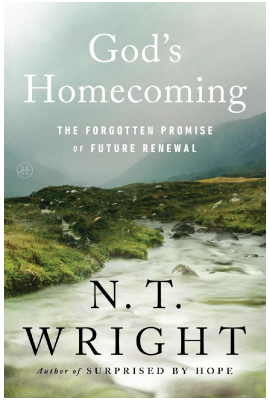
Excerpt Page from N. T. Wright and Ibram X. Kendi
Easter Sunday — April 5, 2026

Theme for Easter: God's Coming Home on Easter Is 'Resurrecting' the Unity of the Human Family

> *In John's story of Easter morning, Jesus calls his disciples "brothers," or "siblings," for the* first *time. This has been building throughout the Gospel but began in earnest at the Last Supper, when Jesus the Master washed his disciples feet. Shortly thereafter, he emphasizes calling them "friends." Now, on Easter morning he calls them "siblings." What this signifies is that, in Jesus, God has come home to earth to gather God's family. Jesus is going to the Father for a while, but at the Last Supper he explained that this meant sending the Holy Spirit to continue the work of gathering God's children. The Spirit continues God's coming home to the world.*

> *There is a brand new book by renowned New Testaments scholar N. T. Wright, titled* God's Homecoming: The Forgotten Promise of Future Renewal. *As you might glean from the title, Wright argues that Christians, over the centuries, have gotten the message upside-down when we have come to emphasize 'our going home to heaven when we die.' Here are the opening paragraphs of his new book:*



Most people today imagine that the point of Christianity is "to go to heaven when you die." That's what most believers believe. It's what most unbelievers unbelieve. It's certainly what journalists, broadcasters, and popular commentators think Christianity is supposed to be all about.

They are all wrong. The point of Christianity is not that we should go to heaven. The point of Christianity is that heaven should come to us. "To earth," in Jesus's words. The story the early Christians told was not about how humans (or their souls) could, as it were, go upstairs into the presence of God. It was about how God had come downstairs to live with them — and would one day complete that operation, eventually suffusing all creation with his glorious presence. Thus, though people sometimes speak of those who have died as having "gone home" to be with God, from the early Christian point of view that is the wrong way around. The great hope is God's own homecoming. That project, long promised in Israel's scriptures, was launched with Jesus and with the holy spirit. Grasping this enables us to glimpse the true Christian hope and allow it to shape our mission and life. In much contemporary Christianity, this story has been all but forgotten. It is time to refresh our memories.

What the early Christians said about Jesus and the spirit — two of the most important topics, obviously, in the early church — meant what it meant within this story. When they spoke of salvation, they were not talking about people being saved *from* the present world. They were talking about the creator God's plan of salvation *for* the present world — with themselves, as rescued and repurposed human beings, playing an important role in that project.

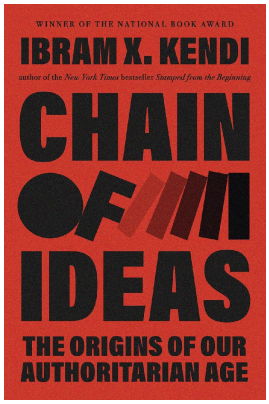
This, by the way, underlines, the importance of seeing the story of scripture as being basically about *things that happened in the real world*. . . . [I]t is vital for the overall biblical world, Judaean and Christian alike, that the story that scripture tells, and the smaller narratives of which that larger story is made up, mean what they mean within the framework of what can be called "creational monotheism": the belief that this world of space, time, and matter is God's world, and that God is reaffirming, reclaiming, and renewing it, not abandoning it.

This is all the more important because this simple yet profound truth about God's sovereign, saving rule becoming a reality "on earth as in heaven" — the very thing for which Jesus taught his followers to pray — has been largely ignored, particularly in the Western churches (Roman Catholicism and the many varieties of Protestantism).

> *I have emphasized in the past that the renewed way of reading the Christian story, sketched here by N.T. Wright, does not take away the hope of life-after-death, or of seeing our loved ones when we die. It* expands *it! It joins that hope with God's saving the whole creation.*

Another question for today leads to the next excerpt: why didn't God complete God's homecoming on that first Easter? Why did it take Jesus and then the sending of the Holy Spirit to begin and continue the homecoming but not complete it? My answer based on scripture: Because humanity has resisted God's homecoming by resisting being God's one human family. The long history of our way of nationalistic governance is based on being divided against one another. We resist seeing ourselves as siblings of the one God's unconditional love and instead believe in false gods of division. The familiar version of Christianity, where God sorts the human family into a heavenly home or eternal punishment in hell, plays right into the nationalistic schemes of divide and conquer. We need the opposite way of reading the biblical story as God's homecoming through Jesus and the Spirit to unite *the human family. This opens the door to an anti-nationalist politics — like this:*

Excerpts from Ibram X. Kendi's brand new book: *Chain of Ideas: The Origins of Our Authoritarian Age* (One World, 2026).



Kendi's book basically analyzes the recent history of human authoritarian regimes in terms of what today is called "The Great Replacement Theory" — which is but the most recent name for how rulers keep power by 'dividing and conquering' those whom they rule over. On page xxvii (in the Prologue), Kendi gives a definition:

This book primarily chronicles the spread of great replacement theory as a racist idea. But it also shows, at times, these mutations to the theory. In a more expansive sense, great replacement theory can be defined as *a political theory that powerful elites* [most often believed to be Jewish, the anti-Semitic base for the theory] *are enabling disadvantaged groups to steal the lives, livelihoods, cultures, electoral power, and freedoms of privileged groups, who now need authoritarian protection*.

In the Epilogue, Kendi speaks of the hope that comes from "alongside" shared power and experiencing humanity as one family:

Chain of Ideas set out to chronicle how humanity has become entrapped in this vicious circle of the great replacement. But this book aims to be more than a global history, by revealing ten ideas used to entrap people — what I have called the chain of ideas. But I believe we can escape the vicious circle.

We can escape the vicious circle by ending our efforts to escape each other. We can liberate ourselves from the ideas that fetter us by recognizing what binds us. Only a universal recognition of the unbreakable chain of humanity can liberate us from the breakable chain of ideas.

Yes, there are different links in the chain of humanity. Yes, there are different skin colors, hair textures, cultures, religions, genders, ethnicities, nationalities, sexualities, and more. But all these different links are interconnected to form the human chain that stretches across borders and oceans and mountain ranges and deserts. What strikes one link ultimately rattles all links. What strengthens one link ultimately strengthens the entire human chain.

To strengthen the entire chain, humanity must recognize that there's more evidence for positive-sum ideas than zero-sum ideas. Most members of privileged groups *gain* from equitable and just policies *alongside* members of disadvantaged groups, not in competition against them.

Humanity sits at a crossroads in the authoritarian age.

Either humanity will create conditions that confine people to the chain of ideas or humanity will create conditions that link people to the chain of humanity. I am hopeful humanity will create conditions for humans to be linked, not confined.

Either humanity will bend the knee before dictators to secure privileges or humanity will stand strong for democracy to secure power. I am hopeful humanity will choose power.

Either humanity will open doors to outsiders or humanity will close doors on the future. I am hopeful humanity will open the doors to the future.

Either humanity will see themselves as one in all our differences or humanity will one day be done. I am hopeful humanity will choose to be one — one chain of humanity.