

The Gospel of the Remnant: Reconstructing Faith from Four Surviving Verses

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In a world where all religious knowledge has been erased, only four fragments of scripture remain: *Genesis 1:1*, *John 1:1*, *Matthew 5:3–10*, and *1 Corinthians 13*. There are no churches, no prophets, no doctrines—only these verses, drifting like embers from a forgotten fire. From them, humanity must rebuild its understanding of God, morality, purpose, and love. What kind of faith would emerge? This thought experiment strips religion to its core: a Creator who initiates reality (*Genesis 1:1*), a divine Logos who is both with God and is God (*John 1:1*), a radically upside-down moral vision that blesses the meek and the merciful (*Matthew 5*), and a portrait of love as the highest virtue (*1 Corinthians 13*). With no mention of sin, sacrifice, law, or ritual, what remains is not a system—but a spirit. This is not a return to primitive faith but a rebirth through essential truths. Could these four verses form a universal gospel? Would they be enough? Or are they everything?

Keywords: *Genesis 1:1*, *John 1:1*, *Matthew 5*, *1 Corinthians 13*, Beatitudes, Logos, love, creation, ethics, metaphysics, spiritual reconstruction, theology, post-religion, radical faith, thought experiment, divine word, remnant gospel, Christian origins, new faith. A collaboration with GPT-4o. CC4.0.

1. Introduction: The Great Reset of Faith

Imagine a moment in history when every trace of organized religion is gone—erased from memory, text, architecture, and culture. No sacred books survive intact, no oral traditions endure, and all priesthoods are dissolved. The human race awakens into spiritual amnesia. Yet four verses are recovered, fragments of a once-vast mosaic:

- *Genesis 1:1* — “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”
- *John 1:1* — “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”
- *Matthew 5:3–10* — The Beatitudes, blessing the poor in spirit, the meek, and the peacemakers.
- *1 Corinthians 13* — A complete teaching on the nature of love.

This paper begins by framing a religious tabula rasa: a scenario in which spiritual civilization must rebuild itself from only these four texts. We adopt a strict interpretive discipline—no reliance on inherited theology, no doctrinal scaffolding. Instead, we read the verses as if for the first time, through eyes untouched by tradition. What divine image emerges? What ethics take root? What becomes of sin, salvation, community, and truth when all we have left is *Creation, Word, Blessedness, and Love*?

2. Cosmic Origin and Logos

(Genesis 1:1 + John 1:1)

When all religious tradition is stripped away, the remaining fragments of *Genesis 1:1* and *John 1:1* anchor humanity’s rediscovery of God in two fundamental revelations: creation and meaning.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

From *Genesis*, we inherit the concept of an intentional universe—brought forth by a singular act of divine agency. This is not a chaotic cosmos, nor a random emergence, but a deliberate creation. It affirms a foundation of order, of cause, of origin. Reality is not accidental—it is willed.

But *John* offers a second axis of understanding: *Logos*. The Greek term implies more than “word”—it carries connotations of reason, logic, pattern, principle, and even consciousness. Where *Genesis* speaks of power, *John* speaks of meaning. The creative force is not merely active—it is also intelligible. God is not only the source of existence but also the source of understanding.

Together, these verses form a dyad: Being and Knowing. One asserts that there *is* a beginning; the other asserts that the *beginning had structure and intention*. There is a fruitful tension here. *Genesis* reveals a God who acts. *John* reveals a God who speaks and *is spoken*. Between them emerges a cosmology of not just things—but *thoughts*, not just force—but *form*.

Without doctrine or commentary, these verses seed a powerful metaphysics:

- The universe has a beginning, and therefore a purpose.
- The divine is not mute, but communicative—its essence is *Logos*.
- To understand creation is not to conquer it, but to hear it speak.

In a world bereft of tradition, these lines become scripture not of dogma, but of orientation: look to the heavens with awe, and listen to the world as if it has something to say. Because it does.

3. The Ethics of Blessedness

(Matthew 5:3–10)

In the absence of all religious institutions and commandments, *Matthew 5:3–10* survives as a radical moral blueprint. The Beatitudes, spoken without context, doctrine, or hierarchy, read as a pure transmission of values—startling in their simplicity and revolutionary in their implications.

“Blessed are the poor in spirit... those who mourn... the meek... those who hunger and thirst for righteousness... the merciful... the pure in heart... the peacemakers... those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake...”

Here, blessedness is not attached to success, strength, or status. It is bestowed upon those whom society typically ignores or marginalizes. This reversal—an inversion of worldly power and wealth—signals an ethical revolution: the last are first, the weak are seen, and the hurting are honored. The moral universe is no longer governed by dominance or possession but by spiritual posture.

In this remnant gospel, there is no Law of Moses, no Levitical codes, no temple rituals. Instead, the Beatitudes become the only surviving ethical constitution. They point toward:

- Humility over pride (“poor in spirit” and “meek”)
- Compassion over vengeance (“merciful” and “those who mourn”)
- Inner integrity over outward performance (“pure in heart”)
- Nonviolence and active goodwill (“peacemakers”)
- Endurance in the face of injustice (“persecuted for righteousness’ sake”)

What emerges is a sacred anthropology: human greatness is measured not by power, but by openness to God and others. Each Beatitude enshrines not just behavior, but *disposition*—not merely action, but *orientation*.

Without institutional religion to mediate salvation, the Beatitudes imply that blessedness is not earned—it is recognized. It is not transactional—it is relational. It arises from alignment with the heart of the divine as expressed in humility, mercy, purity, and peacemaking.

In a post-doctrinal world, this fragment of Matthew would likely become the seed of a new kind of humanism—one not grounded in self-assertion, but in the sacred dignity of those who bow low, suffer honestly, and refuse to hate.

4. The Ontology of Love

(1 Corinthians 13)

If only one ethic survives the collapse of all religious systems, and that ethic is love, it must be understood not merely as sentiment or affection—but as *being itself*. In *1 Corinthians 13*, love is not prescribed as a rule, but described as the fundamental nature of what endures:

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud...”

“Love never fails.”

“Now we see through a glass, darkly... now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.”

This passage does not call love an emotion, an impulse, or even a virtue—it defines love as the highest form of truth and the most permanent reality. Faith and hope are affirmed, but love is declared the greatest. In a world without theology, this fragment offers a replacement for all doctrine: to love is to be in alignment with the deepest structure of the universe.

Love as the Essence of Divinity and Humanity

If *Genesis 1:1* introduces a Creator, and *John 1:1* reveals that Creator to be Logos, then *1 Corinthians 13* reveals the *texture* of that Logos: love. In this vision, God is not only the cause of existence, but the cause is *love-shaped*. To be made in the image of this Creator would mean that we are love-bearing creatures. Thus, love becomes ontological—it is the ground of both divine and human identity.

The Psychology of Selfless Love

This chapter offers a precise interior map of what love feels like when it is not distorted: it is patient, kind, devoid of pride, resentment, or selfishness. It rejoices in truth and bears all things. The definition is notably relational and unselfish, resisting transactional or utilitarian models of morality. In a post-religious world, this becomes a *psychological blueprint* for how humans can relate authentically and sustainably—without coercion, fear, or hierarchy.

Love as Epistemology: “Now I Know in Part...”

In the striking final verses, knowledge itself is humbled. We do not see clearly. We do not know fully. But love bridges the gap between what is now hidden and what will one day be revealed. In this context, love becomes a kind of epistemological lens—a way of knowing that transcends logic or data. What we cannot grasp intellectually, we may apprehend through love.

Love, then, is not only the greatest of virtues—it is a mode of seeing, a mode of being, and perhaps, the only way to endure the mystery of existence in a world where revelation is fragmentary. In a religion rebuilt from ruins, *1 Corinthians 13* would become its deepest ontology, its only psychology, and its final epistemology.

5. Constructing a New Theology from the Four Pillars

(God as Creator, Word, Blessing, and Love)

With only four surviving texts—*Genesis 1:1*, *John 1:1*, *Matthew 5:3–10*, and *1 Corinthians 13*—a strikingly coherent yet radically simplified theology begins to take shape. Though fragmentary, these verses are not isolated; they echo across a shared metaphysical structure. What emerges is not a system of belief, but a constellation of truths—four luminous points forming the foundation of a new faith.

God as Creator (*Genesis 1:1*)

The first truth is origin: there is a beginning, and it belongs to God. The universe is not an accident but an act of divine will. This implies intentionality, order, and a source beyond the material. From the start, theology is cosmological.

God as Word (*John 1:1*)

The second truth is that creation is not merely made—but spoken. The Word (Logos) reveals that creation has inner structure, intelligence, and communicative potential. God is not silent. The divine is not brute force, but intelligible presence. Logos mediates between the transcendent and the manifest.

God as Blessing (*Matthew 5:3–10*)

The third truth is ethical: God blesses the meek, the grieving, the peacemakers. There is no commandment to dominate, no appeal to tribalism or conquest. Instead, blessedness flows to the inwardly poor and outwardly merciful. Theology becomes a morality of grace, not merit—a divine affirmation of the lowly and sincere.

God as Love (*1 Corinthians 13*)

The fourth truth is relational: God is love, and love is the highest truth. Unlike systems built on obedience or fear, this theology centers on *kindness*, *patience*, *hope*, and *endurance*. The divine essence is not wrathful or transactional—it is unfailing relationality.

A Theology Without Sin, Judgment, or Sacrifice

Remarkably, none of the four verses mention sin, damnation, laws, ritual purity, or the need for blood atonement. There is no temple, no priesthood, no commandments, no fear of punishment. This is not accidental—it forces a reinterpretation of religion’s core anxieties. In their place, what remains is presence, speech, blessing, and love.

Without sin, the human problem is not guilt—it is *forgetfulness*. Without judgment, the divine does not threaten—it *waits*. Without sacrifice, there is no transaction to earn favor—there is *only invitation*. This theology does not demand atonement—it extends relationship.

Toward a Relational Metaphysics

What arises is a relational metaphysics of creation through love. God does not merely make the universe—God speaks it, blesses it, and sustains it through love. Human beings, in turn, are not sinners in need of appeasement, but participants in a divine order founded on compassion and humility.

This theology is non-coercive, open-ended, and integrative. It invites not belief in propositions, but alignment with a sacred pattern. It calls for no religion to be rebuilt—only a life to be lived, marked by wonder, gentleness, and love that never fails.

In the end, it may be not a religion at all, but the irreducible echo of God’s original voice—creating, calling, blessing, and loving still.

6. Social Implications of the Four Verses

(Genesis 1:1, John 1:1, Matthew 5:3–10, 1 Corinthians 13)

Though brief, these four verses contain enough conceptual power to reshape an entire civilization. If humanity were to rebuild from these fragments alone, the resulting society would look profoundly different from those constructed under historical religious institutions. Each verse does more than inform theology—it seeds a social architecture. The implications touch every domain of public life: politics, economics, education, and ethics.

Politics: Peacemakers as Leaders

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.”

In this remnant civilization, power is no longer legitimized by strength, conquest, or charisma—but by the ability to reconcile. Political authority belongs to those who heal division, de-escalate violence, and speak calmly across difference. Warfare, once sanctified by religion and ideology, loses its moral foundation. The model leader is not the warrior-king, but the gentle negotiator, who sees enemies as future brothers. Governance becomes an act of *blessing*, not domination.

Economics: The Meek and Merciful Over the Mighty and Rich

“Blessed are the meek... Blessed are the merciful...”

Economies built on exploitation, hoarding, or hyper-competition find no justification in these texts. The Beatitudes reject the assumption that wealth signals divine favor. Instead, the meek inherit the earth, and the merciful are blessed. In this new order, success is measured not by accumulation but by *generosity*. The economic structure favors equity, simplicity, and sharing. The rich are not vilified, but nor are they idealized. Mercy—rather than profit—is the principle of transaction.

Education: Logos as the Foundation of Knowledge

“In the beginning was the Word (Logos)... and the Word was God.”

Education becomes the pursuit not of utility or status, but of wisdom grounded in the divine Word. The Logos implies that the universe is intelligible, ordered, and meaningful. To learn is to participate in the structure of creation. Disciplines like science, language, mathematics, and philosophy are not secular—they are sacred, insofar as they seek to hear what the Logos speaks. Schools are temples of wonder, not factories for employment. To educate a child is to tune their ear to the voice of the world.

Ethics: Love as First Principle

“If I have all knowledge but have not love, I am nothing.”

Ethics is not based on rules or punishments but on the primacy of love. Every action is judged not by outcome or legality, but by whether it is patient, kind, humble, and truthful. Justice becomes restorative, not retributive. Institutions must reflect the nature of love: enduring, hopeful, and selfless. In personal relationships, in governance, in business, in law—love is not a soft sentiment, but a hard standard. It is the cornerstone of moral reasoning.

Toward a Society Without Fear

None of the four verses invoke fear, wrath, or shame. The resulting society would not be governed by threat, surveillance, or exclusion, but by recognition, invitation, and grace. Authority flows from moral clarity, not coercive power. Culture is shaped by creativity, not conformity.

In such a world, every system is built to sustain relationship—between individuals, with creation, and with the divine Word that whispers through it all. The city of God, in this scenario, is not built atop sacrifice or hierarchy. It rises from the humble ground of love.

7. What Is Lost and What Is Gained

(The Trade of Simplicity for Purity)

In this radical reset of faith—where all religious tradition vanishes except for four verses—humanity undergoes both a profound loss and a profound purification. This is not merely the collapse of institutions but the pruning of history, leaving only the essence.

What Is Lost

No Dogma or Doctrine

Gone are the theological systems that once spanned centuries: creeds, councils, catechisms, and codes. There are no definitions of the Trinity, no Christology, no soteriology, no eschatology. Without these frameworks, humanity lacks detailed maps of the divine, structured views of salvation, or explanations for suffering and sin.

No Ritual or Sacrifice

There are no sacraments, no temple rites, no liturgies. No baptisms, no communion, no pilgrimage, no fasts or feasts. The sacramental imagination—the

human instinct to embody the spiritual through physical acts—is rendered temporarily mute.

No Judgment or Damnation

There is no mention of hell or heaven, no apocalypse, no final judgment, no lake of fire. The fear-based components of religion, once used to control, convert, or console, are simply absent. Without these, the existential urgency of belief becomes quieter—perhaps gentler, perhaps more honest.

No Institutional Religion

There are no churches, no hierarchies, no popes, imams, rabbis, or monks. There is no canon law, no excommunication, no centralized authority. The entire machinery of religion—the scaffolding of belonging and exclusion—ceases to exist.

What Is Gained

No Distortion of the Original Message

The absence of interpretive traditions means no accumulation of error, no theological inflation, no centuries of disputes over language, heresies, or textual variants. The four verses remain pure, unpolluted by ideology, unweaponized by power.

No Wars of Interpretation

History's bloodiest battles have often been theological: Crusades, inquisitions, schisms, jihads, pogroms. With only four verses—and none of them prescribing force, exclusivity, or conquest—there is nothing to fight over. The sacred is not owned or defended; it is lived.

A Universal Moral Simplicity

What remains is accessible to every person: child or elder, educated or illiterate, rich or poor. No initiation is required. The criteria are internal: humility, mercy,

peacemaking, love. No conversion is necessary—only transformation of heart. This radical accessibility is its own kind of revelation.

A New Kind of Sacred Ground

Without buildings or relics, the sacred relocates—from altar to action, from sermon to silence, from dogma to disposition. What is holy is not what is controlled, but what is *blessed, spoken, and loved*.

In losing the full body of religion, humanity regains its heartbeat. The cost is complexity; the gain is clarity. The questions left unanswered may be many—but the answers that remain are incorruptible.

8. Conclusion: A Post-Dogmatic Faith

(Faith After Forgetting)

In this thought experiment, where all religious traditions are forgotten and only four verses remain—*Genesis 1:1, John 1:1, Matthew 5:3–10, and 1 Corinthians 13*—we are left with a unique opportunity: to observe how faith might emerge without dogma, how meaning might arise from fragments, and how a moral and metaphysical vision might flourish in the absence of inherited theology.

Would Humanity Rebuild Religion from These Fragments?

It seems inevitable that humans would once again seek to organize the sacred. We are meaning-makers, and even a single phrase like “In the beginning God created...” invites cosmology, myth, story, and structure. Over time, schools of thought would form—around the nature of the Creator, the character of the Logos, the implications of blessedness, and the depth of love.

But without laws, lineage, or sacrifice, what would be *rebuilt* might be radically different from anything we have seen before. It would not be religion as institution, but religion as orientation—toward creation, meaning, humility, and love.

Would It Resemble Christianity, or Something New?

The surviving verses are undeniably Christian in origin. Yet without the context of Jesus' birth, death, and resurrection, even those familiar with Christianity might not immediately recognize them as such. The absence of crucifixion, atonement, and resurrection removes the narrative arc of salvation history. What remains is not the religion *about* Jesus, but the values he embodied and spoke.

The result would be something simpler and more universal:

- A spiritual cosmology of a speaking, loving Creator
- A moral vision defined by mercy, meekness, and peace
- An existential humility rooted in partial knowledge and relational truth
- A communal ethic centered on love as both method and goal

It would *echo* Christianity, but with fewer walls—less creed, more compassion; less system, more soul.

Is This the Gospel in Its Purest Possible Form?

Perhaps. If the word *gospel* means “good news,” then what better news could there be than this:

- That the world was made intentionally, not accidentally.
- That meaning is real, because the Word is God.
- That those who mourn, who hunger for justice, who make peace, are the truly blessed.
- That love is greater than knowledge, stronger than death, and never fails.

This gospel does not require belief in a particular miracle, ritual, or lineage. It requires only a posture of the heart, a way of being in the world. It is the gospel shorn of nationalism, tribalism, and fear. It is not a message of escape from the world, but an invitation to redeem it—*by embodying the very love that created it*.

This post-dogmatic faith would be fragile at first. But perhaps it is in that very fragility—undefended, unguarded, unanalyzed—that something closer to divine truth can grow. Not a system to master, but a mystery to dwell in.

And perhaps, just perhaps, it is enough.

Epilogue: Why Didn't God Choose This Path?

If four verses are enough to sketch a faith of profound beauty—centered on creation, meaning, blessing, and love—then a haunting question lingers at the edge of this thought experiment: Why didn't God choose this path? Why, instead of giving humanity a single distilled message of universal peace, did history unfold through complex covenants, violent texts, bloody sacrifices, apocalyptic prophecies, and institutions that fractured into thousands of sects?

Why didn't God give us only *this*—a quiet, coherent, non-dogmatic gospel?

Perhaps the answer lies not in God's failure to simplify, but in humanity's refusal to remain still. We are restless creatures—hungry for certainty, prone to fear, eager to control the sacred. Given even the most serene truth, we systematize it, weaponize it, build empires upon it. The four surviving verses in this experiment are seeds—but in our world, we turned seeds into swords.

Or perhaps God did give us this path—but we buried it under centuries of commentary. These verses *are* in the Bible. They *were* spoken. They *have* endured. But we surrounded them with scaffolding until the core was nearly obscured.

Maybe this experiment doesn't show us what could have been.

Maybe it shows us what still could be.

References

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- Genesis 1:1 — *“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”*
- John 1:1 — *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”*
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