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## Unthankful, Unholy

- by Greg Gwin

His hair is long, his clothes wrinkled and dirty, his general appearance untidy. Though enrolled in college at great expense to his parents, he has neglected his studies and his grades are disgraceful. He has no job and few, if any, prospects for the future. Given every advantage as he was growing up, he has wasted each opportunity that came his way. His life is a "wreck", and everyone can see it except him. And what does he have to say about all of this?

*"It really doesn't matter to me. People worry about those things too much. Money doesn't really matter to me. I think people are too materialistic anyway. I'm not interested in living like my father."*

The ingratitude of this kid is sickening. Given a chance, we would probably stand in line to get a crack at him! He is ungrateful to the core. He surely doesn't appreciate what has been done for him.

There's another son to consider. His heavenly father loved him more than he will ever be able to comprehend. He blessed him with abundant gifts when he was totally undeserving. Spiritual riches were showered upon him. Yet, he disregarded all of that. He has neglected his duty to God, chosen to live in such a way as to disgrace his Father, tear down his brethren, and generally shame the name "Christian". Urgent pleas for him to change have gone unheeded. He tells us that he simply isn't interested - claims he doesn't care about such things any longer.

Are you surprised that God warns of a "sorer punishment" for this one who has "trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace" (Hebrews 10:29)?

Christian, live so that YOU are never described by the words "unthankful, unholy" (2 Timothy 3:2). Think!

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## God: The Source of All Life

Jim Jonas

"Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things" (Ac 17:25). God "gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did" (Rom 4:17). Everything that lives owes its existence to God. God is the "I AM," eternally existent, who simply spoke our world into being. To live is a blessing; to have self-awareness and the ability to interact with our Creator is the height of purpose and joy.

No matter where we look in the heavens, either in our "solar neighborhood" or to the edges of the universe, we do not see life. There is no substantive evidence of life anywhere else, but when we examine our home planet, life is *everywhere*: teeming from the bottom of the sea to the skies, visible in the microscope and binoculars, even inhabiting our bodies inside and out.

Note the various ways in which God is the God of life:

**Lower life (plant and animal):** We marvel at even subhuman life-forms. Boaters shriek over the breaching humpback; hikers look in stunned silence at the autumn colors adorning a mountainside. A hovering hummingbird commands our breathless attention; and we are still amazed by the lima bean shoot that pops through the soil in our kids' science project. The lonely find solace and companionship in their pets, and endless vistas of fruitful fields feed the world year after year. We visit zoos, plant flowers, dread predators, build with wood, decorate with flora, rejoice in the scents and textures of nature – unconsciously giving honor to the Maker of it all.

**Human existence.** It is impossible to conceive of nonexistence, but in concert with our biological parents God brought our spirit into being. As marvelous as lower life is, God only made mankind in His image (Gn 1:26; Ps 9:5; Ac 17:27-28). What a privilege! What a blessing to exist, to think, to ponder our Creator in all His glory and greatness! Thank God that you are alive, for that life has the potential of sharing in eternal glory.

**Continued existence.** But life in this world is hazardous, a result of the sin introduced by man which tainted this pristine planet with deadly consequences. Now our environment is full of harmful microbes, genetic defects, human violence, accidental injury – both natural and human forces daily threaten our well-being. This brings a measure of uncertainty, anxiety and futility to us as we grapple with our mortality. If you are reading this article, that means you are still alive and God has preserved you and blessed you with opportunity.

**Spiritual regeneration.** Being spiritual creatures, we have a particular obligation to live obediently to our Creator and His laws (animals react by instinct). When we misuse our free will and violate divine law, we sin and create a breach in our relationship with God. This is a fatal condition which, if not remedied before death, will result in banishment forever from God's fellowship. Paul calls this being "alienated from the life of God ..." (1 Cor 15:56).

But again, our life-giving God has stepped in and made provision for us. Ironically, through death – that of His Son – God has restored spiritual life to those who desire reconciliation to Him. Scripture calls this a spiritual rebirth or being "born again" (Jn 3:3-8); 'newness of life" (Rom 6:4); a "new creation" (2 Cor 5:17). "Even when we were dead in trespasses, [God] made us alive together with Christ ..." (Eph 2:5).

**Ongoing forgiveness.** Just as with our continuing physical life following our original creation, God provides that we continue to live after our spiritual regeneration. Sadly, even after our conversion to Christ we succumb to weakness and sin against God. But He provides for our ongoing cleansing and restoration throughout our life on earth (Ac 8:22; 1 Jn 1:9; Rom 8:1; etc.). What grace! What magnanimity of spirit God has! His mercy is inexhaustible to those who continue to honor Him.

**Resurrection.** No matter how precious our loved one; how noble the living may be; how successful the achiever; how revered the powerful; how beautiful the body – the end result of our short time on earth is death. When the body loses its life function, the spirit will depart, and the flesh will begin to decay. We hasten to dispose of that which we touched, held, kissed and admired.

Yet Jesus affirms that "all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth – those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation" (Jn 5:28-29). "For this corruption must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality" (1 Cor 15:53). God promises a new form that will house our soul and be fit for heavenly interaction with our Savior.

**Eternal life.** The term "eternal life," or similarly everlasting life, describes the unending existence in God's presence for the saved: "For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life" (Gal 6:8). One thing is certain: now that we exist, we will forever exist. In what condition we exist is a choice all will make, either consciously or unconsciously.

Do you love your life? Sadly, many curse their existence and are overcome with emptiness and misery. Some even in an unbalanced frame of mind undertake to end their own life. What a tragedy! God wants you to live, and to live abundantly and joyfully. You can do it – if you turn to Jesus Christ in humility and full surrender.

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