

Good News Daily

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Sunday, December 5

Luke 1:57-68 *Awe fell upon the whole neighborhood, and the news of what had happened spread throughout the Judean hills.* (v.65 NLT)

John was born during a dark time for Israel. Roman soldiers occupied the covenant land. The temple had been restored, but with pagan wealth. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit had sent no special word to the nation in four hundred years. No doubt, discouragement ran side by side with expectation that God would soon act on His people's behalf. The Jews anxiously awaited a Messiah to deliver them from their tribulations and make them a mighty nation again.

This story of John's birth tells of the supernatural breaking into the natural world: "Awe fell upon the whole neighborhood." What joy this must have brought to those thirsting for a word from God! One can almost see the excited ripple of news spreading across the hill country from small village to small village, as people asked one another, "Could this be a sign of the Messiah?"

Our neighborhoods are not so different. Despite the cynicism which our age has spawned, hearts still long for a connection to, and a relationship with, the supernatural Creator God.

May we always be open to God working in our lives, and eager to share with others what He has done.

Amos 6:1-14; Psalms 148, 149, 150; 1 Thessalonians 1:5-11

Include in your prayers: Our country; for wisdom and guidance for our leaders and the leaders of all nations; for our armed forces, especially those now in danger and any continuing to struggle, including Rory Fitch, Sarah Fitch, Gregory Campbell, Lieutenant Ryan Morie, Houston, General John Shepherd, Russell Clark, Peniel Reid, and their families; for our enemies; for peace, justice and reconciliation in all places where there is conflict, especially among the peoples of the Middle East; for Haiti and Bondeau; and for Todd and Patsy McGregor and their work with SAMS training missionaries.

Monday, December 6

Psalms 25 *O LORD, I give my life to you. I trust in you, my God!* (vv.1-2a)

This psalm really speaks to me right now. It comforts me to know that David's prayer (and my prayer) for God to "feel my pain and see my trouble" (v.18) is not unheard. God knows all of our pain by voluntary, first-hand experience. Juergen Moltmann, in his book *The Trinity and the Kingdom*, submits that the sufferings of Jesus are not limited to his life on earth. Rather, his earthly sufferings reflect the eternal heart of the Creator God. By virtue of His creating us and loving us, God has always suffered with and for the world. Jesus' life, death, and Resurrection make it more obvious to us, living in the post-Resurrection age, but it has ever been so! Thanks be to God! He is not indifferent to us. By creating the universe and us out of His abundant love, God permitted Himself to be moved. "Jesus wept" (John 11:35), and he weeps with you and me still.

Amos 7:1-9; Revelation 1:1-8; Matthew 22:23-33

Include in your prayers: Ricardo Acuña, Joanna Aras, Karin Armbruster, Daryl Bacon, Kay Bailey, David and Jayne Baker, Liz Bardin, Todd Baron, Wally and Evelyne Bates, James Baur, Nicholas Beswick, Joe Bishop, Lance Block, Pete Bohnsack, Kelly Bonneau, Brad Brett and Linda Johnson-Brett, Abigail Browne, Barbara Buttner, Melanie Casey, Gloria Chung, Linton Chung, Nico Clothier.

Tuesday, December 7

Revelation 1:9-16 *And standing in the middle of the lampstands was someone like the Son of Man. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow.* (vv.13a, 14a)

A friend and I were discussing the nature of God. "God is a force," she said. "God can include a force," I replied, "but cannot be less than a personality, with mind, emotions, and will." Shocked, she said, "Do you mean to say you think God is anthropomorphic, like humans?" "No," I said. "The likeness occurs

because we are theomorphic, that is, made in the image of God.” I do not take this passage from Revelation literally. When Scripture talks about the “right hand” of God, I assume the passage refers to God’s power, not a body part, and the language to be poetic, not descriptive. Nevertheless, whatever God may look like, the God we Christians worship must have a *persona*, something which wills, loves, and acts. A “force” may appear to be easy access to divinity, but as soon as God’s purpose and love are introduced, we are confronted with God’s mind and a heart. It is comforting to know that there is a supremely intelligent, deeply feeling God who has willed us into being, and who has something to say to us.

Amos 7:10-17; Psalms 26, 28; Matthew 22:34-46

Include in your prayers: Martin Conlon, Robert Connell, Shirley Connell, Mark Connell, Ray Constable, Alan Costa, Cindy Croushore, Joe and Connie D’Alessandro, Ruth Dans, Joseph Devan, Dave Downing, Lynn Duncan, Rachel Dwyer, George Dzama III, Nolan Eicher, Joan Engskow, Susan Feldman, Mary Fietze, Drew Fogg, Joe Follayttar, the French family, and John Fullager, Cassandra Fuller.

Wednesday, December 8

Amos 8:1-14 *Beautiful girls and strong young men will grow faint in that day, thirsting for the LORD’s word.* (v.13)

The prophecy of Amos paints a chilling picture of what happened when the covenant people forgot the Creator God. Beautiful buildings, lush vineyards, and great wealth lulled them into thinking that “nothing bad will happen to us” (9:10). But they had forgotten their calling. As a culmination to all disasters, warned Amos, “People will stagger from sea to sea and wander from border to border, searching for the word of the LORD, but they will not find it” (v.12). When people reject God, they take themselves out of relationship with Him—the very picture of hell. God’s complaint is to be seen in the context of covenant. He never abandoned His people, and He never will. But this passage reminds us that the most precious thing we possess is a relationship with God. Nothing else compares. Without God’s presence, we stagger and thirst. Thank You, Father, for sending us Your Holy Spirit. May we treasure You as the man who sold all he had that he might buy the field to obtain the treasure (Matthew 13:44).

Psalm 38; Revelation 1:17—2:7; Matthew 23:1-12

Include in your prayers: Charlie Gasperino, Anne Gibb, Bob and Kim Gorman, Jake Graybill, Janie Greene, Dennis and Janet Grote, Barbara Gustafson, Joe Hagerty, Leslie Hahn, Madeline Hanlon, Patty Hart, Hart family, Shirley Hazen, Pam Heatley, Sally Honeyman, family of Alice Hopkinson, Mike and Alicia Howard and family, Mary Imle, Tindy Islip, Marj Johnson, Stephen Johnson, Jr. and Jennifer Corson, Kristian Joseph, Allison Kieffer and family, Keith and Janet Kieffer, Susan Kelly, Sarah Lawler, Jeff Lefevre, Frank Lepore, and Greg Lowe.

Thursday, December 9

Matthew 23:13-26 *“What sorrow awaits you teachers of religious law...you ignore the important things of the law—justice, mercy, and faith.”* (v.23)

When Jesus walked the earth, people traveled long distances to be near him. They often went to great trouble to bring an incapacitated friend or relative into Jesus’ presence, hoping that he would be healed just by being near Jesus. Crowds followed Jesus across lakes, gathered to meet him when word of his coming near preceded him, cried out his name as he passed, reached out to just touch the hem of his robe, disturbed his sleep and invaded his prayer time. Why? People wanted to be near him because he lived with joy, thanksgiving, and compassion; he touched the untouchables, embraced the disgraced. Jesus reached out to those who had been ignored, even condemned by the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law.

This might be a somewhat sobering question, but do people flock to be near us? Do we work to make God’s church a place where those outside would want to go to be healed, loved, forgiven, and accepted? We’re fortunate in that Jesus not only showed us how, but gives us the power to do exactly that.

Amos 9:1-10; Psalm 37:1-18; Revelation 2:8-17

Include in your prayers: Becky Mahoney’s family, Patricia Malloy, Elaine Mariggio, Priscilla Marshall, Steve McCue, Joey Mitchell, Julia Montgomery, Bob Montheard, Judy Mozer, Ashley Munoz, Mindy Nash, Dawn Neher, Sammera & Dash Parker, Anthony, Olivia and Vincent Parrone, Peter Pawlikowski,

Joe Pellegrini, Sal & Colleen Perrone, Chris Peters, Brook Pitman, Pat Powell, Jim and Jerre Rannie, Debbie Rannie, Kerry Robb.

Friday, December 10

Haggai 1:1-15 *On August 29 of the second year of King Darius's reign...(v.1a)*

As a student and teacher of history, it is important to me to understand when and why things happen. Thus, I find the Jewish emphasis on history fascinating. They recorded their people's story through the lens of their religious faith, portraying the Creator God as the one ultimately in charge of world events—past, present, and future.

In true Jewish fashion, the Apostles' Creed does the same thing when it states: "He suffered under Pontius Pilate." This lone, somewhat odd, historical reference, reminds us that we are not dealing with an abstract principle or a timeless truth, but with a supernatural Being who entered our world at a particular time, in a particular place, as one of us to suffer and die an ignominious death on a cross of wood.

Our own individual stories are the same. At particular times, in particular places, God steps through the veil and steps into our lives, our history, changing us forever. He does not force His way through. He comes in only by invitation, and when He comes, He loves us purely and completely with mercy and forgiveness and fills us with His Spirit, gives us His joy, and promises us life everlasting.

Psalm 31; Revelation 2:18-29; Matthew 23:27-39

Include in your prayers: Carlos Salmán, Danielle Salman, Jessica Sanchez, Maggie Sandin, Arnie Selna, Cheryl Seyfert, Tammy Simpson, Amanda Smith, Brian Smith and family, Howard Smith, Kathryn Smith, Kimberley Smith, Melissa Smith, Philip Smith, Allison Spencer, Bob and Audrey Sprague, Cliff Stehle, Rob Steiner, Leah and Kaala Taylor, Jane Thomas, Roger Thomas, Richard Timmerman, Phil Toren, Keith van Cleave, Harold Vandersea, Patricia Vreeland, Grace Wasko, Les Waton, Karen Weitz, George Whiteley, the Willcox family, Wendy Williams, Bob and Joetta Wright, Mirabelle Wrist, Peter Wrist, Ray Wrist, Ric Wrist, Ali Zygmunt.

Saturday, December 11

Matthew 24:1-14 *But he responded, "Do you see all these buildings? I tell you the truth, they will be completely demolished. Not one stone will be left on top of another!" (v.2)*

This statement was a real shocker. Nobody expected a Messianic candidate to minimize the temple, much less refer to its destruction. After all, according to popular thought, the Messiah was to restore the temple's purity after having fought off the pagans who controlled it. So what did Jesus mean? Some scholars hold that such "anti-temple" remarks, coupled with the famous "cleansing" of the temple (Matthew 21:12), were symbolic actions pointing to God's judgment. When referring to the destruction of the temple, Hebrew writings always coupled the destruction with a final withdrawal of God's pleasure. Perhaps Jesus was saying that the powerful temple had become an idol, an object which blinded the people to seeing God's true purpose for them. Once we understand God's purpose for us, we enter into the light of His love. We are transformed into new beings through Jesus Christ. All the temples and idols in the world become meaningless. His love makes us free.

Haggai 2:1-9; Psalms 30, 32; Revelation 3:1-6

Include in your prayers: Andy and Rita, Bonnie, Bunny, Chrissy, Clay, Dale Anne, Dave and Marion, Glenda, Jane, Jay, Kim, Karen and family, Laurette, Laurie, Leo, Lindy, Marilyn, Marty, Meg and family, Mika, Nancy and Stan, Noelle, Pat, Trish, Victoria and family.

by Ashley Rogers

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