

A Theology of Hope

The disconnection between “salvation” and the suffering of the world

- Does God care about human trafficking, poverty, orphans, injustice, rape?
- Is Jesus only about our “soul being saved”? Is the cross only about forgiveness of sins?
- Now that we are “saved” are we just marking time til we “fly away” to glory?

God was at work within His fallen creation from the beginning

- God made the world and called it good
- God in the garden went looking for Adam
- Not a distant, deist God

God continued to work through His fallen creation

- The call and covenant with Abraham

God—Jesus!—entered our suffering

- 2nd person of the Trinity
- the glory of the incarnation: becoming subject
- Jesus wept, suffered
- The fulfillment of Abraham’s covenant

God—Jesus!—took the weight of evil upon Himself at the cross

Col. 2:15 (ESV)

“He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.”

- “Do your worst, and when you are do I will do mine..”
- Death is the ultimate goal of Evil;

God raised Jesus from the dead!

- Resurrection is the defeat of Death and therefore the end of Evil’s reign

Because Jesus Was Raised From the Dead...

▪ Evil’s defeat has begun

Isaiah 25:8 (NIV)

“He will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken.”

1 Cor. 15:20-25, 54-55 (NIV)

“But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. ²²For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. ²³But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. ²⁴Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. ²⁵For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet....

“...⁵⁴When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.” ⁵⁵“Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?””

- When Jesus returns, He enforces what He accomplished at the cross
- He reigns until He sets it all right

It will not always be this way!

▪ New creation has begun

Isaiah 65:17-20 (NIV)

"Behold, I will create new heavens and a new earth. The former things will not be remembered, nor will they come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I will create, for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight and its people a joy. I will rejoice over Jerusalem and take delight in my people; the sound of weeping and of crying will be heard in it no more."

Rev. 21:1-3 (NIV)

"Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. ²I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God."

- Sea: chaos, alien (to Egyptians); Monsters arising out of the sea (Rev); Wicked people were sea-farers (Isaiah)
- Evil will be destroyed!
- Isaiah's vision: wolf and lamb lie down together, swords beaten into plowshares
- What I told Sophia and Norah

Rom. 8:20-25 (NIV)

"For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope ²¹that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God. ²²We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. ²³Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what he already has? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently. "

- We will get resurrection bodies (1 Cor. 15)
- Creation is longing to be remade

2 Cor. 5:17 (NIV)

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

- We are the prototypes of the future
- We have the life of the age to come in us now

What's coming is better than what is!

▪ **Comfort Has Begun**

2 Cor. 1:3-9 (NIV)

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, ⁴who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. ⁵For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows. ⁶If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. ⁷And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort. ⁸We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about the hardships we suffered in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. ⁹Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead."

- Hope is in the God who raises the dead
- Because Jesus is alive, we will be raised even after death
- Suffering is temporary; comfort is eternal and final

The End Has Begun

- We think of evil end times
- First Christians saw it as meaning that comfort was near!
- We are in the final bars of the song, the Hallelujah chorus has started

How Do We Live as New Creation?

We anticipate the future the Jesus the Savior is bringing

- No fear
- "Do your worst..."
- Jewish martyrs in the Macabbean era; Christian martyrs in the early centuries

We participating in the saving work of Jesus the Savior now

- Why rescue orphans, human trafficking, etc?
- Atheists have no grounds for this; pantheists have no claim