

PART III

A Gospel Narrative

Poetic Version

“Never be content with your current grasp of the gospel. The gospel is life-permeating, world-altering, universe-changing truth. It has more facets than a diamond. Its depths man will never exhaust.”

(C.J. Mahaney, *The Cross Centered Life*, 67)

Beholding the heavens,
I now understand
God measured them all
with the breadth of His hand.¹
He fashioned the trillions
of stars in the sky,²
The sun and the moon
He established on high.³
All heaven and earth,
which He made in six days,⁴
Show daily and nightly
His merit of praise.⁵

¹**Isaiah 40:12.** "Who has measured the waters in the hollow of His hand, and marked off the heavens by the span?"
[a 'span' is a hand breadth]

²**Isaiah 40:26.** "Lift up your eyes on high and see who created these stars, the One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; Because of the greatness of His might and the strength of His power, not one of them is missing."

³**Psalm 8.** "(3) When I consider the heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars which You have ordained, (4) what is man that You take thought of him, and the son of man that You care for him?"

⁴**Exodus 20:11.** "For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth . . ."

⁵**Psalm 19.** "(1) The heavens are telling the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. (2) Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night reveals knowledge."

So wondrously caring⁶
is God ev'ry day,
Creating,⁷ sustaining
my life ev'ry way.⁸
Each breath I intake,
ev'ry beat of my heart,
All pleasures well-tasted
are His to impart.⁹
Indeed, for such blessings
He should be adored
And honored supremely
as eminent Lord.¹⁰

⁶**1 Peter 5:7.** ". . . He cares for you."

⁷**Psalm 139.** "(13) For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb. (14) I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well. (15) My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, *and* skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth. (16) Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Your book they were all written, the days that were ordained *for me*, when as yet there was not one of them."

⁸**Acts 17.** "(27) . . . He is not far from each one of us; (28) for in Him we live and move and exist . . ."

⁹**1 Timothy 6:17.** "God . . . richly supplies us with all things to enjoy." **Acts 14:17.** "And yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness."

¹⁰**Revelation 4:11.** "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed and were created."

In fact, for this purpose
He brought me to be,
That I might His glory
and kindness see¹¹
And cherish Him fully
in all of my days,¹²
Obeying with pleasure
whatever He says,¹³
Fulfilling the calling
He's laid upon me
To show forth His glory
deliberately.¹⁴

¹¹**Romans 2:4.** "Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?"

¹²**Luke 10:27.** "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind."

¹³**John 14.** "(15) If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. . . . (21) He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me." **1 John 5:3.** "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome."

¹⁴**Romans 11:36.** "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things [including me]. To Him be the glory forever. Amen." **1 Corinthians 10:31.** "Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."

Yet I could not fail God
much worse than I've done.
Ignoring His glory,
for mine I have run.
I've spurned a life
under His wisdom and care,
Begrudged Him the throne
and pretended me there.¹⁵
A prideful and lust-laden
path I have trod,
Transgressing all Ten great
Commandments of God.¹⁶

¹⁵**Romans 1:21.** "For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. (22) Professing to be wise, they became fools, (23) and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man (25) . . . they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen." **Romans 3:23.** "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

¹⁶**Exodus 20.** "(3) You shall have no other gods before Me, (4) You shall not make for yourself an idol . . . (5) You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain . . . (6) Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy, (7) Honor your father and your mother (8) You shall not commit murder. (14) You shall not commit adultery. (15) You shall not steal. (16) You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. (17) You shall not covet . . . anything that belongs to your neighbor." **Colossians 3:5.** ". . . greed . . . is idolatry." **Matthew 5.** "(27) You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery'; (28) but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." **1 John 3:15.** "Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him."

My foolish rebellion
gives God ev'ry right
To damn me with haste
to the mis'erable plight
Of terrible judgments
in His Lake of Fire,¹⁷
Where wrath is most fierce
and will never expire.¹⁸
With wickedest sinners
I truly should know
The worst of Hell's furies
for failing God so.

¹⁷**Romans 6:23.** "For the wages of sin is death."
Revelation 21:8. "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." **Ephesians 2:3.** ". . . we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest."

¹⁸**Matthew 25:46.** "These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." **Mark 9.** "(47) If your eye causes you to stumble, throw it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell, (48) where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched."

So this is my status
and these are my flaws
Apart from Christ Jesus
and His saving cause:
I carry sin's guilt
and am gripped by sin's pow'r,¹⁹
Held fast to its
various lusts ev'ry hour,²⁰
Deserving of flames,
both within and without,²¹
And sliding t'ward Hell
as I toss all about,²²

¹⁹**Romans 6.** "(16) Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? (17) . . . you were slaves of sins . . . (20) . . . you were slaves of sin."

²⁰**Titus 3:3.** "For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another."

²¹**Revelation 21:8.** "But for the cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

²²**Isaiah 57.** "(20) But the wicked are like the tossing sea, for it cannot be quiet, and its waters toss up refuse and mud. (21) 'There is no peace,' says my God, 'for the wicked.'"

Too reprobate²³ even
to play a small part
In clearing my record
or changing my heart²⁴
To pacify wrath
and be worthy of grace,
To make myself lovely²⁵
and win God's embrace.
Completely condemned by
God's Law in its whole,²⁶
I've nothing to offer
to ransom my soul.²⁷

²³**reprobate.** *adj.* under God's judgment, extremely sinful, lost in sin.

²⁴**Jeremiah 17:9.** "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?"
Mark 7. "(21) For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, (22) deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. (23) All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man."

²⁵**Isaiah 64:6.** "For all of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment."

²⁶**James 2:10.** "For whoever keeps the whole law, and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all."

²⁷**Romans 5:6.** "... we were ... helpless ..."

But wonder of wonders,
so great to behold,²⁸
My God chose to save me²⁹
with method so bold.
What I could not render,
God fully has done,
And doing, He rendered it
all through His Son.³⁰
He sent Christ to die
on the cross for my sin
To suffer my anguish,
my pardon to win.³¹

²⁸**1 Peter 1.** "(10) As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, (11) seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. (12) It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven – things into which angels long to look."

²⁹**Ephesians 1.** "(4) . . . He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love (5) He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself . . ."

³⁰**Acts 4:12.** "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved." **John 14:6.** "Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.'"

³¹**1 Peter 3:18.** "For Christ also died for our sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God" **1 Corinthians 15:3.** ". . . Christ died for our sins"

Amazing it is, when I
stop to regard,
That God would consent
to an anguish so hard,
Surrend'ring His Son³²
unto mayhem and death,³³
To torturous writhing
'til His final breath.
'Why does God forsake Me?'
alone Jesus cried;³⁴
Yet God left Him hanging
until He had died.

³²**Romans 8:32.** ". . . He did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all . . ." **John 3:16.** "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."

³³**Isaiah 53.** "(3) He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief . . . (4) . . . our griefs He Himself bore, and our sorrows He carried . . . (5) . . . He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him . . . (6) . . . the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him. (7) He was oppressed and He was afflicted . . . (8) By oppression and judgment He was taken away . . . He was cut off out of the land of the living . . . (10) . . . the Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief."
Acts 2:23. "This Man [Jesus], delivered over by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death."

³⁴**Mark 15:34.** "And at the ninth hour, Jesus cried out with a loud voice, . . . 'My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?'"

That Jesus was willing
His life to lay down,³⁵
Be scourged³⁶ and insulted
and wear thorny crown³⁷
For one such as I
who had spited God so,
Amazes and blesses
and makes me to know
That greater a lover
is no man than He,
Who laid down His life
for a sinner like me.³⁸

³⁵**John 10.** "(17) For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life . . . (18) No one has taken it from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative . . ."

³⁶**John 19:1.** "The Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged Him."

³⁷**Mark 15.** "(17) They dressed Him up in purple, and after twisting a crown of thorns, they put it on Him; (18) and they began to acclaim Him, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' (19) They kept beating His head with a reed, and spitting at Him, and kneeling down before Him. (20) After they had mocked Him, they took the purple robe off Him, and put His own garments on Him. And they led Him out to crucify Him." (*See also Luke 23:35-37*)

³⁸**John 15:13.** "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends." **Romans 5.** "(7) For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. (8) But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Now after Christ died
He was placed in a tomb,³⁹
Which first was a grave,
but then served as a womb,
Travailing and quaking⁴⁰
the day He was raised⁴¹
And brought forth by God
to be handled and praised.⁴²
The Firstborn from death⁴³
on that day emerged He
With power to save
to the utmost degree.⁴⁴

³⁹**Mark 15:46.** "Joseph bought a linen cloth, took Him down, wrapped Him in the linen cloth and laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb."

⁴⁰**Matthew 28:2.** "And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it."

⁴¹**1 Corinthians 15:4.** ". . . He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,"

⁴²**Luke 24:39.** ". . . touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."
John 20. "(27) Then He said to Thomas, 'Reach here with your finger and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side' (28) Thomas answered and said to Him, 'My Lord and my God.'"

⁴³**Colossians 1:18.** "He is . . . the first-born from the dead"

⁴⁴**Hebrews 7:25.** "Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them." (*New King James Version*)

At God's own right hand
Christ now reigns from on high,⁴⁵
A Friend in high places
to sinners⁴⁶ who cry⁴⁷
To Him for forgiveness,
their evils confessed.
He gives them a pardon
and then makes them blessed.⁴⁸
As Prince He is Savior⁴⁹
to all who believe,⁵⁰
Who come to Him humbly
His grace to receive.

⁴⁵**Ephesians 1.** "(20) He [God] raised Him [Jesus] from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, (21) far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come."

⁴⁶**1 Timothy 1:15.** ". . . Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners"

⁴⁷**Romans 10:13.** "For whosoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved."

⁴⁸**Romans 10:12.** ". . . the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call on Him."

⁴⁹**Acts 5:31.** "He [Jesus] is the One whom God exalted to His right hand as a Prince and a Savior, to grant repentance . . . and forgiveness of sins."

⁵⁰**Ephesians 2.** "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; (9) not as a result of works, so that no one may boast."

Now when my time came
and to Jesus I cried,
He gave me the pardon⁵¹
for which I had sighed,
He cleansed me completely
from wrongs I had done,⁵²
Released me from bondage
to sins, ev'ry one.
He shattered sin's chains
which had held me before,
And thus made me free
not to sin any more.⁵³

⁵¹**Ephesians 1:7.** "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace."

⁵²**1 Corinthians 6.** "(9) Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, (10) nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God. (11) And such were some of you; but you were washed"

⁵³**Romans 6.** "(6) knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; (7) for he who has died is freed from sin. . . . (14) For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace."

A child of the Father
He made me to be⁵⁴
And gave me the Spirit
as His guarantee⁵⁵
That, being God's child,
I will one day obtain
A heavenly treasure
that never will wane.⁵⁶
While in me, the Spirit
gives power⁵⁷ and love⁵⁸
And sweet premonitions
of glory above.⁵⁹

⁵⁴**Ephesians 1:5.** "He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself"

⁵⁵**Ephesians 1.** ". . . you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, (14) who is given as a pledge of our inheritance. . . ."

⁵⁶**1 Peter 1.** "(3) Blessed be . . . God . . . who . . . has caused us to be born again to a living hope . . . (4) to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you."

⁵⁷**Acts 1:8.** ". . . you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you." **Ephesians 3:16.** "that He would grant you . . . to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man."

⁵⁸**Romans 5:5.** ". . . the love of God is poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who is given to us."

⁵⁹**Romans 8.** "(16) The Spirit testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, (17) and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. . . . (23) . . . we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body."

In saving, God also
did justify me,⁶⁰
Accounting me righteous
by His own decree,⁶¹
Declaring me guiltless
of all of my sin,
And bringing His wrath
against me to an end.⁶²
This wrath Christ appeased⁶³
in full brunt on the Tree,
When, bearing my sin,
He endured it for me.⁶⁴

⁶⁰**Romans 5:1.** "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

⁶¹**Romans 4:3.** "But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness."

⁶²**1 Thessalonians 5:9.** "For God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ."

⁶³**1 John 2:2.** ". . . He [Christ] Himself is the propitiation for our sins . . ." (*'propitiation' = satisfaction, appeasement of wrath*)

⁶⁴**1 Peter 2:24.** ". . . He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree . . ." (*literal translation*)

So now God relates
to me only with grace⁶⁵ –
The former wrath banished
without any trace!⁶⁶
And each day I'm made
a bit more as I should,
His grace using all things
to render me good.⁶⁷
Yes, even in trials
God's grace abounds too
And does me the good
He assigns it to do.⁶⁸

⁶⁵**Romans 5:21.** ". . . as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness [justification]...."

⁶⁶**Romans 5:9.** "Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him."

⁶⁷**Romans 8:28.** "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."

⁶⁸**Romans 5.** "(1) Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, (2) through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. (3) And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; (4) and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; (5) and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."

And when I am sinning,
God's grace does abound,⁶⁹
Insuring my justified
status is sound.
No wrath is awakened
in God at my sin,
Because Christ appeased it⁷⁰ –
to say so again.
God's heart pulses only
with passionate grace,
Which jealously wants me
back in His embrace.⁷¹

⁶⁹**Romans.** "(5:20) . . . where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, (21) so that, as sin reigned in death, even so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. (6:1) What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace might increase?"

⁷⁰**1 John 2:2.** ". . . He [Christ] Himself is the propitiation for our sins . . ." (*'propitiation' = satisfaction, appeasement of wrath*)

⁷¹**James 4:5.** "Or do you suppose that the Scripture is speaking to no purpose that says, The Spirit Whom He has caused to dwell in us yearns over us – and He yearns for the Spirit [to be welcome] – with a jealous love." (*The Amplified Bible*)

God does not require
even that I confess,
Before He desires
His forgiveness to press.
Forgiveness has been
in His heart all along;
And when I approach Him
to make right my wrong,
He runs up to greet me
and draws to me near,⁷²
Embracing and kissing⁷³
and ready to clear.⁷⁴

⁷²**James 4:8.** "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you."

⁷³**Luke 15.** "(20) So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. (21) And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' (22) But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; (23) and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; (24) for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.' And they began to celebrate."

⁷⁴**1 John 1:9.** "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

God does see my sins
and He grieves at them so,⁷⁵
For when I am sinning,
His love I don't know.⁷⁶
He even will send me
some heart-rending pain,
So I'll learn new ways
and His holiness gain.
His disciplines always
are with love imbued,⁷⁷
A love that seeks ever
my ultimate good.

⁷⁵**Ephesians 4:30.** "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God"

⁷⁶**John 15:10.** "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love" (*Jesus' words imply that if I don't keep God's commandments, then I am not fully abiding in His love while sinning.*)

⁷⁷**Hebrews 12.** "(7) It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? (8) But if you are without discipline, of which we all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. (9) Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? (10) For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness."

So this is my story;
ongoing it is.
How shall I thank God
for this gospel of His?
A gift that keeps giving,⁷⁸
the gospel confers
The bounty of heaven
each time I rehearse.
Deserve it? I don't
on my holiest day;
But this is salvation,
and herein I'll stay.⁷⁹

⁷⁸**Colossians 1.** "(5) . . . the gospel, (6) which has come to you . . . is constantly bearing fruit and increasing . . . since the day you heard of it and understood the grace of God in truth." **Acts 20:32.** ". . . the message of His grace [the gospel] . . . is continually able to build you up and give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified." (*literal translation*)

⁷⁹**1 Peter 5:12.** ". . . this is the true grace of God. Stand firm in it!" **1 Corinthians 16:13.** ". . . stand firm in the faith" **Colossians 1.** "(22) . . . He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach – (23) if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel...."

About the Author

Milton Vincent (*B.A., Bob Jones University; M.Div., The Master's Seminary*), formerly taught English Grammar and served as a Faculty Associate of Old Testament Language and Literature at The Master's Seminary in Sun Valley, California. He is presently in his fifteenth year as Pastor-Teacher of Cornerstone Fellowship Bible Church in Riverside, California. He and his wife, Donna, live in the Riverside area with their four children.

**Inquiries may be directed to
Cornerstone Fellowship Bible Church,
1363 Linden Street, Riverside, California 92507
(951) 781-8174
or to
miltonv@juno.com**