

BIBLE EXPLORATIONS

Jun 2004

Volume 18, No. 2

Bible Explorations Online:

email: info@bibleexplorations.org www.bibleexplorations.org

...to know the love of Christ
which passeth knowledge
that ye might be filled with
all the fulness of God Eph 3:19

The Hopes Of God's People #15

In concluding this series on "The Hopes of God's People" it will be well to review the subjects of *earlier articles. The subjects under consideration have been,

(1) The usage and meaning of "hope" in Scripture,

(2) God's People in various companies, and

(3) Things that are common and things that differ in the hopes of God's People.

The writer sought to show that the noun "hope" in the King James Bible is not used of an uncertain future, but of a confident expectation of good; that those without life from God have *no* hope, but all His People have *certain* blessed hopes.

The term "God's People" was used to include all who are His, that is, all who have received everlasting life by faith in His Sacrifice. God's People were said to be made up of 4 companies which were identified as, "Children of God", that is, all who have received God's gift of life, and 3 companies of saints that God called out from among His children and whom He adopted as sons to serve Him. Those sons by adoption are (1) Israel, the chosen nation He called His "Wife", (2) The elect company of over-comers and martyrs of Israel's calling spoken of as the "Bride of the Lamb", and (3) The Church of individuals summoned out of all nations that He called "The Body of Christ".

It was shown that all of God's People, in the 4 groups mentioned above, have blessed hopes. All have glorious futures in the ages to come. We saw that their hopes have things in common and things that differ. Things common in their hopes are, that all hopes are made possible by the finished work of Christ, that all hopes are entered by resurrections or

changes to immortality, and that in all hopes there will be recompense to saints, either reward or loss according to their walk life and works.

Things that differ in the hopes of the 4 companies are, (1) The realms where hopes will be enjoyed (2) Times when hopes will be realized and (3) Inheritances they will receive.

Concerning the realms where hopes will be enjoyed, we saw that Scripture speaks of two. They are, the Land and earth that God *creates* in the future and the eternal realm above the heavens that is not a *created realm*, but always existed. We noted that the newly created earth will be the dwelling place for Israel and the Bride company. "Children" of God will also realize their hope on that earth. The realm far above all heavens is said to be the realm of the Church that is Christ's Body.

We found that the times when God's People realize their hopes vary. Members of the Church which is Christ's Body must realize their hope first, for they are promised that *when* Christ is made manifest above the heavens, they will be there with Him.

Following that appearance in glory (above the heavens), Christ will descend to earth and rule over the nations 1000 years. As a reward for their faithful obedience, the Bride company will meet Him in the air, descend with Him, and be with Him in that Kingdom.

We are told that the rest of the dead are raised at the end of that 1000 year reign. (Rev.20:5) "The rest" would include the unjust saints of Israel and also all the "Children" of God who have slept in the grave since Adam, all who were not part of the 3 companies of sons already raised.

At the end of Christ's 1000 year

reign, when all of God's People have been raised and all hopes have been realized, when death and hell (gravedom) are destroyed, the words of 1 Corinthians 15:25-28 will be fulfilled. There we read, "**For He (Christ) must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.**" Here we understand that the reign of Christ, the "Son", is for a limited time. It is until death, and the results of sin in men and all God's creation, are no more. It is until the ruin in earth, heaven, and all God's creation is gone.

Continuing in our reference we read, "**For He (God) hath put all things under His (Christ's) feet. But when He saith all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him (God) that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.**" Here we read that when the Son's work of Savior, Redeemer, Prophet, Priest, and King is finished, then "God" will rule.

When all of God's enemies are destroyed and He is all and among all His People, the darkness that sin brought upon His creation will at last be totally dispelled. His People will dwell with Him and the light of His presence will fill the universe.

As a Father with His family, He will be among members of the Church which is Christ's Body. They will be with Him in the realm above all heavens, called the most holy place, realm of "the" light and glory. In Colossians 1:12 Paul wrote of, "**Giving thanks unto the Father,**

...cont'd on backpage

The Good Confession # 3

In our last article, we considered the silence of Christ when He was questioned by Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor. Of the four writers of the Gospels, John only records the words that the Lord did speak. From the beginning of His earthly ministry until His dying breath on the cross, the Gospels bare witness that the words that the Lord spoke on earth were either from the Scriptures or directly from the Father. The words that Christ spoke and His actions confirmed that which was written by the prophets. Though we do not have all of the words that He spoke on earth nor were all of His works recorded (See John 21:25), the Holy Spirit has left us with precisely what we need to know concerning His earthly ministry.

His ministry began when He was thirty years of age (Lu 3:23) shortly after John the Baptist was imprisoned (Lu 3:20). The next thing Luke records concerning Christ is that He was led by the Spirit into the wilderness and was tempted of the devil for forty days (Lu 4:1-13). It is during this time of trial that we read of the faithful witness of Christ and His response to the challenges of the devil. In each case, He answers the devil from the Scriptures, **"It is written..."**. The Lord could have argued at length to the devil's provocations. Rather, He wisely and simply answered with the direct words of God. Paul had learned the importance of avoiding disputations. He warned Timothy and Titus to avoid foolish questions knowing that they only gender strife, are unprofitable and vain. (1Ti 1:4; 6:4, 2Ti 2:23, Tit 3:9. See also Phil 2:14)

The next occasion that Luke records the Lord's words is in the synagogaue in Nazereth, where He grew up. He stood up to read, from the scroll of Isaiah, **"And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.' And He**

closed the book, and He gave it again to the minister, and sat down." (Lu 4:17-20)

From the beginning, He announced the purpose of His ministry and spoke the words directly from the prophets. To those of His own hometown, His words cut sharply, even to the point that they thrust Him out of the city and would have cast Him off the brow of the hill but He passed through them and went away. (Lu 4:29,30)

And so was pattern throughout those brief 3-1/2 years that He stood faithful to the Scriptures. He was direct and to the point. His words were truth. As He promised, He came not to bring peace but rather division or a sword. (Mat 10:34, Lu 12:51). **"And a man's foes shall be they of his own household."** (Mat 10:36) So aptly is the Word described in Hebrews 4:12 **"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, (living and energetic) and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."** Many of those who heard His words would come to experience the divisions in their own households. To those who believed, His words would divid them from those who did not.

Furthermore, He spoke the words of the Father, **"For I have not spoken of Myself; but the Father Which sent Me, He gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak."** (Jn 12:49,50)

And finally, in His last hours on earth, He stood before the Gentile governor, Pontius Pilate and affirms His purpose on earth. To Pilate's question **"Art thou the King of the Jews?"** (John 18:33), the Lord replies **"...My kingdom is not of this world: if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My kingdom not from hence."** (Jn 18:36)

To this Pilate asks, **"Art thou a king then?"** At this point, the Lord reveals His purpose. **"...Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born,**

and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice.' "

Pilate's final question, a timeless one, **"What is truth?"** Ironically, "truth" was standing there before him, the very living word, the true and living way. So rang true the words of the Lord, **"Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice."**

Pilate would not understand these words, however, he could not convict Him. He found no validity to the accusation brought against Him. At worst, he would scourge Him and release Him. But He could find no fault in Him.

Pilate returned unto the Jews and said, **"I find in him no fault at all."** John and Luke each record this statement three times, the number of completion. That is God's stamp of approval on these records to certify that Christ was blameless. However, Pilate was soon swayed by the people to have the Lord crucified, thus fulfilling a multitude of Scripture.

These were not the last words of our Lord. He would speak further truth while on the cross. He spoke further truth after His resurrection through the Apostles. Many today may not recognize that He speaks now through Paul's last seven letters. It is in these letters that we read of truth hidden from the ages that tell us of His fulness.

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:" (1Pet 1:18, 19)

B. Bagby

Conference Tapes

Cassette tapes and CD's are available for both the Phoenix Conference and the recent TFT Conference. The Phoenix Conference series is available in MP3 format and can be received via email or write for a CD. Request tapes/CD's by writing either Bible Explorations or TFT. TFT's address is:

TFT Bible Fellowship
P.O. Box 6358
Lafayette, IN 47903

Suffering/Obedience, Is There A Correlation?

As believers in Christ Jesus our risen Saviour, we should EXPECT to suffer while living in this world. In 1 Timothy 1:18, Paul tells us that there is a warfare going on, “...war a good warfare.” In 2 Timothy 2:12 Paul writes that there will be suffering for those whose hope it is to reign with Christ. He says, “... if we suffer, we shall reign with Him.” Yet, some of us still find ourselves questioning, “Why so much suffering, Lord?” Hebrews 5:8 speaks of Christ and His sufferings. It reads, “...yet learned **He obedience by the things which He suffered.**” *Obedience and suffering.* Is there a direct correlation between these two words? Let us examine the context.

The Book of Hebrews was written to Jews by the Apostle Paul during the time when many did not believe their Messiah was Jesus Christ Who came to suffer before becoming their King. In 2:9 and 3:8,12 we read, “**But we see Jesus, Who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man...Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness...Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.**”

Even though the prophets told them of His suffering, they still refused to believe that their Messiah would come in such a humble manner to suffer. Isaiah had told them, “**He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.**” (Isa.53:3)

With this context in mind, let us look at references containing the word “obedience” and note who or what the authority is that is to be obeyed. In 1 Peter 1:22, Peter speaks of, “... **obeying the truth** .” “Truth” is the authority in this context. But, what is “the truth”? Jesus said in John 8:31,32 that by continuing in “**My**

Word”, “...ye shall know the truth.” Later, in chapter 14:6, we read, “**Jesus saith unto Him, ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life.’**” So, the truth is Jesus’ Word and in Jesus Himself. Peter was speaking of obeying Christ Jesus and His Word. He and His Word are the authorities in this reference.

In Romans 1:5 and 16:26, Paul tells the saints in Rome that they “**received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations.**” “The faith” is referring to “truth” itself, or “the truthfulness of God” and in this context it is referring to relying on Christ for salvation. Once again this example of obeying is connected to listening to God’s authority (His Word, and Jesus Christ Himself) and what they’d been taught regarding Christ and salvation.

Philippians 2:8 states, “**And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.**” In this verse we see that Christ was so obedient that He was willing to give up His life. “Who” or “what” was Christ obedient to? We find the answer in John 5:30 where Christ tells us that He sought “**the will of the Father Which hath sent Me.**” Christ was obedient to His Father, His Authority, even to the point of giving His own life. This was the ultimate obedience, and the ultimate sacrifice that leads us to the other half of the correlation in question, that is to *suffering*.

In the following verses we are going to see that Christ’s continued obedience to do the will of the Father led Him to suffer for our sakes, 1 Peter 2:21-23 states, “... **Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should** (diligently) **follow His steps.**” And in Matthew 4:1-10 we can see we are given specific examples of Christ’s sufferings. Here we learn that Christ suffered, “...**to be tempted** (tried or tested).” In this context Christ was tempted with food while hungry, with power and authority over life while physically weak, and finally with the opportunity to control this earth and be wor-

shipped while seemingly powerless. Each of these are areas in which we also, can be tested. His example enables us to know that He understands our temptations and that through Him we can overcome them.

The final reference to note which ties in with Christ’s ultimate act of “obedience” is in 1 Peter 3:18. This example has to do with His ultimate suffering: “**For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the Just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh.**”

Christ’s suffering was for one purpose; it was to bring us to God. Through His obedience to His Father to go through the testing in the wilderness and to obey and suffer even to the point of death, Christ gave us examples to follow, gave us access to His Father, gave us victory over death and gave us eternal life. By His example, we can see that as we go through suffering we may learn to become more obedient and more attentive to God’s leading, His direction, and His authority in our lives. We may learn to be more attentive to His truth, His Word, and to Him.

Is there a correlation between suffering and obedience? We are told that God, through our suffering, is doing a work in us, perfecting us. In 1 Peter 5:10 we read, “**But the God of all grace, Who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect** (perfect you), **stablish** (establish you), **strengthen, settle** (ground) **you ...**” By enduring suffering, we are being perfected, and by being obedient and attentive to His authority through His Word, we receive a two-fold blessing. (1) We are brought closer to Him and (2) we have the opportunity to be a reflection of Christ to others. According to Scripture, there is a direct correlation between suffering and obedience, and what a blessing the result becomes! “... **To Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.**” (1 Ptr 5:11)

K. Cottrell

Hopes # 15 ...cont'd

which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." A more accurate rendering of this is that the Father has made us acceptable to share in the inheritance *in the holies* in "the" light. We will share in Christ's inheritance where He now dwells in unapproachable light. (1Tim.6:16)

Christ will also be among those of the Bride company while He reigns 1000 years over His enemies and also after that in the heaven-like city that will come down out of heaven. John wrote of that city, "**And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God... And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.**" (Rev.21:2,3,25) There will be no night there for the rulers of the darkness will be no more and the glory of God will fill the city and Land.

When sin and death are destroyed, when there is no more curse on the earth, then Paradise will have been

restored. The faithful servants of Israel's hope, with the rest who were raised at the end of the millennium, will dwell there forever in God's light. John wrote, "**And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life... And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; ... And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.**" (Rev.22:1-5)

Thus we see that in every hope, whether it is to dwell on earth or above the heavens, God's People will dwell with Him in His light. The Hebrew David wrote of the blessed hope he will realize on earth saying, "**As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness. "...in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.**" (Ps.17:15; 16:11)

Nearly a thousand years later Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, members of the church which is the body of Christ,

Bible Explorations is a joint effort by a group of believers. Articles submitted are not necessarily the view point of the group collectively. Free to anyone upon request.

wrote concerning their hope. He said they should be looking for "...**that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing** (appearing of the glory) **of the Great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.**" (Tit.2:13) He urged them to be looking, with anticipation, for the time of that grand display of glory above the heavens, because then they would be there to view it. (Col.3:4)

As members of the body of Christ, we too will appear there with Christ to see God's finale. We shall see the curtain rise and God's people come into their places, His hidden ones brought forth to receive their hopes and rewards at God's appointed times and in His appointed realms. We will be privileged to see all that God has accomplished through our Lord Christ Jesus.

WHAT A FINALE THAT WILL BE!

Blessed be God (speak well of God) Who has given us so great a hope.

J. Heltzinger

4-2007

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 48
SUN CITY, AZ

BIBLE EXPLORATIONS
P.O. BOX 26608
Phoenix, AZ 85068-6608