



An Unlikely... Author

May 30, 2010

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God, *I thank You that You gave us your Word so that we might not forget the majesty of your Gospel. Today, as we begin to look at Paul's letter to the church at Colossae, reveal to us a new facet of your truth so that we might fall deeper in love with You.*

And Lord, it would be my prayer that as we leave here today, as people go they would not be talking about the preacher; they would be talking about Jesus.

It is in Jesus' name we pray. AMEN.

This summer, we will be walking through the book of Colossians together, and today we will make a lot of progress – we will knock out the first two verses! But first, let's review two additional passages – one in Acts chapter nine, and one in Philippians three.

ACTS CHAPTER NINE

¹ But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ² and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound

to Jerusalem. ³ Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴ And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' ⁵ And he said, 'Who are you, Lord?' And he said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. ⁶ But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.' ⁷ The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. ⁸ Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. ⁹ And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

Today's Scriptures

Jeremiah 4:7; Luke 24:45; Acts 2:6-11; 9:1-9; 6:14-15; 19:1-27; 1 Corinthians 15:9; Philippians 2:19-24; 3:3-9; Colossians 1:1-2

PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER THREE,
from the mouth of Paul,

³For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh—⁴ though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: ⁵circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. ⁷ But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

COLOSSIANS CHAPTER ONE

¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, ² To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

VILLAINS

Villains play an important role in storytelling. Most often a good story, and in particular a great story, juxtaposes good versus evil. Good always has its representative, whom some would call a *hero*, (or I might call a *superhero*, like my beloved Superman). And evil always has its representative, whom we call the *villain*.

There are a few famous villains throughout literature and cinema. The aforementioned Superman had Lex Luthor; the sweet puppies from *101 Dalmatians* were often forced to flee the grip of the villainous Cruella DeVil; and Sherlock Holmes was most often challenged by the brilliant Professor James Moriarty.

There are villains throughout American history, like John Wilkes Booth, the assassin of President Abraham Lincoln. And John Hinckley, Jr., who attempted to take the life of President Ronald Reagan.

And finally, if a certain Pastor were being biased and narrow in his outlook, a certain Pastor who is a Carolina fan and alumni of Wake Forest University, that certain Pastor might consider Mike Krzyzewski, Coach of the Duke Blue Devils basketball team, a villain – particularly in light of this last season.

The Bible is full of villains as well. Pharaoh, the powerful ruler of Egypt, enslaved the Israelites and turned his heart against God's gracious attempts to

free His people. And consider Nebuchadnezzar, the ruler of Babylon who conquered Judah and Jerusalem. His destructive work, as recorded in the Book of Jeremiah, warranted the label *destroyer of nations*¹ because of his destruction of God's dwelling place, the Temple.

One interesting fact about villains, they never change their stripes. No one would ever accept Lex Luthor as the new sidekick for Superman, or willingly hand their precious puppy over to the hands of suddenly dog-loving Cruella DeVil. It would be an untenable position to suddenly ever trust a great case to Professor James Moriarty, rather than to Sherlock Holmes. It would be unimaginable to ever think that a Carolina fan would sit amongst the Cameron Crazies! And there's no way the Israelites, once freed from slavery, ever returned on family vacation to Egypt.

You see, a villain is always a villain, and a villain's stripes never change.

THE ULTIMATE VILLAIN

Today we turn our attention to the book of Colossians by first looking at one of the greatest villains in all of human history – the apostle Paul. That's right, I called the apostle Paul a villain. Most of us know Paul as one of Christianity's venerated heroes and among the most famous of all Biblical characters. He planted churches that grew and multiplied. He ministered to and disciplined many of the church's great leaders. For example, the physician Luke, who became the most prolific writer in all the New Testament, was disciplined first by Paul. Paul's missionary journeys are legendary. And the legacy of the Apostle lives on as a steadfast example of sacrificial leadership.

Yet, that legacy is not where the story of Paul begins. Look again at the words of Acts nine:

¹ But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest ² and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

¹ Jeremiah 4:7

The man we revere as foremost among all Christian leaders began his journey *breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord*. What was it that drove Paul to that place in his heart where he had hatred towards those whom Acts calls, *the people of the Way* – the early Christians?

It was a threat against what Paul believed to be the central truth of his life, and he was protecting that truth. It was a threat against the faith he had always known. Paul grew up a Jew; he was trained as a Jew; he led as a Jew. A desire to protect the innocent welled up in him.

Doesn't this happen to us when we hear of harm or injustice to children; when we hear of unfairness in the world? Isn't there a righteous indignation that wells up in all of us?

Paul welled up with indignation, but he allowed it to go too far. His indignation had turned to hatred.

Then something happened to Paul, but before we can understand that, we must understand who Paul was.

Let's examine the life of Paul before he knew Jesus. In truth, most of what we know about Paul we actually receive from Paul himself. Consider his self-described qualifications from his letter to the church at Philippi.

Philippians 3:3: *For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh—⁴ though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also.*

If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more:

If you think you are a good Jew, I am better ... he continues,

⁵ *circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶ as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. ⁷ But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.*

Let's look at these qualifications:

- *Circumcised on the eighth day* – meaning, I have been marked as a child of the covenant;
- *Of the people of Israel* – or, I have been set aside as chosen by God;

*The man we revere
as foremost
among all Christian leaders
began his journey
breathing threats and murder
against the disciples of the Lord.*

- *Of the tribe of Benjamin* – or, I am held in high esteem. Saul, the first king of Israel, came from the tribe of Benjamin;
- *A Hebrew of Hebrews* – or, unlike those Samaritans that are half-blood, my blood is pure;
- *As to the law, a Pharisee* – meaning, I am committed to my belief;
- *As to zeal, a persecutor of the church* – I am faithful; and
- *As to righteousness under the law, blameless* – my sin has been fully atoned for.

We must be clear that Saul was not wavering as he went to Damascus. He was not having second thoughts such as, *Have I been taught correctly? You know, I have not quite mastered my sin; I have my doubts; Should I really persecute the Christians?*

There was no way that Saul, soon to be renamed Paul, had any such thoughts. He was single-mindedly moving up to Damascus with one purpose. He believed in his own mind that he could not be more righteous; that God could not be more pleased with him; that the angels were rejoicing; and that the Lord God was giving him a standing ovation for all he was doing. He was moving against those who blasphemed the Living God. He was even moving beyond Jerusalem; he was showing his zeal. Paul was on his way to Damascus to capture Christians and bring them to account for their false beliefs, and then in an instant, everything changed.

Whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

A RADICAL TRANSFORMATION

How did this villain's stripes change? We continue in Acts chapter nine:

³ Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. ⁴ And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?' ⁵ And he said, 'Who are you, Lord?' And he said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.' ⁶ But rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.' ⁷ The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. ⁸ Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. So they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. ⁹ And for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank.

Most are aware of this story. Paul, the man who once *breathed threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord*, had now been transformed. In a light-filled second God gave Paul a new heart. I have often thought about what it was like for Paul in that moment.

When we first meet Paul he believed he was at the very pinnacle of a God-pleasing life with devotion and dedication to the rules, laws and precepts of God. He was not looking for his own gain, only for the gain of God.

Jesus said, *Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?* Who are you to oppose me? Do you see that your entire life, your entire disposition of life, is in opposition and enmity against the Living God? Everything you can bring is not only slightly deficient, but it is opposed to God.

And we see the conviction of Paul's heart in Philippians chapter three, ⁷*But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.* He did not have second thoughts; he considered it all loss for the sake of Christ. There was something that happened on the road to Damascus which is very important to understanding Paul:

⁸*Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith.*

This is not a slight change. I often wonder how the implications of this change affected Paul. When Paul received a new heart, he also saw the world with new eyes. Consider this verse from Jesus' encounter with his disciples before He ascended to heaven: *Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures.*²

Can you imagine what it would have been like for Paul? He had been trained in the ways of the Old Testament, he knew it backward, knew it forward. He knew the four covenants and knew the way that God had graciously extended Himself to His people to restore them into relationship. Can you imagine what it was like for Paul for the first time to see the covenants and know that they were God's effort to reveal the Messiah?

Or, what it was like for Paul to have heard the Passover story, to have celebrated the Passover feast over and over, to have gone year after year after year to observe the Passover and then, for the first time in his life, to realize Passover was a foreshadowing, that it wasn't simply about atoning for sin by taking the blood of an innocent lamb and spreading it on the doorway or preserving that moment? What was it like for Paul to realize that Passover was about revealing to us the true Lamb of God? What was it like for Paul to see Scripture again for the first time?

I do not think it was by mistake that, once God transformed Paul's heart, He made him unable to speak. Oftentimes when I have to process and think through things, I have to get in my car and drive around, because if people are near me, all I want to do is *talk*, and I never get to a moment when I can *think*.

² Luke 24:45

*Indeed, I count everything as loss
because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.*

What was it like for Paul during those three days, to not be able to speak, reflect, or talk about the way his heart had been given new life; to have to sit for twenty-four hour period, after twenty-four hour period, after twenty-four hour period, and be reminded of all the ways that God was using human history to reveal Jesus?

I wonder about the changes in Paul's relationships with people he had always known, for Paul had been radically changed. His heart had been revealed; his eyes had been opened; and he was able to see Scripture. He said, *But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.*

Paul was radically changed. He saw God and God's work in the world differently, and one of the many results of this transformation was this letter we begin to study today.

COLOSSIANS CHAPTER ONE

¹ *Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,* ² *To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.*

We learn a few things in these two brief verses that we should explore together.

- First, we learn the author of Colossians is Paul.
- Second, we learn that Colossae is the city where this letter is sent.
- Third, we are introduced to Paul's dear friend, Timothy.
- Fourth, we find a common greeting, *Grace to you and peace from God our Father.*

PAUL, THE AUTHOR

During our study of Colossians we will assume that Paul is the author of this letter, but it seems appropriate to mention that many in critical scholarship question the authorship of the letter to the Colossians. Yet, until the early nineteen hundreds and the writing of *The Quest for the Historical Jesus*, by physician and theologian,

Albert Schweitzer,³ no one questioned Pauline authorship, including any of the early church fathers or reformation leaders. Meaning, for nearly the first two thousand years of church history the authorship of Colossians went without question.

Schweitzer argued that the language and theology of Colossians are inconsistent with other of Paul's letters. I believe he was wrong for many reasons that I will not address now, but among the leading reasons I would argue that Paul is the author is that the letter itself says Paul is the author – seem simple enough?

A DEVOTED COMPANION

Paul loved Timothy. At the beginning of many of Paul's letters he comments about those whom he loves, most of whom were converts of his preaching ministry, but from all accounts, Paul had a particular affection for Timothy. Timothy was the one who comforted him, and whose companionship he most loved. Consider Paul's words about Timothy,

PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

¹⁹ *I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you.* ²⁰ *For I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare.* ²¹ *For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.* ²² *But you know Timothy's proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel.* ²³ *I hope therefore to send him just as soon as I see how it will go with me,* ²⁴ *and I trust in the Lord that shortly I myself will come also.*

During the many years Paul spent laboring as an apostle, Timothy had been his dear friend. Timothy is an interesting character. We learn from Scripture that he was frequently sick, often hesitant and needed a lot of encouragement. In my estimation,

³ Albert Schweitzer, Von Reimarus zu Wrede, 1906. First English Edition, The Quest of the Historical Jesus, 1910.

Timothy probably cried a lot, had a low pain tolerance, watched romantic comedies, and drank Diet Coke during his time off – a lot like me! That was Timothy. Yet no one ever in Paul’s entire ministry is seen in such a relationship to Paul as Timothy – he was Paul’s best friend. In no one did Paul place such confidence and affection.

A REGIONAL MINISTRY

We know Paul. We know Timothy. Now what about Colossae? Any study of Colossians must begin with an historical question: *If Colossians was written by Paul, what is the connection between Colossians and Acts, which tells the story of Paul’s conversion and ministry?*

As we will see in coming weeks, it is clear that Paul worked with the leadership of the church in Colossae, but never actually visited the church there. And if Paul had never been to Colossae, how did his message get there? This is important for a variety of reasons, one of which is that the way the message reached Colossae informs the way Paul writes the letter and the information he gives us about the problem in Colossae.

The answer is rooted in Ephesus. First it should be established that it is clear Paul visited Ephesus and started the church there, probably around 52 CE, or 52 AD. Let’s look at an account of his journey as recorded in Acts nineteen, where there are a lot of clues.

ACTS CHAPTER NINETEEN

¹ *And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland (upper, highland) country and came to Ephesus ...* ⁸ *And he entered the synagogue and for three months spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading them about the kingdom of God.*

So, it is clear that while in Ephesus Paul preached the Gospel of Jesus. And then we see,

¹⁰ *This continued for two years – that is a lot of talking! You think your sermons are long – good gracious! Two years!*

... so that all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.

This is important because Colossae was part of a cluster of cities – Ephesus, Laodicea, and Hierapolis – in the region of Asia Minor, and it was the cultural

and economic center of this group. Thus this connects Paul’s ministry to the region.

²³ *About that time there arose no little disturbance concerning the Way (concerning this new Christian teaching).* ²⁴ *For a man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought no little business to the craftsmen.* ²⁵ *These he gathered together, with the workmen in similar trades, and said, ‘Men, you know that from this business we have our wealth.’* ²⁶ *And you see and hear that not only in Ephesus but in almost all of Asia this Paul has persuaded and turned away a great many people, saying that gods made with hands are not gods.*

That’s a great line – *gods made with hands are not gods!*

²⁷ *And there is danger not only that this trade of ours may come into disrepute but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis may be counted as nothing, and that she may even be deposed from her magnificence, she whom all Asia and the world worship.’*

This passage suggests that the influence of Paul’s teaching in Ephesus was so significant that it was spreading to the wider area of Asia Minor. We find more information about this in the account of Pentecost.⁴ One of the native tongues of Asia Minor was from Phrygia, and we read in the account of Pentecost that people from this town were there. Phrygia was a sub-area of Asia Minor. For instance, Winston Salem is in Forsyth County of North Carolina. In the same way, Colossae was in Phrygia of Asia Minor.

So as we are considering how the Gospel reached Colossae, we begin to understand two aspects of the answer. One aspect is the spread of Paul’s own missionary efforts from Ephesus into Colossae. The other is the possibility that much before this time, Jews from Phrygia had gone to the Feast of Pentecost, heard the Gospel, become Christians, and then returned to their home regions and shared the Good News in their hometowns. Colossae would have certainly been among those hometowns. So very early we begin to see the importance of Colossae.

A UNIQUE CITY

Colossae was a very interesting town, both for its history and for its character, and next week these

⁴ Acts 2:6-11

aspects of Colossae will help us in beginning to understand what Paul was dealing with in this town.

Location

Colossae was an ancient town of Phrygia, situated about twelve miles above Laodicea on the Lycus River, a tributary of the Maeander River, which travelled east and west and fed into the Mediterranean Sea. Thus, although Colossae was an inland town, a waterway to the city enabled ease of travel in that ancient world. In addition, the river provided water for agriculture, so both of these advantages stimulated steady growth of the city over several centuries before Christ.

History

In about 600 BCE, the Babylonian exile included a dispersion of the Jews from their homeland, not only eastward, but also westward and south towards Colossae. Although there has been much speculation about the number of Jews that arrived in Colossae, the overwhelming consensus is that they numbered at least ten thousand men, or close to one hundred thousand people with women and children.

In 500 BCE, there was already historical documentation for the existence of Colossae, which is understandable because the water and road access made Colossae a favorable and formidable city.

About 300 BCE, Alexander the Great was expanding the Greek Empire with his conquests, and he chose Colossae as his military base because of its strategic location in providing him with access to the world by water. As a result, Greek culture, language and thought began to permeate the culture of Colossae.

By 130 BCE, the rise of the Roman Empire began influencing Colossae with their use of hardware, steel, and military might.

Prosperity

Colossae had many natural resources. Because of its proximity to the water, it had very fertile ground which was perfect for vineyards, figs, olives, and many different plants. In fact, a native root, called the *Colossus root*, was used to produce purple textile dye, and Colossae was famous for its purple cloth. Lydia, with whom Paul and Silas stayed in Philippi,⁵ sold purple cloth and may very well have done business in Colossae as well as Philippi before moving to Macedonia and trading there.

Decline

Despite this prosperity, by the time of Paul Colossae was considered a small town. What happened to this booming city? Some of its decline can be attributed to the two towns slightly north of Colossae – Hierapolis and Laodicea. Further, it seems that Colossae was rather insignificant by the time of Jesus because of industrialization. It was the ghost town of the New Testament – like in the old West of the United States where once booming towns had been displaced by the railroads. The growth Hierapolis and Laodicea made Colossae all but disappear. Rome moved the road.

So that is information you need to know about Colossae and it will inform Paul's letter and our understanding in the weeks to come.

A SIMPLE GREETING

We've seen the writer, his companion, the readers, and finally, the greeting. It reads,

Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

The greeting is simple and common. And no one knew its truth better than the Apostle Paul.

Grace is God's unmerited favor in action in the lives of people. It is God's loving-kindness in operation, and Paul says that when God gives you His sovereign grace, you also receive peace. One is dependent on the other. Without the grace of God, there is no peace of God. Paul in essence says to the Colossians, *I hope you are experiencing the grace of God, so that you might know the peace of God.* Grace was a Jewish term (*charis*), and peace was Hebrew (*shalom*), and so Paul is saying, I give you *charis* and *shalom*, both of which flow from the heart of God.

A DISQUALIFIED APOSTLE

So we have an unlikely author, a beloved friend, an insignificant city, and a simple greeting. And so our journey through Colossians begins.

But what does this mean to you? What is the application for you today? Let's look at one final verse from Paul's letter to the Church in Corinth:

*For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.*⁶

⁵ Acts 16:14-15

⁶ 1 Corinthians 15:9

GRACE

is God's unmerited favor in action in the lives of people.

It is God's loving-kindness in operation.

When God gives you His sovereign grace,

you also receive

PEACE

One is dependent on the other.

Without the grace of God, there is no peace of God.

Paul considered himself a disqualified apostle. *I count all things before as lost for the sake of Christ. I am disqualified to be an Apostle because I persecuted the church.* Paul thought that his villainous acts against the church disqualified him from ever leading the church,

except for the grace of God.

OUR OWN STORY

As we begin this study together, it is vitally important that we understand that Paul was God's villain, subject to the wrath of God, and in an instant he became a saint of God, subject to the righteousness of Jesus.

But in a real way this is our story, right? We were the villain of God, now we are His saints. We were lost, completely separated from God. Yet God in his benevolent kindness loved us so radically that He sent His only begotten Son, who died in our place for our sin. And in doing so, while I should have been nailed to the cross of Calvary as the enemy of the most righteous and Holy God, Jesus took my place. When I lived a life of rebellion and rejection of God's truth, Jesus came and lived the life I could not live. And when the only consequence for my sin was to suffer the wrath of God, Jesus took it, and gave me His righteousness.

See, Paul says, I am disqualified, the most unlikely of all apostles. I persecuted the church. I spoke on

behalf of sin in the face of God, and now God has elevated me to this position of righteousness.

I, myself, was lost and alone, fearing separation from God, anxious over being accepted, anxious over ever being abandoned, crying at romantic comedies and drinking Diet Coke, a sinner destined for destruction. And yet, God in His unmerited favor pulled me out of darkness and set me free into righteousness.

Paul's words weigh so heavy because he says, *I am unqualified, yet look at what God has done in my life.* Maybe today you need to be reminded of your own testimony, of the time that you were once a villain yet now have been set free by the power of the Gospel. Once you were set to inherit the wrath of God for your own sin; now you have been redeemed and set free by the power of the Gospel to live as co-heirs with Christ!

God, I thank you that we are reminded by the testimony of Paul of just how unworthy we ourselves are to inherit anything other than separation from You.

But then there is that good news, the good news of how you sent Jesus, Who died in our place, suffered the wrath and gave us His righteousness.

And God, today we stand here as your people and believe that You inhabit our praises. I want to thank You for the good news of Jesus. Thank You for the good news of what He did at Calvary.

Lord we love You. We love You so much that all we have to do is sing praises to your name, to bring renown to your name, and glory to your name. In Jesus' name we pray. AMEN.

IN CHRIST ALONE,
IN FULLNESS AND POWER.
THAT is the Gospel!

We never want to end a service without giving you the opportunity to accept Jesus as the Savior of your life if you never have done so before. Let today be the day. Let today be your Damascus road.

The Scriptures are clear that salvation comes through putting your faith in Jesus. Meaning, if we simply confess with our mouths that Jesus is our Savior, Lord of our life, we will be rescued. Let today be the day you turn your own mess over to Jesus. We believe in faith that God wants to meet you in a powerful way today.

Thank you for worshipping with us today. I am glad to be your Pastor through the summer, and I will be available in the Chapel after the services. If you need anything, please let us know.

I am excited about what God is going to do this summer, (not quite as excited as I will be to give the pulpit back to Alan in the Fall), but it is going to be a good, good summer. God is going to do a good work in the church.

As you leave here today, know that God loves you and your church deeply loves you.

*While I should have been nailed
to the cross of Calvary
as the enemy of
the most righteous and Holy God,*

Jesus
TOOK MY PLACE

*When I lived a life of rebellion
and rejection of God's truth,*

Jesus
CAME
AND LIVED THE LIFE
I COULD NOT LIVE

*And when the only consequence
for my sin
was to suffer the wrath of God,*

Jesus
TOOK IT
AND GAVE ME
HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS

May God the Father,
Who created you for a great destiny,
and Jesus the Christ, the Son of the Living God,
Who died in your place for your sin,
and the Holy Spirit,
Who dwells in you now so He might work through you,
be with you now and always.
AMEN.

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