

# Racing Towards the Future

I recently met an old friend I had not seen for a long time. We talked about the many things that had happened since we last met, how tall our children had grown, and how much had changed among our friends. She remarked, “The future is coming at us faster every year, or we are running more quickly towards it.” Whilst we know this is not literally true, we can understand, and perhaps relate to what she meant.

## A Changing World

At the same time, the whole world is changing more quickly than ever before. Technology, global communications and easy travel mean that business, government and social structures are developing more and more rapidly. Some of this is positive, such as the eradication of certain diseases. Some is less so, such as environmental damage and the proliferation of dangerous weapons.



We may have heard people ask what the world is coming to; there is certainly worry about the future and where humankind is headed.

There is good news here. Jesus predicted that there would be a time of uncertainty and concern, just like this, when men and women do not know which way to turn.

*There will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken (Luke 21:25–26).*

He continued to explain that this was a sign that he would soon return to set up the Kingdom of God:

*Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near... So you also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near (v27–28, 31).*

The future for the earth is not uncertain, God has told us all about it, in His word, the Bible. He created the universe, and He created the earth for people to live on. It will not be destroyed. He wants men and women to be saved, to live with Him in the kingdom to come.

*For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens, who is God, who formed the earth and made it, who has established it, who did not create it*

*in vain, who formed it to be inhabited: "I am the LORD, and there is no other. I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth; I did not say to the seed of Jacob, 'Seek Me in vain'; I, the LORD, speak righteousness, I declare things that are right" (Isaiah 45:18–19).*

## Our Future

This leaves the question of our personal future, and in which direction we are heading. Do we have a clear vision of where we want to go, what we want to be?

One such hope might be to be somewhere beautiful, like on our front cover, perhaps driving on an open road with nothing ahead but rolling hills and dramatic skies. Maybe it is to be surrounded by loving friends and family, a place where we feel content.



The Bible, however, gives us an even greater vision, one of life after death, living in God's Kingdom. This is God's plan for the world, and He invites each of us to have a part in it. This edition of *Glad Tidings* focuses on this hope for the future, and the way to get there. It is described in the Bible as a race, and we are using this as our theme.

The writer to the Hebrews encouraged Christians in this race, to make the effort and to do so with endurance:

*Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us (Hebrews 12:1).*

The Apostle Paul also used this picture, describing his own efforts to please God:

*Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified (1 Corinthians 9:24–27).*

The race has a course – the passage of our lives. It has a prize – eternal life in God's Kingdom. And it has fellow runners, but they run together, not against each other, as everyone can win this prize. Like any other race, the race of life requires preparation, training and commitment. We need to develop our resilience and resistance to setbacks. We have to understand and value the prize, and keep our eyes on the goal. This is to be welcomed by Jesus to a place in God's Kingdom.

*Then the King will say to those on his right hand, 'Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world' (Matthew 25:34).*