

IS THERE ANY HOPE?

C. Objectives (Value, a.k.a. Blessings) of this Study

C5. Blessing: Hope

Our assurance in God's word gives us events to look forward to, in anticipation of them coming to pass. Our study of Revelation, especially from chapter 4 on, will focus on these things that Jesus said are to comeⁱ. We can trust in all that Jesus has said, for he is the faithful and true witnessⁱⁱ. Thus, the knowledge he reveals to us in Revelation blesses us with hope that is best defined as expectancy. Paul clarifies our hope in Romans 8:25,

“if we hope for what we do not see, *we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.*”

What, then, are we eagerly waiting for? Earlier in this passage, Paul refers to our ‘*adoption, the redemption of our body*’ⁱⁱⁱ as the hope in which we were saved. For we know that this will occur, though we do not yet see it. When will we see it? What will the ‘redemption of our body’ look like? Opinions vary on this topic, and as Paul explains, none are able to sufficiently describe God's preparations hidden from our view. As we read in 1 Corinthians 2:7-9,

“we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, ⁸which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. ⁹But as it is written: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man *The things which God has prepared* for those who love Him.”

ⁱ MATH 24:6-8, you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for *all these things must come to pass*, but the end is not yet. ⁷For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. ⁸All these are the beginning of sorrows.

ⁱⁱ REV 3:14, to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, "These things says the Amen, *the Faithful and True Witness*, the Beginning of the creation of God.

ⁱⁱⁱ ROM 8:23-24, we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, *eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.* ²⁴For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?

Since no one can imagine what this will look like, it seems groundless to argue over any such topic. Instead, we should be assured in the Word and the power of God. For in many Scriptures God tells us that we who believe have the promise of adoption^{iv}, the redemption^v of the body, the power^{vi} to become the children of God^{vii}.

Though now we see the things to come through a dark glass^{viii}, we may yet learn from the examples that we have: those who eagerly waited with perseverance, who lived by faith, in hope of things to come. For, we are called to persevere through various trials for the strengthening of our faith^{ix}. We endure our ‘cross’ daily^x with our sight focused on our hope, just as Christ endured the cross knowing of his resurrection^{xi}. As a sojourner, Abraham eagerly waited by faith for the city established by God^{xii}. Just as Moses, looking forward to the riches of the Messiah^{xiii}, disavowed his worldly position and associated himself instead with his fellow Hebrews^{xiv}. Even the creation expects coming events, as found in Romans 8:19-22,

“the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; ²¹because the creation itself also will

^{iv} EPH 1:4-6, He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, ⁵having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, ⁶to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.

^v REV 5:9, they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And *have redeemed us to God by Your blood* Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation.

^{vi} JOHN 1:12-13, as many as received Him, to them He gave *the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:* ¹³who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

^{vii} ROM 8:16-17, The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs-heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, *that we may also be glorified together.*

^{viii} 1COR 13:12-13 [KJV], For now *we see through a glass, darkly*; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. ¹³And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

^{ix} 1PET 1:6-7, In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, *you have been grieved by various trials,* ⁷*that the genuineness of your faith,* being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

^x LUKE 9:22-23, "The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day." ²³Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and *take up his cross daily, and follow Me.*

^{xi} PSM 16:8-10, I have set the Lord always before me; Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved. ⁹Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will rest in hope. ¹⁰For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, *Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.*

^{xii} HEB 11:9-10, By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as in a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; ¹⁰*for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

^{xiii} HEB 11:24-27, By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, ²⁵choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, ²⁶*esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.* ²⁷By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.

^{xiv} EXO 2:11, it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that *he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens.* And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren.

be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. ²²For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now.”

So, as long as the creation suffers ‘the bondage of corruption’, the children of God have yet to be revealed. Our current state is thus hidden until Christ is revealed, as we learn from Colossians 3:2-4,

“Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴*When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.*”

Though we are unable to imagine the brilliance or the extent of this glory, we can be assured by God’s faithfulness that His word will be fulfilled. Our hope, therefore, rests in Him.

We observe by faith the unseen attributes of God^{xv}: His goodness, faithfulness, righteousness, love, &etc. Clearly, we know these exist, and yet they are not directly visible. For, though we cannot see His hand, we witness the result of God’s goodness^{xvi}. His work is evident in creation and knowledge is gained from observing it, as we read in Psalm 19:1-3,

“The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. ²Day unto day utters speech, And *night unto night reveals knowledge*. ³There is no speech nor language Where their voice is not heard.”

In addition, the more we know of the Scriptures and of the power of God, the more we are sure of His limitless capability, which consists to gird our hope. For, our hope is in the Lord. His Word, all that he has said, will surely come to pass! As even the prophecy written in Isaiah foretells of our hope in the Lord^{xvii}, which Paul explains for us in Romans 15:12-13,

^{xv} ROM 1:20, For since the creation of the world *His invisible attributes are clearly seen*, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.

^{xvi} PSM 31:19-20, Oh, how great is Your goodness, Which You have laid up for those who fear You, Which You have prepared for those who trust in You in the presence of the sons of men! ²⁰*You shall hide them in the secret place of Your presence From the plots of man; You shall keep them secretly in a pavilion From the strife of tongues.*

^{xvii} ISA 11:10, in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; *For the Gentiles shall seek Him*, And His resting place shall be glorious.

“Isaiah says: "There shall be a root of Jesse; And He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, *In Him the Gentiles shall hope.*" ¹³Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

In this passage, we see how the Son, Father, and Holy Spirit contribute in unison to our hope: as the object, the source, and the power, respectively.

Our hope is built on the assurance of truth. Unlike the ‘hope of man’ which is built on the opposite: the uncertainty of doubt. Our hope is not in what *might* come to pass; this is the ‘hope of man’. For, this kind of hope is better defined as wishful thinking. An example can be found in Luke 23:8,

“when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and *he hoped to see some miracle done by Him.*”

Knowing of the Lord’s reputation, Herod failed to realize who Jesus is: the Christ, the Son of the Living God^{xviii}. Had He known this, Herod would have hoped for salvation from the Lord, not just a miracle. Instead, the ‘hopes of man’ are built on guesses and personal desires. We discover that the final result of such wishful hope is futile, for we read in Job 14:18-20,

“as a mountain falls and crumbles away, And as a rock is moved from its place; ¹⁹As water wears away stones, And as torrents wash away the soil of the earth; *So You destroy the hope of man.* ²⁰You prevail forever against him, and he passes on; You change his countenance and send him away.”

Herod’s countenance changed when Jesus would not perform a miracle before him, but offered him silence instead. His hope was dashed, so Herod turned against Jesus, as we read in Luke 23:11,

“Herod, with his men of war, *treated Him with contempt and mocked Him*, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate.”

^{xviii} MATH 16:13-16, Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" ¹⁴So they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ¹⁵He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ¹⁶Simon Peter answered and said, "*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.*"

Herod's expectation of Jesus did not match the truth of who he met, and so his presumption turned to doubt. His doubt turned to denial, and he sent Jesus away without believing the truth. When faced with the truth of the Scriptures, we are just as susceptible to failure as Herod. Our assumptions can lead us to doubt just as Herod's did, when what we read in the Bible does not match what we expected.

Our hope is in the Lord, and he is the Truth^{xix}. Therefore, our hope rests in the truth, and not upon doubt. When we doubt, we are tossed about like water^{xx} under every wind of doctrine^{xxi}, making guesses and assumptions based in lies and deceit^{xxii}. Conversely, standing firm on the truth of God's word, our assurance in the Lord increases, this serves to decrease our level of doubt. Even Jesus encourages us of this in Mark 11:22-24,

“Jesus answered and said to them, "Have faith in God. ²³"For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' and *does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done*, he will have whatever he says. ²⁴"Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them.”

Our hope, then, serves as proof to ourselves of the assurance we have in the Lord, our faith in Him. Therefore, hope measures our assurance in the truth, whereas doubt shows the lack thereof.

Revelation highlights events for which our hope eagerly waits. We anticipate these events without doubt, seeing as our security in is God's faithfulness to His word. As servants of God we hope in Him, and there are several future events

^{xix} JOHN 14:6, Jesus said to him, "I am the way, *the truth*, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

^{xx} JAM 1:5-6, If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him. ⁶But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, *for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind.*

^{xxi} EPH 4:13-14, we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; ¹⁴that we should no longer be children, *tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine*, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting.

^{xxii} COL 2:8, *Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit*, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

validated for us in Revelation that will bless us as we ‘keep’ them^{xxiii}. One such event we may anticipate is found in Revelation chapter 20, which as Paul indicates also adheres to the Old Testament, ‘Law and Prophets’. We find Paul’s discourse of this in Acts 24:14-16,

“this I confess to you, that according to the Way which they call a sect, so I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the Law and in the Prophets. ¹⁵“I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, *that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust.* ¹⁶“This being so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men.”

We can see here that Paul’s hope in God flows from his believing all things written beforehand^{xxiv}. He affirms that the Old Testament contains the word of God. All Scripture is therefore beneficial to our learning^{xxv}, wherein we may grow in our knowledge of God, who establishes and preserves our hope. For, those who do not know God have no hope; Paul cites them as an example in contrast to us, in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-15,

“I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, *lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.* ¹⁴For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus. ¹⁵For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep.”

Thus, just as Jesus was raised from the dead in his resurrection body, so we, the believers in Christ, will also be resurrected. For, Jesus is the firstfruits of the dead^{xxvi}, that is, the first of those to be raised from the dead^{xxvii}.

^{xxiii} REV 22:6-7, he said to me, "These words are faithful and true." And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent His angel to show His servants the things which must shortly take place. ⁷"Behold, I am coming quickly! *Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.*"

^{xxiv} ROM 15:4, whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that *we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.*

^{xxv} 2TIM 3:16-17, All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and *is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,* ¹⁷that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

^{xxvi} 1COR 15:20-21, now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead.

^{xxvii} 1COR 15 22-23, For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. ²³But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, *afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.*

The realization of God's plan, in addition to producing hope in us, also inspires us to good works. Paul outlines this sequence for us in Titus 2:11-14,

“the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, ¹²teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, ¹³*looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ*, ¹⁴who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works.”

Our good works are an outward sign of an inward transformation: the hope we have in the Lord. Therefore, they should be evident to everyone^{xxviii}, profitable to all^{xxix}, and reflect our hope. For, if the hope within us is not displayed by our good works, then who would ask the reason for our hope? What would be the evidence of our hope? Peter advises us to be ready to give a response to those who inquire of the hope within us; as he states in his letter 1 Peter 3:15,

“sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you *a reason for the hope that is in you*, with meekness and fear”

The blessing of hope we receive from reading Revelation comes through our learning of God's faithfulness to fulfill His word. From the beginning He tells us the end. We can completely put our trust in Him. For, our hope is in the Lord: In the truth, He is absolute. In ability, He is limitless. In character, He is faithful and just. In commitment, He is forever. And, in His word, He is perfect.

^{xxviii} 1PET 2:11-12, Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, ¹²having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, *by your good works which they observe, glorify God* in the day of visitation.

^{xxix} TIT 3:8, This is a faithful saying, and these things I want you to affirm constantly, that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. *These things are good and profitable to men.*