

The Promise of the Future

Hello Dear Listeners;

The other day I heard someone say, “ *While there is not a great deal of interest in the past, most people generally have a keen interest in the future.*” I think that’s probably true. Although there are those who consider themselves students of history, neither the War of 1812 nor the Battle of Waterloo ‘turns’ many people ‘on’ today.

Yet a lot of people, I think, would like to know what is coming round the corner. Only consider the popularity of psychic hotlines, fortune tellers, teacup readers and the like. You meet people who won’t start their day, and won’t plan a new venture without first having consulted their horoscope.

Besides, (and it’s only one other indication of people’s preoccupation with the future), there is the temptation to support only those candidates vying for public office who make the most compelling promises about what they will do should they be elected.

Someone who’s studied the matter says his research shows, “ North Americans are far more preoccupied with the future than were many previous generations.”¹ Christians certainly share this heightened interest in the future although not a few of them will admit to being confused at times.

¹ Cornelis P. Venema, The Promise of the Future The Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, UK, p. 4

We hope, this month, to give some closer attention to matters concerning the future. Not because we pretend to have free access to some well-known psychic, some Lady Alirah or Master Mutaffa who promise to unfold the secrets of the future for you and me.... for a certain price, of course.

No, but because we have free access to the bible, God's own infallible Word. Because the God of that bible, who inspired the writers to inscribe His truth says we had better stay within the boundaries of His Word. For the fact is that the future is hidden, shrouded from our (sinful, human) view. Yet the LORD God knows the things you and I need to know, even for our *salvation*, even for our *everlasting* life!

That Word of God testifies “ *All Scripture is breathed out by God and (is) profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction and for training in righteousness*”.² It is also the only reliable antidote available to counteract all the speculation that abounds today about the future. Therefore we do well to listen to God's Word.

It is the bible that teaches us that the LORD Jesus Christ is the Lord of history. Of all of history and not just the history of the church! Indeed all history finds its meaning in Christ. Lose sight of him, look to people's futile, often dreamt-up prognoses of what is to come and you and I become disoriented very quickly.

The bible is rich with the promises of Almighty God. Very early on in the Old Testament, just after mankind's horrendous fall into sin we

² 2 Timothy 3:16

read of God's promise concerning Jesus Christ.³ He would come to crush or "bruise (ESV) the serpent's head although his "heel" would be bruised in the process, indicating he would die. God's promise (of salvation for those who believe) would be fulfilled by and in him.

Besides, there is that far-reaching promise made by God to Abraham. A promise that extends not only to Abraham's immediate offspring but even to all the families of the earth who would share Abraham's true faith.⁴ Jesus Christ would be the promised Son of David who would be established on his Father's throne forever.⁵

On the day the LORD Jesus Christ was raised from the dead he was found conversing with two of his followers on the road to a place called Emmaus. (Luke 24:27) Then we read, "*... Beginning with Moses and all the Prophets he (that is Jesus) interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.*"

That's just a few references yet there is much more in the New Testament that shows Jesus Christ to be the Lord of history, the one who has the whole world in his hands! Consider only the genealogies of Matthew and Luke in which Christ's birth is traced back through the centuries to Abraham (Matthew 1:1) and even to Adam (Luke 3:38). In the Book of Revelation, that last book of the bible and one which says a great deal about the things to come, Christ Jesus is said to be "*The firstborn of the dead and the Ruler of the Kings on earth.*"⁶

³ Genesis 3:15

⁴ Gen. 15: 5, 6, 17: 7

⁵ 2 Samuel 7: 12,13; Psalm 89: 3, 4

⁶ Revelation 1:5

Did Jesus Christ fulfil the Old Testament promises? He also guarantees the future fulfilment of God's promises because of his resurrection from the dead and his ascension to power at the right hand of the Father as well as the outpouring of his Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.⁷

It is Christ who has been given all authority in heaven and on earth.⁸ The bible says he will reign until all things are subjected to him. That includes even that powerful "last enemy", (as *death* is called in 1 Corinthians 15: 25, 26).

It is true even as the writer of the letter to the Hebrews testifies, "*At present we do not see everything in subjection to him.*" But then we often fail to keep in mind that even today Christ is waging war. A spiritual war against that very powerful opposition to his rule by the devil, this sin-filled world, as well as the resistance to his rule by our human nature.

Even as that war comes to a climax at the end of days we should not be surprised to see "*the pieces go flying*" as it were. For Satan is very angry as he's lost a decisive battle in Christ's victory on Calvary's cross. We hear of wars and famines and terrorism and murderers who dare even to invade prayer meetings only to shoot to death those found there. Yet Satan knows his time is short and before long his ultimate doom will come.

⁷ Acts 2

⁸ Matthew 28: 18

All the more reason that we need to lift our hearts on high. We need (and I turn back to Hebrews ch. 2) to “ *See him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus Christ, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.* ⁹

“For everyone”. One single sacrifice sufficient to pay for the sins of everyone who has ever, and will ever, live! Yet that sacrifice will not benefit you *unless you believe!* Speaking about the things that are to come will only leave you confused or in league with the hopeless prognostications of clairvoyants and other misguided individuals, unless you “see” with eyes of faith. With hearts, and minds and in love and awe of God’s Word and Jesus Christ who sits on the throne.

Do that, believe that, and don’t confuse the modern practice of fortune telling with the bible’s expectations for the future and you will not be sorry. O, I know, there are many who scoff at the Word of God today. One day they will be terribly surprised when Jesus Christ comes back to judge the living and the dead.

Yet, thanks be to God there are many, (and it fact there will one day be an “innumerable multitude” ¹⁰), who will welcome the day when Christ returns and will rejoice in the “*new heavens and the new earth*” which will greatly surpass the old in glory!

True, there is much we do not know, for (as it says in 1 Corinthians 13:12) “ *Now we see in a mirror dimly*” . Now we’re still in these

⁹ Hebrews 2: 9

¹⁰ Revelation 7:9

mortal, human bodies so prone to stumble, and to have 'cataract vision' which is tantamount to blindness.. But “ *Then, we will see Christ, face to face.*” *Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known*”. (v. 12b)

Therefore dear listeners, cling to God's Word. Trust in His promises and honor his demands . Wait, with eager expectation for the return of this great God and Savior, who will make everything new. To him be the power and the glory, now and forever.

Amen and thanks so much for listening.