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“All things have been handed over to me by my Father” (Matt 11:27).

Isa 10:5-7, 13b-16; Matt 11:25-27

As Jesus sized up the world he was in, he must have had full assurance that God was the only Lord of history. He grew up in Roman-occupied Israel, in Galilee, a region under the control of King Herod, a cruel tyrant. Most of the people around him were poor, except for the privileged, absentee landowners and wealthy aristocrats living in Jerusalem off the revenues of the temple and a corrupt tax system.

Yet Jesus knew in his heart that God was just and the Lord of history. Jesus had heard Isaiah read in the synagogue, how the prophet mocked the Assyrians for boasting that they controlled the world. Yes, they could invade and destroy nations and even carry God’s people into exile, but it was only because God allowed this to happen. Isaiah reminded the Assyrians that they were like the axe boasting to the one who wielded it. They were only instruments of God’s will.

But Jesus had more to say about history. He praised his Father for giving wisdom to the childlike hidden from the bragging big shots and experts. Ordinary people were the salt of the earth, the meek who inherit the earth and ultimately decide history. Tolstoy mocked Napoleon in his masterpieces, *War and Peace*, for thinking he could conquer Russia. His invasion failed because a broken wagon wheel slowed his advance just long enough to ensure a debacle during the cold Russian winter.

Watching old newsreels and videos on the History Channel only confirms that the great men of yesterday are now just grainy images whose names we have forgotten. Saints, heroes and prophets are remembered: Tubman, Gandhi, King, Mandela, Day,

Romero, Romero, Stang, or a man named George Floyd, whose death shed light on 6,000 lynching victims waiting to be acknowledged.

Jesus completed his mission and surrendered his life on a cross, trusting that his Father would bring a victory of justice and love out of a brutal effort to silence the truth to protect an empire that would soon be dust in the wind. Our participation in history depends on who we think is in charge and what we believe is real and true. Remaining faithful to these ideals and values is all we can do, but it is more important in the big picture that the illusions of the rich and famous or the boasts of those who think they are making history happen.

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