

## “Hope Foretold is Hope For Sure!”

Hope Incarnate – Pt. 3

December 17, 2017

Subtitle: *Harlots, heathens, horrible people—and Hope!*

### Intro ...Having Faith and Facing Trouble

**John 14:1-4** “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. <sup>2</sup> In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. <sup>4</sup> And you know the way to where I am going.”

‘believe’ = pisteuo (Gk.) - to have faith; to think to be true, to be persuaded of, to credit, place confidence in

The remedy to a troubled heart is FAITH ...but how does God stir up faith?  
...and how do we know if he can deliver on His promises?

*Have you ever noticed how often the Christmas Story Passages are quoting from the O.T.?*

*“This is why Scripture is so prominent in both accounts. Scripture explains what apparently was initially surprising and lacking in explanation. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that these opening accounts both introduce the story rather than conclude it, and anchor it firmly within the plan and purpose of God throughout history.” Darrell Bock, “Jesus According to Scripture”, p. 53*

**Matt 2:3-6** ... We’re not merely being told that Jesus’ birthplace was Bethlehem —we are being reminded and informed that This Was FORETOLD!

***Why these promises—this Prophetic foretelling? ...to present God's resume, so that we will hire him as the object of our trust!***

**Isaiah 44:6-8** Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: “I am the first and I am the last; besides me there is no god. <sup>7</sup> Who is like me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and set it before me, since I

appointed an ancient people. Let them declare what is to come, and what will happen. <sup>8</sup> Fear not, nor be afraid; have I not told you from of old and declared it? And you are my witnesses! Is there a God besides me? There is no Rock; I know not any.”

*“Knowledge of the future is not only the test of a true prophet. It is also the test of a true God. In the contest between Yahweh and the false gods of the ancient Near East, a major issue is: which deity knows the future? ...Knowledge of the future is a defining mark of the true God... In the NT, the writers emphasize over and over again that various events take place in order to fulfill Scripture... in many cases, the gospel writers clearly intend to ascribe to the OT prophets a supernatural knowledge of the future, as when Micah predicted the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.” John Frame, “Systematic Theology”, p. 311, 312*

**Genesis 15:13-14** Then the Lord said to Abram, “Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. <sup>14</sup> But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions.

...God prophecies of his descendant’s future servitude for 400 yrs in Egypt

**Is. 44:24, 26, 28** Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, who formed you from the womb: “I am the Lord, who made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself, ... <sup>26</sup> who confirms the word of his servant and fulfills the counsel of his messengers, who says of Jerusalem, ‘She shall be inhabited, and of the cities of Judah, ‘They shall be built, and I will raise up their ruins’ ... <sup>28</sup> who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd, and he shall fulfill all my purpose’; saying of Jerusalem, ‘She shall be built, and of the temple, ‘Your foundation shall be laid.’”

...God prophecies about Cyrus who will overthrow the Babylonians (200 years later)

**Is 48:1, 3, 5** “Hear this, O house of Jacob, who are called by the name of Israel, and who came from the waters of Judah, who swear by the name of the Lord ...<sup>3</sup> The former things I declared of old; they went out from my mouth, and I

announced them; then suddenly I did them, and they came to pass ...<sup>2</sup> I declared them to you from of old, before they came to pass I announced them to you, lest you should say, 'My idol did them, my carved image and my metal image commanded them.'

— Note the Appeal for Us to LISTEN and Take to Heart! ...Note the reason why God foretells—that we might know that He has power over our future!!

**Matthew** - *Matthew's presentation of 'The Christ' begins by firmly anchoring this story/revelation in Previous Promises*

*"Matthew's accounts of Jesus' childhood set the stage for Jesus' ministry depicted in the rest of the gospel, 'defining his origin and goal.' Matthew builds almost every paragraph following the genealogy and preceding the Sermon on the Mount around at least one text of Scripture." Craig Keener (quoted in 'Jesus According to Scripture', p. 51)*

**Matt 1:1** ...*the genealogy of Jesus Christ*—Why start with a long list of names? ...to remind us:

- (1) That God fulfills His promises [to Abraham in Gen 12] ...
- (2) To remind us that God is providentially in control—when it looks like he isn't! (v. 3 'Judah fathers Perez by Tamar' ...v. 5 'fathered by Rahab' (a Gentile harlot) ...v. 6 'David fathered Solomon through the wife of Uriah'!!)

**Matt 1:22-23**

**Matt 2:3-6** ...The little town of Bethlehem—as Micah predicted 750 yrs earlier!

***But How did they End up in Bethlehem —Lk 2:1-7***

*...I wonder if Joseph & Mary understood the prophetic nature of this Massive Inconvenience! ...*

**Matt 2:13-15** ...Fulfilling the prophetic decree that the Christ would come 'out of Egypt'

...Notice again, the MEANS of fulfillment is a 'corrupt government official' who is motivated by paranoia—not by cooperation with God's plan!!

**Matt 2:16-18** ...The fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy (600 yrs earlier)

**Matt 2:19-23** ... 'He shall be called a Nazarene'

*...Again, it is interesting to note the MEANS that God uses to fulfill His purpose*

*That's quite a cast of characters and circumstances that have to be managed in order for God's Promised Plan to come to pass!—God has Quite a RESUME!!*

**Isaiah 46:8-11** "Remember this and stand firm, recall it to mind, you transgressors,<sup>9</sup> remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, <sup>10</sup> declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,' <sup>11</sup> calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country. I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it.

- This is God presenting His Unique Resume—and appealing for us to put our faith in him because of these unique qualities that are found ONLY in Him!
  - We live by faith. ...We live in today (the present) with memories of the past and hopes for the future. But what is the basis for what you believe about the future?
- God's Resume about the Future:
  - He is God... He is not a finite, limited creature! "...I am God, and there is no one like me" (v. 9)
  - He foretells because he foreknows! "...declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done" (v. 10)
  - He decrees and accomplishes—he doesn't just 'hope and watch'!

*...So... what am I looking to, what am I directing my hope toward—that has the absolute ability to deliver the goods in the future?— Do I think 'my idol did*

them' (v. 5)... Whatever that modern American suburban idol might be ...Do these things have the ability to control all the future variables of your life?

*The Christmas Story is a Great Illustration of This Providential Management of God in our Lives! ...Once again, it provides us with much insight through which to 'walk with God by faith'—to trust in his providential involvement in our lives, even when it doesn't make sense or he is accomplishing his purpose through harlots, heathens, and horrible people!*

**... Be careful where you 'put your hope'**