

# Praise for *They Turned the World Upside Down*

“Jesus taught us to pray, ‘your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven,’ but so many professing Christians haven’t stopped and asked, ‘What does that mean?’ In *They Turned the World Upside Down* Charles Martin dives deep into the realities of Jesus’ kingdom come by asking needed questions pointing us to the revelation of God through His word made flesh. This book is for the person who knows that there has to be more to this life and that there has to be something more real than all these temporary experiences. In his charming yet challenging way, Charles takes us beyond the temporary and into the eternal realities our souls are craving, and by doing so, he guides us to the throne room of God’s grace, where we find truth, life, and the way of Jesus.”

—RYAN BRITT, EXECUTIVE MINISTRIES PASTOR, CHURCH OF ELEVEN22

“Imagination is a gift from God and one of the most important tools for your faith journey. Have you ever imagined what it was like to walk with Jesus and witness the first sparks as the church began to spread? This book will help you do that. Watch Peter raise a dead woman to life, see Paul walk out of the prison gate, witness thousands come to Jesus. What would it have been like to be there? What if your life today could look a lot more like theirs than you ever imagined? Through brilliant storytelling and convicting questions, Charles Martin invites you to challenge your status quo and experience the power that raised Christ from the dead in your every day. The truth is, you and I aren’t different from those ordinary men and women whose proximity to Jesus changed everything for them. And just like they did, we have the opportunity to join the movement that turned the world upside down. Want to come along?”

—JONATHAN VINKE, MINISTRIES PASTOR, CHURCH OF ELEVEN22

“When *What If It’s True* was recommended to me by a close friend, I had no idea that ‘it’s heavy stuff’ meant that I was about to have my whole world gracefully wrecked. The stories were conveyed so vividly that I often felt like I was in the pages with the characters. The insightful attention to the often-overlooked details of these familiar passages revealed new aspects of Jesus that I’d once considered,

but never had the language to verbalize. Charles Martin, by the Holy Spirit, has an uber-unique gift. His ability to boldly dig into the secret crevices of the soul of a man, yet gracefully lead the reader into a prayer that hits the nail on the head is nothing shy of supernatural. I'm on the edge of my seat with every line of *They Turned the World Upside Down*. Oddly enough, both works have done just that—turned my world upside down, and I wouldn't have it any other way.”

—MARC DICKERSON, LEAD PASTOR, AMAZING LIFE CHURCH

“Charles does a magnificent job of bringing us to the feet of Jesus and God the Father and leading us by the Holy Spirit into doing the ministry of Jesus, which He left for us, as believers, to do here on earth.”

—HANK BRINK

“I'm forever grateful for the goodness on these pages and the incredible gift Father God gave to Charles and even more grateful that my brother has chosen to share that gift with us. Having walked much of the testimony of this book with Charles, I know no other human who embodies living by faith and turning the world upside down more than Charles Martin. I think the saying ‘walk the walk’ was penned for him. Father God is the change agent, but if you press in, this book can and will change you as you hear the testimony of the power of God's Word in the lives of real people and how it powerfully answers the questions: What if these words are true, and what if signs and wonders really are supposed to be following us?”

—RICK CROWLEY

“*They Turned the World Upside Down* is the perfect follow-up to *What If It's True?* The opening of the gospel of John says that Jesus is the Word that became flesh, and if He is the Word and the Word is always true, then Charles unveils a paradigm shift to what the entirety of the gospel actually is and does. Having done life with Charles for more than twelve years, I can attest to not only his understanding of the Word of God but also to the freedom that comes with it this side of the cross. Jesus' finished work at Calvary wasn't just for salvation; it gives every believer the right to His authority and power, as sons and daughters, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And this book explains it perfectly.”

—GREG FARAH

“*They Turned the World Upside Down* should inspire every believer to look outside the walls of conventional Christianity and what our intimacy with the Master should look like. Journeying with Him and doing the same things Jesus did should be an everyday part of life. This will motivate you to grow in harmony with the Holy Spirit, listen for His direction, and move with compassion to see the lives of people changed through simple obedience. If you know there is more to your walk with Him than you are experiencing now, this book will change you . . . period!”

—MIKE HOHMAN

“Charles leads his readers along a path of redemption. He reminds us how ordinary men walked alongside Jesus and were empowered by the Holy Spirit. I believe this book will shake many readers to their core and lead them closer to Christ. The quote that stands out for me is ‘there is more grace in Jesus than sin in us.’ I am again reminded that forgiveness is the path that leads to redemption.”

—DEAN KRUGER

“Charles Martin’s *They Turned the World Upside Down* is a master class in not just how to have a deeper intimacy with our King and Savior, but how to understand our unique calling, role, and purpose. While a lot of books convey knowledge, this centers around your heart. Charles encourages a deep dive into who we are as priests and what our Lord has in store for us. If I’m honest, it isn’t easy. Action and repentance are required. But oh, the reward! As he so eloquently states, ‘Freedom is worth the pain.’ I am indebted to Charles for not only leading me to my Father but encouraging me to participate in this exciting journey.”

—JON LIVINGSTON

“Our society teaches that when the rescue mission is accomplished, the story ends. But when it comes to Jesus’ perfect, sacrificial, sanctifying rescue of us, the story has only just begun. With this freedom comes the blessing of a scriptural mandate to go—as warriors, disciples, priests—and to go boldly, in full belief in the power of the Holy Spirit, in complete willingness to receive Him, and in total faith to allow Him to do His will through us. Easy to say, but harder to put into practice every day. That’s what our guys’ group talks, studies, laughs, cries, worships, and prays about every week, and it’s what Charles, with his typical brilliant way of asking simple questions that have life-changing, and sometimes life-saving, implications, lays out in this book.”

—JOHNNY SARBER

“To the broken, lost, and fearful . . . this book is hope. It is a lamp to the feet of those who follow the Lord. Charles Martin has given us a detailed blueprint of what Jesus desires from our hearts and actions.”

—JASON WATSON

“*They Turned the World Upside Down* is a Holy Spirit–inspired complement to *What If It’s True?* When I finished *What If It’s True?* my reaction was ‘that’s a great way to think about it, but what do I do?’ *They Turned the World Upside Down* answers that question.”

—DAVID WAINER

They  
Turned  
the  
World  
Upside  
Down



# They Turned the World Upside Down

*A Storyteller's Journey with Those  
Who Dared to Follow Jesus*

CHARLES MARTIN



W PUBLISHING GROUP

AN IMPRINT OF THOMAS NELSON

*They Turned the World Upside Down*

© 2021 Charles Martin

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, scanning, or other—except for brief quotations in critical reviews or articles, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Published in Nashville, Tennessee, by W Publishing, an imprint of Thomas Nelson.

Author is represented by The Christopher Ferebee Agency. [www.christopherferebee.com](http://www.christopherferebee.com)

Thomas Nelson titles may be purchased in bulk for educational, business, fundraising, or sales promotional use. For information, please email [SpecialMarkets@ThomasNelson.com](mailto:SpecialMarkets@ThomasNelson.com).

Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are taken from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®). Copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked DARBY are taken from the Darby translation. Public domain.

Scripture quotations marked KJV are taken from the King James Version. Public domain.

Scripture quotations marked NASB are taken from the New American Standard Bible® (NASB). Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. [www.lockman.org](http://www.lockman.org)

Scripture quotations marked NIV are taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. [www.Zondervan.com](http://www.Zondervan.com). The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™

Scripture quotations marked NKJV are taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked RSV are taken from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible. Copyright © 1946, 1952, and 1971 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Any internet addresses, phone numbers, or company or product information printed in this book are offered as a resource and are not intended in any way to be or to imply an endorsement by Thomas Nelson, nor does Thomas Nelson vouch for the existence, content, or services of these sites, phone numbers, companies, or products beyond the life of this book.

ISBN 978-0-7852-3143-1 (TP)

ISBN 978-0-7852-3148-6 (Audiobook)

ISBN 978-0-7852-3144-8 (e-Book)

**Library of Congress Control Number: 2020943252**

ISBN 978-0-7852-3142-4

*Printed in the United States of America*

21 22 23 24 25 LSC 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

*For The King*



# Contents

<i>Prologue</i> . . . . .	xiii
Chapter 1: The Death of the Only Innocent Man . . . . .	1
Chapter 2: It Is Perfectly Perfect . . . . .	10
Chapter 3: A Dead Man Walks. . . . .	21
Chapter 4: Shame—the enemy’s First Weapon. . . . .	34
Chapter 5: Problem Number One . . . . .	46
Chapter 6: Their Problem Is Our Problem . . . . .	57
Chapter 7: Moving from Faith to Faithfulness . . . . .	79
Chapter 8: The Holy Spirit . . . . .	101
Chapter 9: Willing to Be Willing . . . . .	138
Chapter 10: Show Us the Father. . . . .	156
Chapter 11: The Kingdom of Heaven . . . . .	183
Chapter 12: I Raise My Hand . . . . .	220
Chapter 13: You’re in a War . . . . .	252
Chapter 14: What or Who Are You at War Against? . . . . .	285
Chapter 15: They Turned the World Upside Down . . . . .	297
<i>Epilogue</i> . . . . .	319
<i>Appendix A</i> . . . . .	325
<i>Appendix B.</i> . . . . .	331
<i>Notes</i> . . . . .	339
<i>About the Author.</i> . . . . .	345



---

## PROLOGUE

---

The sun is setting. A crimson line trails across a blue canvas. The air is cool. A breeze filters through. Jesus and the disciples exit Jerusalem, cross the brook Kidron, walk through the Garden of Gethsemane, and begin the ascent up the Mount of Olives. This is the same path Jesus walked after His arrest en route to His mock trial, His merciless beating, and the criminals' cross. Now they're walking it in reverse.

And all of them recognize it.

The eleven are laughing and shaking their heads. They're having a difficult time reconciling what they're seeing. Weeks ago, they watched and listened as Jesus died a gruesome death. When they took His body down, some brave soul reached up and closed His eyes. Then they carried His tortured and graveyard-dead body to a cold tomb and watched helplessly as the soldiers rolled the heavy stone into place and sealed it with an iron spike. It was the end of all things good and beautiful.

But that was before.

Now, they're walking alongside Him. Huddling close. Touching Him. Making sure. Listening as the laughter enters and exits His lungs. During His earthly ministry, Jesus was a jungle gym for the young. They climbed all over Him. Rolled in the grass. Played tag. The disciples watch in wonder as Jesus carries one of their children on His shoulders.<sup>1</sup> Skips along the trail. Sings with another.

---

1. I realize Scripture does not say this. And I'm not claiming it does. I'm taking license—given what we know of His nature. Having said that, Jesus loved children. More than that, I think He made time for them. If I were a child, and Jesus were walking up a mountain trail, I'd be climbing all over Him. I've tried to think and write like that.

## PROLOGUE

They wind up the worn path to a hilltop where they overlook all of Jerusalem. Jesus has been here many times. He has prayed here, wept here, and it is here that His sweat turned to blood. It is here that His blood began crying a better word than that of Abel. And it is here that He told his disciples to wake up. There's a time for sleep but this was not it.

Over the last few weeks, Jesus has opened their minds to the Scriptures. Allowed them to see what has remained hidden for so long. Blown their minds with each new revelation. To the south sits the City of David. The City of the Great King. Up that winding path, King David returned the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem. The spoken words of God returning to the City of God.

But here and now, that very Word is flesh and walking among them.

Jesus Himself. Eating. Laughing. Talking. Praying. And not one of them can explain it. It's simply too good to be true. In their minds, anything is now possible. Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, lived, died, was buried, and was resurrected. He walked out of the grave. They don't understand everything that means, but at its minimum it means Jesus is more powerful than death. They are on the cusp of something great. Never seen before.

This is storied ground. Mount Moriah. The mountain of God. The word *Moriah* itself means "Foreseen by God." Over there, Abram met Melchizedek in the valley of the five kings; over there, he laid his son Isaac on the altar and raised the knife. This is the mountain of which Abram spoke when he told his son, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering."<sup>1</sup> Down there is the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite where God withdrew the plague from the people. Up there, King David brought the ark of God into the City of David. Over there, Solomon built the temple. Along that trail, Jesus rode into the city triumphantly seated on a donkey, and down there, under cover of night, He was arrested. On that serpentine path that winds out of the city, the innocent King carried a criminal's cross. And up there, over by the skull, He poured out His soul unto death. Just over there, His body was laid and sealed behind heavy

## PROLOGUE

stone. Three days later, out of that same rock, He rose again—in accordance with everything written before.

More has happened on this mountain than any mountain in the world—and has yet to happen. It is here, on this mountain, that the very rocks cry out. It is here, on and in this ground, that God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth, has placed His name. Forever. And it is here that He will, at a time in the future of His choosing, prepare a lavish banquet for all peoples. Refined and aged wine. Choice pieces of meat. On this mountain, He will swallow up the covering which is over all people. Even the veil which is woven into the nations. On this ground and in His time, He will swallow up death, wipe away every tear, and remove the reproach of His people from all the earth.<sup>2</sup>

But that time is not yet.

And while this is storied ground, these are not storied men. At least not yet. They will be, but here on this mountain they're second string. The did-not-measure-ups. The could-not-cut-its. While they're good Jews, they're not straight A's and valedictorians. That's why most are fishermen. This does not mean they weren't smart. Far from it. Most could probably recite entire portions, verbatim, of the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms. But to be a Pharisee, you had to be something special. A-team. And these were not. In the world's eyes, these men were your average Joes. B-team.

Which was Jesus' intention all along.

As they climb the hill, their minds spin with possibilities. Most want to stick it to Rome. They are waiting for Jesus to bring down fire from heaven. Elijah and the prophets of Baal sort of stuff. Given what they have seen the last few weeks, each has a question on the tip of his tongue. They all want to know the same thing. One of them voices it: "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"<sup>3</sup>

Ever patient, Jesus smiles and continues climbing up the mountain. Halfway up, He turns: "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my

## PROLOGUE

witnesses”—Jesus points to the land laid out before them—“in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”<sup>24</sup>

Up there, the disciples can see what He’s pointing at, but they don’t really understand what He’s saying. The words rattle around their brains. Words like *Father*, *power*, *Holy Spirit*, and *witnesses*.

They want something more concrete. They want to know when He will send lightning bolts through the chests of Pilate and Herod. They’ve got it coming. Their days are numbered.

What the disciples cannot see are the myriad angels that have arrayed around them. Resplendent white. Gold. The army of God has come on assignment. To escort the Son home. Banners. Musicians. Dancers. Warriors. They line the mountain. They line the city. They line the earth for miles. Each has six wings. With two they cover their faces. With two they cover their feet. And with two they fly. A living picture of worship and service. At the top of the mountain, God’s very own chariot awaits. Driven by white horses.

Jesus can see this. They cannot.

Nearing the top, Jesus walks alongside each of His followers. Holding their hands. An arm around their shoulders. They’re all here: Peter, John, James, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, Simon the Zealot, and Judas the son of James. His natural brothers are here too. Including James. As is Mary Magdalene and His mother, along with many other families. Jesus is not distant. Not indifferent. Not aloof, standing over there. He’s a hugger. He is in their midst. He kisses their necks. Tickles their children. They can feel His breath on their faces.

A breeze blows. It is time. The Father has waited long enough.

Jesus turns, looks longingly at His city, at those He loves, and then down through time at you and me. He smiles. He knows the end from the beginning. Then He steps into His chariot, a cloud envelops Him, and He is lifted out of their sight, taking the breeze and the host with Him.

Silence rains down on the mountain.

Minutes pass. Nobody says a word. Children run to and fro through

## PROLOGUE

the grass. He has come and gone so many times lately, walked through walls of stone, surely this is one of those times.

But standing on that mountaintop, the disciples begin to wonder. And so the longing begins. The longing for His return.

When the smoke clears, two angels stand in the place where Jesus had stood. Dressed in white robes. They are nearing eleven feet tall. Towering. Powerful. Magnificent. One of them speaks: “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”<sup>5</sup>

The disciples stand speechless, one singular question on the tips of their tongues. No one is yet brave enough to voice it. But each is thinking it: *Just what on earth do we do now?*

To answer this question, they will spend, devote, and sacrifice the rest of their lives.

But standing on that storied mountain, in the bosom of the world, they find no answer. As the sun falls over Jerusalem, they return down the mountain, scouring their hearts in search of an answer. And it is about here that they start remembering the words He said while He was with them. They spent three and a half years with Jesus as He traveled and spoke, and given their primarily oral culture, Jesus often said the same thing in every location. Chances are quite good they heard the Sermon on the Mount dozens of times. You might even call it His stump speech. Given this, they could recite His words from memory. Finish His sentences. Which is good. They’ll need them in the days to come.

In His absence, they return to Jerusalem—an indescribable combination of sadness and joy. They pray. Sing. Share meals. Encourage one another. And they remember His words: “but you will receive power.”

So they wait.

Given the loss of Judas, they cast lots; Matthias, a longtime follower and believer, is now numbered with the eleven. The chosen apostles once again number twelve. In total, the disciples number about a hundred and twenty persons.

Those who stuck with Jesus. Those who saw Him perform miracles,

## PROLOGUE

heal the sick, cast out demons, raise the dead, and bounce children on His knee. Those who laughed with Him, cried with Him, and sat on the edge of their seats listening to His every word. These are those who saw Him dead and then saw Him alive. And while they wait, this unlikely and unremarkable group of people begin to reconstruct the words He spoke. Trying to both remember and share that remembrance. As they piece it together, they are amazed at how the Scriptures support and reveal what Jesus said and did. When they stand in the temple and the Scriptures are read, they are astounded. All of the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms point to Jesus. A jigsaw puzzle of words that begins to take shape.

How could they not have seen it before?

Given a healthy fear of both the Romans and the religious elite, they remain in Jerusalem and keep to themselves. Despite their new revelation into His words, they have a problem. Jesus gave them His authority and commanded them to do as He did, but currently they are powerless to obey Him, and they know it. His words echo: “you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.”

A week passes.

In the throne room of heaven, the Father is beaming. His Son is home. Seated at His right hand. All of heaven rejoices. The halls echo with “Glory!” “Worthy is the Lamb!” And “Holy, holy, holy!” Over His shoulder, the Holy Spirit awaits the Father’s command. The same Spirit that hovered over the waters in creation and just recently raised the Son does nothing of His own initiative. He is sent and He obeys. He is the agent of both action and change, and nothing that is done gets done without Him. He stands. Patiently. Waiting. The three are inseparable, unified, and share perfect and unhindered communion. They are One.

Finally, the time has come. The Father nods. The Son hugs the Spirit. The Spirit leaves the throne room, carves a vapor trail as He exits heaven, and descends into Jerusalem.

Where the roof starts to shake.

## Power to Obey

When I wrote *What If It's True?*, I hoped to confront you and me with this question: *What if every word in the Bible is true and I can trust it? With my life?* What if the words of Scripture are truer than my circumstances? And if they are, would I, would you, be willing to allow the truth of God's Word to shine a light on our own sin? To unearth the depths of us and encourage us to acknowledge what lies there, confess what we'd rather keep hidden, and give Him room and access to cleanse us and begin making us more like Him? Why and how does the Bible do this? Because it, the Word, is living and active. It pierces us. Divides truth from falsehood. By its very nature, it flings open the closets in our spiritual basements we'd rather keep sealed. One of my spiritual heroes, Derek Prince, used to describe the living nature of the Word this way: When you're reading your Bible, it's reading you. Giving the Word access to our hearts means giving the blood of Jesus the room and authority to work in us and for us and through us. A process theologians call sanctification. Paul told the Corinthians, "the plowman should plow in hope" (1 Cor. 9:10).

So, once again, I'm writing and hoping.

By picking up this book, I assume you're somewhere in that process called sanctification. Like I am. And if so, then just like the disciples, you may well be asking yourself, What now?

If that's you, you're in good company.

As I have wrestled with this and scoured His Word for answers, I've landed on something really simple: nowhere in Scripture does Jesus tell us to sit back and wait until the process is complete before we do what He said. Nowhere—not one single place—does He tell us to become spectators watching only the holy, the perfect, and the superspiritual live out His commands. That's like saying you have to get cleaned up to take a bath or you have to arrive at the destination before you can embark on the journey. He didn't do that with the disciples. He doesn't do that with us. Inexplicably, He uses cracked cups to pour water.

## PROLOGUE

What makes me say this? The arrival of His Spirit. When the Holy Spirit filled believers like you and me on Pentecost, the Father made good on His promise. From that moment in time, the kingdom of God was not about talk, but power.

What kind of power did He give them?

The answer is simple: power to do what He said. To obey Him.

By God's immeasurable grace, I am a blood-bought, blood-washed, and blood-redeemed child of God. Transferred out of the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of the Son of His love. God withheld from me what I deserved, His wrath, and has given me what I don't: His *chesed*, which is His loving-kindness, mercy, grace, forgiveness, and Him-for-me kind of love all wrapped into one. He gave me His Son to take my place.

Included in this undeserved and unmerited gift is the right to become His child. Which I have. And I am. I am a child of God. Heir to the throne. That said, He didn't just pluck me out of the fire only to drop me at His house. I'm no latchkey kid left to fend for myself. There's more. A lot more. God the Father adopted me as His Son and then, unbelievably and miraculously, sent His Spirit—the same Spirit that raised Christ Jesus from the dead—to live in me. He's here right now. Dwelling. Kind of strange when I think about it—that the third member of the Godhead is located in my chest right this second.

The cool thing is that the offer is available to as many as would receive Him. Who believe in His name. Meaning, I'm not the only one. He can dwell in you too. All of us.

He promised this more than two thousand years ago.

In my own experience and my life in ministry, I've discovered that most of us have heard the Bible stories and we've nodded our heads and muttered, "Yeah, yeah, yeah." But the truth is we have no real idea what His Spirit dwelling in us looks like. We think we do, but I disagree. I think we've missed Him by a mile.

Case in point: What if right this second I knocked on your door and told you that you just won the \$250 Million Powerball lottery? And I had the check and the bank officials and the media trucks to prove it. All you

xx