

The Bible teaches us that hope is an anchor (Hebs.6:19), something which will hold us fast in the disturbing waves of doctrine which surround us. Hope is a wonderful security when the entire world is in a flap. We find Paul reminding us to hold hope fast and “not be moved away” from it;

Col 1:23 since indeed you* are continuing in the faith, having been firmly established and steadfast, and are not being shifted away from the hope (ALT)

Our hope is not vague or confusing. It is one thing to say “my hope is in the Lord Jesus”, but Abraham and the 12 apostles hope in the Lord Jesus and their hope as regards to inheritance is not the same as ours. We must distinguish things differing. All of God’s children have life in the Lord, but God has families, some destined for heaven, some for the earth;

Eph 3:14 Because of this, I bow my knees towards the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Eph 3:15 from whom every family in [the] heavens and on earth is named, (ALT)

Each family looks for the Lord’s second coming. At the Lord’s second coming He takes control of His kingdom which stretches from the heights of heaven to the earth beneath;

2Ti 4:1 Therefore I solemnly witness before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who is going to judge *the* living and *the* dead according to His appearance and His kingdom,

Every company or family hopes in the Lord Jesus but not every family has been told to look for the same aspect of the Lord’s second coming. We have been told to look for the Lord’s appearing, the first stage of His second coming. As we have shown in previous lessons, this is not the “rapture” of 1 Thess.4. The appearing of the Lord is an event which takes place above the clouds and air. The appearing takes place where Christ is seated at the Father’s right hand;

Col 3:1 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is sitting at *the* right hand of God.

Col 3:4 When Christ our Life *is* revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

Col 3:4 When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory. (RV)

Last lesson we examined the first occurrence of the word epiphaneia (also translated appearing) in the post Acts letters of Paul and found it here;

1Ti 6:12 Fight the good fight of faith. Lay hold on eternal life, to which you are also called and have professed a good profession before many witnesses.

1Ti 6:14 that you keep the commandment without spot and without blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1Ti 6:15 For He in His own time will reveal *who is* the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords,

We found this title of the Lord (King of kings and Lord of lords) a great linking title which proves that the appearing is part of our Lord’s second coming. The only other place this title occurs is in the book of Revelation and the reader should consider these passages;

Rev 19:5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all His servants, and the ones fearing Him, the small and great.

Rev 19:6 And I heard as the sound of a great multitude, ... saying, Hallelujah! For the Lord God omnipotent reigns!

Rev 19:15 And out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, so that with it He should strike the nations. And He will shepherd them with a rod of iron. And He treads the winepress of the wine of the anger and of the wrath of Almighty God.

Rev 19:16 And He has on *His* garment, and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

Rev 11:15 And the seventh angel TRUMPETed. And there were great voices in Heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world have become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of His Christ. And He will reign forever and ever.

Staying in the book of Revelation we have another passage regarding resurrection which is helpful;

Rev 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was given to them.And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Rev 20:5 But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This *is* the first resurrection.

Rev 20:6 Blessed and holy *is* he who has part in the first resurrection. The second death has no authority over these, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and will reign with Him a thousand years.

The “first” or foremost resurrection is for the “blessed” some of whom will also reign with Christ. This resurrection is at the last Trumpet. Now the reader should be very careful here. I am not saying we are the “blessed” in this passage. We are not “priests” as per Ex.19:6, Isaiah 61:6, Roms.12:1 and 1Peter 2:5-9. What we can take from this passage is that at this resurrection, which takes place at the Lord’s second coming, faithful ones begin their reign with Christ. Since our hope is also realized at the Lord’s second coming, we shall also be resurrected at this time. We will not be resurrected to the earth as priests and kings, Rev.1:6. We will not be resurrected to the air and clouds but we will be resurrected to the heavenly places where some of us will reign with Him.

In the post acts letters of Paul I cannot find one passage which reveals any different time of general resurrection for the church which is His Body. If our company is to be resurrected prior to every other company, then Paul is silent about it. If our apostle is silent then we can only maintain his previous teaching as being the universal doctrine on the matter. Paul spoke at length about resurrection in 1Cor.15 and in a condensed way in 1Thess.4. Both of these contain the last Trumpet of Revelation and Matt.24. as the timing of resurrection. Again, the reader should be careful. I am not saying we are those who will go to the meeting in 1Thess.4 to return to the restored Kingdom of Isaiah 25 and Hosea 13 as found in 1Cor.15:54-55. What I am saying is that since we do not have any alternative post Acts expositions by Paul as to the timing of our resurrection, then we maintain that the general testimony of the NT regarding resurrection includes us. The foremost resurrection at the last trumpet is the resurrection for all companies of believers.

This position fills Christians with great concern. They immediately assume they have to face the great tribulation and suffer the wrath of God. This fearful position is incorrect on two counts. The great tribulation will not be found in America or Australia and the great tribulation and wrath is on the unfaithful, though some of the faithful in Israel during that time will be martyred.

First of all, the great tribulation is particularly associated with Israel and the land of Israel. It is called the "day of Jacob's trouble" (Jer.30:7). In my opinion, the "world" of prophecy is the world around the nation of Israel. We are not Israel and these things have little to do with us as members of the Church which is His Body.

Secondly, the faithful associated with the earthly purposes of God were to be preserved during the tribulation. The tribulation is not for the faithful Israelites or the elect remnant of that Acts period. The tribulation and wrath is for unrepentant Israel, those who are deceived and believe the lie. The reader might like to prayerfully consider Jer.30:7, Joel 2:32, Matt.3:7-10, Acts 2:40, Acts 13:40-41, 1Cor.1:4-9, 1Thess.5:1-9 and Rev.12:6, 13-17. Yes, some of the faithful during the tribulation will suffer as they stand for truth, but in general, the Lord preserves the faithful as He preserved Israel during the judgments on Egypt.

On these two points we should not be concerned that we will "go through" the great tribulation. What we should be concerned about is the rapidly declining authority of God's Word in the "churches" and the growing evil in the world around us. These things Paul plainly warned us about are happening before our eyes. I believe the last days are fast approaching. Maybe some of us will suffer death at the hand of the ungodly in our world; already Christians are dying for their faith, see <http://www.persecution.org/suffering/index.php>

1Ti 4:1 But the Spirit expressly says that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and teachings of demons,

2Ti 4:3 For a time will be when they will not endure sound doctrine, but they will heap up teachers to themselves according to their own lusts, tickling the ear.

2Ti 3:1 Know this also, that in *the* last days grievous times will be at hand.

2Ti 3:2 For men will be self-lovers, money-lovers, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

2Ti 3:3 without natural affection, unyielding, false accusers, without self-control, savage, despisers of good,

2Ti 3:4 traitors, reckless, puffed up, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,

2Ti 3:5 having a form of godliness, but denying the power of it; even turn away from these.

To sum up thus far. All hopes are realized at the Lord's second coming. These hopes are realized within the three stages of the Lord's second coming.

1. He appears in the heavenly places and we will appear with Him there.
2. The Lord then descends out of Heaven and another company of believers are caught up to meet Him as He descends to the earth.
3. The Lord stands upon the Mount of Olives, He saves the remaining Israelis and the dispersed are re-gathered into their land.

At the Lord's second coming there is a resurrection of the faithful, including us. However, the different companies will be raised to that particular stage of the Lord's second coming which relates to their place of blessing. We will be resurrected

to the heavenly places. The remnant of the Acts period and before will be raised to the air and the clouds and some of Israel will be resurrected to the earth.

The Lord will then reign for one thousand years and in each place of blessing there will be those who will reign with Him.

Next lesson we will examine Paul's post Acts epistles for any mention of resurrection. In the meantime, please examine carefully Philippians chapter 3.

Previous lesson in this series can be found here;

www.bibleunderstanding.com/pastissues.htm