



Hope Built on Facts

by Thomas K. Burk

Apostolic Preterism isn't about prophecy; it's about the verification of Jesus' Messiahship, and about the empowerment and identity of His Church.

Apostolic Preterism is the only eschatological position that authenticates both the omniscience and omnipotence of God. How a teaching about the "last days" does this is by showing how these detailed events foretold in the Bible were precisely fulfilled during the established timeframes of which the Bible described. Confidence in God's knowledge and authority is what helped propel the early Church to greatness. Today, this same assurance drives Apostolic Preterists as well.

One of the main accusations waged against Apostolic Preterism is that its teachings remove a Christian's hope. But ask yourself the following: what biblically defined *hope* is removed from believing all prophecies are now fulfilled in detail, and because so, are not for our day? The simple answer to this question is "None!" Biblically speaking, if anything, such a stance justifies what a Christian believes and why they believe it! To prove my point, just look at those who lived after Jesus accurately fulfilled the prophecies of His birth, His crucifixion, or His resurrection. Do you think these saints felt slighted because such prophecies were already passed? Do you think they felt that such issues removed their hope? No, of course not, instead through these detailed fulfillments, they found comfort and strength, since such verification helped prove both God's existence and His ruling power in heaven and in earth! In the same way, an Apostolic Preterist believing all prophecies are now fulfilled does not remove any hope, but instead fills the believer with even more hope in the One true omnipotent and omniscient God—Jesus!

Think about it, which view gives you more hope for your Christianity?

1. That Jesus fulfilled every detail written of Him? Or that Jesus failed complete all written, but will come again someday to do a second work so that all can then be fulfilled?

2. That Jesus' kingdom is right now ALL powerful in both heaven and in earth? Or that Jesus has yet to truly conquer the devil and his kingdom, but will someday when He returns?
3. That Born Again believers are seated with Jesus right now in Heavenly places? Or that the governments of men are more powerful than the Church of Jesus Christ, and because so, the Church needs to just hang on until they can escape the power of its satanic-inspired rule?
4. That those in the Church are the real plan and the true people God has chosen to be His Bride? Or that the Church is nothing but a second-rate plan that is good enough until the real plan can be implemented?
5. That you can believe the time-texts of the Bible to say what they say? Or that you have to believe a hyper-spiritualized explanation that forces these timeframes into some *possible* future fulfillment?
6. That you can believe what the Bible says without the aid of the study notes that were added by man? Or that the study notes must be added so that one can see what these men say is found in the Bible?
7. That Jesus and His apostles were under God's inspiration when they said all remaining prophesied events were happening "soon" and were "at hand"? Or that both Jesus and His Apostles were mistaken, and therefore not inspired of God when saying these *soon coming* statements, and because so God inspired prophecy teachers today to give the true understanding for such fulfillments?

I think the answer to each of these questions should be clear. Because so, you can better see how Apostolic Preterism gives the Church the type of hope and identity as described in the New Covenant, by proving them through fulfilled God-inspired scripture.

To see such hope, one must understand that **the chief function of prophecy is not to predict the future, but to bear testimony of the validity of Jesus as mankind's Messiah, and to call the redeemed in Christ into harmony with Jesus' New Covenant.**

God promised judgment for those found rebellious to His Covenant, and He promised divine intervention for those obedient to its stipulations. Throughout the Bible this is referred to as "the curse" and "the blessing." (See Deuteronomy 28; Moses' Song in Deuteronomy 31; Leviticus 26; Matthew 7:24-27; Galatians 6:8) Once a person sees the issues surrounding these curses and blessings was the true reason for the Bible's prophecies about what *was to come*, it becomes clear how their fulfillments were useful for the Church in the First Century, and are equally valuable for the Church today.

The word "HOPE" mostly refers to *expectation* or *confidence* (See Strong's G1680). Through this definition we can see that biblical hope is not based on what will come, but on who has come—Jesus! This is why I think the issue is clear that the teachings of Apostolic Preterism is not a remover of hope, but instead is an authenticator of the One from whom true hope comes—Jesus, and consequently is also an enabler for the Church to come into the fullness of its biblical identity!

Here is a partial listing of what the New Covenant says is a Christian's hope:

Acts 26:6-9

(6) And now I stand and am judged for **THE HOPE OF THE PROMISE MADE OF GOD UNTO OUR FATHERS:**

(7) Unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, **HOPE TO COME.** For which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.

(8) Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, **THAT GOD SHOULD RAISE THE DEAD?**

(9) I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

This is about the HOPE of Jesus' coming and of His resurrection. This is HOPE founded on fulfilled promises.

Acts 28:20-23

(20) For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: **BECAUSE THAT FOR THE HOPE OF ISRAEL** I am bound with this chain.

(21) And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judea concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came showed or spake any harm of thee.

(22) But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.

(23) And when they had appointed him a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom **HE EXPOUNDED AND TESTIFIED THE KINGDOM OF GOD, PERSUADING THEM CONCERNING JESUS, BOTH OUT OF THE LAW OF MOSES, AND OUT OF THE PROPHETS,** from morning till evening.

This is about the HOPE of Jesus' coming and of His resurrection as found FULFILLED through the Law and prophets. Again, Hope founded on fulfilled promises.

Galatians 5:4-6

(4) Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

(5) For we through the Spirit **WAIT FOR THE HOPE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH.**

(6) For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

Our HOPE and righteousness is not founded on carnal ordinances such as circumcision, but instead is based solely on the finished work of the one true Messiah, Jesus.

Ephesians 1:17-18

(17) That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may **GIVE UNTO YOU THE SPIRIT OF WISDOM AND REVELATION IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIM:**

(18) The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; **THAT YE MAY KNOW WHAT IS THE HOPE OF HIS CALLING,** and what **THE RICHES OF THE GLORY OF HIS INHERITANCE IN THE SAINTS,**

This is about the HOPE that comes through Jesus. Again, Hope founded on fulfilled promises, which here specifically gives Jesus verification and the saint their true identity.

Colossians 1:4-6

(4) Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints.

(5) **FOR THE HOPE WHICH IS LAID UP FOR YOU IN HEAVEN, WHEREOF YE HEARD BEFORE IN THE WORD OF THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL;**

(6) Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:

More HOPE that comes through Jesus. This Hope comes through the promises fulfilled in the Gospel. These are both for this life and for eternity.

Colossians 1:23

(23) 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;

Colossians 1:27

(27) 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:**

Paul's hope to the Church of Colossi was based on the Gospel. Paul went on to explain the basis of this hope was "Jesus IN YOU, the HOPE of glory!" Such a foundation agrees with the fulfillment of the New Covenant promise as found in Jeremiah 31. Again, this is hope based on Jesus fulfilling Old Covenant promises.

1 Thessalonians 5:8

(8) But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for **A HELMET, THE HOPE OF SALVATION.**

This is not salvation from sins since we are immediately forgiven when we are born again of the water and of the Spirit in Jesus' name. Instead Paul's passage here refers to the *expectation* and *confidence* one must keep in mind concerning that finished salvic work Jesus secured for us through His cross and in His empty tomb. This, again, is HOPE founded on the finished work of Jesus!

Titus 3:7

(7) That being justified by his grace, we should be made **HEIRS ACCORDING TO THE HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE.**

Because of the finished work our prophesied Messiah Jesus did, we are assured of our identity in Jesus and its consequent HOPE of eternity. Another finished work of Jesus giving His believers true biblical HOPE.

Hebrews 3:6

(6) But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the **REJOICING OF THE HOPE FIRM UNTO THE END.**

Hebrews 6:17-18 KJV

(17) Wherein God, willing more abundantly to **SHOW UNTO THE HEIRS OF PROMISE THE IMMUTABILITY OF HIS COUNSEL**, confirmed it by an oath:

(18) That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge **TO LAY HOLD UPON THE HOPE SET BEFORE US:**

Like all those before them, these verses in Hebrews are based on Jesus fulfilling what is written of Him in the Word of God. The way the *Message Bible* translates these passages make this even clearer.

Hebrews 6:17-18 MSG

(17) When God wanted to guarantee his promises, **HE GAVE HIS WORD**, a rock-solid guarantee—

(18) God can't break his word. And because his word cannot change, the promise is likewise unchangeable. We who have run for our very lives to God **HAVE EVERY REASON TO GRAB THE PROMISED HOPE WITH BOTH HANDS AND NEVER LET GO.**

This not only secures for a believer the biblical HOPE that's ahead; it also speaks of a believer's biblical identity now.

1 Peter 3:15

(15) But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you **A REASON OF THE HOPE THAT IS IN YOU** with meekness and fear:

There is real comfort in being able to explain the HOPE you believe in from the Bible. To be forced to consult newspapers, magazines, commentaries, or the side notes in a Study Bible for your "biblical evidence" or "Christian hope" would be lackluster and depressing. Such HOPE is not "biblical," but extra-biblical or maybe even non-biblical. Such substandard sources removes biblical hope since it is not found written within the pages of the Bible. Such HOPE is therefore untrustworthy and should be rejected from being the chief source for biblical interpretation and direction.

Biblical hope is never described as a time when a secret rapture whisks a weak and anemic church away to save it from the all-powerful rein of a despotic antichrist. The church's HOPE was never based on weakness but on strength. This type strength is based on the same issues as found in the Edward Mote's hymnal standard, "My Hope is Built." Look now at those words:

**My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.**

I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly trust in Jesus' Name.

On Christ the solid Rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

To properly understand Apostolic Preterism, one must first remember that the New Testament is filled with Old Testament prophecies that both spotlight what would come to pass at the time of the New Covenant, and detailed explanations as to how each of these prophecies was fulfilled by Jesus. These accurate fulfillments of long ago prophecies were the proofs that the Apostles used to confirm that Jesus was both Lord and Christ. Such perfect fulfillment was the First Century Church's message, and accordingly was their hope! Now, some 2,000 years later, these very same biblical fulfillments is what Apostolic Preterists use to prove the exact same conclusions, which is similarly the basis for their biblical hope in Jesus being the perfect Messiah!

In Jesus,
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