

THE RIGHTFUL KING IS OUR HOPE

- A. Introduction: Human beings can't live without hope or an expectation of coming good. Therefore the first thing the apostle Paul prayed for Christians is that we would know the hope of God's calling. Eph 1:18
1. We've spent several months talking about the fact that God has called or invited every human being to be part of His family of sons and daughters with whom He intends to live forever on earth. Knowing God's purpose and our place in it is a tremendous source of hope. Eph 1:4,5; Isa 45:18
 - a. The family and the family home have been damaged by sin. Through redemption (God's plan to deliver His creation from sin, corruption and death) He is regaining what was lost to sin.
 1. Because of sin neither humanity or the earth is as God planned. Consequently He doesn't intend that the world go on forever as it is, nor is He going to fix it up through social change.
 2. His goal is supernatural transformation by His power of both man and the earth, restoring the earth and all who bow their knee to Him to their created purpose so His original plan can be fulfilled. This transformation is accomplished through the first and second comings of Jesus.
 - A. Jesus went to the Cross to pay for sin and make it possible for sinners to be transformed into holy, righteous sons and daughters when they believe on Him and His sacrifice.
 - B. Jesus will come again to complete the plan of redemption by cleansing the earth of all corruption and death as He restores it to a fit forever home for the Lord and His family.
 - b. The Lord isn't going to start over and make new people and a new earth. He is going to restore what He already made by delivering it from sin, corruption and death.
 1. When a sinner believes on Jesus he is born again and becomes a new creature (II Cor 5:17). He isn't turned into something that never existed before. He's the same person made alive with eternal life. "New" is the Greek word KAINOS. It means new in quality or form as opposed to new in time. The new birth is the beginning of a process that will ultimately make him new (free him from all trace of sin and its effects) in his entire being.
 2. Isa 65:17--Isaiah prophesied that the earth will also be made new. This word "new" means to rebuild, renew, repair, refresh. When Peter wrote about the new earth (II Pet 3:13) he used the word KAINOS. The new earth will be the earth we know and love, freed from every trace of corruption and death. It will be new but familiar, changed but recognizable.
 - c. The Bible tells the story of God's desire for a family and the lengths to which He went to obtain His family. Everything in the Bible in some way adds to or advances the story. God's Word opens and closes with Him on earth with His family because that's the plan. Gen 2; Rev 21:3
 2. For the past several weeks we've focused on the anxiety and fear many are experiencing because of the presidential election. Knowledge of the big picture and the hope to which we are called is the antidote to this emotional angst. We've repeatedly said: It's not what you see. It's how you see it.
 - a. Whether you are happy or unhappy about the election results here's what we all need to recognize. The outcome of an election doesn't change what's coming on the earth—good or bad. Jesus is still coming back to complete the plan of God (that's good) and His return will still be preceded by increasingly challenging times (that's bad).
 1. I truly hope the president-elect turns out to be a great president who surprises even his worst critics. We need to pray for him and his administration. I Tim 2:1-4; Jer 29:7
 2. But the birth pangs of a new age will continue and affect us more and more. Ethnic fighting will continue as lawlessness, immorality, unrighteousness and injustice increase. Matt 24:4-8
 - b. More than ever we need to keep our focus on the big picture. None of this is bigger than God. He will get us through until He gets us out. His plan and purpose will be accomplished. We are part of something bigger than this moment and we have a future and a hope no matter how things look.

- B. Our answer is not an election outcome. Jesus is our answer. The rightful King of earth is about to return to reclaim the kingdoms of this world and make them His own. Consider these thoughts.

1. The Book of Revelation is an eyewitness account of events in Heaven and on earth immediately preceding the Second Coming of Jesus. It was given to the apostle John in a vision. He saw Jesus take control of the kingdoms of this world. Rev 11:15; Isa 9:6
 - a. This will be a fulfillment of what was shown to the prophet Daniel six hundred years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem when he interpreted a dream had by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon.
 1. Note one part of the dream. The king saw a Rock cut without human hands become a great mountain that filled the whole earth. Daniel was told the dream signified that the Lord will set up His kingdom on earth and it will never be destroyed, never end. Dan 2:35,44
 2. In Dan 7:27 Daniel received more information about the Lord's kingdom. It will be a kingdom of kingdoms and its power and greatness will given to God's people.
 - A. Rev 5:10--John was taken into Heaven and shown the events he recorded in Revelation. While in Heaven he saw redeemed people who are looking forward to returning to earth to reign. Jesus, the Rightful king, is going to rule over people who reign.
 - B. Gen 1:26--God created men and women to reign on earth. He gave us dominion. Our created purpose will be restored when the family home is made new.
 - b. When we talk about believers in Jesus reigning we tend to think of reigning over the devil and other people. But that's not what Gen 1:26 and Rev 5:10 are talking about.
 1. The devil had no power over mankind before Adam sinned. Reigning over the devil is a sub-purpose necessitated by the fall. The devil will have no access to us in our forever home.
 2. Nor do these verses refer to ruling over each other. The command to reign (this dominion mandate as it is called) was given to all men and women in Adam at the same time.
 2. Reigning on earth has to do with our relationship to the earth itself, the home God made for us. This becomes clear when we read the rest of the passage recounting God's creation of human beings.
 - a. v27,28--After God made Adam and Eve He instructed them to begin the task of bringing forth His family through natural processes: Multiply and replenish the earth. (The original Hebrew word is fill. When the King James Version Bible was translated in 1611 AD replenish meant fill.)
 - b. v28--Adam and man in Adam were also told to "fill the earth and subdue it [with all its vast resources] (Amp). Human beings were commissioned to take earth's plenteous resources and use them to create a way of life for themselves or cultures and civilizations. (lessons for another day)
 1. Men and women were created to bring glory to God (Eph 1:12; I Pet 2:9, etc.). We were supposed to subdue the earth by using its resources to develop God-glorifying civilizations.
 2. To a large degree, humanity has failed in this charge because of rebellion and sin. On the new earth we will get a "do over". We'll be reunited with our physical body through resurrection of the dead to live on earth again and fulfill God's original plan for His family.
 3. This life is not our only shot at life on earth. Many of our gifts and talents aren't even for this life. They're for the life to come when we live lives fully glorifying to God in every way.
 3. II Pet 3:13--Knowledge of the plan and the thought of returning to earth made new gave Peter hope in the face of his impending death. That's the point. Knowing what is to come helps us deal with life's present hardships more effectively.
- C. When Adam sinned he gave his God-given dominion in the earth over to Satan who became the god of this world (Luke 4:6; II Cor 4:4; etc.) Satan is doing all he can to hold on to his kingdom. We could do many lessons on this topic, but consider several points as we bring this part of our series to a close.
1. Satan works to maintain control primarily by working through his sons and daughters (Eph 2:2,3). When Jesus came the earth the first time Satan tried to stop His mission.
 - a. One of his sons, King Herod, murdered all the children in Bethlehem (Matt 2:16). Jesus was vigorously opposed by the Pharisees whom Jesus identified as sons of the devil (John 8:44).
 - b. Satan inspired Judas to betray Jesus to sinners who crucified him (John 13:2; Matt 26:45; Acts 2:23). Because God knew this would happen, He was able to beat the devil at his own game by

placing the sins of the world on Jesus and making Him a sacrifice to pay for sin (I Cor 2:7,8).

A. When Jesus rose from the dead and commissioned His disciples to go out and preach the good news of the resurrection the devil opposed them as well. Persecutions began immediately, progressing from threats to jail to beatings to execution (Acts 4:21; 5:18,40; 7:58).

B. Satan also went to work on the minds of men bringing false teachings and heresies into the Church to undermine, dilute and pervert the truth of the gospel. II Pet 2:1; I John 4:1; Jude 4

c. Satan will attempt to stop Jesus' second coming by offering the world a counterfeit (his antichrist or "in place of" christ) in the hope that people will reject rather than welcome the rightful King.

2. When Jesus returned to Heaven after His resurrection His first message to His followers was: I'll be back (Acts 1:11). Jesus' disciples saw His first coming and presumed they'd see His second coming.

a. His disciples understood from the writings of the prophet Daniel and information given to them by Jesus (and later amplified to Paul and John) that the devil will oppose the coming King.

b. These men had a lot of information about the conditions on earth when Jesus returns. The Bible speaks of a worldwide government, economy and religion presided over a man empowered by Satan (Dan 7,8; Rev 13; etc.). Note what John and Paul wrote about this opposition.

1. I John 2:18--It is the last time—hour [the end of this age]. And as you have heard that Antichrist [he who will oppose Christ in the guise of Christ] is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen, which confirms our belief that it is the final (the end) time. (Amp)

2. II Thess 2:3--Paul called this leader a man of sin or lawlessness (AMP, NIV, NASB, RSV).

A. Paul reported that the Lord's return won't occur until this man comes on the scene. v3--cannot come before the final rebellion against God (NEB) and the appearing of that Incarnation of Wickedness (20th Cent) the son of hell (TLB).

B. Paul, like John made it clear that the power behind this man of sin was already at work.

II Thess 2:7--For the mystery of lawlessness—that hidden principle of rebellion against constituted authority—is already at work in the world (Amp).

3. Paul went on to write: II Thess 2:8-10--Then the lawless man will appear in person...It is through the cunning of Satan that this man of sin will come, and Satan will furnish him with every sort of power and with pretended signs and miracles. He will be equipped with all kinds of wicked deceptions so as to make men perish, all because they refused to love the truth by means of which they could be saved. (Norlie)

A. The devil's going to offer the world a lawless man who rejects God's Law and perpetrates the greatest deception ever, offering himself to the world as God. Through this man and people's support of him, Satan will oppose the return of Jesus. Rev 19:19,20

B. Satan will not succeed. II Thess 2:8--And then the lawless man will appear in person.

But the Lord Jesus will blast him by the breath of His mouth and the very majesty of His appearance will bring the power of the evil one to naught! (Norlie)

3. Let's take this information out of the "freaky" realm. The language used by the prophets in the Bible (the dragon, the mark of the Beast, 666, etc.) is apocalyptic or symbolic because they were 6th century BC and 1st century AD men writing about 21st century life, technology, government and warfare, etc.

a. These conditions will be the natural progression of events in the world. They conditions are developing now and will increasingly affect our lives. The world is moving and will continue to move toward global government presided over by a messianic figure.

1. Increasingly we hear of global problems that the world community must come together to address--climate change, terrorism, income inequality, etc.

2. America must decline and get on board with this move toward globalization--open borders, surrendering our sovereignty to world organizations, etc.

3. Part of the political discord in our country is coming out of the move toward globalization, those who want it and those who don't. (subject for another day)

b. We referenced Matt 24 earlier in the series. In response to questions from His disciples as to what

signs will indicate His return is near Jesus revealed much information. Note this point.

1. Not only will there be great ethnic strife, this period will be marked by deception and an explosion of iniquity or lawlessness. v11,12--Many false prophets will arise, and will mislead many; and as lawlessness spreads, men's love for one another will grow cold (NEB).
 2. Through counterculture revolution of the sixties many societal restraints were removed and deception and lawlessness inundated society.
 - A. Deception in the form of rejecting objective truth. Truth for many has become whatever I "feel" it to be. Lawlessness in the form of rejection of authority. Respect for authority has been replaced by: I don't have to do it if I don't feel like it.
 - B. Through technology (computers and the internet) misinformation, deception and disrespect are disseminated worldwide in a matter of seconds. (subject for another day)
 - c. As the world abandons God and their moral obligation to obey Him, behavior will become more vile and decisions more reprobate making life increasingly challenging. Rom 1:16-32
- D. That first generation of Christians didn't know the Lord's return was two millennia away. They expected to see His coming and all the accompanying challenges. Let's close this portion of our study by looking at how they responded and advised other Christians to deal with whatever came their way.
1. The apostle Paul told believers that the days leading up to Jesus' return will be perilous or fierce because of the behavior of people but God is faithful. He will preserve His own. II Tim 3:1-5
 - a. This spirit of antichrist working through people stirred up persecution against Paul, but his testimony was: the Lord delivered me out of it all (II Tim 3:10-12). When Paul faced death as a martyr his testimony was: the Lord will deliver and preserve me for the life to come (II Tim 4:18).
 - b. In his last words to Timothy, his son in the faith, Paul wrote: Wicked men will get worse, but continue in the Word of God. God's Word is our protection against deception. II Tim 3:13-16
 2. Peter wrote to believers: I Pet 4:7,8--But the end and culmination of all things has now come near; keep sound-minded and self-restrained and alert therefore for [the practice of] prayer. Above all things have intense and unending love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins — forgives and disregards the offenses of others. (Amp)
 - a. One of the main points we've made in this series is: Don't get into strife over non-moral temporal issues such as politics. Remember what is most important—that we show Jesus to the world around us so men and women can come to salvation from sin.
 - b. Satan is our enemy—not people with opposing viewpoints. The devil is working to keep people from the kingdom of God. Don't help him do it. Help people see Jesus. This doesn't mean we have to agree with everyone and sing "Kumbaya". It means remember that Jesus died for those with whom you disagree. Until they take their last breath, there's hope for them.
 3. The rightful King is about to return. He will right the wrongs in this world. Keep that perspective. Remember what's important. We have a future and a hope in and through Jesus.