

Christ Opens God's Welcome

Thomas Robinson, *Life Renewing 9*, Advent 1, December 3, 2017

Romans 15:7-13

⁵ May the God of endurance and encouragement give you the gift to think the same thing among one another, namely, what happened in Messiah Jesus, ⁶ in order that with harmony of mind you may in unison voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Messiah.

⁷ Therefore **welcome one another as the Messiah has welcomed you, for the glory of God.**

⁸ For I tell you that **Christ became a servant** to people with the sign of **circumcision** for the sake of **God's truthfulness**, in order to show the **reliability of his promises** granted to the **ancestors**, ⁹ and in order for **the nations / Gentiles to glorify God** for the sake of his mercy. Just as it is written,

"Because of this I will confess you among the nations / Gentiles, and sing to your name." [Psa 18:49]

¹⁰ And again it is said,

"Rejoice, you nations / Gentiles, with his people." [Deut 32:43 LXX]

¹¹ And again,

"Praise the Lord, all you nations / Gentiles, and all you peoples give him praise." [Psa 117:1]

¹² And again Isaiah says,

*"There shall be **the root of Jesse, even he who rises to rule nations / Gentiles. Nations / Gentiles will put their hope in him.**"* [Isa 11:10]

¹³ May the **God of hope** fill you with all **joy and peace** as you **believe**, so that you may abound in **hope in the Holy Spirit's power.**

Isaiah 11:1-10 (Translated from the Septuagint Greek)

¹ And a staff shall come forth from the root of Jesse and a blossom shall arise from the root.

² And God's Spirit shall rest upon him a Spirit of wisdom and understanding, a Spirit of counsel and strength, a Spirit of knowledge and piety,

³ a Spirit of the fear of God shall fill him.

He will not judge according to fame, nor evaluate according to what is said.

⁴ But with justice he will judge for the humble, and examine carefully the humble of the earth. And he will strike earth with the word of his mouth, and by spirit through his lips he will destroy impious things.

⁵ And he shall gird himself with righteousness, and bind truth around his sides.

⁶ And a wolf shall be grazed with a lamb,

and a leopard shall rest with a young goat, and a calf and a bull and a lion shall be fed together, and a little child shall lead them.

⁷ And ox and bear shall be fed together, and their children shall be together, and lion and ox together shall eat straw.

⁸ And an infant child will place its hand on the nest of asps and on the bed of baby asps.

⁹ And they shall certainly not do evil nor be able to destroy anyone on my holy mountain,

¹⁰ for the whole (earth) was filled to know the Lord, like vast water to cover the seas.

¹¹ And there shall be in that day the root of Jesse, even he who rises to rule nations / Gentiles. Nations / Gentiles shall put their hope in him, and his place of rest shall be honor.

Psalms 18:48-50 (LXX Psalms 17:49-51)

⁴⁸ You are my deliverer: ... | ⁴⁹ from those who rise up against me you will exalt me; ... | ⁴⁹ Therefore I will confess you among nations / Gentiles, O Lord, | and I will sing to your name, | ⁵⁰ You are one who makes great his acts of salvation for his king | and who acts in mercy for his anointed (Messiah), | for David and his seed forever.

Genesis 12:1-3 (cf. Gen 22:18)

¹ Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you ... and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Romans 1:1-5

¹ Paul, a slave of Messiah Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for God's announcement of Good News, ² which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, ³ concerning his Son, who was from David's seed according to the flesh ⁴ and was declared to be Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Messiah (anointed king) our Lord (LORD, emperor), ⁵ through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations / Gentiles

Mark 10:43-45 Jesus tells his disciples about being great.

⁴³ ... "Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant (*diakonos*), ⁴⁴ and whoever wants to be first among you must be slave (*doulos*) of all. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve (*diakonein*), and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Advent – Story of the Event that Shapes Us

Advent means "Coming." The coming of Jesus as Messiah. All that that event means. No one knows Jesus' birthday, but Advent/Christmas is about structuring life around the events of God's promises of grace and salvation flowing from his love: Powerful, continuing Drama: One man (Abram) → a Nation (Israel) → One man (Messiah Jesus) → the Whole World....

Paul comes to the climactic end of the main body of Romans: A way of life and relationships that flows from the whole story. The heart of Christian life & ethics – not general morality. Welcome – As the Messiah welcomed You – God's Glory. What God has done for us in Jesus Christ, we learn as the permanent heart of God, we learn to practice toward others.

Paul quotes Isa 11:10 and other texts. Isa 11:1-10 is often cited at Advent (Greek read in Rome). Jesus is no break from Israel's story but rather the revealing climax of the long drama.

Living in Our Moment within God's Great Story

Christian life is not lodged in a series of rules or doctrines, but in an unfolding story initiated by God to Abram & in Exodus. It unfolds with promise, hope, but also disaster, faithlessness, puzzlement: Israel's dreams of national greatness boiling under disappointment, questions.

In the climax, God reveals that God himself would intervene in his "Anointed" king. But the king would come as a servant – in a feed-trough, an obscure village, on a cross, in resurrection.

This servant-man, servant-God served not Israel's narrow ethnic glory against other nations but Israel's promise and story that would transform God's whole world—all nations/Gentiles.

Paul models the challenge of living in that ongoing story in an ever-changing new time. Not in Israel but Corinth, Rome, including Gentiles with Jews. Every new time brings new and old challenges. Scriptures guide and shape us through the story, so that we live it new again.

The Welcome of Love that Serves

The story is not of exclusion but of welcome! Extravagant, grace-filled, undeserved Welcome! Defined by the center: "As the Messiah has welcomed you!" But it is dynamic: Christ frees us, but self-giving love is the heart of that freedom. Each of us is a servant of God, together.

Each of us receives the challenge to be a whole human, loving, serving, like Jesus: In work, goals, relationships, politics, creativity, sickness, disaster, dreams, parenting, planning, play, etc. Jesus' faithfulness creates our faith that flows in hope, joy, peace, growing trust, power.