

## The Story of the Big Idea

Early in my blissful walk with the Lord, he allowed me to have an idea, or more accurately an observation, regarding the plan for his return and our role as his Body. However, let's call it the *Big Idea*, as the *Big Observation* isn't quite as catchy. Since this idea is found in Scripture, it's not my idea but God's idea. We dove into the details of the definition of *The Big Idea* in Chapter 1, but while you are here, the idea is that *Jesus returns once Christians unite and fulfill the Great Commission*. The origin of this idea began when the Lord drew my attention to a verse in Matthew 24. In this chapter, our Lord Jesus Christ answers many questions from his disciples regarding the destruction of Jerusalem, "the sign of [Jesus'] coming and of the end of the age" (v.3). In one of his responses, Jesus says in verse 14, "And this gospel of the Kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come." Jesus echoes these words in the parallel passage in Mark 13 by saying, "And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations." Upon uncovering this, one could respond, "Wait, so Jesus returns once all have heard? This seems like a gigantic idea, so why aren't we working together to do this right now?" Simple questions like these hit home what I was thinking and are the essence of *The Big Idea*.

### Best Gift Ever

When Jessica and I were about to be married, I was surprised to find out that I was supposed to give her an engagement gift at the rehearsal dinner. With the dinner mere days away, I had the "perfect" idea. I downloaded a program that converted all our text messages into a document—a 900-page document comprising 22,650 texts. I thought I had made the best gift of all time, but I was wrong. Jessica humbled me and brought me to tears as she handed me a simple journal with

## The Story of the Big Idea

the first words on the first page saying, “Honey, I started writing you this journal on the fourth day after I met you,” and proceeded to chronicle our entire engagement in secret.

Yeah, she won.<sup>1</sup>

But the consolation prize to myself is that later in life, I have evidence of when the Lord brought to my heart the Big Idea and my desire to share with others. For in these text messages, I discarded romantic attempts to woo my future bride and instead typed her phrases like,

“I want to change the world,”

“I believe the Holy Spirit has put it in my heart to unite the churches,” and

“A uniting of the churches, I believe, is the first step in the returning of Christ.”

Jessica responded with things like,

“I’m curious to hear responses to the idea of uniting churches, different denominations have been around for a long time,”

“Those are very big goals no doubt about that,” and

“Goodness, that all sounds very overwhelming.”

In hindsight, how that cute Christian girl I once met at a bar playing poker didn’t go running for the hills at such lofty thoughts, I suppose I have the Spirit to thank.

So within six months of coming to faith, God had placed on this young Christian’s heart a strong desire for the churches to unite, to proclaim this to other Christians, and that this unity is an important predecessor to Christ’s return. With time, God would reveal the importance of our role in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) and its fulfillment being the bridge between unity

---

<sup>1</sup> But I also won as I got to marry her.

## The Story of the Big Idea

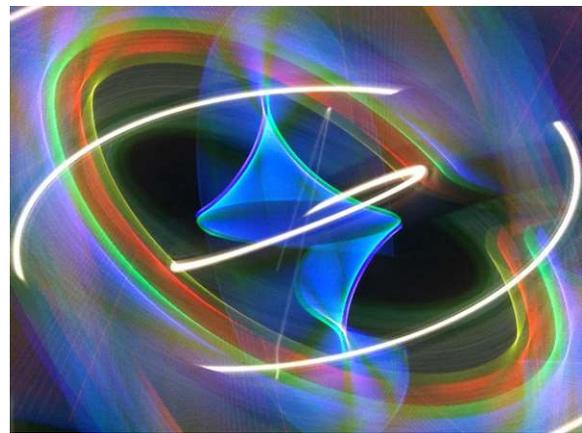
and Parousia (Matthew 24:14, Mark 13:10).<sup>2</sup> The central themes of this work—the unification of the Church and fulfillment of the Great Commission as a prerequisite for Jesus’ return—had been established by God in my heart and my notes by late 2017. The Big Idea is to become a movement, the greatest the world has seen since the initial founding and spreading of Christianity.

Then what took so long to get these words formally onto paper? Life and other projects. One project I called “Rotational Imagery” where I would throw my phone in the air, inducing it to spin while the shutter opened and closed, and produce geometrically beautiful images. Yet despite their beauty, the Kickstarter campaign I launched flopped. It was frustrating.

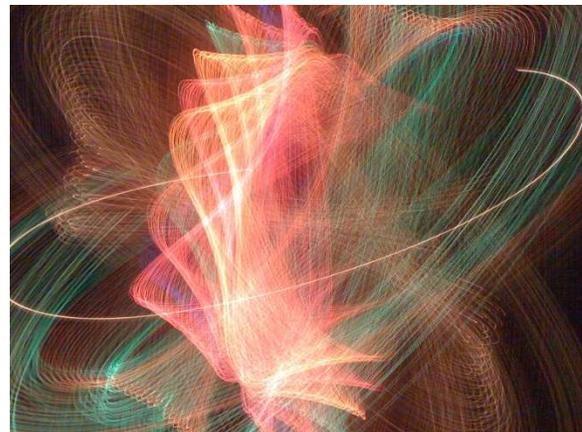
Another project was *Go Figure*. During the time Rotational Imagery failed to *turn* into anything significant, God had *turned* me into a ninth-grade English teacher. (Funny, ninth-grade is the same age I started to go off-course.) This profession



*Window Blinds at the Doctor's Office*



*The Neon Lights of Casa Rita's Restaurant*



*House at Christmas*

---

<sup>2</sup> Parousia – The time when Jesus Christ will return to judge humanity at the end of the world; Second Coming (Merriam-Webster.com n.d.)

## The Story of the Big Idea

allowed me to cultivate a love for writing, figurative language, and rhetoric. I directed my enthusiasm for teaching English and analyzing authors' uses of figures of speech toward a desire to teach others about God's own usage of metaphorical language in the Bible. I cataloged 100s of examples of figurative language, including hypophora, metaphor, and hyperbole. I outlined a book to discuss how God repeats what's important, intentionally juxtaposes himself in the Proverbs, and many other unique ways he has his scribes write. It would have examples from pop culture and literature while I would teach the reader about the varieties of figurative language, how to use them, and the deeper intent of each. So before the Big Idea became big in my life, it also competed with this other writing project I would title *Go Figure*.

Sounds like a good idea for a book, right? So why didn't I write it? Because it has *literally* already been written—down to the title. Somehow in my research, I missed Dr. Julia Hans' excellent work, *Go Figure!: An Introduction to Figures of Speech in the Bible*. Consolation prize here? I purchased her book, took it in, and utilized many skills she teaches while I wrote *The Big Idea*. Although I didn't know it at the time, projects like Rotational Imagery and Go Figure were ultimately distractions to the Lord's plan for my life, so he graciously allowed these competing projects to fail one by one until only *TBI* remained. If a project in your life flops, friend, prayerfully consider what the Lord wanted you to learn from the experience and eagerly expect something better to come from him in the future.

During these years of turning cameras in the air and understanding how God turns phrases, the Spirit never let the embers of the Big Idea die in my heart. Beginning in 2017, I started more seriously chronicling what the Bible and others have to say on the topic. Along with studying the Church's call to spread the Gospel and the circumstances surrounding Christ's return, God revealed the importance of unity and fleeing division. Jesus rebukes the Pharisees in Matthew

## The Story of the Big Idea

12:25, saying, “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand.” This principle can extend to any kingdom or house—including our own body of Christ. In John 11:51-52, we learn that Jesus died not only for our sins but to unite the children of God.<sup>3</sup> Outside the Bible, a close pastor friend would commend the Big Idea with the words, “Let it be with this generation.” I came across ministries like the Joshua Project that track people groups still in need of the gospel. These examples barely scratch the surface of how the Holy Spirit has been leading Christians regarding unification and evangelism.

So throughout the end of the 2010s, some writing would get accomplished, but only bits and pieces for this book, like the Ed “Too Tall” Jones anecdote or the “long lost letter” from Screwtape (the authorship I would change to Schismagon in my last days of revising).

Ultimately, the idea as big as a 6’ 9” defensive end sat on the bench until Spring 2020. It would take a global pandemic to force me to sit down, draw near God, and get this future all-star off the sidelines and into the game.

---

<sup>3</sup> John 11:51-52 – [Caiaphas] did not say this of his own accord, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, <sup>52</sup> and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.