

The Good News of the Kingdom

By Nathan Warner

“Get yourself up on a high mountain, O Zion, bearer of good news, Lift up your voice mightily, O Jerusalem, bearer of good news; Lift it up, do not fear. Say to the cities of Judah, ‘Here is your God!’” (Isaiah 40:9 NASB)

News: “newly received or noteworthy information, especially about recent or important events.”
(Google Dictionary)

Because we aren’t omnipresent and all-knowing creatures, we rely on news to help us decide what to do with our lives and the lives of those we know. We wait on news to make the best decisions for our present and future. And so, we see investors eagerly waiting on news about how their financial investments are performing – are they richer this morning or poorer? The news should directly affect their behavior. Medical patients pray for good news from their doctors. The news they receive should directly affect the direction they go from that office. I say “should” because sometimes people continue on their course regardless of the news. A man who lost his fortune in a financial transaction may go about his business as if it never happened until the creditors catch up with him and he is forced to face reality. Similarly, a patient may ignore his doctor’s diagnosis and go about his life as if he had never heard he had a terminal illness. To deny bad news does not change reality, just as hoping for good news cannot make it so.

Regardless of reality, we all hope and pray for good news: *“Bright eyes gladden the heart; Good news puts fat on the bones”* (Proverbs 15:30). *“Like cold water to a weary soul, So is good news from a distant land”* (Proverbs 25:25). And we fear bad news: *“Concerning Damascus. ‘Hamath and Arpad are put to shame, for they have heard bad news; they are disheartened. There is anxiety by the sea, It cannot be calmed’”* (Jeremiah 49:23). *“And when they say to you, ‘Why do you groan?’ you shall say, ‘Because of the news that is coming; and every heart will melt, all hands will be feeble, every spirit will faint and all knees will be weak as water. Behold, it comes and it will happen,’ declares the Lord God”* (Ezekiel 21:7).

News is a new revelation of the reality of a situation. When we face the reality of life, we cannot escape the “bad news” of that reality – futility, decay, and death. This is the reality of the sin nature. You can ignore it all you want, but this is the reality. This was Solomon’s assessment of life when he bent his unparalleled wisdom upon it:

“The wise man’s eyes are in his head, but the fool walks in darkness. And yet I know that one fate befalls them both. Then I said to myself, ‘As is the fate of the fool, it will also befall me. Why then have I been extremely wise?’ So I said to myself, ‘This too is vanity.’ For there is no lasting remembrance of the wise man as with the fool, inasmuch as in the coming days all will be forgotten. And how the wise man and the fool alike die!” (Ecclesiastes 2:14-16)

Despite all the pleasures and joys of this present life, it is all fleeting and frustrated, and it all comes to an end. Why is it this way?

This present futile reality is the effect of our rebellion against God. Man chose this reality over and above deathless life in Eden when we rebelled against the provision, protection, and sufficiency of God. We rejected His meaningful purpose for our lives in exchange for our own futile ambition. As a result, God allowed the consequences of our actions to take effect in the

natural order. All the tragedy and futility of life is on us as the life-altering consequences of our rebellion.

This is really bad news. Yet, just like the investor or patient who ignores it, the world tries its hardest to ignore it too. They spend incredible resources dressing this bad news up with distracting “advertisements” – vain promises that life can be self-fulfilling in and of itself, if you only do x, y, or z. We are taught to enjoy it while we can regardless of the long-term consequences of a self-willed life. The “*god of this world*” (2 Corinthians 4:4a) uses these “advertisements” to get you to invest yourself in his own rebellion against God. He does this by appealing to your flesh – to sacrifice your eternal soul for a small blip of enjoyment in the world system he controls and profits from. We lose everything – the pleasures of this life (because they do come to an end) and the pleasures of Eternity (because we remain disinherited from them) – inheriting instead the natural destination of a life unreconciled to God—eternal separation from Him: “*For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?*” (Matthew 16:26)

The point is, even gaining “all the world” doesn’t change the reality of life. The futility is still there, even if you veneer it with short-lived fleshly happiness. Our “precious” lives and Satan’s “precious” world are doomed to come to an end and be supplanted with the eternal Kingdom of God and the glory of the Children of God. “*For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God*” (Romans 8:20-21).

Yes, out of the bad news, there is the good news. The investor is offered debt forgiveness! The patient is offered a treatment for his terminal illness. This good news doesn’t come from man – it comes from God. Through His prophets, God has given us the good news of His future restoration of the world and rule through His Son, Jesus Christ: “*How lovely on the mountains Are the feet of him who brings good news, Who announces peace And brings good news of happiness, Who announces salvation, And says to Zion, ‘Your God reigns!’*” (Isaiah 52:7) “*The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, Because the Lord has anointed me To bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to captives And freedom to prisoners; To proclaim the favorable year of the Lord And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn*” (Isaiah 61:1-2).

This is God’s good news about a future kingdom ruled and healed by His Son, Jesus Christ. But in order to inherit it, you must believe on the name of Jesus Christ – you must entrust your life to His Headship over you – His protection, provision, and sufficiency over your life. So, “*while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world. But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons*” (Galatians 4:3-5). “*He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will*” (Ephesians 1:9-11).

Jesus came to earth to proclaim the good news of the coming Kingdom: “*Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people*” (Matthew 4:23). He told us that “*this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony*

to all the nations, and then the end will come” (Matthew 24:14).

This good news was delivered to mankind for a purpose—as the Apostle John said: *“These have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name” (John 20:30-31).*

But the world system goes about its business as if it never heard the good news, because that would mean they would have to acknowledge the bad news too (that they are not okay and they need saving), and they prefer to pretend it doesn’t exist. They give up the solution of God, because they are unwilling to acknowledge the reality of the problem they are actually in! This is the self-willed, self-imposed blindness of man that closes his eyes and plugs his ears to the cries of the onlookers as he runs into a delightful meadow toward a cliff edge, *“in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God” (2 Corinthians 4:4).*

As Believers, we are to be as wise as serpents and as innocent as doves. We do not turn a blind eye to the bad news of our reality and our position in it – on the contrary, we confess it as the truth! And we preach and plead with those we meet to face reality and also confess this truth, which is so apparent in the quicksand of our own lives. Yes, any efforts or struggling to free yourself from your sin nature only sucks you down further—no effort on your own can keep you from being swallowed by the inevitable end of your rebellion. And no mortal man can rescue you either from the consequences.

Yes, our prospects on our own are hopeless, but we do not leave them stuck in this sinkhole of reality! There is a way out from this universal predicament! There is One who can rescue us! And here, we acknowledge the good news of God’s promise of rescue at the hands of His Son! We share the good news of Salvation that God has promised to everyone who confesses the truth and entrusts themselves to His Jesus Christ. And we share the promise of His coming, eternal, righteous Kingdom, which he will rule by justice and truth and peace, for *“He will not judge by what His eyes see, Nor make a decision by what His ears hear; But with righteousness He will judge the poor, And decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked” (Isaiah 11:3b-4).* Even so, Amen.

“And we preach to you the good news of the promise made to the fathers, that God has fulfilled this promise to our children in that He raised up Jesus, as it is also written in the second Psalm, ‘You are My Son; today I have begotten You.’” (Acts 13:32-33)