



BULLEEN BAPTIST CHURCH

Cnr Marcus & Thompsons Roads, LWR TEMPLESTOWE VIC 3107
03 9850 9633 / www.bulleenbaptist.org.au

SERIES : "THE LAST THINGS"

Study 1 "Faith, HOPE and Love" August 6, 2006

Notes by Rev. Gary Lockyer

INTRODUCTION : to the series

The "Last Things" is a Series on God's ultimate purposes for his people and his creation. The Series will pick up on the main themes through the Scriptures; themes which find their ultimate fulfilment when Jesus returns to the world. Then the whole of creation is renewed, his people are "clothed with immortality," and God reigns supreme. See the "Introduction Leaflet" for a more detailed expectation of the Series' aims and approach.)

INTRODUCTION : to Study 1

“They resigned to hope, the uncertain goddess, their unknown chance of happiness”

From Pericles (431BC) in praise of Athenian soldiers killed in defence of their city. His view of "hope" is still common today. So then, is "Christian Hope" just

A heart-felt LONGING?

A concession to DOUBT?

or an acknowledgment of UNCERTAINTIES?

Hebrews 6:18-19, in the context of the certainty of God's promises, says :

“ ... take hold of the hope offered to us ... as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure”

Uncertain goddess OR an anchor for the soul?

The Christian understanding of "hope" is a world apart from the common usage of the word.

"Now these three remain: Faith, hope and love.

..... Hope is listed with Faith and Love as a permanent characteristic of the Christian, and therefore with them, has a definitive BIBLICAL meaning

A. HOPE ... A DEFINITION

The Christian Hope is the ASSURANCE of the certainty of God's promises

seen in the past in the RESURRECTION of Jesus;

applied as the basis of Christian LIVING in the present,

... and EXPECTED as our experience of the future.

Let's examine each of these elements of the definition:

B. DEFINITION ELEMENT 1 : THE CERTAINTY OF GOD'S PROMISES IN JESUS

1. A GENERAL PRINCIPLE

But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not "Yes" and "No." For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ" 2Cor1:18-20

2. SPECIFIC ... IN JESUS' RESURRECTION - Paul speaks in his defence

"I stand on trial for my hope in the resurrection of the dead." (Ac23:6) "It is because of my hope in what God has promised our fathers that I am on trial today." (Ac26:6) "I am saying nothing beyond what Moses and the prophets said would happen, that Christ would suffer, and as the first to rise from the dead, would bring light to his own people and to the gentiles." (Ac26:22-23) (See also Rom5:1-10)

C. DEFINITION ELEMENT 2 : THE BASIS OF CHRISTIAN LIVING

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief ... what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives. 2Pt3:10-11

1. HOLDING TO THE TRUTH (Note "the glory of our Lord" = "hope" in this passage)

He called you ... that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then... stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you ... May our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God our Father, who ... gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word. 2Th2:13-17

2. IN EVERYDAY LIFE

For the grace of God ... teaches us to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope - the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. Ti2:11-14

3. IN SHARING OUR FAITH WITH OTHERS

Always be prepared to give an answer a to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect. 1Pt3:15

4. IN MINISTRY IN GENERAL

For what was glorious (under Moses) has no glory now in comparison with the surpassing glory. And if what was fading away came with glory, how much greater is the glory of that which lasts! Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. 2Cor3:10-12 (read down to, say, 2Cor5:5 to see how Paul uses the themes of Jesus' Resurrection and ours in this context.)

D. DEFINITION ELEMENT 3 : OUR EXPERIENCE OF THE FUTURE

1. IS REALISED WHEN JESUS RETURNS ...

For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. 1Th4:16-18

2. ... WHEN WE ARE FITTED FOR ETERNITY (Selected verses from 1Cor15)

If Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless ... (and) your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are to be pitied more than all men. But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep In Christ all will be made alive, but in their own turn. First, Christ ... then when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power.

...The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven.

... We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed for the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed

E. SUMMING UP

The resurrection of Jesus is a seminal piece of the future, dragged back in time so that we may live in its light now and expect its reality to be ours in the future. Two quotes : (authorship lost!)

Unlike optimism, Christian hope doesn't opt out when faced with harsh realities. The reason for the realism of Christian hope is the fact that it is cast in the mould of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ.

Christian hope can face any situation, because it is not based on changeable circumstances, but a settled conviction that nothing can overtake us that Christ hasn't taken care of. It is willing to risk all on the reality of the resurrection. We welcome the future, because it bears the face of Jesus.