



Part 15: Our Ultimate Hope

Revelation 20:1-6

Neither suffering nor death can separate us from our eternal life in King Jesus, because He has triumphed over death for us.

EXPECTATIONS ARE IMPORTANT

The Bible explicitly connects true faith with our expectations of God. The biblical word for this is “hope.”

“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for....And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.” Hebrews 11:1-2, 6

DEALING WITH OUR DISORIENTATION

In our present cultural moment, Christians are dealing with a lot of disorientation around the changes in our culture and what we have expected from God. It raises the question of hope.

We need to return to God’s Word to look more closely at what we have been promised and what is to be our ultimate hope.

REVELATION 20:1-6

- Popular Theology of *Left Behind* Series

“Revelation is not about the antichrist, but about the living Christ. It is not about rapture out of this world but about faithful discipleship in this world. That is, like every other New Testament book, Revelation is about Jesus Christ – ‘A revelation of Jesus Christ’ (Rev. 1:1) – and about

following him in obedience and love.” Michael Gorman, “Reading Revelation Responsibly”

“The purpose of the book of Revelation is to persuade its hearers and readers, both ancient and contemporary, to remain faithful to God in spite of past, present, or future suffering – whatever form that suffering might take, and whatever source it may have – simply for being faithful.” Michael Gorman

- The Thousand Years is Symbolic

It means that everything is under God’s control (Revelation 2:10, 6:10-11). Our suffering for the name of Jesus is under the sovereignty of God.

“...the ‘millennium’ that I believe John describes in the Apocalypse is concurrent with the church age in which we live and consists of the co-regency with Christ of those believers who have died and entered into the glory of the intermediate state. ...The millennium is now: the present age of the church between the first and second comings of Christ” Sam Storms

- Jesus has Already Bound Satan (Revelation 20:1-3)

- Progressive parallelism (recapitulation) - the visions of Revelation do not relate consecutive, chronological events, but frequently cover the same event from a different perspective.
- Jesus bound Satan in his earthly ministry (Mark 1:15, 3:27; John 12:31-32, Matthew 28:18-20).
- Jesus is reigning as King now (Revelation 1:4-5a, Matthew 28:18, Acts 2:36, 1 Corinthians 15:24-28, Ephesians 1:20-22, Colossians 3:1-4)

Two meanings:

- Satan is bound from mobilizing an international rebellion against the Church until God permits it (the Last Battle).
- The Gospel can go forth in the power of the Spirit.

- “First Resurrection” is Eternal Life Now and Forever (Revelation 20:4-6)

In Revelation, physical death is a spiritual victory that leads to life (Revelation 2:10-11; 6:9, 11a; 12:11; 14:13; 20:4-6).

Despite having lost their physical lives, the believers are raised to life together with Christ in the intermediate state where they rule and reign with the Lord for the duration of the present church age (2 Corinthians 5:6-10, Philippians 1:19-24, Revelation 6:9-11, 20:4-6).

THE PRACTICE OF HOPE (COLOSSIANS 3:1-4, 1 PETER 1:3-13)

“Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.”

1 Peter 1:13

“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on 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 now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.” Colossians 3:1-4

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How would you describe the importance of our expectations or hope in God with our ability to endure hardship and suffering? In your experience, how was the possibility of hardship and suffering communicated as something to be expected when following Jesus?
- What has been your experience, if any, with teaching on the thousand-year reign in Revelation 20? Does this sermon offer you a different or encouraging perspective? How does it inform your ultimate hope in Jesus?
- What practices have you tried, or could you try, to help you place your ultimate hope on Jesus’ return (see Colossians 3:1-4, 1 Peter 1:13)? Are you willing to memorize Colossians 3:1-4?

Note: If you would like Doug’s detailed exegetical notes (10 pages), you may email him (DBrown@GreenwoodCC.com).