST **DISTRIBUTING** IT." THEY WERE NOT IN THE **PRODUCTION BUSINESS**, BUT IN THE **DISTRIBUTION BUSINESS**. **PRAISE** THE **LORD** THAT THAT IS TRUE FOR US TOO. WE ARE NOT CALLED TO BE **PRODUCERS** OF ANYTHING, BUT **HUMBLE DISTRIBUTORS** OF WHAT HE HAS **GIVEN** US.



CHAPTER 4:21 SAYS ABOUT **ABRAHAM** THAT HE WAS **FULLY CONVINCED** AND **ASSURED** THAT WHAT **GOD** HAD **PROMISED** HE WOULD PERFORM. **ABRAHAM** DID **NOT** **LOOK INSIDE HIMSELF** TO SEE IF HE HAD ENOUGH **FAITH** TO HAVE A SON. NOT AT ALL. **FAITH** IS ALWAYS **UPWARD-LOOKING** -- AT **GOD**. WE ARE TOLD TO "LOOK UNTO **JESUS**, THE **AUTHOR** AND **FINISHER** OF OUR **FAITH**" (HEBREWS 12:2).





THE **OBJECT** OF OUR FAITH IS NEVER FOUND **INSIDE** US. IT IS WHAT WE LOOK AT **OUTSIDE** US THAT **DETERMINES** WHETHER OUR FAITH IS **STRONG** OR **WEAK**. CONSIDER THIS: IF YOU ARE ASKED TO **WALK** ACROSS A RIVER OVER A **STRONG CONCRETE BRIDGE**, YOUR FAITH WILL BE **STRONG** TO WALK OVER IT!

BUT IF YOU ARE ASKED TO **CROSS** THE **SAME** RIVER OVER A **RICKETY, WEAK BAMBOO BRIDGE**, YOU WILL HAVE **NO FAITH** AT ALL!



THE SAME GOD WHO **FORGAVE** OUR SINS **JUSTIFIES** US AS WELL. HE **IMPUTES** THE **RIGHTEOUSNESS** OF **CHRIST** TO US. IT SAYS ABOUT **ABRAHAM** THAT HIS FAITH "WAS **RECKONED** TO HIM AS **RIGHTEOUSNESS**" (VERSE 22). THE **RIGHTEOUSNESS** OF **CHRIST** IS PUT TO **OUR ACCOUNT** BY **GOD**, **APART** FROM ANY **WORKS** WE HAVE DONE TO **MERIT** IT (VERSE 6). IF MY **FATHER** WERE TO PUT SOME **MONEY** INTO MY **BANK ACCOUNT** AS A **GIFT**, I **CAN'T** SAY I DID ANY **WORK** FOR IT. IF I SAID **DON'T BELIEVE** IT WHEN I AM TOLD THIS, IT WOULD BE A **GREAT INSULT** TO MY **FATHER**, IF HE WERE A **THOROUGHLY TRUSTWORTHY PERSON**. THIS IS WHY **UNBELIEF** IS SUCH A **SERIOUS SIN** IN THE **NEW TESTAMENT**.



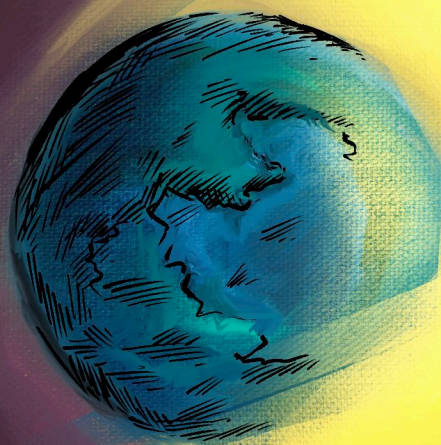
WE CAN ALSO **MISS** A LOT THAT **GOD** HAS FOR US IF WE **DON'T BELIEVE** HIS WORD. IT SAYS IN **MATTHEW 13:58** THAT **JESUS** **COULD NOT** DO MANY **MIGHTY WORKS** FOR PEOPLE IN ONE PLACE, BECAUSE OF THEIR **UNBELIEF**. THEY NEEDED **HELP** -- AND **JESUS** ALSO **WANTED** TO **HELP** THEM. BUT HE **STILL COULD NOT** HELP THEM, BECAUSE THEY WOULD **NOT TRUST** HIM.

Through one man *sin*
entered into the world

Rom 5:12

through one Man, *Jesus*
Christ, *grace* abounded to many

Rom 5:15



WHEN WE COME TO CHAPTER 5, WE SEE THE **BLESSINGS OF JUSTIFICATION**. MANY TIMES HERE, A **CONTRAST** IS DRAWN BETWEEN WHAT WE RECEIVED THROUGH ADAM AND WHAT WE RECEIVE THROUGH **CHRIST**. IN ADAM WE DIED. IN **CHRIST** WE CAN BE MADE ALIVE. AS **COMPLETE** AND **TOTAL** AS THE INHERITANCE WAS THAT WE RECEIVED FROM ADAM, **EQUALLY COMPLETE** AND **TOTAL** CAN THE INHERITANCE BE THAT WE RECEIVE FROM **CHRIST**.



CHRIST WILL GIVE US HIS NATURE **COMPLETELY** TOO -- IN THE **MEASURE** IN WHICH WE OPEN OURSELVES TO HIM. THE **CHRISTIAN** LIFE IS A LIFE OF **FAITH** -- OF **DEPENDENCE** ON **GOD**. THIS IS THE **MESSAGE** OF THE **NEW TESTAMENT**.



HOLINESS DOES **NOT** COME THROUGH **STRIVING** AND **ATTAINING**. THERE CERTAINLY IS **STRIVING** IN THE **CHRISTIAN** LIFE, AND THERE IS "PUTTING **LUSTS** TO **DEATH**" IN THE **CHRISTIAN** LIFE TOO. BUT THEY ARE THE **RESULT** OF **PARTAKING** OF **GOD'S** NATURE AND **NOT** THE **MEANS** TO HAVE **GOD'S** NATURE. IF WE IMAGINE THAT WE CAN **PRODUCE** THE **DIVINE** NATURE WE **MUST** BE **CRAZY**.