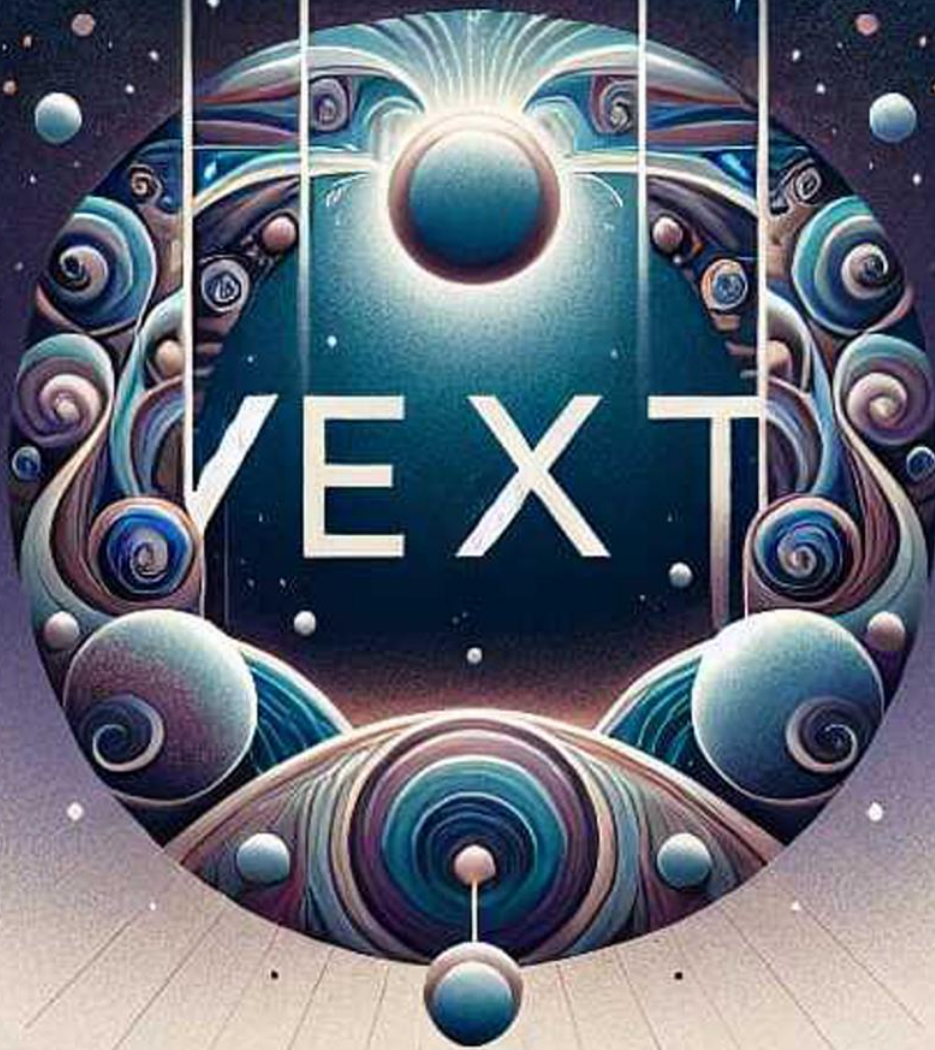


WHAT'S



NEXT

THE
INSIGHTS
ANAND PETER

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Preamble

What's Next? The Timeless Question Woven Through Scripture

The human experience is a tapestry of transitions, each step forward shadowed by the question, "What's next?" While the Bible, with its ancient language, does not pose this question verbatim, its stories, teachings, and prophecies resonate deeply with this universal yearning for direction and purpose.

From the very beginning, we witness the "What's next?" dilemma. Abraham, the father of faith, receives a call to leave all he knows for an unknown land, a promise whispered on the wind. His journey, fraught with risk and uncertainty, mirrors our hesitant steps into the unknown, trusting in a God who walks ahead.

The Israelites, too, faced a monumental "What's next?" at the edge of the Red Sea. Trapped between an impassable sea and a pursuing army, their fear reverberated with the impossible options life throws our way. Yet, it was in that moment of utter surrender that God split the sea, demonstrating His power to deliver and usher His people into a new future.

Throughout Scripture, we encounter individuals grappling with the weight of leadership and legacy. Joshua, after Moses' death, faced the daunting task of leading the Israelites into the Promised Land. His "What's next?" echoed with the anxieties of filling big shoes and navigating uncharted territory. God's reassurance, "Be strong and courageous," speaks to us today, reminding us that He equips those He calls.

The Psalms, raw and honest, give voice to our cries for direction. David, a man after God's own heart, poured out his fears, doubts, and hopes in psalms that resound with anyone seeking answers. These timeless prayers remind us that even in uncertainty, we can approach God with our "What's next?" questions.

But Scripture does not leave us with mere questions. Proverbs, a treasure trove of wisdom, encourages us to seek understanding and discernment as we

navigate life's crossroads. Recognizing that our choices shape our future, calls us to seek Godly counsel and make decisions rooted in His principles.

The prophets, too, played a crucial role in addressing "What's next?" They painted vivid pictures of the future, both challenging and hopeful. Their pronouncements of judgment served as wake-up calls, while their promises of restoration fuelled hope in God's unwavering faithfulness.

Jesus, in His earthly ministry, addressed the "What's next?" question by focusing on the transformative power of the present. His teachings on discipleship, ethical living, and radical reliance on God laid the foundation for a life lived in light of eternity. Through parables, he invited His listeners to envision the Kingdom of God, prompting them to consider the implications for their own lives and the future.

And finally, in His parting words, Jesus gave The Great Commission, a clear directive for His followers: "Go and make disciples of all nations." This wasn't just a task, but a purpose, a reason to face the future with courage and hope, knowing that God was with them every step of the way.

So, what's next? The Bible may not offer a step-by-step guide, but it does provide the compass and the companion we need. It encourages us to face the unknown with courage, seeking wisdom, trusting in God's guidance, and living each day with purpose, knowing that our "What's next?" is held securely in the hands of a faithful God.

What's Next? Finding Courage in Abraham's Journey

[Read Genesis 12]

Life is full of surprises, is it not? It is unpredictable, full of unexpected twists and turns. One minute you are comfortable and settled, the next you are grappling with uncertainty, wondering, "What's next?"

This is where the story of Abraham, from the Bible, resonates. He received a divine call to leave everything behind and journey to a new, unknown land. If I heard a voice like that, I would probably wonder if I was imagining things!

But Abraham listened. He trusted in something bigger than himself, taking a huge leap of faith. He packed up his family and possessions and set off on a journey into the unknown. He had no map, no destination, no clear understanding of his purpose. Now that took guts!

We don't all need to become nomads, of course. But Abraham's story holds an important lesson. Life is full of challenges and changes. Jobs end, relationships evolve, and plans fall apart. It is easy to feel lost and afraid when these things happen.

Abraham's story reminds us to face the unknown with courage and trust. He teaches us the importance of faith, especially when the path ahead is unclear. He shows us that taking that first step, even without knowing the destination, can be an act of immense bravery.

So, the next time you're facing uncertainty and wondering "What's next?" remember Abraham. Be brave, trust in something bigger than yourself, and have faith. You never know what amazing things might be waiting around the corner, which our merciful and all-knowing God has tailor-made for us.

Note: If you have read up to this, you may be interested in the next in line. Let us walk the journey of faith through the Old Testament and the New Testament.

What's Next? Finding Hope Between the Red Sea and the Chariot Wheels

(Read Exodus 14-15)

Have you ever felt backed into a corner, the walls of circumstance closing in with nowhere to turn? The familiar rumble of fear, the rising tide of panic – it is a place we all know, a crossroads of "what ifs" and "what nows." The Israelites, fresh from escaping the chains of Egyptian slavery, found themselves facing a similar crossroads at the edge of the Red Sea.

The crashing waves before them, the thunder of Pharaoh's chariots behind – the sheer impossibility of their situation must have been suffocating. This was not a minor detour on their journey to freedom; it felt like an abrupt and terrifying end. "What's next?" was not just a question whispered in hushed tones, it was a collective cry etched onto every anxious face.

It is easy to judge their doubt and declare, "They should have trusted God!" But haven't we all stood at the edge of our own personal Red Seas? The crushing weight of job loss, the diagnosis that steals our breath, the betrayal that shatters our world, the loss of a very dear one– in those moments, fear doesn't respect logic or faith.

But here is the astounding thing about the Red Sea narrative: God didn't rebuke their fear, He responded to it. He parted the waters, not as a reward for unwavering belief, but as a demonstration of His unwavering faithfulness. He transformed their "What's Next?" from a terrified question to an exclamation of awe and wonder.

The parting of the Red Sea was not just about escaping Egypt; it was about embracing a future sculpted by Divine Hands. It was about understanding that even when the path ahead seems impossible, God is in the business of making a way where there seems to be none.

So, what about your own "Red Sea" moments? Those times when the future feels precarious, the ground beneath you uncertain? Remember this:

Doubt is not the enemy of faith, it's often the catalyst for it. God isn't intimidated by our questions, He invites them.

God's response to our fears is often bigger than we can imagine. His deliverance might not always look how we expect, but it will always be a testament to His power and love.

Stepping into the "what's next?" requires courage. It is a step of faith, trusting that even though we can't see the entire path, He is already there, guiding our steps.

So, take heart. Your Red Sea moment might be terrifying, but it is not the final chapter. Let God's faithfulness be the wind in your sails, propelling you forward into a future brimming with His promises. The best, as they say, is yet to come.

What's Next: Stepping Into the Promised Land of Our Own

We have all been there. Standing on the precipice of something new, something unknown, with a heart full of both anticipation and trepidation. It's the feeling of graduation day, the first day at a new job, the moment you say "yes" to a life-altering opportunity. It is the story of Joshua, taking the reins from Moses, facing the daunting task of leading the Israelites into the Promised Land.

Moses, the legendary leader, was gone. His absence, deeply felt, left a void and a question that hung heavy in the air: "What's next?" It is a question that resonates through millennia, a question we ask ourselves in moments of transition and change.

Imagine the weight on Joshua's shoulders. He was tasked with filling shoes that seemed impossible to fill, leading a nation through unfamiliar territory towards a future promised but unseen. The uncertainty could have been paralyzing, the fear crippling. Yet, at that pivotal moment, God spoke words that have resonated through time, words that serve as a beacon for us all: "Be strong and courageous."

These words were not just a command, they were an antidote to fear. God was not asking Joshua to ignore his anxieties; He was acknowledging them while simultaneously offering strength and courage as companions on the journey ahead.

Stepping into the "what's next" of our lives requires that same strength and courage. It demands we acknowledge our fears, but not let them dictate our direction. It requires faith – not a blind faith, but a faith rooted in the belief that we are equipped, even in our human frailty, to face the unknown.

The Promised Land, for Joshua and for us, represents the dreams we hold, the goals we strive for, and the future we envision. It is not a place devoid of challenges or obstacles. Just as the Israelites faced battles and setbacks, we too will encounter roadblocks on our journey.

But the message of Joshua's story, the timeless message whispered to our hearts, is this: We are not alone. When fear threatens to overwhelm us, when the path ahead seems shrouded in mist, we can cling to the words "Be strong and courageous." We can step forward, knowing that strength is found not just in ourselves, but in the One who walks beside us, leading us towards the promise of what's next.

What's Next? Finding Our Voice in the Questions

(David's Psalms)

Life rarely unfolds in predictable chapters. It is more like a Psalm – a tapestry woven with moments of joy, sorrow, doubt, and unwavering faith. And sometimes, the most honest prayer we can utter is a raw, vulnerable question: "What's next, God?"

The book of Psalms, that timeless anthology of human emotion set to music, is brimming with such enquiries. David, the shepherd king, knew the rhythm of uncertainty. He penned countless verses wrestling with the unknown, pouring out his heart in laments and pleas for guidance. He didn't shy away from the hard questions, the moments when the path ahead seemed lost in shadow.

In Psalm 13, we hear his desperate cry: "How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? ... Consider and answer me, O Lord my God..." These are not the polished pronouncements of a king on his throne; these are the raw whispers of a soul grappling with doubt and fear.

Yet, within those very questions, there is a profound beauty. They remind us that it is okay to not have all the answers, to feel adrift in the sea of "what ifs." The act of bringing our uncertainties to God, of laying bare our anxieties and fears, is itself an act of faith. It is a recognition that even in the midst of confusion, we are not alone.

The Psalms don't offer easy answers or quick fixes. They don't shy away from the complexities of the human experience. But they do offer something far greater – the profound comfort of knowing we are not the first, nor the last, to grapple with life's uncertainties.

When we voice our "What's next, God?" with honesty and vulnerability, we tap into the shared human experience reflected in the Psalms. We find solace in knowing that even David, a man after God's own heart, wrestled with doubt and fear. And in those moments, when the way forward seems unclear, we can find comfort in the very act of asking, seeking, and knocking on heaven's door.

So, the next time you find yourself facing the unknown, embrace the power of the question. Allow yourself to voice your uncertainties, your fears, and your longings to a God who hears and understands. Let the words of the Psalmists be

your guide, reminding you that even in the asking, there is solace, strength, and the quiet assurance that you are never alone.

What's Next? Charting Your Course with the Compass of Wisdom (Proverbs)

Life is a journey of countless crossroads, each presenting a fork in the road, a decision to be made. What lies ahead is often shrouded in mist, the consequences of our choices echoing into the uncertain future. It is in these moments, standing at the intersection of "what is" and "what could be," that we yearn for direction, for a guiding light to illuminate the path less travelled.

The book of Proverbs, that ancient treasure trove of wisdom, speaks directly to this universal human longing. It is a guidebook for navigating life's complexities, reminding us that the power to shape our "What's Next" lies largely in the choices we make today.

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," Proverbs 9:10 tells us. This is not about cowering in fear, but rather about approaching life with a sense of reverence and understanding that our actions have consequences. It is about acknowledging that true wisdom begins when we seek guidance beyond our limited human perspective.

Proverbs remind us that knowledge is essential, but it is wisdom that illuminates the path forward. Knowledge is the accumulation of facts and information, while wisdom is the ability to apply that knowledge with discernment, understanding, and integrity. It is about looking beyond the immediate and considering the long-term impact of our choices.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight," (Proverbs 3:5-6). Here lies the heart of navigating the "what's next" of our lives. It is about surrendering our limited vision to a power greater than ourselves (Jesus our God and Saviour), trusting that even when the path seems unclear, we are being guided towards a purpose far grander than our own!

The journey would not always be easy. Proverbs acknowledges the existence of pitfalls and temptations that can lead us astray. But it also reminds us that "the path of the righteous is like the morning sun, shining ever brighter till the full light of day" (Proverbs 4:18). When we ground our choices in wisdom, seeking guidance from above and aligning our actions with our values, we step into the fullness of who we were meant to be.

So, as you stand at the crossroads of "what's next," let the wisdom of Proverbs be your compass. Seek guidance from above, trust in the journey, and make choices that align with the highest vision of yourself. The path unfolds one step at a time, and with each step taken in wisdom, you move closer to the future you were destined to create.

What's Next: Deciphering the Echoes of Prophets

We are creatures of time, bound by its relentless march. Yet, within us resides an insatiable yearning to peek behind the veil, to glimpse the tapestry of "What's Next." This longing, this deep-seated desire to understand the future, is woven into the fabric of our being.

Throughout history, prophets have served as our guides, their voices echoing through time with messages of hope and admonition. Men like Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel didn't just predict events; they painted vivid pictures of "what's next" based on a Divine blueprint—one that transcended the immediacy of their present.

Their words were not always comforting. They spoke truth to power, challenged the status quo, and warned of the consequences of straying from God's path. Jeremiah, lamenting the spiritual decay of his people, didn't sugarcoat his message. Yet, interwoven with his pronouncements of doom were threads of hope, whispers of a future brimming with redemption and renewal.

These prophets understood that "what's next" is never a static destination, but rather a dynamic process. They recognized the cyclical nature of history, the ebb and flow of righteousness and rebellion. Their visions were not limited to specific dates and times but offered timeless truths about the character of God and the consequences of our choices.

Isaiah, for example, spoke of a suffering servant, a Messiah who would bear the weight of sin and usher in an era of peace. This vision transcended the immediate political landscape, offering a glimpse into a future where justice and righteousness would prevail.

Today, their words still resonate, challenging us to look beyond the immediacy of our present circumstances. They remind us that "what's next" is shaped not by blind fate, but by our collective actions and choices. We are called to be active participants in shaping a future that aligns with God's vision of justice, compassion, and enduring hope.

So, as we stand on the precipice of the unknown, let us listen to the echoes of the prophets. Let their words ignite within us a passion for justice, a commitment to righteousness, and an unwavering belief in the God who holds the pen of history. For "what's next" is not a passive unfolding, but an invitation to co-create a future brimming with hope, healing, and the enduring promise of a God who is faithful to his word.

What's Next? Living the Sermon on the Mount

The crowd gathered on the hillside, drawn in by Jesus's magnetic presence. Little did they know, they were about to hear words that would forever alter the landscape of their lives—the Sermon on the Mount.

More than just a collection of ethical guidelines, the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) is a roadmap for discipleship. Jesus's answer to the unspoken "What's next?" sits at the heart of every seeking soul.

He begins not with grand pronouncements, but with the Beatitudes, a radical reordering of societal norms. Blessed are the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart—this is the unexpected foundation upon which Jesus builds His call to action.

"You are the salt of the earth... the light of the world," He proclaims, challenging His followers to be agents of transformation in a world hungry for hope. He lays out a vision of life lived in radical love, in forgiveness that knows no bounds, and in unwavering faith even amidst life's storms.

But Jesus does not merely present lofty ideals; He provides practical guidance. He teaches prayer, worry, judging others, and handling money—the everyday concerns that fill our human experience. He reminds us that true discipleship is not a passive endeavour, but an active commitment reflected in our thoughts, words, and deeds.

The Sermon on the Mount is not a checklist to be ticked off, but a lifelong journey of aligning our lives with the Heart of God. It is a call to live out the "what's next" in every choice we make, every relationship we cultivate, and every action we take.

So, what's next for you and me, sitting here centuries later, captivated by the same timeless words? It is an invitation to embrace the revolutionary love that Jesus embodies. It is a challenge to be salt and light in a world desperately needing both. It is a reminder that the Kingdom of God is not a distant promise, but a present reality we build, brick by brick, through lives lived per the teachings on that hillside.

The "what's next" of the Sermon on the Mount is not a destination, but a direction. It is a call to journey with open hearts and willing spirits, allowing Jesus's words to guide us, shape us, and empower us to live lives that truly reflect the transformative power of His love.

What's Next? Unpacking the Mysteries: Parables of the Kingdom of Jesus

The parables of Jesus. Those short, enigmatic stories woven throughout the Gospels have captivated readers and listeners for centuries. They possess a timeless quality, offering profound spiritual truths through seemingly simple narratives. But have you ever considered “What's New” in these ancient tales?

Take, for example, the Parables of the Kingdom found in Matthew 13. Jesus, standing before the crowds, uses the familiar imagery of seeds, yeast, and hidden treasures to paint a picture of the Kingdom of God. He does not present a straightforward theological treatise; instead, He invites His audience to engage with the stories, wrestle with their meaning and discover the implications for themselves.

What makes this approach so revolutionary?

It breaks down barriers: The parables transcend cultural and historical contexts. A first-century farmer and a twenty-first-century entrepreneur can both connect with the imagery of sowing and reaping, finding personal relevance in the message.

It sparks curiosity: The open-ended nature of the parables invites questions and encourages deeper exploration. We must delve beyond the surface narrative and uncover the hidden treasures of truth.

It fosters personal reflection: The parables act as mirrors, reflecting our own beliefs, attitudes, and actions. We must examine how we respond to the invitation to enter the Kingdom and live out its values.

So, what's new in the Parables of the Kingdom? The answer lies not in discovering new interpretations but in allowing these stories to speak anew to our hearts and minds. It is about engaging with them in fresh ways, asking challenging questions, and allowing their timeless wisdom to shape our lives in the present moment.

This time, why not choose one of the Parables of the Kingdom and spend some time reflecting on its message? You might be surprised by the new insights and understanding that emerge.

What's Next? The Audacious Call Echoing Through the Ages

Imagine standing on a mountainside, the wind whipping at your cloak. You've just witnessed the impossible: your beloved leader, your friend, the one who defied death itself, ascending into the heavens. Joy wrestles with grief, and hope with uncertainty. What now? What next?

In that moment of monumental transition, Jesus left His disciples not with a void, but with a vision. A command that would reverberate through the ages, shaping the destiny of a movement: "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:19-20)

This was not merely a parting instruction, a box to be ticked. This was The Great Commission, an audacious call to action, a world-altering mission statement for the fledgling church. It was not about maintaining the status quo, but about embarking on a journey of radical expansion. No longer confined to the familiar, they were to embrace the world, sharing the transformative power of the Gospel with every tribe and tongue.

But this commission was not just about words. It was about action. Making disciples meant more than just reciting prayers or gaining converts. It meant fostering deep, life-altering relationships, guiding new believers to become passionate followers of Jesus, equipped to impact their communities. It was about replicating themselves, igniting a chain reaction of discipleship that would spread like wildfire across the globe.

And as if the task was not daunting enough, Jesus added an unshakeable promise: "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." This was not a solitary mission. The disciples, and every believer after them, would carry the ever-present power and guidance of the risen Christ.

Centuries later, the echo of that mountaintop commission still echoes. It is a call to action for us today. Are we content with simply warming pews, or are we willing to embrace the audacious call to be disciples who make disciples, to be the hands and feet of Jesus in a world desperately searching for hope? The Great Commission was not a suggestion, it was a command, one woven into the very fabric of our faith. It's time we lived it out.

Riding the Wave: "What's Next?" After the Holy Spirit Arrives

Imagine a group of friends, huddled together, still reeling from the loss of their leader, their world turned upside down. Then, suddenly, a rush of wind, tongues of fire, and a language they never learned pours from their lips. This was not chaos, but the arrival of the Holy Spirit, the promised power from on High, recorded in Acts 2.

What happened next redefined "What's next?" for the fledgling Christian movement. It was like a surfer catching a wave, a surge of energy propelling them forward into uncharted waters. The book of Acts becomes a thrilling adventure story, a testament to what happens when ordinary people are infused with extraordinary power.

The disciples, once timid and uncertain, were transformed into bold witnesses, fearlessly proclaiming the resurrected Christ. Peter, who just weeks earlier denied even knowing Jesus, stood before a massive crowd, his words infused with authority and conviction. The message was clear: This changes everything.

But this sudden influx of power was not without its challenges. A new question emerged: "How do we navigate this?" How do we structure this movement? How do we reach different cultures? What happens when persecution arises? Every step forward brought fresh questions and required new levels of dependence on the Holy Spirit.

The book of Acts becomes a masterclass in navigating the "what's next" moments:

From Persecution to Expansion: Opposition arose, forcing believers to scatter. Yet, this was not defeat, but a divine strategy. Wherever they went, the Gospel went with them, like seeds scattered by the wind, taking root in new soil.

Cross-Cultural Challenges: The early church wrestled with questions of cultural inclusion, as Gentiles (non-Jewish people) embraced the faith. The Holy Spirit guided them to break down barriers and embrace the radical inclusivity of the Gospel.

Discerning God's Leading: Through visions, dreams, and prophetic words, the Holy Spirit provided direction. Paul's journeys, for example, were marked by a constant surrender to the Spirit's leading, even when it meant facing danger or changing plans.

The lesson for us today is potent. When we embrace the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit, we too become part of the "what's next" story of God's redemptive plan. Just like the early believers, we're called to:

Step out in faith, even when the path ahead seems unclear. The Holy Spirit empowers us to be bold witnesses. Embrace the unexpected. God can use even difficult circumstances to advance His purposes. Seek His guidance in every decision. He promises to lead us with clarity and wisdom.

The "What's next?" after Pentecost was not a neat plan, but a thrilling adventure of following the Spirit's lead. It is a story that continues to be written today, and we have the privilege of being a part of it. Are you ready for the ride?

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