



10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. 11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. 12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. 13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. (Matt 24:10-13)

Every railroad line has a beginning and an end – an “End of the Line” in conductor’s jargon. There are numerous railroad lines in the world. There is even a 19.5 mile railroad line that runs from Enterprise, Alabama, to Waterford, Alabama, carrying soybeans, peanuts, cotton, peanut oil, etc. from Enterprise to a commercial pickup point at Waterford. This line is one of the shortest of which I am familiar. The longest railway line in the world runs in unbroken sequence from Moscow to Vladivostok and was originally planned to include a branch line to Pusan, South Korea. The division of the two countries (North/South Korea) has stymied that plan. The line extends more than 9,000 kilometers – more than twice the distance from New York to Los Angeles.

Such varied distances in railroad lines remind us of the uncertainty of the length of days a person may expect upon God’s green earth. Some lives are quite long and fruitful while others may be so very short as to evoke the most profound sympathies. But every railroad line serves the purpose of its engineers, and every life (regardless the length) serves the purpose of its Maker. There is a point in time in the future at which every reader of this devotion will come to the end of the line. It may be at the rosy promise of youth, or in the gaunt years of advanced age. But old or young, each of us has a room of dying somewhere and someplace. Our lives are like the sands of the hour glass with the upper chamber hidden from view so that we cannot tell when the last grain may fall. Of course, as we advance in years, we can be sure that the upper chamber is nearing exhaustion when the lower chamber has an abundance of sand.

There was a railroad line from Ryan, California, that dead-headed at the gates of Death Valley in the heyday of Borax mining in the region. Death Valley Junction was the

end of the line for that railroad. Unfortunately, Death Valley is the End of the Line for many who have hoboed the rails in fashion without ever considering the end of the line. There is a final End of the Line for every soul that remains separated from the mercy and grace of God. But there is a Divine Switching Station that may reroute the train of our lives onto a different destination if the switch is thrown even an instant before the End of The Line. That was the case for the penitent thief on the cross: *39 And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. 40 But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. 42 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. 43 And Jesus said unto him, **Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.*** (Luke 23:39-43)

Medical science informs us that the last sense to go silent at death is the sense of hearing. Hospice nurses know even after the instant of death that inordinate mourning and wailing in proximity of the dead may cause them to revive for a brief time. This is because they can hear voices briefly after the heart stops beating. It seems that God leaves the door to salvation open in hearing and believing His Word until the very last.

We will all come to the End of the Line at some point, but we arrive under different terms. For many who are saved by the mercy and grace of God, that End of the Line is simply a transfer point. *51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52 In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. 55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? 56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* (1 Cor 15:51-57)

For others who have disregarded the praise and majesty of God with contempt or indifference, the End of the Line is a grave at Death Valley Junction. They will not leave that station but rather sink even lower than the depths of Death Valley itself into the eternal night of separation from God – Hell.

There is an old song (popularized by F. Sinatra) that my mother used to sing on lonely, rainy days of nostalgia which goes:

*Look down, look down that lonesome road
Before you travel on
Look up, look up and seek your Maker
Before Gabriel blows his horn*

*Weary totin' such a load
Trudgin' down the lonesome road*

*Look down, look down that lonesome road
Before, before you travel on.*

Look up, look down, that long lonesome road - separated forever from God and all that is good and virtuous. That Lonesome Road is the same that the Prodigal son traveled in leaving his father and traveling into a 'far country.' Many today are on that same road; but that road has two directions – one away from God and the other returning to Him. The very End of the Line is in the Far Country of the Prodigal where no man would help the boy. He worked for starvation rations, which is the devil's pay, feeding hogs. But the

boy did finally ‘come to himself’ – that is, he returned to his right mind which is the right mind of all who repent and turn to God.

Our Lord is willing to bear our burdens and remove our unbecoming yokes of past sin. *28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.* (Matt 11:28-30)

The End of the Line provides starkly different destinies to many. For King Saul, it was the tip of his own sword that took his life by his own hand. For Stephen, the End of the Line was what seemed a horrible passage from this life having been stoned to death; but Stephen died smiling and looking up into Heaven which was a very different End of the Line than that of Saul. The End of the Line for Saul of Tarsus was on the Road to Damascus, but that End of the Line was the beginning of a Bright and Shining Path to God.

Moses, once arrived at Jordan Banks, was not allowed to cross over into the Promised Land. That was an End of the Line for Moses. So, Moses went up the lonely slopes of Mt. Nebo to the peaks of Mt. Pisgah and surveyed the land which he was forbidden to enter.

1 And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And the LORD shewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan, 2 And all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim, and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea, 3 And the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar. 4 And the LORD said unto him, This is the land which I swear unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed: I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither.

5 So Moses the servant of the LORD died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the LORD. 6 And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Bethpeor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day. 7 And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated. 8 And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days: so the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended. (Deut 34:1-8)

How sad for Moses; is it not? He wrangled with the murmuring, contemptuous Children of Israel for forty years in the Wilderness, but when arrived at the Land of Promise, he was not allowed to enter that desert country. That was an End of the Line for Moses – or was it? Moses was buried by God in a lonely grave in Moab. But when do we see Moses again in Holy Writ? Was it not on another mountain of God’s choosing? *1 And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart, 2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. 3 And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him.* (Matt 17:1-3)

What a blessing to know that, with God, there is no such thing as an End of the Line – only a transfer point. “ALL ABOARD!”