

The Hope of the Church of the One Body

The close relationship we have with Christ that was established before the foundation of the world. The three scriptural references (John 17:22-24, 1 Peter 1:18-20, Ephesians 1:3-4) that pertain to before the foundation of the world involve two that establishes the love that God had with his Son, Jesus Christ, the third talks about us! What an amazing relationship we have with God.

Every calling has a hope and every hope has a promise and every promise has a unique relationship with the Lord and his glory. The calling always determines the hope that the believer has.

Most of Christianity today thinks that Christ only has one return or advent which is here on the earth. But when the common thinking today involves the rapture, tribulation, and millennial reign that should happen in that order, it appears this would involve at least two advents of the Lord.

There is some fault with this thinking. The first advent would be when they meet Him in the air (rapture) which is discussed in the Acts period, and the second would be when he comes back to the earth to set up his kingdom which is discussed in the Gospels and in Revelation (this is the Lords "Parousia").

Christianity doesn't recognize the third advent of Christ which is the "Epiphany" where he appears in glory and we appear there with Him (that is the hope of the church of the one body).

Notice Paul here before Agrippa talks about the hope of Israel:

Acts 26:6-7 (KJV)

6 And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers:

7 Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come. For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.

Acts 28:17a, 20 (KJV)

17 And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together:

20 For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.

What was the hope of Israel? Look in Acts 1:6 to see what they were hoping for:

Acts 1:6 (KJV)

6 When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

This hope stems from the promises that were given to Abraham.

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Romans 9:3-5 (KJV)

- 3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh;
- 4 Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises;
- 5 Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

Paul was not talking about Christ right then, but rather, when He came during the Gospels. Look at Romans 15:8. Paul is talking about when Jesus Christ was here in the flesh on the earth.

Romans 15:8(KJV)

- 8 Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers:

Three Spheres of Blessings (Deut 10:14)	Three Callings (Calling)	Three Groups of People (Promises)	Three Phases of the Coming of the Lord (Hope)
The Earth	The Kingdom	Israel according to the flesh*	Kingdom on earth Hope – Matt. 24 & 25
The Heavenly City (the heavens)	The Bride	Abraham’s seed	Abraham’s seed (heavenly calling) Hope - 1 Thess. 4
Far Above All (the heaven of heavens)	The Body	The One New Man	Far Above All Hope – Col. 3:4

(Adapted from *An Alphabetical Analysis* Part 2 p. 130)

*If you consider the phrase “Israel according to the flesh, be sure and recall the relationship Israel had with Jesus Christ as Messiah. Compare this status with what Paul was saying in Eph. 2:11-12 when he explains the relationship we had as Gentiles in the flesh... being Uncircumcised, without Christ, aliens, strangers from the promises, having no hope and without God in the world. Read below:

Ephesians 2:11-12 (KJV)

- 11 Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;
- 12 That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world:

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Israel was aware of the conditions of Christ's return because the feasts that they held indicated what conditions would be present when the Kingdom was to be set up here on earth.

There is an acronym that helps you remember the feasts days of Israel. The acronym is PUFTAT which stands for these feasts:

P = Passover
U = Unleavened Bread
F = Feasts (of the end gathering)
T = Trumpets
A = Atonement
T = Tabernacle

The first three occur before the Pentecost and then the last three take place after Pentecost. The third feast which is that of the end gathering is to identify the end time when they are to be redeemed by the Lord. We see this in Matt. 24 & 25.

Matthew 24:1-3 (KJV)

- 1 And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple.
- 2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.
- 3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

The word "end" in verse 3 is the Greek word "sunteleias" and it's a word that every Jew understood because it is used to describe the "end gathering". It's a word used to describe the last day of the feast when they are looking for the redemption of Israel.

It's the same idea that we find in Exodus 23:14-17 where in verse 16 "ingathering" is the same word as used in Matt 24:3

Exodus 23:14-17 (KJV)

- 14 Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year.
- 15 Thou shalt keep the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty:)
- 16 And the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labours, which thou hast sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field.
- 17 Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord GOD.

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Matthew 24:15 (KJV)

15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

We see the particular relationship that Israel had with God and it is apparent in the calling of the Kingdom which is hear on earth. The references from Daniel are what the Lord is talking about in His answer to His Disciples.

Daniel 9:27 (KJV)

27 And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week: and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.

Daniel 12:11 (KJV)

11 And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.

Matthew 24:21 (KJV)

21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

Matthew 24:29-30 (KJV)

29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

The word “coming in verse 30 is the Lords “Parousia” or personal presence.

The table has three rows. The first two rows belong to Israel. The third row is what we have today as members of the Body of Christ. The hope today is the hope of the out-resurrection which is described in Philippians 3:3-8:

Philippians 3:3-8 (KJV)

3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

4 Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:

5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;

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- 6 Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.
- 7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.
- 8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

Paul is explaining that he has a pedigree that is very impressive but he counts his status in the flesh worthless for the preferred knowledge of Christ. If you look at Christianity today, the book stores are filled with “how-to’s” and advice on fixing problems you may have but Paul was not speaking about the “junk” you have in your life. He knew that Christ Jesus took care of that... Look in John 8:1-11. Jesus simply said to the woman, “go and sin no more”. It’s as simple as that...

John 8:1-11 (KJV)

- 1 Jesus went unto the mount of Olives.
- 2 And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him; and he sat down, and taught them.
- 3 And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst,
- 4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.
- 5 Now Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?
- 6 This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not.
- 7 So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.
- 8 And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.
- 9 And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.
- 10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?
- 11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

Our sins have been taken care of by the blood of Jesus Christ. The passage in 1 John 1:6-9 is sometimes referred to as the “Christians Bar of Soap”. In this passage there are two things being discussed. One is “Sin” and the other is “Unrighteousness”. Verse 6 is the condition of sin. Verses 8-9 are discussing “sins” plural and this is the difference which involves “unrighteousness”.

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I John 1:6-9 (KJV)

- 6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:
- 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.
- 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
- 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The unsaved has no conviction of the spirit of God from having made a mistake. He is unaware of the sin in his life. Paul understands this. We have two natures. The old nature (the flesh, which is sinful and does no good) and the new nature which is what is given to us by God when we accept Christ as our Savior. Read Romans 7:18-25

Romans 7:18-25(KJV)

- 18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.
- 19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.
- 20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.
- 21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.
- 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:
- 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.
- 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?
- 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

When it comes down to it, the calling and hope that we have in the Church of the One Body, is what Paul is explaining in Philippians 3:11 and Colossians 3:4 which involves the “out-resurrection”. This is not the same as the resurrection that was expressed called the “rapture” which is Jewish.

This resurrection in Philippians 3:11 is unique to us and is further explained in Colossians 3:4.

Philippians 3:7-11(KJV)

- 7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.
- 8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,
- 9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

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- 10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;
- 11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

Colossians 3:1-4 (KJV)

- 1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.
- 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.
- 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.
- 4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.