

# Eureka! (A Baby in Every Manger)

Acts 17:16-34

December 13, 2020

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*Video and audio versions available online:*

<https://relentless-love.org/sermons/eureka-a-baby-in-every-manger/>

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*This document was prepared by Heather Eades using Peter's notes and the video version of this sermon. If you encounter any significant discrepancies or errors in this document, please let Heather know. Thank you!*

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## Prayer

Father, we pray that you would help us to preach “for sure” (Amen means “for sure”), Lord God. And Lord Jesus, I pray that you would connect the dots—you’re the way and the logic—you’re the reason, so by your Spirit, would you connect the dots. And I pray that, especially because this is really the second half of last week’s sermon, but even more because the picture is so beautiful. It’s so deep and so profound that I can’t connect the dots; we need your Spirit to connect the dots. Help us to see you, Lord God. In Jesus’s name, Amen.

## Message

In 1962, Don Richardson took his young wife and infant son to minister to the Sawi people of West Papua, Indonesia (formally, Netherlands, New Guinea). Most of these people had never come in contact with a white man... or metal, for that matter. They still basically lived in the Stone Age and practiced cannibalism. Fascinated by the Richardson’s white skin and technology, three Sawi tribes moved to surround Richardson’s jungle home.

After an immense amount of work, Richardson learned the Sawi language, and then climbed a ladder into a Sawi “man-house” where, surrounded by human skulls, he began to share the story of Jesus. He told them about the Jews, the sacrifices, the Lamb of God, and they were uninterested. But when he got to Judas, they all perked up. In Sawi culture, for a man to feign friendship with an enemy, and then betray that enemy, well that was seen as an admirable characteristic.

Richardson at that point finally gave up. He told the Sawi that he was leaving due to the fact that he didn’t know how to tell them what he had come to tell them, *and* the fact that since they had arrived, 14 civil wars had erupted between the three tribes that surrounded their jungle home.

Desperate to keep the Richardsons and their western technology, the Sawi elders came to the Richardsons and said, “If you don’t leave, we’ll make peace.”

[Image: image of the book cover for Richardson’s book, *Peace Child*, shows on screen.]

In his book *Peace Child*, Richardson describes how he woke the following morning to witness the most passionate ritual that he had ever seen. In a clearing in front of their jungle home, two of the Sawi tribes had lined up on either side of the clearing. The air was tense; the people were nervous.

All of a sudden, one man took his baby from the arms of his wife, held the child up, and ran across the clearing while his wife followed him weeping, and then dropping, and rolling in the mud. In absolute agony, this father handed his baby to members of the other tribe.

Then in the same way, with the same effect, members of that tribe did just the same, handing a baby to members of the first tribe. This was how the Sawi made peace, explaining that as long as the child lived, one tribe could trust the other tribe. As Richardson watched this, he suddenly realized he was observing an altar to the unknown God, like the altar Paul found in Athens so long ago.

Well, the peace held over the ensuing months, as members of each tribe would “plead the Peace Child” whenever violence threatened. And so finally, Richardson once again climbed the ladder into the “man-house,” but this time he read Isaiah 9:6:

“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” (KJV).

He explained that the Father did not give his son because he hated the son, but because the son was his very own heart, and so all that passion was the passion of Love. It was the passion of the young father that he had witnessed in the field that morning when the Sawi had made peace. That passion seems to be something that modern Americans no longer understand—a true sacrifice is not destroying something you hate; it’s surrendering your greatest treasure for the sake of Love.

When old Abraham prepared to offer Isaac, he was offering his dream, his hope, his heart to the one who gave Isaac to him in the first place. And according to the book of Hebrews, he trusted that God could raise him from the dead and give him back again.

Well, God provided a lamb and did give Isaac back to Abraham. And of course, we know the lamb is Jesus—the Prince of Peace. And not only did God the Father offer Jesus the Son, we know that Jesus the Son offered himself, and God the Father was *in* God the Son as he made the offering.

Toward the end of Richardson’s book, about six years later on Christmas day, one of the Sawi men threatened to start a war when he found another man from a neighboring tribe who had killed his brother, who had been given to this other tribe by his father as a peace child.<sup>1</sup> But Richardson plead the Peace Child, saying, “But our Father in heaven gave Jesus, the Prince of Peace, to this man and his tribe too, and this Peace Child lives.” God gave him to all of us; we all killed him, we ate him, and he lives.

A war was abated that day, and no more peace children needed to be given; the One that has been given is forever more than enough. A war was abated that Christmas day, and along with hundreds of new believers, the Richardsons celebrated the birth of the Prince of Peace, for the government was on his shoulders.

Acts 17:16-34 —This is the second half of last week’s sermon. It was titled “Seek (or Christmas in Athens)” — We read how Paul dialogued with pagan philosophers, found an altar to the unknown God, and declared, “*What you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you this day.*” We conjectured that God must use all things to build altars like that in every nation, every tribe (including the Sawi), and in every human heart (including your heart).

I said:

- He builds the altar and even supplies the lamb.
- The altar is the longing for Love, and the lamb is the decision *to* love.
- The altar is a manger, and the lamb is the Prince of Peace.

**<sup>16</sup> Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols. <sup>17</sup> So he reasoned in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. <sup>18</sup> Some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers also conversed with him. And some said, “What does this babblers wish to say?” Others said, “He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities”—because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. <sup>19</sup> And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus...**

—That’s Ares Hill (in Greek) or Mars Hill (in Latin). Ares, or Mars, is the god of war. So...Jesus, the Prince of Peace vs. Mars, the god of war—this should be interesting.

**<sup>19</sup> And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, “May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? <sup>20</sup> For you bring some strange things to our ears. We wish to know therefore what these things mean.” <sup>21</sup> Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new.**

**<sup>22</sup> So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. <sup>23</sup> For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: ‘To the unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.**

Last time I told you, what ancient Greek manuscripts reveal: How 600 years earlier, there had been a plague in Athens, and how they sacrificed lambs to the unknown God, hoping he would forgive their sins and break the curse, and how they had preserved one altar in the hope that one day this unknown God would be revealed.

**...I found also an altar with this inscription [ says Paul]: ‘To the unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. <sup>24</sup> The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, <sup>25</sup> nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. <sup>26</sup> And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, <sup>27</sup> that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him. Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, <sup>28</sup> for**

**“ ‘In him we live and move and have our being’;**

**as even some of your own poets have said,**

**“‘For we are indeed his offspring.’**

**29 Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man. 30 The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, 31 because he has fixed a day on [in] which he will judge the world in righteousness by [in] a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance [pistis] to all by raising him from the dead."**

Paul doesn't tell them about his tribe<sup>ii</sup>, the Jews, the Torah, and the Covenant. Paul refers to *their* tribe, quotes scholars from *their* tribe, and then goes all the way back to the beginning of all tribes, all nations; he goes back to Adam.

**26 And he made from one man** [if you said that in Hebrew it would be "*Adam*"]  
**every nation of mankind** [and that would also be "*Adam*," or "*ha Adam*," the Adam].

Hebrew Scripture often refers to all men as one man—*ha Adam*. It gets translated out because we don't think it means what it says.<sup>iii</sup>

"He made from one man, every nation of man... to seek Him," says Paul.

"*Seek and you will find*," said Jesus.<sup>iv</sup>

So, how is it that some men or women could not find God?

Well, that could only happen if you believe God didn't make some to seek him, in which case you must believe that Paul was lying. Or only if you believe some will seek and never find, in which case you must believe that Jesus was lying. But if you believe all of Scripture, it seems that you must conclude that all seek God in a million, gazillion ways, *and* all find Him, for Jesus, (the Way, the Truth, and the Life), has found us... and made us seek.

**"He made from one Adam, every nation of Adam... to seek Him."  
"...from one Adam..."**

What Adam, what man, is Paul talking about? We all assume it's that first Adam, but as we discussed at length last time, that Adam was alone because that Adam wasn't seeking his Helper.

In Romans 3, Paul quotes David and says, "No one seeks for God." <sup>v</sup> Well, no one... until the last One.

Paul often writes about the first man Adam and the last Adam—the *eschatos* Adam—which can be translated *Ultimate Adam*, or *Super Adam*, that is *Superman*. And that Adam, *seeks not his own will, but the will of God*—that's John 5:30... *The will of God* and *one other thing*, which must be the same thing; he seeks us.

Luke 19:10, Jesus says, "*I came to seek and to save the lost.*"

So, God "*made from one Adam...*" (*all Adams*). And I wonder which "Adam" Paul is talking about. And I wonder if he's talking about both.

You know the *first Adam* is literally manufactured by and with the *last Adam*.

- God makes man on the Sixth Day with a Word, and we know that's Jesus.

- God breathes his breath into clay; a Word is Logos in a Breath; a word is vibrations of meaning in *pneuma*, wind, or breath.<sup>vi</sup>;
- And then, as Jesus hung on the tree in the garden on the Sixth Day, he cried, “It is finished,” and delivered up his *pneuma*, his spirit, his breath.
- On Easter, he breathed on his disciples saying, “*Receive the Holy Spirit.*”<sup>vii</sup>

In 1 Corinthians 15:45, Paul writes, “Thus it is written, ‘The first man Adam became a living being [*psyche*: soul]’; the last Adam [*eschatos* Adam] became a life-giving spirit [*pneuma*: spirit, breath].”

In Romans 5:14, from Young’s literal translation, Paul writes: “Adam... is a type [*tupos*] of him who is coming.”<sup>viii</sup> [literally, “him who is about to be”] That’s the *Eschatos Adam*.

*Tupos* is this fascinating Greek word that literally means “imprint” or “form.” It refers to the shape left behind after an impact.

The *first Adam*, which is your old self, is the *tupos* of the *Eschatos Adam*, who mysteriously gives himself to you and is also somehow your true self.

[Peter holds up a Captain America action figure.]

So, you can think of this as the *Eschatos Adam*. This is an action figure of Captain America. (It would’ve been better if I’d found a Superman doll or maybe a Jesus doll.) This is what Adam truly is and should be; this is the Good in flesh, God’s Will in flesh.

[Peter holds up molding clay.]

And this is molding clay from Hobby Lobby. If I press this *Eschatos Adam* into this molding clay, [Peter takes the Captain America figure and pats him into the clay, removing to make an imprint.] I make a *tupos*. Paul is telling us that this is what the *First Adam* was, and is. This is how we all begin.<sup>ix</sup>

See? If the *Last Adam* is the Good in flesh, then the *First Adam* is the imprint of the Good in flesh, in *Adamah*, in clay.<sup>x</sup>

- The First Adam is the absence of the Good in flesh...
- But at the same time, a longing for the Good in flesh...
- It’s an emptiness... It is, what it is not
- It’s not what Adam truly is, but more like a description of who he will be or should be—It’s *knowledge of the Good*, but also *the absence of the Good*.

It’s like the Law... a description of what should be.

If I think I can fill this void by myself with myself, I make a *false self*, an ego.<sup>xi</sup>

Understand? This is a description of every human soul in the beginning. You could think of it almost as an altar to the unknown God. You could think of it as a stinky manger. It is your need for Love... and you know: God is Love.

Well, I suspect this *tupos* was first formed when God breathed into the clay. But then it must’ve been further formed when the Adam sinned by taking knowledge of the Good from the tree in the Garden.

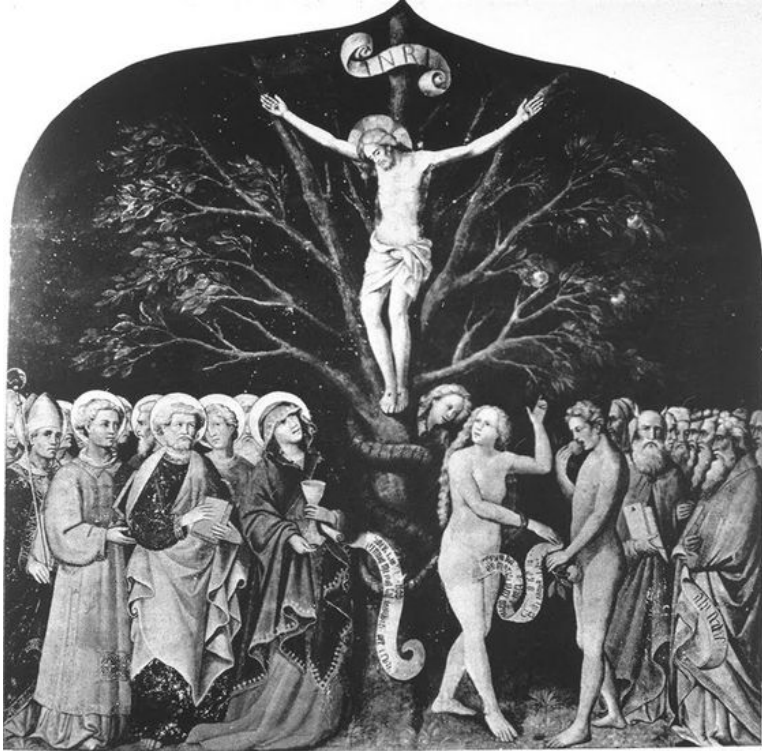


Figure 1 "Mystery of the Fall and Redemption of Man" by Giovanni da Modena (1420)

I suspect that it's formed every time we sin, every time we try to justify ourselves, attempting to make ourselves in the image of God.

Sin is taking Knowledge and Life; it's taking Love in the wrong way. Sin is a void. Grace is what fills that void, and we experience that now as Faith.

[Romans 5:14, 19-20, 11:32 show on screen.]

In Romans 5:19, right after Paul describes the *tupos*, he writes: <sup>19</sup> For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. <sup>20</sup> Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,

Then in Romans 11:32 he sums everything up · "...God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all."

He made all a *tupos*, that he might fill us with himself.

[1 Corinthians 15:22, 28, 44-55 show on screen.]

In 1 Corinthians 15:22 he sums it up this way: "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive."

15:28 · "...Then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all."

Through Christ, God is filling *all* things; but not only *filling* all things, he's subjecting them to himself.<sup>xii</sup>

Church Fathers, like Gregory of Nyssa, taught that God in Christ does this by giving us his own will—the will to love—the will to subject yourself to another.<sup>xiii</sup> It's Love that binds all things together. So, in Christ, God subjects all things to himself, but not from the outside in like a god of war who subjugates his enemies. But from the inside out like the God of Love who romances his bride and makes her his body.

That is, through Christ, God forms the void in you—the longing for love.<sup>xiv</sup> And through Christ, God gives you the will to love, for Jesus is the will of Love. And through Christ, he fills the void with Love, and makes you freely choose to Love—that's the Spirit of the Prince of Peace in you, longing for home.

v. 44 "It is sown a *psychikon* body—a soulish or natural body—it is raised a *pneumatikon* body—a spiritual body.

If there is a natural body, there is certainly also a spiritual body. [That's Christ's body: He is the Spirit in that Body; he is the Promised Seed.] Thus it is written, the first Adam became a living [soul], the last Adam, [the eschatos Adam] became a life-giving spirit."

So, when did God give you his Spirit, the Spirit of the Eschatos Adam? Well, the church has argued about this for 2,000 years. But it helps me to simply take the Bible literally.

[1 Corinthians 3:16 shows on screen.]

Paul writes, "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16)

See? That means that when God goes to all the trouble of describing that old stone temple in the Old Testament, he's actually describing the human soul.

You remember that the temple was this large, mostly empty, stone building in which people could walk around. But at the heart of the temple was the inner Sanctuary, which was filled with the Spirit of God, presence of God, and Jesus is the Presence of God.<sup>xv</sup> A huge curtain separated the priests from the Presence of God in the Holy of Holies.

It seems that this Presence comes to your temple the moment God breathes into the clay—for that breath, it forms the void and also inhabits the void.<sup>xvi</sup>

[Image: Cartoon shows on screen of two door-to-door evangelists standing at the door of a woman, asking, "Have you found Jesus?" Jesus is shown in the cartoon hiding behind the curtain in the woman's living room.]

Remember this cartoon? See, I think it's that breath that makes you seek in the first place. It's the Spirit of Jesus whispering to you from behind the curtain: "Look for me! Look for me! Look for me!" But when we come to Christ, because Christ revealed himself to us, that curtain rips from top to

bottom, just as it did in the old stone temple on the day that Christ lifted his head and cried “It is finished,” and delivered up his Spirit.

When we see him and surrender to him, his spirit begins to fill our temple from the inside out:

- The old man dies, and the new man begins to live.
- The false-self dies, and the true-self is formed.
- The perishable is filled with the imperishable.
- The temporal form is replaced with the eternal substance.
- The *Last Adam* is formed in the void (the *tupos*) that was the *first Adam*.

That is, Christ himself is formed in you, and it’s no longer you that live but Christ who lives in you<sup>xvii</sup>; he is who you most truly are.<sup>xviii</sup> Jesus is God’s Judgment of you. In the very place you imagined that you could create yourself, you come to realize that you have been created and have always been dearly loved.

And now, what makes this truly challenging to talk about is that, like the Bible teaches, the Holy of Holies is eternal<sup>xix</sup>, Jesus is eternal, the Seed is eternal, and you must also somehow be and become eternal. For as Paul writes, “the mortal must put on immortality.” It will happen, for it *has* happened.<sup>xx</sup>

But right now, as King Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes a thousand years before the death and resurrection of Jesus, “God has put eternity into the heart of man... yet not so he can find out what God has done from beginning to end.”

..And so Adam is made to seek.

And so, Paul says to the Athenians, “He made from one man, every nation of man... to seek him.”<sup>xxi</sup>

You seek him, who is Love, because Love made you to seek Love. He formed the void that is the altar to the unknown God, that is, Love created your need for Love. But he also gives you the desire to Love, and love is losing yourself and finding yourself in another; love is self-sacrifice.

Love builds the altar and love even provides the lamb.  
Love consigns you to disobedience and gives you the desire for Mercy.  
Love allows you to build a false self that you may witness the revelation of your true self.  
Love allows you to sin, that you would seek grace and surrender to Grace.  
Love makes you seek himself.  
Love is the Peace Child in you, longing for home, the city of Shalom, Jerusalem (Jeru-shalom—the city of peace).

You have been created to seek and to find, for you have been found and God is always seeking you and seeking through you.<sup>xxii</sup> You seek him in the depths of you own soul—as Jesus said, “*Love the lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength,*”— that is, let God inhabit all of your temple... He’s whispering to you from behind the curtain.

You seek him in yourself and you seek him in your neighbor—as Jesus said, “*Love your neighbor as yourself.*”



And who's your neighbor? Well Samaritans, Jews in Israel, Greeks in Athens, The Sawi in New Guinea, the people in this room, and everyone at the staff Christmas party. Do you understand? There's a baby in every manger!

You are a temple; they are also a temple, and together we're all one big temple. The New Jerusalem, the City of Peace is a Temple, coming down from Heaven to earth.

Last week we saw that God hides behind a curtain in the depths of the Temple; God is playing Hide and seek with his children... or maybe "Sardines."

"Better than hide-and-seek," writes Robert Fulghum, "I like the game called Sardines. In Sardines the person who is "It" goes and hides, and everybody goes looking for him. When you find him, you get in with him and hide there with him. Pretty soon everybody is hiding together, all stacked in a small space like puppies in a pile. And pretty soon, somebody giggles and somebody laughs, [they give themselves away with laughter,] and everybody gets found. Medieval theologians even described God in Hide-and-Seek terms, calling him Deus Absconditus. But me, I think old God is a Sardines player, and will be found the same way everybody gets found in Sardines—by the sound of laughter of those heaped together at the end."xxiii

My friend Sharon Hersh was playing Sardines with one of her friend's children. When the three-year old found them all together in their hiding place in some dark and terrifying place, she gleefully exclaimed, "Everything I'm looking for is here!"xxiv

When you finally walk through the gates of the New Jerusalem, I bet that's what you'll say: "Everything I'm looking for is here!" The New Jerusalem is how God plays Sardines with all of his creation; the New Jerusalem is a temple... and that temple is a Body. It's the Body of Christ, the Eschatos Adam, the Peace Child; it's the city of peace, it's the body of Peace—Jeru Shalom. "Shalom" means everything in it's place, in harmony, and entirely happy.

God made from one man, every nation of man... to seek him, says Paul. God makes every man with his Word on a tree in a Garden at the edge of space,time, and eternity.

[Image: showing on screen is previous painting of "Mystery of the Fall and Redemption of Man" by Giovanni da Modena (1420)]

That tree is the Judgment of God, the Revelation of Love, and the door to the new Creation.

A couple of weeks ago after church, Luke Vakarrela said to me: "Hey Peter, how do you explain the death of Jesus to a four-year old?"

I said something like, "Yeah that's a challenge. It's everything; it's our creation, salvation, and the redemption of all things... How do you explain it to a fifty-year old?" Then I said, "This is my best advice: Watch *The Iron Giant*, and tell Frankie, tell yourself, tell everyone, Jesus is like the Iron Giant... and you are Hogarth."

Twenty-one years ago, I took my kids to see *The Iron Giant*, and at the end of the movie, they all thought I'd lost it because I wouldn't stop weeping. But all at once, all these Bible verses,

experiences, and theological concepts all came together... And I wanted to stand up and scream “Eureka! (I found it!) and “*Olly, Olly, oxen free,*” “*All ye, all ye, on the outs, come in free!*”

Later I would learn that what I saw was the thing that the Early Church Fathers saw when they looked to the Cross and then shared the Gospel.<sup>xxv</sup>

The Iron Giant mysteriously falls to earth from heaven, and it becomes clear that he’s capable of utterly destroying humanity... he’s *a god of war*. (On Christmas Eve you’ll be reminded that Jesus is the Commander of God’s Army—He’s utterly capable of annihilating all things with a thought.) Well, in the movie, the Iron Giant is befriended by a lonely and fatherless little boy named Hogarth, who says to the giant, “*You are what you choose to be.*”

God is Love, and God freely chooses to Love, and Jesus is the incarnation of that Judgment—God is free to be what God chooses to be. And God chooses to be the *Eschatos Adam*, the *Superman—Jesus*.

In the movie, the world powers learn of the Iron Giant, and terrified of the Iron Giant, they launch a nuclear warhead to destroy the Iron Giant, not realizing that by destroying the giant, they destroy us all. Then, like Jesus said to his disciples, the Iron Giant says to Hogarth, “*Where I am going you cannot follow me now...*”<sup>xxvi</sup> And Then he saves the world.

Video Clip: *The Iron Giant*  
Warner Brothers, 1999

*Scene opens with government official shouting, grabbing subordinate by the shirt.*

Official        That missile is targeted toward the giant’s current position! Where is the giant, Mensley?

*Both turn to look at Giant directly behind them. Both cringe.*

*Scene switches to Hogarth pointing up, with crowd around him looking up and shouting, “There it is!”*

Hogarth        It’s a missile—when it comes down...everyone will die.

*View switches to above the giant’s head as he looks down on all the people. Then he kneels down and touches Hogarth on the shoulder.*

Giant:         Hogarth, you stay; I go. No following.

*Giant walks away down the street.*

Hogarth        I love you.

*The Giant blasts off into outer space toward a rocket that is going to destroy the Earth. The Giant hears Hogarth’s voice in his mind: “You are who you choose to be.”*

Giant         Superman!

*The Giant intercepts the nuclear warhead and both explode.*

When Jesus, The *Superman*, was lifted up on the tree for the sins of the world, he saved the world. And yet, the Revelation tells us that the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world.<sup>xxvii</sup> And then at the end of the world and edge of eternity in Revelation, we see the Lamb standing, as if he’d just been slain on the Judgment Seat of God.<sup>xxviii</sup>

You see, what Jesus did on the tree in the Garden is the revelation of what God our Father is doing for all eternity and revealing in time.<sup>xxix</sup> It's the Revelation of Love.

Well, with the sacrifice of himself, the Iron Giant creates an imprint on Hogarth's *psyche*, a longing in Hogarth's heart—an empty place, like an altar or a manger. Actually, he creates it in everyone's heart in the movie, for he dies for everyone; he exposes the sin of everyone and makes everyone long for grace as the pieces of his broken body rain down all over the face of the earth... Then this happens.

Video Clip: <i>Iron Giant</i> Warner Brothers, 1999	
<i>Hogarth and his parents receive a parcel containing a piece of the Iron Giant.</i>	
Dad	Oh, Hey, Hogarth—the general sent this to you.
Hogarth	What is it?
Hogarth's dad	He said it was the only part recovered. He said you should have it.
<i>Hogarth looks down sadly at the metal piece in his hand.</i>	
Hogarth	I miss him.
<i>Hogarth looks behind him to the statue of the Iron Giant behind him. The scene fades to night as Hogarth returns to his home and is shown asleep in bed with a box on the nightstand beside him.</i>	

Did you see the altar, the manger-- the box on the nightstand next to Hogarth's head? It represents the empty place in Hogarth's soul (*psyche*). And did you see what was in the box, in the manger, in that altar? A piece of the Iron Giant—a piece of the Prince of Peace.

...Kinda like—Body Broken and Blood Shed.

...Kinda like—the hopes and fears of all the years.

...Kinda like—a baby in a manger.

...Kinda like—Christ in you, “the hope of Glory.”<sup>xxx</sup>

...Kinda like—a decision in you, to be who you are, the body of the Superman.

You know, the First Adam was a *tupos* of the *Eschatos* Adam. And together, according to Scripture, we all are that Adam. So maybe each of us is Adam in some weird way, but also a *piece* of Adam.

[Peter picks up the action figure on the table and presses the figure's hand into mold.]

So maybe you're the *tupos*, the imprint, of the hand... and over the span of your life—through *failure* and forgiveness, *seeking* and finding, *longing* and fulfillment—you discover you actually are the hand of the Superman. And maybe *I* discover that I'm the foot of the Superman.

And that's neat, but it only makes us seek...because what good is a foot without a leg, without a body, without an arm, without a hand, and ultimately without a head?

Ephesians 1:10 · This is the “plan for the fullness of time to [*anakephalaaiosasthai* “recapitulate” in Latin, to bring together under one head] unite all things in Christ Jesus.” And how does he do this? Well, not from the *outside in*, but from the *inside out*.

Through *failure* and forgiveness, *longing* and fulfillment, *seeking* and finding—God will give to each of us the Faith, the Hope, and the Love of the Super Man. “*You are what you choose to be...*” And you have been predestined to freely choose to be who you ultimately are, the Super Man.

And “The Government will be on his shoulders;” it’s his Head... and you have the mind of Christ—it’s in your heart; He rules from the Judgment Seat in your soul; it’s Faith.

So, you will seek, and you will find everything and everyone you’re looking for.

Video Clip: The Iron Giant  
Warner Brothers, 1999

*Hogarth is laying in the dark in his bed and suddenly his eyes open. He opens up the box where he had placed the Giant’s bolt and the box is empty. Hogarth looks under the bed. A light begins flashing (from the bolt) outside Hogarth’s window and Hogarth smiles. He opens the window and the bolt falls to the ground and begins to move away from the house.*

Hogarth (happily) See you later!

*The bolt continues to move “toward” something and soon other “parts” of the Giant are seen and all are moving toward a light and beeping sound.*

*The next scene is the Giant’s head with a light and antenna on the top of his head. Suddenly his eyes open.*

So anyway, St. Paul stands on War God Hill, and he says to the Athenians:

**“The God who made the world and everything in it... he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, <sup>27</sup> that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him...**

**<sup>30</sup> The times of ignorance God overlooked, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent, [have a new mind]<sup>31</sup> because he has fixed a day on [en: in] which he will judge the world in [en] righteousness by [en: in] a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance [pistis: faith] to all by raising him from the dead.”**

That word *pistis* appears 243 times in the New Testament. In my English Standard Version, it’s translated as “faith” 238 times, “faithfulness” 3 times, and “belief” 1 time—so 242 times it’s translated as “faith” or a word that means “faith.” But this one time, in all the Bible, they chose to translate it “assurance.”

Literally it reads: “God has given faith to all by raising Jesus from the dead.” Do you understand? Faith in you is the faith of Jesus in you; Faith is a gift.

Faith in you is a piece of the Super Man in you, rising from the dead in you. God has given it to all, according to Paul, even if now it lies in the depths of your being like a seed, apparently dead.... But it doesn’t stay dead.

Faith in you is the life of the Peace Child in you, a piece of the Superman in you, his choice in you, his judgment. And what is the Judgment on that day? Well that Judgment *is* the Superman.

Paul doesn't say *God has appointed this man to judge...*

Jesus said, "The Father judges no one but has given all judgment to the son."<sup>xxxii</sup> And then he said, "I judge no one."<sup>xxxii</sup>

Paul doesn't say God has appointed this man to judge. Paul reveals that this man—the Eschatos Man—*is* God's judgment.

And "that day," Judgment Day, is the day that you encounter Jesus Christ, crucified and risen from the dead.

Paul clearly taught that this event is "*the end of the ages,*" and it has happened,<sup>xxxiii</sup> it does happen, and it will happen at the edge of your time and eternity. The Judgment is the revelation of Reality, and it forces a question: Will you freely choose to be who God has chosen you to be—*the image and likeness of himself, the Superman, the Body of the Prince of Peace...?*

This is the Judgment: {Peter points to the communion table behind him.}

## Communion

The Super Man took bread, and he broke it, saying, "This is my body given to you. Take and eat. And do it in remembrance of me." This is how we remember him. This is how his members come together. That's the judgment of God.

And in the same way, he took the cup, saying, "This is the covenant in my blood; drink of it, all of you, and do it in remembrance of me." This is how we are created, saved, sanctified—finished in the image of God.

As long as you refuse this judgment, you will remain in outer darkness where men weep and gnash their teeth. Alone.

And yet, you will ultimately surrender to this judgment. For without this judgment you wouldn't even exist.<sup>xxxiv</sup>

This is the judgment:

*"Let us make Adam in our own image and likeness."  
"So God created Ha Adam, the Man, in his own image".  
"In the image of God he created him."  
"Male and Female he created them."*

And at the end of the Sixth Day and the edge of eternity, God saw everything that he had made and behold, it was very Good. He lifted his head on the tree in the garden and said, "*It is finished.*"

To enter God's rest, you must agree with his Judgment. I am convinced that ultimately you will. But you why not do it today, right now?

Pray this with me: “Lord God, I surrender my judgment to your judgment. I’m not my salvation. I’m not my own Creator. You are the Creator. God is Salvation—Jesus. Amen.”

And so, *break* the bread and dip it in the cup—it was you that took the life of the Superman—and *for you* the Superman gave his life.

Then *ingest* that piece of the Superman into the empty space in your being. He will rise from the dead and makes all things new. That’s called the Gospel. And you will worship.

## Benediction

And so Lord God, we thank you that you have made us to seek because from the foundation of the world, you sought and you found us. God, I thank you that you are always better than we thought. The love of Jesus is always deeper than we know. And the Spirit is everywhere, working the wonders of mercy. And so seeking will not disappoint us. I think the way that Paul says it in Scripture is “Hope will not disappoint us.” That’s impossible...for the one we hope in is the end and the beginning, and the meaning of all things. And so we worship you, Lord God, in Jesus’s name. Amen.

For the past 1500 years, the institutional church has been so preoccupied with keeping our enemies out of the Kingdom. And in that endeavor, I believe we have utterly distorted the judgment of God.

The Judgment of God is to make from one man, all people, that they would seek God and find God and freely choose to be the manifestation of God—that is one man, the Body of the Prince of Peace, the New Jerusalem. The city of peace.

People sometimes ask, “*What difference does it make?*” And I’m sincerely baffled—it’s the difference between *nothing* and *everything!* It’s the difference between the void and all creation. And right now, it means: There’s a baby in every manger.... Believe that, and nothing will be the same. And every day will be Christmas Day.

## Endnotes

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<sup>i</sup> He had actually cannibalized the child. I’ll mention this in the footnote, for it’s a bit much in the sermon. And yet, it is precisely what we confess every time we come to communion. We have crucified the Christ and consumed the knowledge of Good and evil, the Body of Wisdom. We confess our sin, and at the same time receive God’s Mercy—what we took, he freely gave from the foundation of the world: His Life.

<sup>ii</sup> Paul was actually part of the tribe of Benjamin, but they had basically been assimilated into the tribe of Judah and all were referred to as “Jews.”

iii It gets translated out because we don't think it means what it says... and we want to be politically correct with our gender references, but in Biblical thought, Eve is Adam—in fact we're all Adam.

iv Matthew 7:7, Luke 11:9

v "No one seeks for God, at least not until he makes himself fit for us."  
God is our Helper our husband, and he offers us his heart on a tree.

vi I wonder what God said when he breathed into the clay—maybe "my beloved."

vii That's the Holy Spirit... and it remains the 6<sup>th</sup> day until you surrender your breath and begin to breathe in rhythm with your creator. Jesus is firstborn from the dead, and we must be born from above. You see we're still being created... still learning to seek and surrender.

viii The verb, *mello*, means something like "him who is about to be." So most literally translated, "the imprint of the one who is about to be."

ix Therefore the status of Adam is lower than the status of Christ, the sin of Adam counts for [far?] less than the righteousness of Christ. So also the relationship of the many to Adam is less significant than their other relationship to Christ....Our relationship to Adam is a subordinate relationship, because the guilt and punishment we incur in Adam have no independent reality of their own but are only the dark shadows of the grace and life we find in Christ.

- Karl Barth, *Christ and Adam* (New York, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956), p. 45, 48

We have come *to* Christ as believers and Christians, because we had already come *from* Christ, so that there was nothing else for us to do but believe in Him....What is Christian is secretly but fundamentally identical with what is universally human. Nothing in true human nature can ever be alien or irrelevant to the Christian; nothing in true human nature can ever attack or surpass or annul the objective reality of the Christian's union with Christ....So it is Christ that reveals the true nature of man. Man's nature in Adam is not, as is usually assumed, his true and original nature; it is only truly human at all in so far as it reflects and corresponds to essential human nature as it is found in Christ.

-Karl Barth, *Christ and Adam* (New York, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956), p. 111-112

x When Adam fell, God's son fell; because of the true union made in heaven, God's son could not leave Adam, for by Adam I understand all men. Adam fell from life to death in the valley of this wretched world, and after that into hell. God's son fell with Adam into the valley of the virgin's womb (and she was the fairest daughter of Eve, in order to free Adam from guilt in heaven and in earth; and with this great power he fetched him out of hell.

The wisdom and the goodness in the servant represent God's son. That he was poorly dressed as a laborer and standing near the left-hand side represents Christ's Humanity and Adam with all the consequent trouble and weakness; for in this parable our good Lord showed his own son and Adam as but one man. The **strength** and goodness which we have come from Jesus Christ; the **weakness** and the blindness which we have come from Adam, and these two were represented in the servant."

- Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*. p.121

xi But to think that God will fill the void with his Self, is faith.

xii Teilhard de Chardin writes: "Everything that rises must converge." In other words, higher levels of evolution are always a movement toward greater unity. Along the way there will be differentiation and complexity, but paradoxically, that increased complexity moves life to a greater level of unity, until in the end there is only God who is "all in all" (see [1 Corinthians 15:28](#)). If it isn't moving toward unity, it is not a higher level of consciousness.

- Adapted from Richard Rohr, *Christ, Cosmology, & Consciousness: A Reframing of How We See* (CAC: 2010), From Daily Meditation 11-3-16

xiii Like Origen, and mindful of Paul (1Corinthians and Romans), Gregory insists on the Adam-Christ parallel in his discourse on the foundations of apokatastasis [restoration]. If death entered the world due to the sin of one human, another human's obedience heals the consequences of that disobedience, and by means of his resurrection all humanity rises with him; thus, Christ annihilates the death that had been brought about by Adam's sin (Contr. c. Apoll. 21, GNO III,1, 160–161). Both Adam and Christ can recapitulate all humanity because humanity is a unity, a whole. This is a concept that Origen had already hammered home in his anti-Valentinian polemic. Throughout his *In illud* Gregory identifies the body of Christ with the whole of humanity, therefore also identifying the Church, which is the body of Christ, with all humanity at least in the perspective of the telos [the perfection, the end]. I have demonstrated elsewhere how this notion is drawn from Origen, 317 and how Gregory relies on Origen for his core argument that the salvific submission of Christ to the Father refers, not to Christ's own divinity, but to his "body," that is, all human beings. This constellation of concepts rests on a strong basic notion of the unity of human nature, which in Gregory's words, forms one and the same "lump" or "mass" ..., one and the same "fullness" or "totality" ... This unity is, not by accident, especially emphasized by Gregory in connection with the unity of humanity at its first creation and the unity will be restored in the final apokatastasis... The totality of humanity was included in the first human being, and it is included in Christ as well. It is not simply the individual human being that is in the image of God, but also, and primarily, the full totality of humanity. The full realization of this being in the image of God will take place at the eventual apokatastasis, when the totality of human nature will be reconstituted into its perfect unity and will make up "the body of Christ." ... This super-body lives by its union with its Head, who is Christ, whose life is shared by the body itself (De Perf. GNO VIII,1, 197-198).

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- Ilaria L.E. Ramelli *The Christian Doctrine of Apokatastasis*, 416 ff.

<sup>xiv</sup> Simone Weil said, "It is grace that forms the void inside of us and it is grace alone that can fill the void."

- Quoted by Richard Rohr, *Everything Belongs: The Gift of Contemplative Prayer*, p. 46

<sup>xv</sup> In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old. – Isaiah 63:9

<sup>xvi</sup> The day of universal revelation, Barth suggests, as itself the day of judgment, will disclose that Jesus Christ himself has always somehow accompanied every member of the human race. If not directly through revelation by grace to, then he will have done so at least indirectly in some unknown and incognito form. That form will at least be divested of its hiddenness and revealed to each one for what it was and is and is to be, in its gracious significance and inevitable judgment, before the consuming fire of God. . . . We know, states Barth, "only one certain triumph of hell"-the cross of Golgotha on which Jesus died for our sins-and "this triumph of hell took place in order that it would never again be able to triumph over anyone. . . . We know of only One who was abandoned in this way, and only of One who was lost. This One was Jesus Christ. And he was lost (and found again) in order that none should be lost apart from him" (II/2, p. 498). When we know this One by faith and see what he endured of the sake of the world, then no matter how desperate the situation may be, we will not abandon hope for anyone, not even for ourselves.

- George Hunsinger, *Disruptive Grace*, p. 248

<sup>xvii</sup> Galatians 2:20

<sup>xviii</sup> Jesus is not another religion. Jesus is what God believes about you - Francois Du Toit

Man is not just like a fire sputtering for a few moments, then fizzling out, darkness before and after. Man is not the plaything of the universe, not a thing to be teased with happiness and crushed with sorrow, a thing without meaning among the many things of the earth. *Man is God appearing in the universe*, appearing visibly in the midst of all he created. That changes the meaning of man, doesn't it?

I can see you Masai shaking your heads and saying, No! Man is not God. We know man, and he is filled with evil. He fights, he kills, he destroys, he does everything to separate others, and to separate himself from them.

I say to you Masai; you have not known man, you have never seen a man. Creation is not yet finished. What you see is creation groaning and moaning even until now, yearning to be finished and completed, to be the body of God.

But suppose the fullness of time had come and the work of God was perfect, and there appeared a man a who was perfectly a man, according to the plan of God, a man completely human. If, once upon a time, there was such a man who was so completely a man, so perfectly human, then there would be no other way to describe him than to say; this man is God-God appearing in the universe. Isn't that so? Jesus was that man.

Perhaps the really surprising thing that the man Jesus did in his lifetime was to show us, not only what God is, but what man is.

- Vincent J. Donovan, *Rediscovering Christianity*, p.57

<sup>xix</sup> Hebrews 9:9

<sup>xx</sup> The fact that the Word become flesh undoubtedly means that, without ceasing to be eternity, in its very power as eternity, eternity became time. Yes, it became time. What happens in Jesus Christ is not simply that God gives us time, our created time, as the form of our own existence in the world. . . . In Jesus Christ it comes about that God takes time to himself, that he himself, the eternal One, becomes temporal, that he is present for us in the form of our own existence and our own world, not simply embracing our time and ruling it, but submitting himself to it, and permitting created time to become and be the form of his eternity. (II/1, p. 616)

- Karl Barth as quoted by George Hunsinger in *Disruptive Grace*, p. 203

<sup>xxi</sup> Ecclesiastes 3:11

<sup>xxii</sup> And all those under heaven who shall come there shall do so by longing and wishing; and this wish and longing was shown in the servant standing in front of the Lord, or, to put it differently, in the Son standing in front of the Father in Adam's tunic; for the wish and the craving of all mankind that shall be saved appeared in Jesus; for Jesus is all who shall be saved and all who shall be saved are Jesus; and all through God's love, along with the obedience, humility and patience, and other virtues which pertain to us.

- Julian of Norwich, *Revelations of Divine Love*, p. 122-123

<sup>xxiii</sup> Robert Fulghum, *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarden* (New York, NY: Ivy Books, 1986), pp. 55-56

<sup>xxiv</sup> Sharon A. Hersh, "Mom, Sex is NO big deal!", p. 111-112

<sup>xxv</sup> He has therefore, in His work of recapitulation, summed up all things, both waging war against our enemy, and crushing him who had at the beginning led us away captives in Adam ..the enemy would not have been fairly vanquished, unless it had been a man [born] of woman who conquered him. ... And therefore does the Lord profess Himself to be the Son of man, comprising in Himself that original man out of whom the woman was fashioned, in order that, as our species went down to death through a vanquished man, so we may ascend to life again through a victorious one; and as through a man death received the palm [of victory] against us, so again by a man we may receive the palm against death - Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.21.1 in A. Roberts and J. Donaldson (eds), *The Writings of Irenaeus* Vol. 2 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1869), p. 110-111



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“...salvation...this discovery of ourselves is always a losing of ourselves—a death and resurrection. “Your life is hidden with Christ in God.” The discovery of ourselves in God, and of God in ourselves, by a charity that also finds all other men in God with ourselves is, therefore, not the discovery of ourselves but of Christ. First of all, it is the realization that “I live now not I but Christ liveth in me,” and secondly it is the penetration of the tremendous mystery which St. Paul sketched out boldly—and darkly—in his great Epistles: the mystery of the recapitulation, the summing up of all in Christ. It is to see the world in Christ, it’s beginning and it’s end. To see all things coming forth from God in the Logos who becomes incarnate and descends into the lowest depths of His own creation and gathers all to Himself in order to restore it finally to the Father at the end of time. To find “ourselves” then is to find not only our poor, limited, perplexed souls, but to find the power of God that raised Christ from the dead and “built us together in Him unto a habitation of God in the Spirit” ([Ephesians 2:22](#))

- Thomas Merton, *No Man is an Island* pp. xv-xvi

xxvi [John 13:36](#)

xxvii [Revelation 13:8 NKJV](#)

xxviii [Revelation 5:6](#)

xxix This choice of his own being, in the full knowledge of what he did; this active willing to be the Son of the Father, perfect in obedience—is that in Jesus which responds and corresponds to the self-existence of God. Jesus rose at once to the height of his being, set himself down on the throne of his nature, in the act of subjecting himself to the will of the Father as his only good, the only reason of his existence. When he died on the cross, he did that, in the wild weather of his outlying provinces in the torture of the body of his revelation, which he had done at home in glory and gladness. From the infinite beginning—for here I can speak only by contradictions—he completed and held fast the eternal circle of his existence in saying, ‘Thy will, not mine, be done!’

- George MacDonald, sermon on [John 1:3-4](#).

xxx To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. – [Colossians 1:27](#)

xxxi [John 5:22](#)

xxxii [John 8:15](#)

xxxiii [1 Corinthians 10:11](#), [Hebrews 9:26](#)

xxxiv “If there is a natural body, there must also be a spiritual body”

There would be no shadow self, without a true self.

There can be no *tupos* in clay, without the substance that formed it.