



THERE IS
NOTHING
LEFT FOR YOU
TO DO

Echoes of Grace

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contents



3 There Is Nothing Left for You to Do



8 Restored



12 Rock Slide

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THERE IS **NOTHING** *LEFT FOR YOU* **TO DO**

Many years ago Nicholas was raised in religion, but he was notorious for his pursuit of pleasure. However, like you and me, he had both a memory and a conscience.

Nicholas began to remember the many wicked things he had done and the warnings he had received. His conscience convicted him. He thought, "It may be true that there is an eternal punishment for sinners!" He had heard of the "**lake of fire**" and thought, "If anyone is ever likely to be there, it is myself—for I have never seen or heard of anyone who has sinned as I have done."

His sins lost their pleasure. The horrors of hell haunted him—he longed for deliverance from his past, from his guilt—from himself! He despaired



of ever discovering a way for sinners to be saved. He feared that a long life of penance and a thousand years in purgatory would not be enough to find the favor of a holy God. What could he do?

He had heard of a monastery whose rules and restrictions were the most severe of any, and he decided to go there to seek his soul's salvation, if possible. He would become a monk and endure all of the harsh discipline demanded, if only he could be sure of pardon.

That monastery was about 1,500 miles from his home, and he walked the whole way because he thought that the long, hot journey might count as a part of his penance. Finally, faint and fearful, he reached the old building and rang the bell. An old monk slowly opened the door.

"What do you want?" asked the aged monk.

"I want to be saved," replied Nicholas.

"Tell me what you mean," said the old man.

Nicholas answered, "I have been a far greater

sinner than anyone I ever heard of. I do not think it is possible that I can be saved. But I am willing to do whatever may be done, if only I may have a faint hope of escaping eternal punishment. If it must be by spending all of the rest of my life in penance, the harder it is, the more I shall be thankful. Only tell me what to do, and I will gladly do it."

A SURPRISING ANSWER

"If you are ready to do what I tell you," replied the old monk, "you will go back to Germany. There was One down here who has done the whole work in your place before you came—and He has finished it. He did it instead of you, so there is nothing left for you to do! It is all done."

"Who has done it?" asked a stunned Nicholas.

"Did you never hear of the Lord Jesus Christ?" replied the old man.

"Yes, of course I have heard of Him."

"Do you know where He is?" enquired the old man.

"Yes, of course I know. He is in heaven."

"But tell me," said the old man, "do you know why He is in heaven?"

“No, except that He is always in heaven.”

“He was not always in heaven,” replied the old man. “He came down here to do the work you want to do yourself. He came down here to bear the punishment of your sin. He is in heaven now because the work is done. If it were not so, He would still be here. He came down to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself!

“Do you not know what He said on the cross? **‘It is finished.’** *What was finished? The work you want to begin!* And now, if you want to do something worse than all you have ever done—you may cast contempt on the blessed and perfect work of the Son of God by trying to do what only He could do and has finished. It would be as if you said, ‘Christ has not done enough. I must add to the work which He has declared is finished.’

“I stay here where Christ is insulted because I am old and can only walk to the gate. But you can go, and I urge you to go back to your friends and to tell them what the Lord has done for you.”

Said Nicholas, “I stayed three days, and the old man told me much more of the work of the Lord Jesus—not only what His death had done for me, but also how He had risen again to give me eternal life and how He had won a place for me in heaven, above the angels, where He is waiting for me and



for all who believe in Him. Now I tell any who will listen the wonderful news of the perfect work of Christ.”

“Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God”
(1 Peter 3:18).

“Now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself”
(Hebrews 9:26).

Friend, do you rest in Christ and in His work?

If you still think that you can help God out in doing the work He says is finished, you will benefit from reading *Restored*. ◀




RESTORED

It was supposed to be the romantic, gentle portrait of Jesus Christ. The original artist, Elias Garcia Martinez, was talented and his delicate brush strokes on the fresh plaster about 100 years ago had left a locally famous fresco painting in Borja, Spain. But images, especially ones created on plaster in humid climates, have a way of cracking, chipping, peeling and decaying.

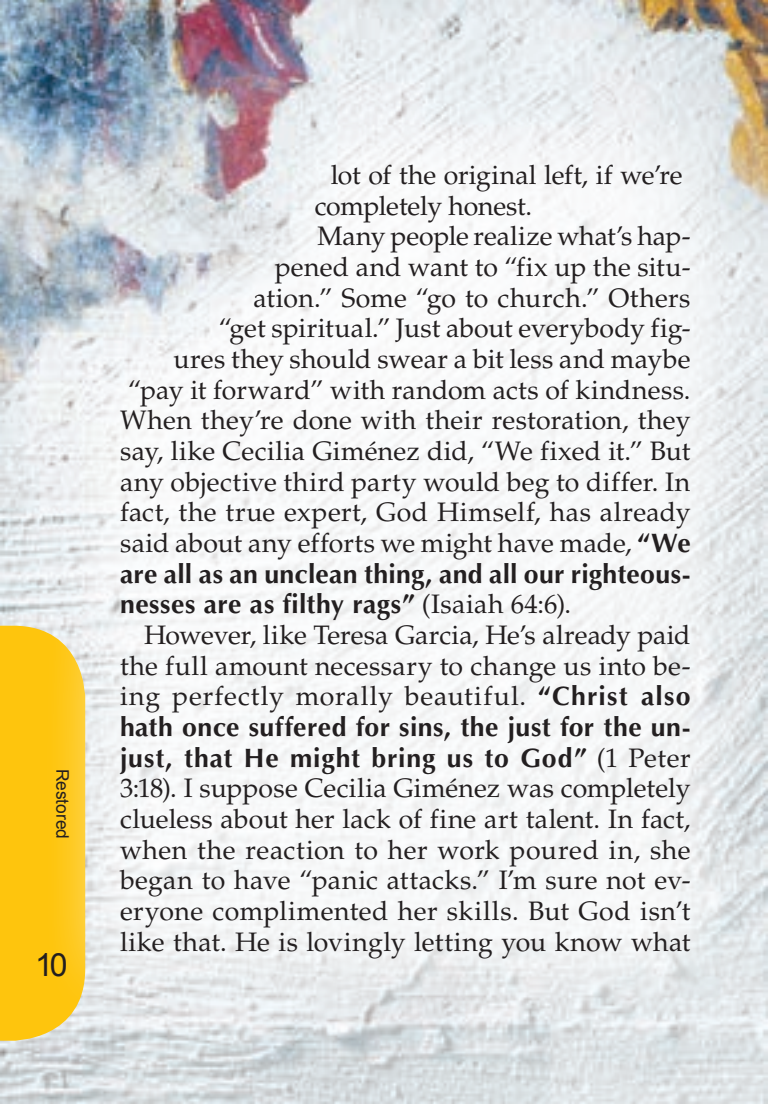
His granddaughter, Teresa Garcia, noticed and got to work. She raised enough money to get the restoration rolling. Expert art restorers would be called in, the work would be lovingly restored, and Elias Garcia Martinez's genius would be freshly admired.

But 85-year-old Cecilia Giménez didn't know anything about the plans for restoration and she



had her own paints and a paintbrush. Why, she'd even done some lovely little paintings of her own on canvas. It was even pretty clear to her that the old fresco needed some fixing. So with all good intentions, she set to work. On came the thick globs of paint. First the fading tunic disappeared under the heavy layers. Next came the touch-up of the delicate brush work of the face. Tourists are now arriving by the thousands in the sleepy town of Borja to chuckle, groan and marvel. The result has to be seen to be believed. A quick Internet search would show you what she came up with.


You and I were created by God. As it says in Genesis 1:27, **“God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them.”** This isn't talking about having the properly-shaped mouth and a certain arch to the eyebrow. God created us to be like Him in love and holiness. God never lashes out in irritation, shades the truth to look a bit better or helps Himself to someone else's things. But we do. Constantly. We aren't like a tattered portrait of the one true God; there's not a whole



lot of the original left, if we're completely honest.

Many people realize what's happened and want to "fix up the situation." Some "go to church." Others "get spiritual." Just about everybody figures they should swear a bit less and maybe "pay it forward" with random acts of kindness. When they're done with their restoration, they say, like Cecilia Giménez did, "We fixed it." But any objective third party would beg to differ. In fact, the true expert, God Himself, has already said about any efforts we might have made, "**We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags**" (Isaiah 64:6).

However, like Teresa Garcia, He's already paid the full amount necessary to change us into being perfectly morally beautiful. "**Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God**" (1 Peter 3:18). I suppose Cecilia Giménez was completely clueless about her lack of fine art talent. In fact, when the reaction to her work poured in, she began to have "panic attacks." I'm sure not everyone complimented her skills. But God isn't like that. He is lovingly letting you know what



He's done to put away the mess of sin in your life and make you like Himself. However, anything short of letting Him do all the work of restoration won't be accepted. He doesn't ask us to add to, touch up, or assist Him in any way. He doesn't want our supposed good works. Instead He says, **"Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"** (Matthew 11:28). Will you do that today?

God's work of restoration wasn't a pleasant paint job. It required the supreme sacrifice to pay for the sins we have committed. You'll get a sense of that in *Rock Slide*. ◀



ROCK SLIDE

One autumn day, a dad was taking his family hiking in the Colorado Rockies along a popular trail to view a waterfall. They were walking along at the base of a steep mountain when a solid rock face high above them abruptly and unexpectedly splintered into rocks and boulders forming a huge rock slide. The man had just enough time to make a painful decision. He used his body as a shield to protect his thirteen-year-old daughter. Tragically, the falling rocks claimed the lives of the man, his wife, an older daughter and two other members of his extended family. The thirteen-year-old girl survived because of the brave and selfless action of her dad.

Do you know that nearly 2000 years ago a man voluntarily gave his life to shield you from death? His name is the Lord Jesus Christ, and He died on Calvary's cross so that sinners who place their faith in Him might escape the eternal death their sins deserve. **"Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures"** (1 Corinthians 15:3).

The man in the rock slide could only use his body to shield one member of his family. However, the death of the Lord Jesus has the power to shield every member of the human race from the judgment their sins deserve. He has this power because of the supreme excellence of His person. He was God come in the flesh, so that He was both man and God in the same person. Although He lived among sinful men, He lived a life of pureness and unblemished righteousness. Of all the men who ever lived, He is the only One who never sinned. As a man He could suffer and die. As God His death has limitless power to put sins away forever. **“Now once in the end of the world hath He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself”** (Hebrews 9:26).

Sin needs to be put away because judgment is certain to fall on all those who continue on in their sinful ways. The final judgment will take place when impenitent sinners are cast out of God’s presence forever to spend eternity in the darkness and fiery atmosphere of hell. Before that judgment falls, won’t you turn from your sin and take the Lord Jesus as your Saviour? You can’t by good works ever deserve God’s forgiveness, but God is willing to forgive you on the behalf of what His Son has done the moment you truly believe in Him. Those who trust



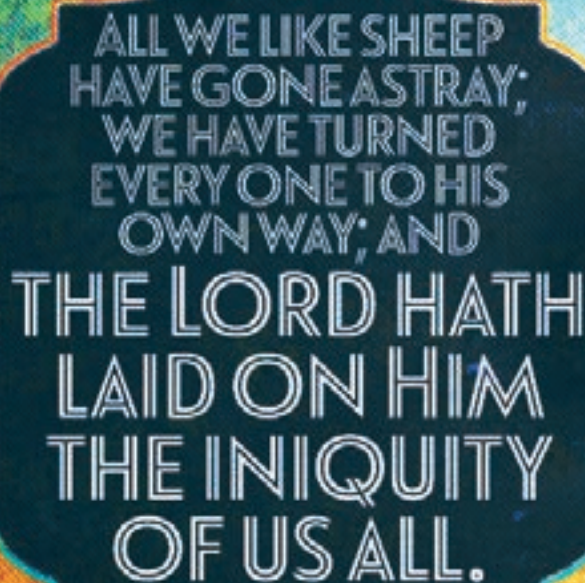
in His name will be shielded from the eternal death their sins deserve. There is no other way to escape the judgment to come.

Life, as the story of the rock slide illustrates, is uncertain at best. Not one of us can be sure that we will be given one more day to live. Since we can't be sure we will be here **"tomorrow,"** we ought to think on serious things while it is **"today."** **"Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation"** (2 Corinthians 6:2). This verse tells us not to delay the all-important decision to trust Christ. Won't you make today the day of your salvation and trust in the Saviour right now? Only through faith in Christ can sinners ever be shielded from the judgment their sins deserve.

"Every word of God is pure: He is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him" (Proverbs 30:5). ◀

SHARE GOD'S WORD

If you know Christ as your Saviour, consider cutting out the page to the right and getting permission to post it on the community bulletin board at your local grocery store, Laundromat, community center or other public place.

A decorative shield-shaped frame with a dark blue background. The shield is outlined in gold and features ornate floral and scrollwork patterns in green and gold at the top and bottom. A small, stylized figure in blue is positioned at the top center of the shield, and another similar figure is at the bottom center. The background of the entire image is a textured, mottled mix of blue, green, and yellow.

ALL WE LIKE SHEEP
HAVE GONE ASTRAY;
WE HAVE TURNED
EVERY ONE TO HIS
OWN WAY; AND
THE LORD HATH
LAID ON HIM
THE INIQUITY
OF US ALL.

ISAIAH 53:6

ECHOES OF GRACE

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“The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).

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