

# RUMINATIONS OF A FORMER HEATHEN

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Chewing the cud

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Chewing the cud, always chewing the cud. He is always on my mind for one reason or another. Now that I know a little about him I am always thinking about him. That's probably the way it should be, but I didn't plan on that. How many people will be saved? Who are the people that will be saved? What does it take for someone to be saved? What about those churches full of people? Are they all saved? Thirty thousand, forty thousand-people churches, the megachurches. Then you have all the in-betweens, three hundred, four hundred, a hundred, right down to tiny little churches in tiny little towns, little churches with less than ten people. We have in the U.S. millions of people who attend church, sporadically or regularly. Are they all saved? Are there people in some churches who are under false illusions because of false teachings? Will God wink at the ignorance of those who are under false teachings? Who, then, is being saved? I have to admit I don't know.

According to the Bible an awful lot of people will be lost. The hope of a great revival in the Christian church does not seem possible. If there is a revival it would be among the heathen. Buddhists, Muslims, Jews, and all other heathen would suddenly see Jesus for whom he is, the saviour, the sacrifice, the redeemer, the only chance, the only bridge, the only train out. They will become weary and disillusioned at their efforts, which never erase guilt. Whatever it is, my Bible says only a remnant will be saved. Satan is going about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. He is like a man going through the cornfields, grabbing ears of corn with both arms, ripping them off the stalks, as many as he can. He knows he's lost, so he's going to kill as many as he can. Satan knows how God grieves for the loss of any of his children, so he is going to take down as many as possible with him, just to hurt God. He is on his way to the lake of fire and lashing out in revenge is all he has left. And he does a pretty good job in leading people astray. He has been around a long time and knows how to deviate people from salvation. Wrong doctrine or plain rebellion is all that's necessary, and Satan is an expert at promoting both. Only a remnant will be saved. How big is that remnant? It may only be a tithe, a ten percent, a small number. Will God issue a final warning just before the end of the world? Will he make everybody suddenly aware of their need for salvation? I wish he would. But the warnings have been there for a long time. No one can really say that God is sneaking up on them.

How did I get here? Why am I such a zealot? What caused this total negation in my mind of every, and *any*, other idea concerning God? I am not a

total naif. I was not convinced by some preacher hitting the pulpit. I got here by way of the Catholic Church, which I rejected as a child, seven or eight years old, perhaps. Then it was witchcraft for a few years, the occult, that which was hidden, fascinated me. In my early teens for a time I joined the Methodist Church; later the Mormon Church, until, eventually, I abandoned everything that was Christianity. I think I was sincere every time, I wanted some sort of connection with the benign being that lived in the invisible realm. I retained my desire to know the occult, but slipped more into a mixture of different ideas. Buddhism, Eastern religions, philosophy, psychology, witchcraft never far away, thinking patterns, the workings of the mind, everything and anything that I could learn that would allow me to mold myself in some way, obtain personal power, manipulate the invisible world, that's what I wanted to know. I spent many years in that spiritual wilderness, where all sorts of demons live. Oh, how God protected me! I don't think God had any choice but to let me go looking in all the places where he wasn't. I was so rebellious from the time I was little that he probably figured my neck would break before it got bent. But he kept me in a long leash and he never really let me go, until he brought me to the Bible. Once he brought me to the Bible, he took me off the leash, he knows I'm not going to run from him anymore. I am totally his because I understand there is no other place to go.

I had dismissed the Bible as simply another book of religion. Much of what I knew about the Bible were criticisms of the Bible. Critics would say there were contradictions, books had been edited many times, there were issues regarding legitimacy. Besides that, everything was subject to interpretation, you think about this what you want, and I'll think what I want. Basically, the Bible was to be dismissed, scorned, ridiculed. Most of all, the Bible was one more book of religion among many and, therefore, irrelevant. What anyone believed or not believed about the Bible did not make one bit of difference one way or the other. So, just as one plays with a dumb kitten, by getting his curiosity, God got my curiosity regarding the Bible. He started by letting me notice how many famous and respected people all over the world quoted from the Bible. Why would Newton quote from the Bible? Why would Einstein? I began to check it out. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. I had always thought the Bible was a book men had written about God. It soon became apparent that the Bible was written as if it were God himself talking and instructing what to write.

Despite that, it wasn't until Leviticus 26 that I was convinced that no one but God could say such things. Beginning in verse 15 of chapter 26, there is a list of the curses for idolatry and disobedience. It was the end of verse 17 that really got my attention. Leviticus 26, at the end of verse 17, says: "and ye shall flee when none pursueth you." What? My ears got hot. I had been fleeing for a long time when nobody was pursuing me. This was a very strange verse. I could understand

fleeing if somebody pursues you, but, if no one is chasing you, why should you run? Why *would* you run? A man would have never written such thing. A man would have written something that made more sense, something that by posing an immediate threat would make you run. A man would have said "I'll go after you with my sword and you will flee when I pursue you." No, if the Bible had been written by men somebody would have caught the error while editing. Only God, who can act in the invisible realm, can say something like that. Merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, is God. I am so glad God has no pleasure in the destruction of the wicked. What would be of me, otherwise? If he had pleasure in the destruction of the wicked, I would be taking an early trip to Hell right now. Not only that, but he would be having a party in celebration. So, I am glad God has no pleasure in the destruction of the wicked.