

I. Biblical Hope

- A. Biblically, hope is confidence in God's promises related to our future and faith is confidence in God in the present. Hope is not wishful thinking but rather it is future certainty based on revelation of the promises of God in scripture.
1. Hope is cultivated through a clear picture of the future that purifies us in the present. Understanding our future destiny gives us hope in these days and prepares us for victorious endurance during seasons that appear contrary to our hope. When we are firmly established in hope we are also equipped to be intentionally diligent and zealous to live focused lives. (Rom. 12:11-12, 15:13; Heb. 6:18-19; 1 Jhn 3:2-3)
 2. It is my conviction that a major contributing factor in the disillusionment and burnout we constantly see in the body of Christ is because we have a theology that causes us to place most of our hope in this age not in the next. Often times we expect and desire to see next age realities happen now and when they don't we grow frustrated and offended at God.
- B. The Christmas season is known as a holiday that brings hope to the hopeless. It is during the holidays that we see a massive surge in humanitarian efforts to end or relieve injustice and oppression in society. There is this sense that even in secular society that the remembrance of the birth of Jesus should produce a desire to hope for a better tomorrow.
1. The scriptures point heavily to the activity of the first coming of Jesus as being the truth that should be the anchor of our hope in the fulfillment of all prophetic utterance. Another way of saying it would be, "God did that so that we would know He's going to do everything else He promised."

II. The Hope Cultivated by His First Coming

- A. There was a very real night in a very real place in humanities past where the cry of a newborn child was heard in Bethlehem. Those who understood who this child was, were surely filled with overwhelming hope as they looked upon Him. The question is what was the substance of that hope. Would their hope line up with your hope if you were there that night?

- B. We can get a pretty good idea of what the substance of Mary and Joseph's hope was for the child they held in their arms. The angel, Gabriel, had told them much about the baby that was in Mary's womb and surely they would have believed it and set their hope fully upon his promises. Their minds would be filled with the scriptures that the angel quoted as he spoke of Jesus. (**Lk 1:31-33** – 2 Sam 7:11-13; Ps. 132:11; Is. 9:6-7, 16:5; Jer. 23:5-6; 33:15-17; Ez. 17:22-24, 34:23-24, 37:24-25; Amo 9:11-12)
- C. There are 2 primary hopes that run through all these prophetic promises of what the birth of Jesus gives surety to:
1. **Bringing heaven and earth back together (Garden of Eden)** - The first is the restoration of the realities of the original intentions of God for humanity's existence. The prophetic promises about Jesus constantly weave together the realities of heaven and the garden of Eden once again being seen and experienced on the earth. God will dwell again with His people on the restored earth in a curse free environment.
 2. **The Throne of David established Forever** – The second primary hope is the multitude of promises concerning the establishment of the eternal worldwide governmental rulership that the Messiah would accomplish.
- D. Gentile believers tend to be focused on worshiping Jesus in the fullness of His identity as God in the supernatural conditions of heaven. Jewish believers tend to be focused on reigning with Jesus in the fullness of His identity as David's son in the natural conditions of earth. The prophetic scriptures clearly bring together the concept of the utopian dream of perfect world in a physical paradise (heaven) and the eternal kingdom of David on the earth. To miss the restored Garden of Eden is to fail to encounter Jesus as Creator and to miss the restored Davidic Kingdom is to fail to encounter Jesus as king of the nations. **The full truth of our hope is only seen when these two paradigms are brought together.**

III. Hope of the Restoration of the Earth and God's Dwelling Place

- A. One of the greatest keys to understanding the activity of God in the last days is to understand the eternal purpose of Jesus to administrate the rejoining of heaven and earth together again. Without this understanding the end time scenario that the scriptures foretell makes very little sense.

- B. God's purpose has always been to live together with His people face to face in the natural environment of the earth He created. God has no intention of allowing the realities of heaven and earth to remain separated. Therefore He calls us to intercede and partner with that desire. (Lev. 26:11-12; Is. 12:6; Eze. 37:27, 43:7; Mat. 6:10; Rev. 7:15)
- C. The primary mandate that awaits Jesus at His second coming is to prepare for the full restoration and joining of heaven and earth. The bible tells us that this preparation initiative lasts 1000 years and is known as the millennial reign of Jesus and it has two primary aspects. (1 Cor. 15:24-28; Eph. 1:9-10; Rev. 20:2-7)
 - 1. Restoration of Righteousness - As creation peered in to look upon the baby lying in the manger they were beholding the agent of all righteousness. Not only would he make a way for men to be made righteous and receive atonement and forgiveness for sin, but he would also instruct and shepherd men to live righteously. (Ps. 72:2, 99:4; Is. 9:7, 11:3-5, Jer. 33:15-16)
 - 2. Restoration of Paradise – The scriptures are clear that the curse of sin and death that resulted from the fall of Adam and Eve not only had devastating effects on man's existence and nature but also the rest of creation. The 2nd coming of Jesus is also the key of hope for the physical earth and nature. ((Ezek. 34:26-29; 36:8-11, 30-35; 47:6-12; Isa. 11:6-9, 35:1-8; 51:3; Rom. 8:18-22; Rev. 22:1-3)

IV. The Hope of the Eternal Throne of David

- A. There was not a Jew in Israel in the day that Jesus was born, nor is there today, whose hope lies in the establishment of a spiritual kingdom only. The hope of the Kingdom of God being established is rooted in promises interpreted as a physical, political, monarchical government. The baby that the wise men traveled hundreds of miles to behold was to indeed be the King of Kings as He was destined to sit of the throne of David and rule the earth from Jerusalem forever.
 - 1. Jesus will fulfill every prophetic promise that God will establish Him as King over the nations of the earth forever therefore fulfilling the promise to Abraham that all nations would be blessed through Him. (2 Sam. 7:13, 16, 23:5; Isa. 9:6-7; 55:3; Ps. 89:3-4; 34-37; Jer. 23:5-6; 30:8-9; 33:14-17, 20-21; Ezek. 37:24-25; Hos. 3:4-5; Amos 9:11)

B. The birth of this baby we celebrate today secures us in hope that the Kingdom of God will one day be openly manifest worldwide affecting every sphere of life (political, social, agricultural, economic, spiritual, educational, law enforcement, family, media, arts, technology, athletics, environment, social institutions, etc.). The result of this will be unprecedented blessing, joy, peace, and prosperity for the entire earth. (Ps. 2:6-12, 110:1-7; Is. 2:1-4, 9:6-9, 51:1-8, 60-62; Mat. 17:11, 19:28, 28:29)

1. Also rooted in the hope of this Kingdom is a large aspect our own personal hope of the substance of our eternal existence. We are promised that He will rule in partnership with the saints who will have various roles of delegated authority in the restoration of all things. (Mt. 19:28, 20:12-23, 25:23; 1 Cor. 6:2-3)

V. In Summary

A. There are many realities within the promises of God that we have a limited expression (kingdom is here) now through the work of the cross. Those realities are the source of our joy, power, and vision for our lives and ministry. However, we are called to hope and look forward to the not yet seen fullness of God's promises to be fulfilled through Jesus at His second coming. (Rom. 15:4-13)

1. It is my hope that this holiday season produces true and powerful hope in your hearts and minds that overcomes the growing darkness that we are seeing and experiencing in our world. When we look upon the nativity scene let us be confident and strengthened in our faith that we will see Him again very soon.

But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. (1 Thes. 5:8)

And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end. (Heb. 3:5-6)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you. (1 Pet. 1-3)

Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. 1:13)