

Good News for a Future

Thomas Robinson, *Good News of God with Us 4*, December 29, 2019

Matthew 28:18-20 After Jesus' Resurrection, He talks with the Disciples

¹⁶ Now the eleven **disciples** went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ And when they **saw** Jesus, they **worshipped** him, but some **doubted**.

¹⁸ And when Jesus had come near, he talked to them,

"All authority in God's realm and on the earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make all the **nations into learning disciples** by **plunging** them into the **identity** of the **Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,** ²⁰ as you **teach** them to **hold tight to everything that I instructed you.** Look, **I myself am with you every day** to the consummation of the age."

Isaiah 9:2-7 Isaiah points to an expectant future, 740 years earlier.

² The people who walked in **darkness**
have seen a **great light**;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them **light** has shone.

³ You've multiplied the nation;
you've increased its **joy**.

They rejoice before you
as with **joy** at the harvest,
as they're glad when dividing treasure.

⁴ For the **yoke** of his burden,
and the **staff** for his shoulder,
the **rod of his oppressor**,
you've broken – like conquering Midian.

⁵ For **every boot** of the tramping warrior
in battle tumult
and every garment rolled in blood
will be burned as fuel for the fire.

⁶ For **to us a child is born**,
to us **a son is given!**

And the **power**
shall be upon his shoulder,
and **his name** shall be called
**Wonderful Counselor – Mighty God –
Everlasting Father – Prince of Peace.**

⁷ Of the increase of his **power**
and of **peace** (*shalom*)
there will be **no end**,
on the **throne of David**
and over his **kingdom**,
to **establish** it and to **uphold** it
with **justice** and with **righteousness**
from this time forth and evermore.
The zeal of **YAHWEH of Hosts**
will do this!

Matthew 1:22-23 The words of Isaiah applied to Jesus – God with Us.

²² This whole event happened in order that what was said by the Lord through the prophet may be filled up, when he says: ²³ *"Behold, the virgin will become pregnant and will give birth to a son, and they will call his name Emmanuel"* [Isaiah 7:14], which is translated, "God with us."

Ephesians 1:3, 7-10 God's Grace for us points to his Grace for all reality.

³ Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord, Jesus Anointed King (*Christos*)! God has blessed us with every blessing that's empowered by his Spirit and belongs to his realm in the Anointed King. ... ⁷ In Jesus we have the promised redemption from slavery through his blood, the forgiveness of all our wrongdoings, because of the richness of his grace ⁸ that he lavished on us, in all his wisdom and insight ⁹ by making known to us the hidden depths of his purpose, ... ¹⁰ as a universal plan for the fullness of times, to sum up together all things in the Anointed King, both things in God's realms and things on earth.

Galatians 3:25 – 4:6 Fullness of Time: Jesus' Faithfulness – We're plunged into Him.

²⁵ But now that Jesus' faithfulness has come, we're no longer under a guardian, ²⁶ for you're all sons and daughters of God through the faithfulness that's in Anointed King Jesus.

²⁷ Every one of you who was plunged into the Anointed King clothed yourselves with the Anointed one. ²⁸ There's neither Jew nor Greek, there's neither slave nor free, there's no male and female; for you're all one in Anointed King Jesus. ²⁹ And if you're part of the King, then you're also Abraham's family, heirs of everything in God's promise to him. ...

4:⁴ When the fullness of time came, God sent his Son, who came from a woman, came under the Law, ⁵ in order to redeem those under the Law so that we could receive full status as his children. ⁶ Because you are sons and daughters, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba, Father!"

Emmanuel – God with Us

Jesus' story, like other human stories, begins with birth and goes to death. The same but different. Something more is happening so that that event can become part of every human life – our life. Our theme: "God with Us." Unexpected entry; Refugee; at Long last. God chooses a very distinctive way to create a bridge from God to Us. It's truly wise and powerful beyond imagining, but overturns every structure of smart power we build. We humans live in a moment. The limitation of life unfolds in Genesis. The Big Bang, 13.75 billion yrs ago. All written human history, 6,000 yrs. But in the scale of God's infinity, the Big Bang is hardly longer ago than the pyramids or cave paintings. Other things determine value, meaning. 2 Pet. 3:8. God's bridge draws my human life into the long past and future of the human drama and into the heights and depths of God's life.

Being Part of a Long Past and Long Future

We have no idea what it's like to be God. Timeless? Maybe. That's beyond my imagination. But God chose to reveal himself in unfolding, varied history. Drama with twists and turns. Disasters, promises, hopes, turning-points, new vistas, direction, purpose, participation. Advent begins the great turning-point of Jesus. God fulfills his promises but surprises human expectations. Long before Jesus, Isaiah encapsulated the present-future life of hope created by God for his people. Real darkness, real promises, a structural makeover, a child, a visionary name, an unfolding future, God will do it. People/Jesus lived that faith. What could Isaiah mean after 7 centuries under successive empires? Could there be a different kind of power, a different hope? How do we share in that near/distant future?

The Gift of Grace that becomes a Quest

Part of the Event announced in the Good News brings a new paradigm of human hope/future. God brings the indefinite future into the present in Jesus' resurrection. The Fullness of Time is here. Symbols of temple, kingdom, sacrifice, etc. reshaped. Power, idolatry, glory, wisdom, are all remade. Humans participate in creating the future. "I am with you!" People are recreated. Barriers between humans are broken. Against our barrier building history. Baptism is plunging into God's gracious identity. Put on Jesus' identity. Only God can do it. I am part of God's long purpose to unite everything in Jesus. "On Earth as in Heaven." But I get up in a new year and go to work. What difference does it make? Do I know who I am? I'm a beloved child of God, living in God's grace, no matter what my circumstances? We make thousands of choices. On what basis? Reacting to others? As a child of my Abba? Can it be true? Some doubted. Jesus knows and still calls us. God's Spirit lives in us today!