

The Blessed Hope

11/05/2023 #1 Week in Series, Our Hope and Future

// Intro

- For those of you who may not know, we are an Assemblies of God church, part of the largest Pentecostal denomination in the world. As members of the Assemblies of God, we believe in 16 core Fundamental Truths of our faith. Are these the only truths? No, but they are fundamental and foundational in what we believe. Throughout this series, we will be taking a closer look at four of these fundamental truths and the hope and future we have in Christ and Christ Jesus alone!
 - These truths provide unity. They provide clarity on what we believe about “pentecost” and the Holy Spirit and His power. They’re all grounded in Scripture. That’s one of our values here. We’re grounded in Scripture. If the Bible says it, we believe it.
-  **We are in uncertain times... certainly known by God.**

- **BOOK OF REVELATION is the ONLY BOOK that comes with a promise! There’s a special blessing to all who read this book aloud!**
- **JESUS IS VICTOR - THE MAIN THEME OF REVELATION**
 - **SON OF MAN & SON OF GOD who defeats every other kingdom Daniel 7**
 - **HE COMES FOR HIS BRIDE (CHURCH) prominent in Ch 2-3; then again in 19:7 & 21:16**
 - **This is called the Marriage Supper of the Lamb**

The Book of Revelation is about the Lamb more than the Beast.

It’s about Jesus eternal victory & our unity in that Victory!
Romans 6:5-6 Someone Read

It’s a Revelation of JESUS and the things to come.
It’s a warning.

KING JESUS
TIMELINE

King to Come	King on Earth	Sons & Daughters	King of New Heavens & Earth
2 Sam 7:12-13 Isa 9:6	Mt 12:18	2 Cor 3:18 Eph 2:6-7; Phil 3:20	Mt 19:28 Rev 21; Dan 7

God is all powerful & outside of time. We're trapped in time. Basketball Game Analogy

God orchestrated in advance ...

- Types of Christs in the OT to reveal who Jesus would be
- Jesus' birth and life & resurrection Daniel 7 | Isaiah
- The Church Age (we're in)
- The Rapture (Christ's Return) 1 Thess 4
- The 7 Years of Tribulation We're a pre-tribulation church
- The 1,000 Reign of Christ
- The 2nd Coming (Christ's feet hit the Mount of Olives, Splits in two, New Heavens & New Earth established, Satan throw into Lake of Fire)

- In other words, as Christians...

// We have a hope in Jesus

-  1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 CSB
For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words.
- You might know this by another name, “rapture”
- The fun thing is, the word rapture is never used in scripture but is something that has been used to describe what we read here in 1 Thessalonians.
 The Greek for “caught up” (*harpazō*, “to grab or seize suddenly, to snatch, take away”) gives a sense of being forcibly and suddenly lifted upward (see John 6:15; Acts 8:39).
 - “The resurrection of those who have fallen asleep in Christ and their translation together with those who are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord is the imminent and blessed **hope** of the church.”

- Millions of people don't have hope.
- When tragedy hits them, they don't know what the future holds.
- When they lose a loved one, their world is not just upside down, it's all together hopeless.
- When their child

So what about this "rapture" ??? This moment in time when the Father says "Ok SON, go get your bride." When we are caught up in the clouds to be with Jesus.

- Warren Wiersbe puts this straightforward, *This does not mean that He will put the elements of the body together again, for resurrection is not "reconstruction."*

- We see this happen with two people in the Bible so there is a pre-text that we actually have for such an occasion:

-  1 Corinthians 15:35-46 CSB

But someone will ask, "How are the dead raised? What kind of body will they have when they come?" You fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And as for what you sow—you are not sowing the body that will be, but only a seed, perhaps of wheat or another grain. But God gives it a body as he wants, and to each of the seeds its own body. Not all flesh is the same flesh; there is one flesh for humans, another for animals, another for birds, and another for fish. There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is different from that of the earthly ones. There is a splendor of the sun, another of the moon, and another of the stars; in fact, one star differs from another star in splendor. So it is with the resurrection of the dead: Sown in corruption, raised in incorruption; sown in dishonor, raised in glory; sown in weakness, raised in power; sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. So it is written, The first man Adam became a living being; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. However, the spiritual is not first, but the natural, then the spiritual.

- Evidence of this hope continues to encourage us through scripture.

-  2 Corinthians 4:17-18 CSB

For our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory. So we do not focus on what is

seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

- personal story - last night we had a couple from the neighborhood sitting in the LR with us discussing this very idea of our hope being secure ONLY in heaven - especially in light of pain and suffering - injustice and grief and one MESSED UP world.
- I told them about Nancy - my sister who died of cancer last December. I told them how I have a HOPE AND FUTURE in knowing I'll see her in Heaven. In the midst of my grief and it is TERRIBLE at times. Grief hits you like a train with no warning. But in the midst of that grief - that pain of her loss - I have a hope - a smile that can follow the tears - a smile can eventually cross my tear-filled face because I KNOW that NANCY is with her LORD JESUS and I will one day be there too! Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so!

Jesus, as the victorious Lion of Judah, and Lamb who died in our place, is crowned King of all!

His throne is surrounded by 24 Elders & 24 Thrones

"Dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads" Rev 4:4

24 Elders *could be* ...

The 24 Groups of Israel was divided into; each had a priest to serve/make atonement on their behalf

All the saints, both Old and New Testament

The sounds that are ominous "thunder, lightning..." represent the judgment coming to the earth for those who refused the Lamb

-  **Jesus return is both reassuring and sobering!**

It's reassuring to me and my family in light of losing Nancy. But it's sobering to those who don't yet trust in Jesus to be their Lord and Savior. Is that YOU today?

Job 28:28 And the Lord said to man, 'The fear of the Lord — that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding.'

// We will be made new

-  Romans 8:23-25 CSB

Not only that, but we ourselves who have the Spirit as the firstfruits— we also groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. Now in this hope we were saved, but hope that is seen is not hope, because who hopes for what he sees? Now if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with patience.

- This verse is talking about our adoption, the redemption of our bodies FROM THE GRAVE

As we read earlier, it's not our physical bodies, but instead it's a redemption of our bodies - saved by hope!

- This week, I witnessed TWO adoptions! It was beautiful. Find our church on Facebook to see those pictures!
- The father and mothers' love didn't increase on the day of adoption. Those children were fully loved before the gavel hit the desk and before the van was parked in the car. The judge simply made it final.
- The judge said these amazing words "Do you understand that after today you will be fully responsible for this child and it will be as if they were born to your family?" Both couples had no delay "YES!"
- You see the judge has the RIGHT to make the adoption finalized. ONLY GOD the JUDGE of all has the right to grant you and me adoption into HIS family!

JESUS made a way for US to be adopted - given a new name, a new family, a new future - a future filled with promise and HOPE - a HOPE & A FUTURE!

-  That which is corrupted and full of sin will be redeemed! Our corruption, imperfection, sinful-nature we know in our bodies will see redemption through Christ. Rescued from death and the power of the grave, made to be like Christ as we see in **Philippians 3:21 CSB**: He will transform the body of our humble condition into the likeness of his glorious body, by the power that enables him to subject everything to himself.

- **Final Adoption into God's Family**

We talk a lot about Jesus being our older brother who upon His death and resurrection gives us access to the Father. But did you know our adoption isn't FINAL until Jesus comes back and takes us to His Father's house!?

- We are already walking in sonship with God, but on the day when Jesus returns for us, we will be called into an even greater depth of our adoption into the Kingdom of God by stepping into a life with Christ with perfect bodies in the resurrection, stepping into our FULL INHERITANCE.

-  1 Corinthians 15:50-58 CSB

What I am saying, brothers and sisters, is this: Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor can corruption inherit incorruption. Listen, I am telling you a mystery: We will not all fall asleep, but we will all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed.

- For this corruptible body must be clothed with incorruptibility, and this mortal body must be clothed with immortality. When this corruptible body is clothed with incorruptibility, and this mortal body is clothed with immortality, then the saying that is written will take place: Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, death, is your victory? Where, death, is your sting?
- The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ! Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the Lord's work, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

- **We must live lives knowing that we have hope in Jesus!**

- Again - This promise of His return is both reassuring and sobering!

-  Colossians 3:1-4

- So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also

will appear with him in glory.

- Be encouraged, Church! We have a hope in Jesus, and we know where it comes from!
- Is it possible that some will be church-goers but not get “caught up” in the rapture when Jesus comes? yes.
- There’s a divine paradox here.
- It’s all grace and only grace that saves you. The THEIF next to Jesus is SAVED. He’s sincere and has moments to live. Jesus forgives him and receives him into the Kingdom! WOW!
- But two things can be true at the same time.
- It’s all true that **some** will attend church but never let grace do it’s work. They never let God transform them so enjoy church attendance and feel “in the club” but they never become a kind, generous person - giving of their time and energy and resources to the marginalized in our world. Those people are deceived. They believe they love God but don’t express it by loving others. Truth is if you love God, you’ll love His creation - people.
- WHAT HAPPENS after we meet Jesus? There’s a separation of those who were sincere and those who weren’t.

Our Lifestyle and Love Proves Jesus’ Lordship & our READINESS for His Return

Matthew 25:34-46

34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. 35 For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. 36 I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.'

"Then these righteous ones will reply, 'Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? 39 When did we ever see you sick or in prison and visit you?' 40 "And the King will say, 'I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!'

"Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, 'Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his demons. 42 For I was hungry, and you didn't feed me. I was thirsty, and you didn't give

me a drink. 43 I was a stranger, and you didn't invite me into your home. I was naked, and you didn't give me clothing. I was sick and in prison, and you didn't visit me.' "Then they will reply, 'Lord, when did we ever see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and not help you?' 45 "And he will answer, 'I tell you the truth, when you refused to help the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were refusing to help me.' 46 "And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life."

This should provide FEAR of the Lord - respect for He is and what He has said.

Proverbs 9:10

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.

Job 28:28

And the Lord said to man, 'The fear of the Lord — that is wisdom, and to shun evil is understanding.'

Psalms 111:10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow His precepts have good understanding.

Isaiah 33:6 {The Lord} He will be the sure foundation *for your times*, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the Lord is the key to this treasure.

Jesus' Return Will Be Unexpected For Many

Luke 17:26-31

Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all.

"It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all. "It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed.

2 Peter 3:8-9 But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise, as some understand slowness.

He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance

1 Thessalonians 5:1-7 Now concerning how and when all this will happen, dear brothers and sisters, we don't really need to write you. For you know quite well that the day of the Lord's return will come unexpectedly, like a thief in the night. When people are saying, "Everything is peaceful and secure," then disaster will fall on them suddenly ... and there will be no escape. 4 But you aren't in the dark about these things, dear brothers and sisters, and you won't be surprised when the day of the Lord comes like a thief. For you are all children of the light and of the day; we don't belong to darkness and night. So be on your guard, not asleep like the others. Stay alert and be clearheaded.

// This hope is for you!

-  Titus 2:11-15 CSB
For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, instructing us to deny godlessness and worldly lusts and to live in a sensible, righteous, and godly way in the present age, while we wait for the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. He gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to cleanse for himself a people for his own possession, eager to do good works. Proclaim these things; encourage and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.
- **GRACE** - the undeserving favor from God! We must turn to Jesus to experience this grace. We're saved by grace through faith. Grace is the water. Faith is turning the faucet on and admiring your need for that water. Turn to Jesus today and let Him save you by His grace!

The Bible is not silent about the times.

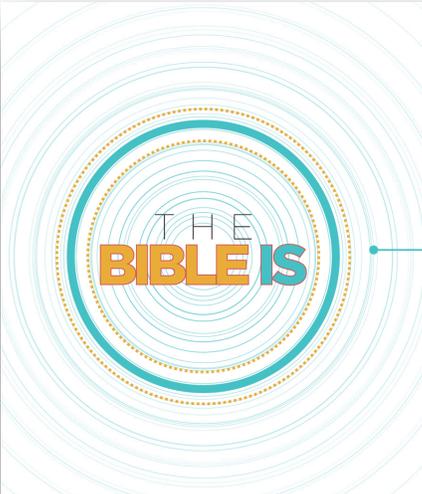
- Jesus said "It will be as in the days of Noah" What were the days of Noah like? There was sexual promiscuity rampant and people exchanging what God intended for sex to be between a man and woman and instead - there were many in Noah's day that were living a same sex lifestyle. There was no FEAR of GOD - no respect for His divine design or lordship. People ignored Noah's warning and just like I'm warning you RIGHT NOW there will be people in the sound of my

voice TODAY who mock my words and the words of every preacher standing behind a pulpit. They'll believe their truth is THE truth or that truth itself is subjective - in the eyes of the beholder - instead of objective - truth no matter what. Only Creator God can define the bounds of truth and so these signs of His return - sexual perversion - Israel and Hamas btw that's Abraham's two sons: Isaac & Ishmael. **BOTH Muslims and Christians claim Abraham to be their founding right to Jerusalem and the temple mount.** If you want to understand world events, read the Bible. It's fascinating!

God intends for us to discern the signs of His coming

We must be prepared – be waiting, be watching, to working, be warning, be ready!

- *There Is Still Time to place your trust in Jesus!* – Romans 10:9-10
If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God.
- 📖 Romans 6:12-14 CSB
For sin will not rule over you, because you are not under the law but under grace.
Let GRACE do it's work! Let God's grace wash you clean of all regret and sin and desire for sin! Look upon JESUS and let Him transform you into the person He wants you to be!
- This grace was shown to us through God by sending his son for us:
- 📖 **John 3:16-17** For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.



BOOK OF REVELATION IS

- THE LAST BOOK
- REVELATION OF JESUS/VICTORY
- ONLY BOOK WITH A PROMISE TO READER
- NOT ALLEGORY / NOT FICTIONAL
- YES SYMBOLIC, BUT PROPHETIC IN NATURE DESCRIBING REAL EVENTS THAT ARE TO COME
- PROMISE OF IMMORTALITY, WEDDED TO JESUS, BODY LIKE HIS (ABILITIES) DWELLING W/HIM

- God's grace was seen throughout the entire Bible! So don't buy the lie that God is rude or unjust for coming like a thief in the night. God is kind and patient

Psalms 145:8-9,13,17 The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The Lord **is good to all;**

He has **compassion on all He has made...**The Lord **is faithful to all His promises and loving toward all He has made.** The Lord **is righteous in all His ways and loving toward all He has made.**

Jeremiah preached for 23 years! Noah preached for weeks and weeks months and months and still only some will repent of their sin and admit their need for salvation.

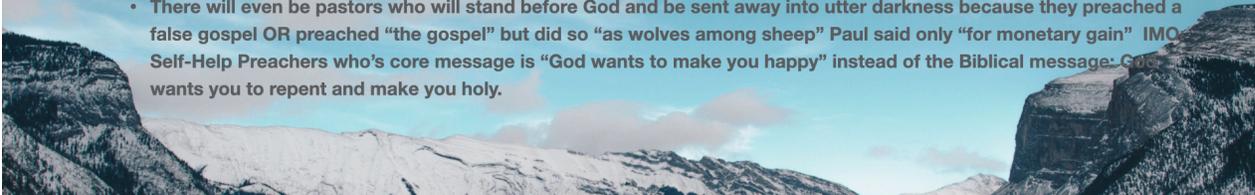
- **It is through Christ** that we have this Blessed Hope...and he's calling YOU into it.
To be adopted into his family.
To live a life of righteousness
-  **THE BIG IDEA** _ TRUST in JESUS NOW. WORSHIP JESUS NOW. SO YOU'RE READY THEN - WHEN HE COMES BACK!

Big Idea: Worship Jesus and submit to Him NOW so you can have peace with Him THEN / be raptured in "first resurrection"

People who will suffer instead of be raptured

(Many will actually give their lives to Jesus during the tribulation Revelation implies, and will be beheaded. Those people will be given a special crown for turning their lives to Jesus during such great trouble.)

- **Agnostic:** Don't believe anything can be truly known about God or eternity. No feelings as to the existence of faith/eternity/after-life
- **Atheist:** Declares there is no God
- **Universalist:** All roads lead to heaven (the Oprah W. Philosophy) tends to become works based
- **All Error Religions who reject Christ as Lord & Savior**
 - **Islam:** Believing Muhammad is God, angelic visitation ...
 - **Mormons:** Joseph
 - **Catholics** who are religious in name only (culturally /family) but elevate Mary above Jesus, don't exalt Jesus as Savior
- **Tare (Church-Goer)** who actually doesn't submit to Jesus (more on this next week)
 - Mt 24-25
 - There will even be pastors who will stand before God and be sent away into utter darkness because they preached a false gospel OR preached "the gospel" but did so "as wolves among sheep" Paul said only "for monetary gain" IMO
 - **Self-Help Preachers** who's core message is "God wants to make you happy" instead of the Biblical message: **God wants you to repent and make you holy.**



ALTAR



DO YOU HAVE THE BLESSED HOPE OF JESUS?

- TRUST IN JESUS. REPENT OF YOUR SIN.
- CHOOSE TO LIVE A LIFE THAT HONORS GOD, FREE OF SIN
 - Do as Romans 6 states, to not let sin reign in our minds and bodies, to live a life of righteousness, seeking after God daily, pursuing the things that are of Him.