

# Jesus Redeems the Timeline

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March 5, 2023

Many of us in our past have made decisions or taken actions that have had a profound negative effect on our lives and the lives of others. The memory of these things lingers for months, or even years, like an ever-present partial eclipse of the sun. Life goes on, but not as brightly as before, because it is dimmed by the memory of terrible mistakes of the past.

How many of us have often wished that time travel was possible, and that we could somehow go back and correct what was done and make things right? This is a recurring theme in many fictional stories and films.

One such example can be seen in *Star Trek: Voyager* (1995-2001), a science fiction television series set in the 24th century. It follows the adventures of the starship USS Voyager as it attempts to return home to the Alpha Quadrant after being stranded in the Delta Quadrant on the far side of the Milky Way galaxy.

In the episode *Timeless* (Season 5, Episode 6, 11/18/1998), the crew of *Voyager* attempted to use a newly developed slipstream engine technology to bring them home. Ensign Harry Kim and Commander Chakotay were in the shuttle *Delta Flyer* guiding the larger ship.

Kim was responsible for entering the precise calculations in the shuttle's navigation computer to help *Voyager* maintain a stable slipstream. But something went wrong with the

calculations, and it became unstable. This caused the ship to drop back into normal space out of control and crash into a nearby ice planet with all hands lost. The shuttle survived the disaster, so Kim and Chakotay were the only ones of the *Voyager* crew to make it home.

Driven by grief, regret and guilt, Kim and Chakotay spent the next 15 years looking for the ice planet that was the tomb for *Voyager*. They planned to use a stolen temporal transmitter with special equipment found only on *Voyager* to send a word back in time to the crew to avoid the disaster.

Though it cost them their lives, Kim was able to send new calculations back to the *Voyager* crew that caused the slipstream to collapse prematurely, dropping them back into normal space with no harm. The mistakes made that caused the destruction of *Voyager* were erased, and the timeline changed with the crew eventually making it home.

The brothers of Joseph were jealous of his status as the favored son of their father Israel (Genesis 37). In their hatred they betrayed and sold him into slavery and what likely would lead to his death. His brothers all decided to lie to their father to conceal their treachery.

After their anger against Joseph subsided, and seeing the intense grief of their father, regret, remorse, and guilt set in that haunted their consciences for years. This can be seen when they later encountered Joseph unknowingly in Egypt and experienced dismay as they sought to purchase food to save their lives during a great famine in the land (Genesis 42).

But God preserved Joseph and prospered him, taking what was meant for evil and turning it to good. His intervention redeemed the timeline by saving the lives of Israel's family and bringing about forgiveness and reconciliation (Genesis 50:15-21) between Joseph and his brothers.

Saul was very zealous in his adherence to Judaism and his

ancestral traditions, even beyond many of his contemporaries. He viewed the followers of Jesus as a threat to his nation that needed to be eliminated.

He ruthlessly persecuted the church, involving himself in the imprisonment and execution of many believers, both men and women. On the road to Damascus, he had an encounter with Jesus that altered the course of his life (Acts 9:1-31).

Saul, renamed Paul, not only was converted to Christ, but he became one of the most zealous proclaimers of the gospel and writer of most of New Testament Scripture. Though he carried within him regret and sorrow for his previous persecution of Christians (Acts 8:3, 9:2, 26:9-10; 1 Corinthians 15:9-10; Galatians 1:13; 1 Timothy 1:13), he had come to embrace God's grace, mercy, and forgiveness in his heart. He realized that God's intervention in his timeline through his persecution of the church resulted in the spread of the gospel beyond Jerusalem into the surrounding regions, and through his conversion into the rest of the world.

God created time and the universe. In this environment He made the world, all its creatures, and in His image man and woman. God made all things good (Genesis 1:31), and He made Adam and Eve – and by extension us, their descendants – for His glory and to enjoy fellowship with Him forever (Psalm 16:11, 37:4, 43:4, 70:4, 73:25–26, 89:9; Isaiah 43:5-7; Romans 11:36; 1 Corinthians 6:20, 10:31; Ephesians 1:9-12; Philippians 2:9–11, 4:4; Colossians 1:18; 1 Peter 4:11; Revelation 4:11).

This fellowship with God was broken when Adam and Eve disobeyed God, bringing sin and death into the world. One can imagine the regret, sorrow, and guilt they felt as they had to leave the Garden of Eden and see through the remaining years of their lives the devastating effects of sin on their progeny and the world.

**“Do not call to mind the former things, or ponder things of**

**the past.** Behold, I will do something new, now it will spring forth; will you not be aware of it? I will even make a roadway in the wilderness, rivers in the desert.” (Isaiah 43:18-19)

The immediate context of this passage foretells God’s restoration of the Jewish people to Israel from Babylon, but it also references something even greater. God did not leave humanity doomed to destruction and eternal separation from Him. He entered time by sending the Word made flesh into the world to redeem lost sinners by His life, death on the cross, and bodily resurrection and restore the broken fellowship (John 1:1-3, 14; Galatians 4:4-5) that was always intended.

We do not need a time machine to go back in time or a temporal transmitter to send a message to ourselves in the past to undo the mistakes or awful things we have done. All the transgressions we have committed against God, each other, and ourselves, including our regrets and guilt, are covered with God’s mercy, grace and love in Jesus Christ. God can cause even the worst of them to work together for good.

**“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.** For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.” (Romans 8:28-30)

Those who rest in Jesus’ forgiveness, trusting solely in Him, can and should let the past go. Forsake and forget the chains that formerly held you captive. Live life under the full brightness of the Son, because He has entered your timeline and redeemed it so that you can experience newness of life (Romans 6:3-4, 8:1) and the amazing things He has in store for you (Ephesians 2:8-10).

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