

Fulfilled Prophecies

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What Is Our Hope Now? The Hope Of The Fulfilled Kingdom



By Dan Maines

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Introduction

† One of the most important questions for the fulfilled believer is this: If the first-century Christians were hoping for the coming of Christ, the resurrection, the judgment, and the arrival of the promised New Covenant age, and those promises were fulfilled, what is our hope today?

† Futurism often defines Christian hope by something that hasn't happened yet. Christ still needs to return, prophecy still

needs to be fulfilled, the resurrection still needs to occur, and God's people are still waiting for the final victory. In that system, hope is continually pushed into the future.

† The fulfilled perspective doesn't leave us without hope. It changes the foundation of our hope. We aren't hoping that Christ will someday become King. We rejoice because He is King. We aren't hoping that His Kingdom will someday arrive. We live in His Kingdom now. We aren't hoping that the New Covenant will someday be completed. We live in the completed work of Christ now.

† Our hope isn't an escape plan from God's creation. Our hope is rooted in a present reality, Christ reigns, His Kingdom cannot be destroyed, His gospel continues to transform lives, and nothing can separate His people from the life found in Him.

† Biblical hope isn't merely about a place we're waiting to go. It's confidence in the God in whom we presently live, worship, serve, and belong. The fulfilled Kingdom gives us a state of being before it gives us a destination.

Romans 15:13

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

† Paul calls God Himself the God of hope. Hope isn't dependent upon an unfinished prophetic calendar. It rests in the character, faithfulness, and power of God.

† Notice that Paul connects hope with joy and peace in believing. Biblical hope produces something in God's people now, not merely anticipation about what might happen later.

† The first-century church had specific prophetic promises that were approaching fulfillment, but the God who gave them those promises didn't stop being the God of hope when those promises were fulfilled (Romans 15:4, 12).

† We can abound in hope because we know God kept His promises. Fulfilled prophecy doesn't destroy hope, it gives hope a proven historical foundation.

Hebrews 6:18-20

so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to hold firmly to the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and reliable and one which enters within the veil, where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

† Christian hope is an anchor because it rests upon something God has accomplished through Christ. Jesus entered God's presence as our eternal High Priest.

† An anchor doesn't work because it's floating somewhere in the future. It works because it's secured to something stronger than what is being tossed around.

† Our hope is anchored in Christ's completed priestly work, His victory, His Kingdom, and our relationship with God through Him (Hebrews 7:24-25).

† We aren't standing outside waiting for God to establish access to Himself. Through Christ, God's people have access to Him now (Hebrews 10:19-22).

Colossians 1:25-27

I was made a minister of this church according to the commission from God granted to me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, that is, the mystery which had been hidden from the past ages and generations, but now has been revealed to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what the wealth of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles is, the mystery that is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

† Paul gives us one of the clearest descriptions of Christian hope, Christ in you, the hope of glory.

† Notice where Paul places the emphasis. Hope isn't merely about believers leaving earth someday. Hope is centered in Christ dwelling in His people.

† This changes our understanding from only thinking about where we're going to understanding who we are in Christ. The

Kingdom is a present spiritual reality because the King dwells among His people (Luke 17:20-21).

† Our hope is personal, spiritual, relational, and kingdom-centered. Christ is our life, our righteousness, our access to the Father, and our assurance that God's purposes cannot fail (Colossians 3:3-4).

Matthew 13:31-33

He presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a person took and sowed in his field; and this is smaller than all the other seeds, but when it is fully grown, it is larger than the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the sky come and nest in its branches." He spoke another parable to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three sata of flour until it was all leavened."

† Jesus described His Kingdom as something that begins small and grows. He also compared it to leaven working its way through the whole measure.

† That gives us genuine hope for the future without creating another unfulfilled prophetic countdown. We can hope for the continued influence of Christ's Kingdom because the Kingdom itself is already established.

† We can hope for more people to know Christ, stronger Christian families, healthier churches, greater righteousness, mercy, justice, generosity, and societies increasingly influenced by the teachings of Jesus.

† We don't need to claim that Scripture guarantees a particular modern nation will become Christian. Our confidence is greater than nationalism. Kingdom influence isn't limited to one country, government, culture, or generation (Revelation 22:2).

† The mustard seed doesn't need another Kingdom to replace it. The leaven doesn't need another age before it can work. Christ's Kingdom is already here, and we participate in its influence by faithfully living and proclaiming the gospel.

Isaiah 9:6-7

For a Child will be born to us, a Son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace On the throne of David and over his kingdom, To establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness From then on and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of armies will accomplish this.

† Isaiah didn't describe Christ's Kingdom as temporary. He said there would be no end to the increase of His government and peace.

† Jesus doesn't need to return in our future to begin reigning. The New Testament declares that He was raised to David's throne and given authority (Acts 2:30-36).

† This gives Christians a positive reason to labor for future generations. We plant because the Kingdom continues. We teach because the Kingdom continues. We raise children in Christ because the Kingdom continues. We proclaim the gospel because the Kingdom continues.

† Our hope isn't that human governments will create the Kingdom. Our hope is that Christ's government remains when human governments rise and fall.

Daniel 2:44

And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.

† Daniel's Kingdom wasn't established in the twenty-first century. It was established in the days of the Roman Empire, exactly where Daniel placed it.

† The important words for us today are that it shall stand forever. Fulfillment doesn't mean termination. Fulfillment means the promised reality has arrived.

† We aren't living after God's Kingdom. We're living in God's Kingdom. We aren't waiting for the stone to appear. We live in

the Kingdom that Daniel said would never be destroyed (Daniel 2:34-35).

† Nations will continue to rise and fall, cultures will change, and civilizations will come and go, but Christ's Kingdom doesn't share their expiration date.

Hebrews 12:28

Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let's show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe;

† The writer didn't tell his readers that the answer was to abandon the Kingdom and wait for another one. They were receiving the unshakable Kingdom promised by God.

† The shaking concerned what could be removed so that what couldn't be shaken would remain (Hebrews 12:26-27). The temporary covenant order was passing away, but Christ's Kingdom would remain.

† That is where our hope stands today. We're citizens of something that Jerusalem's destruction couldn't destroy, Rome couldn't destroy, persecution couldn't destroy, and twenty centuries of human history haven't destroyed.

† Our response isn't passive waiting. Hebrews says we serve God. Fulfilled eschatology should produce active Christianity, not spectators sitting around with nothing left to do.

1 Corinthians 13:13

But now faith, hope, and love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

† Fulfillment doesn't mean faith, hope, and love become meaningless. Our hope is no longer built around postponing first-century promises into our future.

† We have hope for tomorrow because Christ reigns today. We have hope for our children and grandchildren because His Kingdom isn't going anywhere. We have hope when nations fail because our citizenship in Christ doesn't fail.

† We have hope in death because belonging to Christ isn't interrupted by physical death (Romans 8:38-39). We have hope

in life because our labor in Christ has meaning.

† And above everything stands love. If our fulfilled theology doesn't produce greater love for God and people, we've missed the purpose of understanding fulfillment.

Historical References

† Josephus recorded the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in AD 70, providing an eyewitness historical record of the catastrophic end of the city and its Temple-centered order. His account shows that the judgment Jesus warned His generation about became an actual historical event, not an event still waiting in our future. Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews*, Book 6, chapters 4 and 8, and Book 7, chapter 1.

† Eusebius later connected the calamities surrounding Jerusalem with the judgment that came upon that generation and recorded the tradition that believers in Jerusalem departed before the war. Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book 3, chapters 5-7.

† Eusebius also pointed to the extraordinary spread of Christ's teaching among the nations as evidence of the power of the gospel and the Kingdom proclaimed by Christ and His apostles. Eusebius, *Demonstration of the Gospel*, Book 3, chapter 5.

† History didn't end when Jerusalem fell. The Kingdom didn't disappear when the Old Covenant age ended. Christ's Kingdom continued across nations, cultures, empires, and generations, exactly as an everlasting Kingdom should.

How It Applies To Us Today

† We don't wake up every morning waiting for Jesus to fulfill promises He already kept. We wake up as citizens of the Kingdom those promises established.

† Our hope is that Christ reigns now, God is with His people now, we have access to the Father now, and the New Covenant blessings are ours now.

† We can hope for the gospel to reach more people. We can hope for stronger families. We can hope for communities shaped by truth, mercy, justice, forgiveness, and love. We can

hope for future generations to know Christ better than ours does.

† We can work toward a more Christian-influenced society without confusing a human society with the Kingdom of God. Governments can change. Cultures can decline. The Kingdom remains.

† This gives us a reason to build instead of escape, teach instead of retreat, plant instead of abandon, and leave something for generations we may never personally see.

† Our understanding of reality doesn't have to revolve around a place we're waiting to go. Eternal life is knowing God and Jesus Christ whom He sent (John 17:3). That life begins in relationship with Him, not merely at physical death.

† When our physical lives end, our confidence remains in Christ. But Christianity isn't supposed to be spent staring at the sky waiting to leave. It's a life to be lived under the reign of Christ.

† The futurist says, Our great hope is coming. The fulfilled believer can say, Our great hope has a name, Jesus Christ, and He reigns now.

Q & A Appendix

Q: If Christ's promised coming was fulfilled in the first century, do Christians still have hope?

A: Absolutely. Our hope is grounded in Christ Himself, His completed work, His present reign, and the unshakable Kingdom we have received (Romans 15:13; Hebrews 12:28).

Q: Does fulfilled prophecy mean there's nothing left to look forward to?

A: No. Fulfilled prophecy isn't the end of God's activity. We can look forward to the continued work of the gospel, future generations coming to Christ, growth in righteousness, deeper knowledge of God, and the continuing influence of His everlasting Kingdom (Matthew 13:31-33; Isaiah 9:7).

Q: Should we hope for a more Christian-based society?

A: Yes, we can pray and work for societies increasingly influenced by Christ's truth, righteousness, mercy, and love, but we shouldn't confuse any earthly nation with God's Kingdom. Christ's Kingdom transcends every nation and generation (Daniel 2:44).

Q: Is our hope primarily about going somewhere when we die?

A: No. Our hope begins with who we are in Christ now. Paul called it Christ in you, the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27). Physical death doesn't separate God's people from Christ (Romans 8:38-39), but eternal life is already a present relationship with God through Him (John 17:3).

Q: Then what should fulfilled believers be doing?

A: Living. Loving. Teaching. Serving. Building. Raising future generations in Christ. Sharing the gospel. Seeking righteousness and demonstrating the reality of the Kingdom we've received (Hebrews 12:28; 1 Corinthians 13:13).

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Romans 15:13; Hebrews 6:18-20; Colossians 1:25-27; Matthew 13:31-33; Isaiah 9:6-7; Daniel 2:44; Hebrews 12:28; 1 Corinthians 13:13

† Historical writers: Josephus, The Wars of the Jews, Book 6, chapters 4 and 8, Book 7, chapter 1; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, chapters 5-7; Eusebius, Demonstration of the Gospel, Book 3, chapter 5

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