

Jesus' Year of Jubilee

In view of our *Present Global Crisis*, what specifically would constitute as being “Good News”? Would some form of worship, or, a particular dogma preached by a particular religion, whether Catholic, Protestant, Buddhist or Islamic, be “Good News”? Or, did Jesus see his person as being the “Good News”? Before we continue with our new and refreshing understanding of what Jesus meant by “Good News”, please read the following segment from Robert D. Brinsmead’s Journal entitled, “*Jesus and the Sabbath/Sept. 1981*”:

“From the beginning of Israel's history the Sabbath was a day associated with the idea of liberation. It was the day on which Israel was to celebrate their liberation from Egypt (Deut. 5:15). The grandest festival of liberation was the “Year of Jubilee”, which was supposed to take place every fifty years. On the eve of the Jubilee all “debts” were supposed to be released (Lev. 25). We say “supposed” because there is no record that the Jews observed this festival. To devote an entire year to liberation was too much for the Jews. Devoting a day to liberation every week was more within their reach. The weekly Sabbath was really a “mini-Jubilee”. On that day no servant could be required to work, for the Lord of creation had made a proclamation of liberty concerning every seventh day. But for the great year of liberation, those burdened with debts and bound by servitude would have to await the coming of the Messianic Liberator. At the end of the age God would act to usher in the eternal Sabbath and the great eschatological Jubilee. Thus, all these Sabbatical institutions not only commemorated Israel's liberation from Egypt, but they were shadows of the great liberation which God and His Messiah would bring at the end of the age.

This association between the Sabbath and the Jubilee is highlighted by Luke's account of Jesus' inaugural proclamation of the gospel at Nazareth. On the Sabbath day Jesus went into the synagogue:

St. Luke 4: 17) The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

18) “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, 19) to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.” 20) Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, 21) and he began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.

Scholars are agreed that “the year of the Lord's favor” is a reference to the Jubilee. Jesus was announcing the beginning of the great eschatological Jubilee in which the prisoners were to be released, the disinherited were to have their inheritances restored, the oppressed were to be released and all “debts” were to be forgiven. The Lord of creation was now acting in His Anointed One to make good this joyful announcement. Thus, Luke describes how Jesus went on to Capernaum and liberated the demon-possessed man on the Sabbath. By this and other mighty Sabbath deeds, Jesus made the connection between the Sabbath and His Person. His deeds were unmistakable signs that the One by whom the Sabbath existed (Col. 1:16) was in the midst of His people. The shadow was being taken up in Him who was the reality (Col. 2:17).”

Therefore, the “Year of the Lord's Favor” is the Old Testament's “Year of Jubilee” and the Jews knew and still know that when the Messiah appears, he will proclaim it. Unfortunately, today's Jews believe in the Old Testament's “Year of Jubilee”, but, they don't believe in Jesus as the Messiah. And just as disappointing, today's Christians believe in Jesus as the Messiah, but they don't believe or haven't been taught correctly the Old Testament's “Year of Jubilee”. As for us at Greatest1command.com, if one makes the connection, the “Year of Jubilee” is an event when all “bills” and “deficits” are deleted or forgiven, and everyone is “debt free”. Jesus began announcing it and the tax collector initiated it, but the religious teacher was concerned with Religious arguments and Churchy rituals. (Luke. 4:18, 19) Since we believe that Jesus is the Messiah and has already announced the “Year of Jubilee”, we have transformed it into “Jesus' Year of Jubilee” for Jesus' version of the Jubilee was never ending!

In addition, when Jesus showed how to pray, the Greek and many English bibles, include the word “debts”:

Matt. 6: 9) “This, then, is how you should pray: “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, 10) your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. 11) Give us today our daily bread. 12) Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. 13) And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’

Here are the next two verses, which we believe the word sin throws a twist on the word debts:

14) For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15) But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Contrary to tradition, we believe Jesus was alluding to the Jubilee, and not just to the forgiveness of sins. Forgiving others’ sins is a prelude to forgiving debts. In fact, you have to be in a forgiving mode, or better said, a forgiving “mood/spirit” before you can forgive in any fashion. This can also be said to the releasing of ‘literal’ prisoners as stated in Luke 4: 18 when Jesus proclaimed the Jubilee; for verse 18 can be mistaken as being only a prisoner to sin and then being freed from it, or similarly, being spiritually dead and then becoming alive spiritually. Evermore, we positively believe that Jesus mainly alludes to the Old Testament’s “Year of Jubilee” and the forgiving of debts in the traditional “Lords Prayer”. And that the prisoners, in Jesus’ Jubilee proclamation, as we just stated, are actual, literally incarcerated individuals, and not just spiritual or figurative prisoners. This is what we mean when we stated at the beginning of this essay as having a new and refreshing understanding of what Jesus meant by “Good News”. Well, at least it’s “Good News” to the poor and those in prison. As far as the rich were and still are concerned, it is hard for them to entertain Jesus’ ideals and hard to make the transition in their generation and ours. As Jesus stated, “**it’s hard for the rich to ‘enter’ the kingdom-Jubilee of heaven (Luke 18: 25)**”. Many rich people are set in their ways and are very comfortable. Some did and will think today, “Why should I give up what I have and start all over with nothing?” I don’t trust others, for look at the way the poor envy me. If I give it all up, will others forget me and not include me in receiving, at least, my daily bread?”

Furthermore, using the “Historical Method”, which shows the true context of scriptures (Jesus in his “Sermon on the Mount” with the presupposition that the un-ending Jubilee was in effect) preached to encourage and reassure that because the Jubilee was a precarious event, God would step in to procure food, clothing and shelter during the transitional stages until, and beyond, the fullness of “Jesus’ Year of Jubilee” becomes world-wide! Jesus did say in Matthew 24: 35, that heaven and earth will pass away but his words will never pass away. The following statements by Jesus were not for a future generation, but for the very people who first heard them. Remember, keep in mind as you read them that his words are for our generation as well:

Matt. 6: 25) “**Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear....28) “And ...why do you worry about clothes? 31) So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32) For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them.**

Therefore, knowing the long term ramification, from Jesus’ short term implication, some in Jesus’ generation did apply “Jesus’ Year of Jubilee”. For example, it states in St. Luke chapter 19: 8, 9: “8) But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.” For that, Jesus blessed him and stated in verse 9, “**Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.**” Also, in Acts 4: 34 & 35 it states, “There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the Apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.

Sadly, there were some unbelievers like Ananias and his wife Sapphira, who when they tried to keep some of the money from the sales of their property, they instantaneously fell down, and died! (Acts 5: 1- 11) Similarly, any literal prisoners that were, or will be released from any incarceration, if for one moment they were to have any inclination for wrong doing, which would affect the collective, they too will also die instantaneously. Because if God stopped Ananias and Sapphira from a sin, which on the surface seems minor, will he not stop others from a greater sin, or crime, for which one is imprisoned for? This is reassuring and comforting to know, because of the fear of some prisoners who are not fit for society, especially if they have not truly repented and have not been truly converted. Remember, like Ananias and his wife Sapphira, there will be “Divine Intervention”! Violators of “the year of the Lord’s favor” will be testing the Spirit of the Lord and would not be acting in line with truth of the Gospel (Gal. 2: 14). In conclusion, what Jesus called as being “Good News” and the fulfillment of the “Gospel” is, in modernized terms for its proclamation in our generation: “Jesus’ Year of Jubilee” Greatest1command.com

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