

AS I SEE IT

(A world view)



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I'm a follower of Jesus Christ, a Christian, and I trust what the Bible tells me.

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As I see it, we're all looking for security and fulfilment. Sadly though, most of us look for security and fulfilment in things and places that just can't provide them; and all the while God offers security and fulfilment to us for free.¹ About 2,000 years ago God took on human form, entered our history and lived and died as the man Jesus Christ. Since then millions of his followers, Christians, have started living lives of eternal security and fulfilment.² This is because they've come to trust in and rely on this Jesus' sacrificial death in their place as the only way, according to God, to be right with God.³ This trust and reliance is also called 'faith'.

For whatever reason, there have always been those trying to convince us, despite the very real security and fulfilment it's brought to millions of his followers, that trusting in Jesus is futile. Many have urged trust in more rational, less 'supernatural' things. They'd have us forego that very real fulfilment, and instead put our faith in human reason and ability as the answer to everything.⁴

Perhaps because faith in human reason and ability hasn't provided much security or fulfilment for anybody, many self-styled, self-centred 'progressives' nowadays are trying to compel the rest of us to move away even from that; and further away from the very real security and fulfilment that comes from trusting in Jesus. They're trying to compel us all to enter a fantasy. In their fantasy, trusting in their feelings and the ideologies they've developed from their feelings is the path to security and fulfilment;⁵ if not for everybody, at least for them.

¹ **1) Romans 6:23** ". . . the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." **2) John 10:10:** (*Jesus speaking*) ". . . I have come so that they may have life and have it in abundance."

² **John 3:36** "The one who believes in the Son has eternal life, but the one who refuses to believe in the Son will not see life; instead, the wrath of God remains on him."

³ **John 14:6** Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

⁴ **Deuteronomy 8:17-18** "You may say to yourself, 'My power and my own ability have gained this wealth for me,' but remember that the Lord your God gives you the power to gain wealth . . ."

⁵ **2 Timothy 4:3 (NASB)** "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires."

Some of the tools they've used to great effect are counterfeit science, misuse of words, and a toxic variety of political correctness.

With their counterfeit science, even when true scientific evidence and objective truth do get to play a part in establishing what they peddle as 'scientific' findings, it's with far less weight than their dogma.

They abuse noble words such as tolerance, equality, love, truth, and even science, by using them as if they have one over-riding, common meaning: unconditional affirmation and unquestioning endorsement of what they want; and they brand anything else as bigotry based on personal hatred of them.

Their disciples and propagandists, like Daleks in Dr Who, automatically use their toxic political correctness to try and exterminate the discussing, even the airing, of any evidence other than that which supports their dogma. Common methods are:

- falsely and deceitfully to brand such evidence as harmful or hateful; or as encouraging and endorsing violence against people in one of their favoured self-interest groups,
- to claim it denies science and/or truth; when what's really happening is that their counterfeit science and counterfeit truths are being challenged, or
- even to say that the airing of such evidence might infringe on their imagined 'basic human right' not to be offended.

Major casualties are freedom of expression, and the open, intelligent discussion of world views and ideas; especially ideas about God. Unless, of course, they're ideas that support their dogma; ideas like: god is a figment of imagination, or god is whatever weak-minded individuals who need such a concept concoct him / her / it up to be in their minds, or god is not an objective reality.

It's a convenient and appealing proposition for some,⁶ but to me it just doesn't make sense. When I ponder nature and the universe without God as an objective reality, the hopeless fantasy I'm left with is that me and the universe I live in are just some random effect of the big bang; a collection of atoms brought together by chance. We're an accident.

But, if we're just an accident, then:

- Our existence has no meaning, no reason and no purpose
- Our ethics, our rights and our ideas about right and wrong, good and evil have been dreamed up by accidental collections of atoms that bring about our thought processes
- They have no power or authority; they just help us feel good about ourselves and give us a way to justify our own behaviour – or condemn that of others.

Then, on top of this, I have to accept that our natural, inevitable and hopeless destiny, as the universe tears itself apart, is destruction.

On the other hand, I can give this fantasy a miss and look at realities: the reality of the order that prevails in nature and the universe, and the order that makes science and scientific conclusions possible; along with the reality that it's just not natural for order to be produced from random explosions or big bangs.

When I do that, the 'accidental collection of atoms' fantasy looks more and more unnatural, implausible and absurd. It makes far more sense to accept, even if it's just as a possibility, that the God who reveals himself to us in the Christian Bible is a reality. And once I do that, I find there's a reason our natural destiny is what it is and that there actually is hope.

- The **reason** our natural destiny is destruction is that, in one way or another we all reject, ignore or disobey God.⁷

⁶ **1) Psalm 10:4** "In all his scheming, the wicked arrogantly thinks: 'There is no accountability, since God does not exist'." – **2) Psalm 14:1** "The fool says in his heart, 'God does not exist'." – **3) Psalm 53:1** "The fool says in his heart, 'God does not exist'."

⁷ **2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 (NIV)** "He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might".

- The **hope** that we have is that God is offering all of us fulfilling, abundant, everlasting life.⁸

You see, the Bible, God's written word to mankind, confirms to us that God is real; a unique and absolutely real identity who transcends nature, time and space⁹ and who exists as a single God in three persons: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.¹⁰ We also read that God has absolute power and authority; that he's perfectly just and deeply loving and caring and that he created and sustains the world, the universe and everything in them¹¹. We learn that God created us, mankind, to be like him: with our own minds and wills and the ability to assess consequences and make our own decisions; and that he created us to run the world¹² in obedience to him.¹³

⁸ **1) John 3:16** "For God loved the world in this way: He gave His One and Only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life." – **2) John 3:36**: "The one who believes in the Son has eternal life, but the one who refuses to believe in the Son will not see life; instead, the wrath of God remains on him."

⁹ **Genesis 1:1-2** "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness covered the surface of the watery depths, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters."

¹⁰ **1) Genesis 1:26** "Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness. They will rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the livestock, all the earth, and the creatures that crawl on the earth." – **2) Matthew 28:19** ". . . in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit". – **3) John 10:30-31** (Jesus speaking) "'The Father and I are one.' Again the Jews picked up rocks to stone Him."

¹¹ **Acts 17:24-28** "The God who made the world and everything in it — He is Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in shrines made by hands. Neither is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives everyone life and breath and all things. From one man He has made every nationality to live over the whole earth and has determined their appointed times and the boundaries of where they live. He did this so they might seek God, and perhaps they might reach out and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us. For in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring.'"

¹² **Genesis 1:27-28** "So, God created man in His own image; He created him in the image of God; He created them male and female. God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and every creature that crawls on the earth'."

¹³ **Genesis 2:16-17** "And the Lord God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree of the garden, but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for on the day you eat from it, you will certainly die'."

But we all reject God. We decide for ourselves what's good and what's not. We know that obedience means submission and we've decided that any kind of submission – even submission to God – is somehow bad. On top of that and despite all the evidence, we've also decided we know best how to run the world and live our own lives. So, we all reject, ignore or disobey God in some way. We live as if we don't need God; we remove ourselves from the protection of God's power. It's that attitude and its outworking that the Bible calls 'sin'. And the Bible says we all do it; we're all sinners.¹⁴ It also tells us that the consequences of being a sinner aren't good.

God has set a day when we'll each be called to account¹⁵ for having rejected, ignored or disobeyed him. Unless he forgives us for this sin we'll be condemned to eternally ongoing destruction, separated from everything we might consider, even remotely, as being good.¹⁶ It's natural. Without God's forgiveness it's inevitable. On our own there's nothing we can do about it. It'll be just as if God didn't exist. Sin is all bad news and presents us with a problem only God can sort out.

But, unlike the hopeless, Godless 'accidental collection of atoms' fantasy scenario, which is all bad news, the 'God is a reality' scenario has good news along with the bad. The good news is that it's all part of God's eternal plan; a plan which has included from the beginning a strategy to sort out this sin problem.¹⁷ Just as this plan called for, God, God the Son, took on human form around 2,000 years ago and lived as the man Jesus. Jesus lived a human life in which he never once rejected, ignored or disobeyed God. It was a human life lived without sin.

¹⁴ **1) Ecclesiastes 7:20** "There is certainly no righteous man on the earth who does good and never sins". – **2) Romans 3:23** "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God".

¹⁵ **Acts 17:31** ". . . because He has set a day when He is going to judge the world in righteousness by the Man He has appointed. He has provided proof of this to everyone by raising Him from the dead."

¹⁶ **2 Thessalonians 1:8-9** ". . . taking vengeance with flaming fire on those who don't know God and on those who don't obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction from the Lord's presence and from His glorious strength".

¹⁷ **Acts 2:23** "Though He (*Jesus*) was delivered up according to God's determined plan and foreknowledge . . ."

But because he knows we need his forgiveness and because of his incomprehensible, unconditional love for us, and again just as his eternal plan called for, he arranged for himself, an absolutely innocent man, to be unjustly tried and executed: tortured to death on a Roman cross as a sacrifice so that we could be forgiven.¹⁸

You see, even though God's own loving character drives him to have mercy and forgive us, and even though he has authority enough to forgive everybody for everything and anybody for anything, he is also perfectly just. And, on the face of it, forgiveness and justice can't happen together.

Justice is wrongdoing being acknowledged and dealt with; wrongdoing being punished; a penalty being paid. In our justice systems, penalties range from the death penalty, through a term of imprisonment in a penal institution, to a financial penalty: paying a fine or being compelled to compensate a wronged party.

On the other hand, forgiveness means the forgiv-er (the wronged party) gets no compensation and the forgiv-ee (the wrong doer) is saved from having to pay a penalty. It's as if the wrongdoing never happened; as if it just doesn't matter. When forgiveness happens, justice doesn't.

But look at what's happened here. Justice has been done. Our wrongdoing has been acknowledged and our penalty has been paid. God himself, God the Son, in the person of Jesus on the cross, has taken on himself our punishment for rejecting, ignoring or disobeying him. So now, forgiveness can be offered, and is offered, without justice being compromised¹⁹. If our wrongdoing, our sin, were a debt we could say that

¹⁸ **Acts 2:23** "Though He was delivered up according to God's determined plan and foreknowledge, you used lawless people to nail Him to a cross and kill Him."

¹⁹ **Romans 3:23-26** "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. They are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. God presented Him as a propitiation through faith in His blood, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His restraint God passed over the sins previously committed. God presented Him to demonstrate His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be righteous and declare righteous the

the creditor, God, had taken over our roles²⁰ as debtors; and himself paid to himself the debts we owed.²¹

Having completed that job, Jesus rose from the dead to take over another of the roles we've proven incapable of filling since the beginning: that of God's **obedient** ruler over God's world. In fact, Jesus is God's obedient ruler over all of creation.²² And, as God the Son and ruler over creation, Jesus is offering us something that, because of our sin, we can never receive otherwise; something that flies in the face of the everlasting destruction our sin has earned us.²³

Jesus offers us forgiveness; forgiveness not just for what we've done, but forgiveness for all sin, past, present and future.²⁴ And remember what forgiveness means? It means being saved from having to pay a penalty. In our case: being saved from the everlasting death and destruction that's our penalty for rejecting, ignoring or disobeying God; saved **from** that and saved **to** everlasting life. And this 'everlasting life' isn't just the life we're living now going on forever. That would be unbearable for a lot of us. No, what the Bible's talking about here is life the way God created it: Life with a capital 'L'; abundant, fulfilling life without decay and without death.

That's an amazing response to being rejected, ignored or disobeyed. It shows grace that's almost beyond our understanding. Grace that makes some people want to play bagpipes. And others of us, even tone-deaf ones like me, to want to sing out loud whenever we hear the music to

one who has faith in Jesus.”

²⁰ **2 Corinthians 5:21** “He made the One who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

²¹ See, in The Lord's Prayer, **Matthew 6:12** “And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.”

²² **1) Matthew 28:18** “Then Jesus came near and said to them, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth'” -- **2) Colossians 1:15** “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.”

²³ **Romans 6:23** “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”.

²⁴ **1 Peter 3:18** “. . . Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring you to God . . .”

'Amazing Grace'. And what makes it even more amazing is that Jesus is offering it to anybody who'll accept it. Anybody! Me – you – even people we reckon are far worse sinners than we are! But it's an offer. Offers don't achieve anything until they're taken up. And like any offer, you can take this one up or you can leave it; you can give it a miss.

Millions have already decided to give this offer a miss, and millions more will do the same. Millions will settle for our natural destiny: everlasting destruction and separation from everything good. But right now, it's not about those millions. It's about you. Have you realised that, just like me, you're a sinner too? Have you accepted what God's offering you: his forgiveness and the everlasting life that comes with it?

Or do you think what I've been saying is all a load of old cobblers? If that's the case, do yourself a favour: do some proper research and take your best shot at trying to prove that Jesus didn't rise from the dead.²⁵ At the end of that process, which many have tried and failed at, then think about what it might mean that he did rise from the dead.

On the other hand, maybe you'd like to find out more. If that's the case, email me at leigh@windsor-lp.net.²⁶

But if you've realised that you have rejected, ignored or disobeyed God and you want to sort it out, you can do it right here and right now. It's not difficult, but it is life-altering. For me, the hardest part was coming to grips with the fact that no matter how good I was compared to all the lowlifes in this world, no matter how much – or how little – good stuff I'd done, it was my *sin*, my having rejected, ignored or disobeyed God that made me unacceptable to him. **God owes me nothing, but I need his forgiveness.**

Once I'd acknowledged that to myself, it was simply a matter of acknowledging it to God too, then asking him for his help; asking him to

²⁵ One way to start might be to watch the movie 'The Case for Christ' . . . or read the book it was based on: 'The Case for Christ', by Lee Strobel.

²⁶ Your privacy will be respected. And I'm always happy to 'chat' about the real Jesus and the difference he makes.

help me become a follower of Jesus. You see, the Bible tells us that Jesus' taking of our punishment on himself on the cross is the exclusively unique solution to the problem of sin. And that it's only Jesus' followers who'll receive God's forgiveness; along with the abundant, everlasting life that flows from it.²⁷

So, if you accept the fact that you've ignored, rejected or disobeyed God and you sincerely want to make things right with him, then you should acknowledge it to God. Confess it to him and ask him for mercy and forgiveness based on Jesus' death in your place. Ask him to help you to become a follower of Jesus. One way is to pray a prayer like this one:

Dear God,

I know I don't deserve to be accepted by you.

I don't deserve the gift of eternal life you're offering me.

I've rebelled against you, ignored, rejected or disobeyed you.

I need your forgiveness.

Thank you that because Jesus died for me I can be forgiven.

Thank you that Jesus rose from the dead and that I can have eternal life.

*Please forgive me and change me to be someone who lives with Jesus
as my master.*

Amen.

In the Bible, God promises to grant sincerely prayed prayers like that.²⁸ There's no promise that life will be any easier. That's not what I mean by a secure, fulfilled life. Not an easy and comfortable life. But a life knowing that your eternal future is secure. That's why, once you've sincerely prayed such a prayer you should expect to start wanting to put into practice what you've prayed about: becoming a follower of Jesus. You can expect to want to know Jesus better and to want to be less greedy, less angry, less selfish and so on; instead becoming more generous, kind, loving, patient etc.

²⁷ **John 3:36** "The one who believes in the Son has eternal life, but the one who refuses to believe in the Son will not see life; instead, the wrath of God remains on him."

²⁸ **1 John 1:8-9** "If we say, "We have no sin," we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

These changes won't come about overnight. They'll be going on for the rest of your life. But, through the Holy Spirit, God will be with you all the way. He'll be revealing his will as you read his written word, the Bible. And he'll be listening to you as you pray. He'll be enabling and empowering you to live his way. And he'll provide you with brothers and sisters to support and encourage you as you meet with other Christians.

It won't be a breeze, and, of course, you'll have setbacks. You'll still stuff up and do the wrong thing. We all do. So, you'll need to keep coming back to Jesus, his death on the cross and his resurrection as the only way to be right with God.

We must never stop relying and depending on Jesus, and Jesus alone, as the only way to be forgiven and to receive God's gift of eternal life.

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