

CHRIST: THE HOPE OF GLORY

David B. Jones

People live in discouraging situations around the world. Some are abused - physically, sexually, verbally and mentally. Some live in financial need -- poverty, malnutrition, etc. Some live with mental and physical handicaps.

Perhaps the saddest situation in which people can find themselves is that of being without hope. No matter one's situation mentioned above -- if he lives in hope, he can conquer and overcome any situation. One who has hope looks forward to a better and brighter day. We are commissioned by the Lord to preach the gospel, giving all people the hope of a better land which is fairer than the day.

Paul penned the letter to the church in Colosse in order to give them this same hope. In chapter one we find the word "hope" used three times: *"For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;" -- Col 1:5.....If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;" -- Col 1:23.....To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:" -- Col 1:27.* It is the hope of glory -- which is CHRIST in you -- which we will set forth in this article. We will do so by asking several questions which are answered for us in chapter one.

WHO IS THIS CHRIST?

Paul refers to the PERSON of Christ as we see first of all what Paul said in verse two: *"To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."* -- Col 1:2. Notice the three-fold description Paul gives us as to who this Christ is. We can have hope because of who Christ is.

Paul refers to Him as "Lord," that is, ruler, supreme in authority, controller. On the day of Pentecost following the Lord resurrection, notice what Peter said: *"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."* -- Acts 2:36. The apostles were sent to preach by the One who has all authority: *"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."* -- Mat 28:18. Paul and John write of the authority bestowed upon Christ: *"Which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;" -- 1 Tim 6:15.....These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful."* -- Rev 17:14. Christ is Lord over everyone in Russia, America, etc., no matter where they might live or under what government they might find themselves.

Second, Paul refers to Christ as Jesus. The idea here would be that of Savior, the meaning of the Greek word used. The angels that spoke to Joseph and Mary made reference to Jesus as the Savior: *"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."* -- Mat 1:21.....*And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS."* -- Luke 1:31. Jesus is the Savior of the body, the church: *"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body."* -- Eph 5:23.

Third, Paul calls Him "Christ" -- the anointed one, or the Messiah. This appeals to His mission as God's anointed, or the One who would fulfill the mission of the Father. Notice what the apostles said in their prayer: ***"For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together," -- Acts 4:27.*** He was the One who was anointed by God to do His will -- to fulfill the Old Law -- to provide salvation -- to be the Messiah.

Second, Paul writes of the POWER of the Christ as he writes of the Creator -- ***"Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:" -- Col 1:15-16.*** Before coming to earth as the Son of God, Jesus existed as the Word -- ***"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." -- John 1:1-3.*** He was the active agent in the creation -- ***"And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;" -- Rev 3:14.*** The Word became flesh for the purpose of dying to satisfy the justice of God (John 1:14; Phil. 2:6-8). This shows His humility -- which ought to serve as an example to us of how humble God expects us to be. As we deal with one another, would God accept any less humility on our part?

Third, Paul will speak of the POSITION of the Christ -- He is the head of the church -- ***"And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." -- Col 1:18.*** All of the actions of our bodies are controlled by our brain -- in our head. All of the actions in the body of Christ are to be controlled by the head -- Christ. It is His will which must be obeyed. It is His commands which must be followed. It is He who must have the preeminence in the church. Sometimes men try and assume that role from Him: ***"I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church." -- 3 John 9-10.*** That role solely belongs to Him, and no one can and had better not, try and take His place. We must be careful as to how we carry out the work of the church, deliberately watching our attitudes as we deal with one another and the doctrine of Christ.

We can have hope because of the person, power and position of Christ.

WHAT HAS HE DONE FOR US TO GIVE US HOPE?

Paul points out that Christ has provided us with an inheritance -- ***"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:" -- Col 1:12.*** The Father has provided us with the inheritance but only in His Son. We can be partakers together -- ***"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." -- Rom 8:17.*** We can have the hope it takes to make it through any situation life can offer, if we are striving for the inheritance with the hope of gaining it.

Not only did Christ prepare an inheritance, He also provided redemption through His blood --

"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:" -- Col 1:13-14. The word "redemption" means "to buy back". Thus, we have been bought by the blood of Christ: "For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." -- 1 Cor 6:20....."And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood," -- Rev 1:5.

Christ also provided reconciliation with God -- ***"And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled" -- Col 1:20-21.*** God and man were divided or separated by the sin of man -- Isa 59:1-2. Christ gives us hope because through His blood He has reconciled us back to God. Now there will be no enmity with God if we will obey Christ. Today through obedience to His word we can be reconciled -- ***"And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." -- 2 Cor 5:18-19.***

WHERE IS CHRIST TODAY?

Due to the person of Christ, He has been able to do many things for us. But, where is He now? Paul answers this in an allusion to the scheme of redemption, involving Christ's ascension and the Holy Spirit's descending: ***"Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:" -- Col 1:25-26.*** Christ was able to do this because He is at God's right hand today: ***"So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." -- Mark 16:19....."Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." -- Acts 2:33....."If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." -- Col 3:1....."Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him." -- 1 Pet 3:22.***

We might ask the question "Why is He at God's right hand?" He is at God's right hand to make intercession for the saints: ***"Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." -- Rom 8:34....."Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." -- Heb 7:25.*** He is our advocate -- lawyer, whom we can call to our side or to our aid, provided we are members of His body: ***"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." -- 1 John 2:1-2.***

CONCLUSION

How long will He be there? He will be there till God the Father decrees He return in the clouds: ***"But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father***

only." -- Mat 24:36. He will then return to judge the world -- "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." -- Acts 17:30-31. His return will be sudden and without warning -- "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." -- 2 Pet 3:10. At His return all will come forth -- "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." -- John 5:28-29. He will at that time present His kingdom to the Father -- "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power." -- 1 Cor 15:24

Do we have this hope in us? *"And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." -- 1 John 3:3.* Are we willing to do what Jesus says to purify ourselves? Those who have already done the initial acts, do we actually live in hope of heaven?
