



The Era is Limited

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Part 1

Now they were persevering in the teaching of the apostles, and in fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Now on every soul came fear, yet many miracles and signs occurred through the apostles in Jerusalem. Besides, great fear was on all. Now all those who believe also were in the same place and had all things in common. And they disposed of the acquisitions and the properties, and divided them to all, forasmuch as some would have had need. Besides persevering day by day with one accord in the sanctuary, besides breaking bread home by home, partaking

of nourishment with exultation and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor for the whole people. Now the Lord added those being saved day by day in the same place (Acts 2:42-47).

Imagine this: You are living in Jerusalem in the days when the long-awaited Messiah walks in your midst. You actually saw Him and heard Him teach in Jerusalem before His death. You were in the crowd the day He called the Pharisees snakes and hypocrites. He came to confirm the patriarchal promises, to become the sacrificial Lamb for your sins, and to rise from the dead—in accord with the sign of Jonah—on the third day. All of this, He has done. Since then, over 500 brethren have seen Him alive. You are one of them. You touched His resurrected body, grasping His elbow in a crowd. He spoke to a group of a hundred of you, saying, “The Scriptures have been fulfilled.” Those of the saints who came from the tomb on the day of His crucifixion continue to appear and testify in Jerusalem. It is impossible to miss them. You spoke to one of them at the market; you had to wait in line.

Following Peter’s stirring testimony on the day of Pentecost a little over a week ago, over 3,000 of your fellow citizens who had been ambivalent about Jesus have come to believe in Him. The evangel of the kingdom of God is being heralding everywhere by the disciples of John and of Jesus. After thousands of years, after dozens of prophets, after cycle upon cycle of frustration, the realization of your deepest dreams and desires is upon you. The times of refreshing prophesied by Joel have come. You would not be surprised to see David walking, for that, too, is prophesied. Why wouldn’t Abraham be turning a corner in your neighborhood? These days, the unlikely is the expected thing.

So powerful and persuasive is the reality of resurrection and the proximity of the promise God made to Abraham (you will shepherd all the nations of Earth) that the Jewish leadership who killed the Messiah fears *you*. In essence, you, the believers, now control Jerusalem. The politicians are hemmed in by the undeniable reality: the Man they put to death is alive and the future rulers in His kingdom—fishermen, tax collectors, prostitutes—await His word and the assumption of their millennial posts. The Jerusalem leadership must now either accept Him themselves or double-down upon their disbelief. A new priesthood, a new government, a new life for you and for the rest of the world is not merely on the horizon but is inviting people to touch Him in the streets. Some of the well-known teachers are even saying, “Possibly Thursday.”

Possibly Thursday. What do you do with this information? You practically float. All burdens feel gone. You meet daily and break bread hourly with your fellow-believers, partaking of your nourishment “with exultation and simplicity of heart” (Acts 2:46). The taxman’s demands—what are these to you now? What does it matter should the collector want everything? You would hand it over with joy. Is there a purer simplicity of heart available to mortals? A greater freedom? Then there is your daughter, Keren, who marries in two days. Just a week ago you fretted the details of her union to Katzir. Now, these details seem ridiculous. Who has time for them? Who can spare the energy? Keren and Katmit themselves flit about Jerusalem with other believers, breaking bread and singing hymns in the homes; any day now, the kingdom will arrive and none will be married or given in marriage (Matthew 22:30); the argument with Keren over which musicians to hire falls into insignificance. How could you have cared? The two of you now laugh over such an inconsequential thing and decide to hire “Ruti and the Renegade Raiders,” who promise to offend every known Jewish sensibility.

The days of “standard procedures” are over.

Landholders look back in wonder at the days—even recent ones—when they gazed upon their land and swelled in the chest at their blossoming—literal and otherwise—acquisitions. But now, this. All acquired property returns to original owners at Jubilee, and the Jubilee of all time is here. Your milkman (Dan, with all the dogs) always wanted that lot with the trees adjacent to the Mount of Olives, so you walk over to his house with a pair of cigars in pocket and hand him the deed. “You need this more than I do, friend.” Dan beams at

your generosity and says, “I know someone who needs it more than *I* do. Amos of Meggido.” The generosity this day is all blessed formality—and great fun—because on Thursday the property returns to original owner Ahab Ahron, the smith on Tamar Street to whom it rightfully belongs. “Let’s see how he’s doing!” Dan says. So off you go with Dan to Tamar Street to inquire of Ahron. He’s beside himself in simplicity of heart. “It all belongs to our Christ anyway, *I’ll* not claim it!” says the fashioner of brass instruments, and to prove this sentiment he ceremonially pours his week’s earnings into the tin of Zeev, known as “The Beni Street Beggar.”

Ahron’s father had stopped by the shop that morning. “He just bought two oxen for his field,” says Ahab, “but he said, ‘What use are they now?’ I swear by Moses—and



**“My father gave the purchase
to Mazal of the Mor district.
Now he has two oxen!”**

— *Ahab Ahron*

we should see that patriarch any day now, gentleman—that my father went to give the purchase to Mazal of the Mor district, who we all know has barely two mites to make heat with. Well, now he has two oxen!”

“Not even he will care,” you say.

“We have long noted the alms and prayers of Mazel at the temple,” Dan says. “No better than Zeev in the

ways of earthly wants, is Mazal, but do either of you doubt his place at Peter's right hand in the coming days?"

Your brother's wife Rafa died two weeks ago. The grief has followed you everywhere, dampening your days like a cloud of rain. Rafa was so beautiful, a pure light of God, bringing joy to all. A mother of five, she yet spared the hospitality to refresh the saints. She had entertained Jesus Himself in the closing days of His earthly sojourn. But now, when you think of Rafa, joy flutters within. Sorrow is banished to the shadows in light of the coming resurrection and kingdom. Only your thoughts have changed; Rafa is yet in the grave. What has changed but the thoughts? How powerful are the thoughts! Surely such thoughts steadied Abraham's dagger over the heart of his son, so certain was that patriarch of the resurrective powers of Yahweh.

If this has happened to the sorrows, what of the joys? The opposite thing. While the sorrows are turned to light, life's joys—or what you considered joys—sit still in quieter places, strangely near the sorrows. For both sorrow and joy share this common thread: they are passing away. Soon, *all* that you know will dim and dissolve at the coming of the prophesied bliss. It is already happening. *Possibly Thursday.*

"Are you still with us?" asks Ahron.

"What? Oh—sorry. I was dreaming of the kingdom."

"You and all of us, sir. You and all of us."



What if it were possible to live this way today? What if we of the 21st century could so anticipate the coming celestial kingdom of Christ that all earthly responsibility would become feather-light? What if "*possibly Thursday*" became the central mantra of a band of believers whose appetites and fortunes are already so squarely deposited in the Next Big Thing that life's new priority becomes the breaking of bread with fellow castaways? What if these strange troops are rallied behind an even more impassioned oratory of a more superior intelligence than that proffered by Peter at the memorable Pentecost, so that both sorrows and joys become as jokes, as things to be kicked like so many discarded cans to the side of a road poised in moments to become the launching pad to glories more real and graspable than a hand before the face?

A hand before the face. It is not merely possible, it is here, described by a man using some of the same words appearing this day, now, on the backs of our cereal boxes

and billboards—such is their simplicity. A scratch beneath this *verbal* simplicity, however, lies a treasure so complex, real, rich, large and bright that even those assigned to teach it are blinded to it (it's too obvious to be real, I guess), so that they, themselves, publicly deny it, choosing rather to flee its imagined improbability to teach simpler, darker, poorer, more "realistic" lessons of a bygone way or a future furrow dug joylessly in the sour peat of their own dim thoughts, scattered abroad like cow manure from the tines of their monochrome heads. The treasure, meanwhile, remains so imminent that a figure of speech must be invented to describe it, the key given only to those *staying* to describe it, who are *compelled* to describe it, who *want* to make it known, and who will learn the necessary figure of speech in *order* to describe it, and who are already two mental jumps (that is, two mental legs) into the Object of their description.

Movie theaters imitate it: a world escaping the world within the world it escapes. A parallel universe. Video games imitate it: a world escaping the world within the world it escapes, offering portals into new worlds within the worlds in the world escaping the world it escapes. In both attempts, drawn curtains and





subdued lighting aids and abets entry into the illusion—these imitations are just that, however: illusions. But if I should tell you that our kingdom is *not* a parallel universe and is anything *but* illusion, but is rather *greater* than a parallel universe and a defier of illusory fantasy—would you believe me? Would you believe another calling himself, “the least of all the saints to whom was granted this grace: to bring the evangel of the untraceable riches of Christ to the nations and to enlighten all as to what is the administration of the secret, which has been concealed from the eons in God, Who creates all, that now may be made known to the sovereignties and the authorities among the celestials, through the ecclesia, the multifarious wisdom of God, in accord with the purpose of the eons, which He makes in Christ Jesus, our Lord; in Whom we have boldness and access with confidence, through His faith”—would you believe it of *this* man (Ephesians 2:8:12) who does not even *describe* the thing greater than a parallel universe, but with the above words merely gropes and sniffs its perimeter? (He describes it in another place.)

The disciples of Pentecost stayed divinely unaware of a secret administration of God destined to interrupt—in linear time—their dreams of political conquest. No such secret administration hinders our new world; we *are* the

secret administration. Not only is The Next Big Thing The Next Big Thing, but the call of the man and the Man—and this man—is to enter it now, in spirit, and then witness how such vision inevitably affects the flesh.

Next week: The Era is Limited, Part 2. ■

Martin, I heard you on a radio show in Chattanooga, TN several years ago. You debated a Baptist Minister. The host gave me one of your books: *Flawed by Design*. I had been a Baptist from a young age until about age twenty. Then there were too many questions that didn't add up, so I became mostly an atheist.

When I read your book, I nearly went deaf because of all the clicking sounds. Those were the sounds of all those things in the Bible that didn't add up, clicking into place. I credit your book as the means God used to allow faith in Him to return to me. I now realize that Christ died on the cross for all our sins and His grace is sufficient to save us.

I am purchasing a large quantity of your books to give away to family and friends, to spread what I now realize is the true Good News.

Thank you! —A.R.