

THE GREAT NEWS

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F L I P P I N G T H E N A R R A T I V E B A C K

A careful reading of the Apostolic Record reveals something sort of shocking, wonderful and simultaneously sobering which is that the overall message of Christ's victory is super good news for the world but it's not a best news for believers. What? You heard me. I suggest that this is the better way to read the overall contextual biblical message. Yes, it's pretty self-evident – Christians for nearly two thousand years have flipped this narrative on its head and made the overall message bad news for the world of non-believers and great news for the followers of Christ, but if we really think about it, the reverse is actually the reality. Here's why. The Word reveals to us that God so loved the world that He gave us His only begotten Son – I'll finish that verse in a minute. It also reveals that this son paid the wages of the worlds sin debt through the sacrifice of His own life, and that God has been reconciled to the world as a result. The scripture makes it clear then that the worlds sin has been paid for in full by Christ unconditionally and without price. And then having overcome sin, death, hell and the grave, Jesus make

resurrection of all possible. Unconditionally and without price. Because of Christ the spiritual detriments from the first Adam are gone – that's a win for the world, sin has been paid, resurrection is given, and God is reconciled to us as a whole – all unconditionally and without cost or price. For the world. That's pretty darn good, eh? Great news for the world – unbelievers too. I mean, Jesus even said it himself, "I did not come to condemn the world but to save it," right? Remember the Christmas song? "Peace on earth goodwill toward men, peace on earth, Goodwill to men!" I don't know why this message is not heralded across the land sea and sky from the mouths of every bible reader on earth. But instead of this perspective, Bible readers tend to see themselves as the lucky ones and the world as dark, unloved, abandoned by God and the recipients of nothing. What is really intriguing is the fact that if there is sobering, unsettling, sort-of bad news in the record, its for believers. I mean, don't believers, the longer we are in the Word start to see that if we choose to receive and believe on Him, the demands upon our lives can

be summarized by terms like, "suffering," "loss," "pain," "aliens," "sacrifice," "walking by faith," "dying to self," "fearing God more than man," "serving," "giving rather than taking," "surrendering," "being slaves," "submitting," and all the rest? It fascinates me that the collective mindset of Christianity has taken up the written narrative, and has sort of locked arms together and looking around at the world of unbelievers sees it as the recipients of bad news but while in this life and relative to this life there is probably no worse news to be had than the biblical message for those who choose to believe. Unbelievers unconditionally loved by God have sort of a win/win in the scripture – they can walk according to their will and still be loved and saved from their sin by the unconditional victorious works of Christ. But when a believer chooses for some insane reason to receive, believe and to continue in His Word, the results are not less gruesome than our King hanging on a cross outside the city walls while the rest of the community celebrates. Don't misunderstand me. Believers are promised rewards in heavenly places, I know. And in faith, we make

the very personal decision to pursue God in the shadows of hat can sometimes be great doubt. But let's not forget the goodness of God toward the unbelieving world along the way. We don't need to flip the narrative – we need to keep it right where it is – that God so loved the world that He gave his only human son (and) when we choose to believe on Him, and continue in His Word, we will be disciples indeed, and we (not the world) shall know the truth (not like the world gives) and the truth will set us free – a freedom that the world, though forgiven and reconciled, cannot know. But that liberty comes with what can only be seen as an enormous price tag in the here and now. And that is my point. Where unbelievers are gifted with unconditional beneficial results of Christ's victorious work, believers are paradoxically subsumed into the very spirit and life of our King, and choose to walk in this life as He walked, doing what He did, and relying on God as He relied on Him. But unlike our spoiled brat world, we are sons and daughters, and submit to the chastening hand of our loving God who seeks to have us as more than creations, but as heirs.