

Isn't perspective a marvellous thing?

I know many of you may not have been flying recently, but how good was it the last time you did? I'm thinking about getting up high, especially if you have a window seat and are flying nationally, you get to watch life going on down below with a wonderful sense of detachment and perspective.

Everything looks so orderly and right. The trees all in little bunches, rivers and lakes looking majestic and beautiful, the roads heading off where they are supposed to go, the tops of houses and barns and when you are flying over cities ... factories and warehouses.

It all looks like it should. That seeing it all from above, it looks manageable, understandable. It always makes me think that if we could get above things every now and again, perhaps life would not be quite so hard.

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This is one of the reasons why in the bible mountains are viewed as being special places to seek after God. Moses goes up the mountain to seek the Lord and comes down with the 10 commandments. Jesus goes to the mount of olives to pray, just before he is arrested ... John, here in Revelation is "carried away to a great high mountain," so he can see what is happening.

I don't know, perhaps you go up Mt Eden for a walk or a bike ride when you want to think or pray, perhaps One Tree Hill or Mt Albert. Perhaps you have another high place you like to seek out when you feel the need for a little clarity.

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We have said, when speaking about Revelation, that for John's hearers, at the bottom of the heap in almost every regard, this proclamation that in Jesus' death and resurrection, the reign of chaos is over, is good news.

That this world's empires are no match for God and the Lamb. In fact, "all power and wealth, wisdom and might, glory and honour and blessing", belong to that Lamb.

This too, is good news.

And in today's hearing, looking out from the mess they see all around them, they get some perspective. They hear that no matter what happens in the meantime ... at the eschaton, in the end, the holy city, Jerusalem, the church, will come down out of heaven from God. That heaven and earth will meet and God will be with God's people.

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They saw that the Roman Empire had no say in what happened at this point, they were powerless. That God and the Lamb would reign victorious, no matter what Caesar said or did. That in this time, Caesars would serve God, empires would bring their glory to God, and they would walk by the light that comes from God.

This was good news.

They also saw that there would be no temples, no religious institution, no one to say what was right and wrong as far as the worship of God was concerned. Because God was the cities temple, it's light, its life, its water, it's healing.

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As we hear these words, we also hear that at the eschaton, in the end ... Empires are powerless. Temporal Russian aggression, powerless. Pax Americana ... powerless. In the end God and the Lamb will be victorious.

This is good news.

It is also good news that in spite of the tragedies of the church; the lives lost and taken; over the arguments about the sacraments, the place and nature of the bible, the right to worship as you felt lead, adult baptism, sectarian religious wars, church government.

God and the lamb will be victorious.

In spite of the horrors of Clergy and church abuse of children, women and their positions, the wickedness of too much power and money ... in the end ... God and the Lamb will be victorious.

In spite of presently falling church numbers, budgets, maintaining expensive buildings, worry and concern over the church's future, it's appearance in and to the world, it's public persona ... in spite of church splits and hurt and pain, the abuse of interns ...in spite of change ...

At the eschaton, in the end, the holy city, Jerusalem, the church, will come down out of heaven from God. That heaven and earth will meet and God will be with God's people.

In spite of all these things ... in the end ... God and the lamb will be victorious.

That is good news.

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Thanks be to God.