SERMON NOTES — April 6, 2025

The basics of today's sermon on God doing a new thing: all the references in the Bible of God doing New Creation are spoken to the whole people, not just individuals. So that the essence is for God to say to us: "The new thing I'm offering you is a new way of 'doing civilization' that leads to life — because, as I've been telling you, your old ways based on nations and empires, lead to death"

In addition to God's new thing in today's reading from Isaiah 43:

- St Paul last summer telling us about God creating one new humanity in place of all the ways in which we divide ourselves
- And last week "new creation" in Christ is about reconciling all things (which we've divided) to God — calling us to a "ministry of reconciliation
- It will continue on Easter Sunday as we read about God creating "a new heavens and a new earth" (Isa 65:17)
- The last three weeks of the Easter Season will feature the exact same words of Isa 65 (Rev 21:1), followed by a depiction over Rev 21-22 of the New Jerusalem descending to earth from heaven — all of this after fifteen chapters or so of a coded depiction of the history of human civilization as *failed*, as Satan led

My friend Brian McLaren (new book *Life after Doom*, p. 110) sums up the biblical journey this way:

> Let me state it as clearly as I can: The real horizon in biblical literature is:
> - (1) *not* the end of an individual life at death.
> - (2) Nor is it the end of the space-time universe.
> - (3) It *is* the end of whatever shortsighted and small-hearted civilization currently dominates the world.

To finally see this and choose God's new thing will fell like a death, because the latest version of Christian Nationalism is basically what we've been doing for 1500 years. The moment in our liturgical year, as we are about to embark on Holy Week, is to choose what Mary chose, to anoint Jesus' body for burial as he is about to die at the hands of our typical nationalistic sin. Can we this time be ready then to fully embrace God's new thing?

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