

“Hope”

December 13, 2015

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Isaiah 9:6–7 (ESV)

⁶ For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
⁷ Of the increase of his government and of peace
there will be no end,
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,
to establish it and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time forth and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.¹

Sometimes the world can seem bleak. It’s true that the world can be beautiful, and it is filled with many good things. Yet at the same time, we are inundated with discouraging news. The news is full of disappointing leaders. Presidents, congressmen, governors, and even Christian leaders fail time and again. The news is full of terrible things that happen all around us. There are stories of shootings, terrorist attacks, refugees, and a middling economy for the middle and lower classes. There are natural disasters. And there’s death. Then there’s the sense that we are not the way we should be. We all have a sense of disappointment in life. We’re disappointed in ourselves, who we are and what we do. Earlier this year, I read a book by a British author who was trying to show how Christianity makes “emotional sense.” This writer, Francis Spufford, said that the effect of sin on our lives doesn’t need to have the drama of war, murder, or disease.

It can equally well just be the drifting into place of one more pleasant, indistinguishable little atom of wasted time, one more morning like all the others, which quietly discloses you to yourself. You’re lying in the bath and you notice that you’re thirty-nine and that the way you’re living bears scarcely little resemblance to what you think you’ve always wanted; yet you got here by choice, by a long series of choices for things which, at any one moment, temporarily outbid the things you say you wanted most. And as the water cools, and the light of the Saturday morning in summer ripples heartlessly on the bathroom ceiling, you glimpse an unflattering vision of yourself as a being whose wants make no

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are taken from the English Standard Version (ESV).

sense, don't harmonize: whose desires, deep down, are discordantly arranged, so that you truly want to possess and you truly want not to, at the very same time. You're equipped, you realize, for farce (or even tragedy) more than you are for happy endings. . . . You have, indeed, [screwed] things up. Of course you have. You're human, and that's where we live; that's our normal experience.²

If that mundane sense of disappointment and farce—or tragedy—resonates with you at all, you may wonder where hope can be found. Is this as good as it gets? Is there something better that's coming. Where is the good news?

We've been looking at the major events in the Old Testament over the past two and a half months, and it seems that the whole story of the Old Testament is a series of failures. God does something great, and people make a mess of things. Adam and Eve failed. Cain failed. Noah and his family ended up failing. Abraham is a great man, but he had his own failures. His family certainly had their share of failures. Israel fails again and again. Where can hope be found?

Today, we're going to look at words of hope that were delivered by the prophets. We'll look at some passages in the so-called "major prophets": Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. In the midst of Israel's failure, in the middle of national decay, when the Israelites were disobedient and worshipping idols and being punished for their sin, God spoke words of hope through these prophets.

Before we look at these passages, I want to say just a quick word on the nature of prophecy. Some people think of prophets as people like Nostradamus: men who predict the future by saying obscure phrases. If we could only crack the code, we would understand what's going to happen in our near future. This isn't an accurate view of the prophets. Most of what these men said wasn't predicting the future. Instead, the prophets were speaking to people in their day, warning them of the danger of turning away from God. They urged Israel to turn back to God. They also warned about future judgment that would come if the people were faithless. And they also promised salvation to those who trusted in God. Most of their words concerned things that would happen in their own day. But some passages spoke of a bright future that would come when God would make things right.

² Francis Spufford, *Unapologetic: Why, Despite Everything, Christianity Can Still Make Surprising Emotional Sense* (New York: HarperOne, 2013), 28-29.

We'll see in these passages that God promised a new King, a new creation, and a new covenant. These things will fix the broken rulers and governments, the broken world, and the brokenness we find within ourselves.

Let's first look at the passage that was just read, Isaiah 9:6-7. In order to appreciate this passage, we have to understand a bit of context. In the beginning of Isaiah, the nation of Israel is found guilty by God. Chapter 5 describes Israel as a vineyard that God planted, but the vineyard has produced only sour grapes because of its lack of justice and righteousness. The land was filled with idols (2:8). Israel had become like Sodom and Gomorrah (1:9-10), cities known for their wickedness. God had commissioned Isaiah to speak to people who wouldn't listen, because they had become dull (6:8-10). They worship senseless idols and had become senseless.³ When Isaiah asked God how long he was supposed to do this, God said, "Until cities lie waste without inhabitant, and houses without people, and the land is a desolate waste, and the LORD removes people far away, and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land" (6:11-12). That doesn't sound very hopeful.

In Isaiah's day, Judah and its capital city, Jerusalem, were threatened by the northern kingdom of Israel and Syria. God told Isaiah that he would give him a sign: he would give him a child called Immanuel, which means "God with us" (7:14). Before this boy grew up, Israel and Syria would be defeated by Assyria. Jerusalem would be saved. In the middle of this news, God promised that a child would be born in the future, who would bring great light into a dark place.

Let's read Isaiah 9:2-7:

- ² The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shone.
- ³ You have multiplied the nation;
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as they are glad when they divide the spoil.
- ⁴ For the yoke of his burden,
and the staff for his shoulder,
the rod of his oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.
- ⁵ For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult

³ See the previous sermon in this series, "Idolatry," preached on December 6, 2015.

and every garment rolled in blood
 will be burned as fuel for the fire.
 6 For to us a child is born,
 to us a son is given;
 and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
 and his name shall be called
 Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
 Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
 7 Of the increase of his government and of peace
 there will be no end,
 on the throne of David and over his kingdom,
 to establish it and to uphold it
 with justice and with righteousness
 from this time forth and forevermore.
 The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

People who walked in darkness would see light. Usually, God is associated with light. So we can assume that God would appear to his people. Verse 3 says that God “multiplied the nation.” This reminds us of Genesis 1:28, when God told the first people to be fruitful and multiply. God will fulfill that commandment. He will multiply his people. God will bring joy. Verses 4 and 5 say that God will defeat Israel’s enemy. There will come a time when there will be no more war.

Then we get to verses 6 and 7. There is the promise of a special child. The government will be upon his shoulder. We might say the whole nation will rest upon him. He will carry the nation. And he will be called many names. “Wonderful Counselor” suggests that this future king will have supernatural wisdom. This king will be wise. But he’ll be more than wise. He will be called “Mighty God.” Now, in Hebrew, it’s possible that this name could be read, “God is Mighty.” Some names in Hebrew are similar. For example, the name “Ezekiel” means “God will be my strength.” But in Isaiah 10:21, the very same words are used of God. So it would seem that this child is also divine. He will be known as “Everlasting Father.” Elsewhere in Isaiah, God is known as everlasting or eternal (26:4; 57:15). This does not mean that this child is God the Father. The word “father” can also refer to a leader of a tribe or family. A “father” is one who provides and protects. And this child will be “Prince of Peace.” He will bring about peace and harmony.

This child’s kingdom will have no end. He will be sit on the throne of David. In other words, he will be a descendent of David. He will be the King that God promised David (2 Samuel 7). And he will reign forever, with justice and righteousness. He won’t be corrupt and wicked like so many of the other kings in Israel’s history, and like so many of the rulers today.

I don't know how Isaiah and the people of his day received this news. I imagine they might wonder how a child could be God. I'd be willing to bet they assumed that the child wouldn't actually be God in the flesh, but would be one whose name was something like "God is Mighty." Whatever they thought, this promise must have given them hope. It must have caused them to wonder.

Isaiah reported a similar promise in chapter 11.

- ¹ There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.
- ² And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him,
the Spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and might,
the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.
- ³ And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.
He shall not judge by what his eyes see,
or decide disputes by what his ears hear,
- ⁴ but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the earth;
and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,
and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.
- ⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist,
and faithfulness the belt of his loins.

We know that this prophecy is about one of David's descendants because it mentions a shoot coming from Jesse, who was the father of David. (We have to remember this is poetry, after all.) And we know it's about a Messianic king, because he is called a "branch." In Jeremiah 23:5-6, we're told:

⁵ "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ⁶ In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which he will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.'

And all of these passages must be about the same person, who will rule with justice and righteousness. In Isaiah 11, we're told that the Spirit of the LORD will be upon him. His rule will be empowered by the Holy Spirit. And he'll take delight in worshiping God and doing what is right. He'll take care of the poor and the meek, and he will punish the wicked.

So, we're told that there will be a new king, a forever king, who rules perfectly, with the power of God. He'll *be* God.

We're also told of a new creation. When this King rules, there will be peace. The earth will be full of God's glory. It will be like a return to the garden of Eden, but even better. Look at Isaiah 11:6-10:

- 6 The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat,
and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together;
and a little child shall lead them.
- 7 The cow and the bear shall graze;
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
- 8 The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra,
and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.
- 9 They shall not hurt or destroy
in all my holy mountain;
for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.

¹⁰ In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.

Remember what I said earlier: Isaiah has already been told that Israel would be punished for its sin. Its cities would be desolate. It would go into exile. But that wouldn't be the end of the story. There would be a time when God's people would be gathered and would live in a perfect land of peace. The passage that we just read is a poetic picture of that time. (Again, this is poetry.) Animals that wouldn't normally live together in peace, like the wolf and the lamb, would lie together. That's like saying the Red Sox and the Yankees will eat dinner together. And verse 8 shows that there would be peace between the offspring of the woman and the offspring of the serpent. You may remember that theme that emerges in the Bible back in Genesis 3. The war between Satan and God will be over.⁴ This will be a place where there will be no more hurt or destruction. Everyone will know God—"the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD." And the whole earth will inquire of this "root of Jesse," the one who is the "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

In the very next verse in Isaiah 11, verse 11, we are told that God will "recover the remnant that remains of his people" from foreign lands. In verse 12, it says he will "assemble the

⁴ "This is a picturesque way of declaring that after the judgment on God's people, through which they are brought to salvation, there will be no more enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman." James M. Hamilton, Jr., *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010), 197.

banished of Israel, and gather the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth.”

Throughout Isaiah, we find this kind of language of God gathering his people and bringing them to the Promised Land. It’s like a second exodus.⁵ God will once again deliver his people, but this time it won’t just be from oppressive rule in a foreign land. This time it will be deliverance from sin.

There’s far more in the book of Isaiah about the new creation than I have time to talk about today.⁶ But I do want to point out two of my favorite passages. One is Isaiah 65:17-19:

- ¹⁷ “For behold, I create new heavens
and a new earth,
and the former things shall not be remembered
or come into mind.
¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice forever
in that which I create;
for behold, I create Jerusalem to be a joy,
and her people to be a gladness.
¹⁹ I will rejoice in Jerusalem
and be glad in my people;
no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping
and the cry of distress.

Here, God clearly says he will recreate the universe. Genesis 1:1 says, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” Now he promises to make a new creation. The way this is written, it seems like the new creation and Jerusalem that will create are one and the same. That is, the new Jerusalem will be the whole earth. The whole world will be the holy city where God dwells.⁷

This is good news. It causes rejoicing. All the bad things of the old creation won’t come to mind—they’ll be forgotten. The new creation will not have any more weeping or crying. What kind of a place has no more weeping and crying? A place where there is no more loss, where there is no more heartbreak, sickness, divorce, lost jobs, and a place where there is no more death. Again, in verse 25, we’re told, “They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain.”

In fact, we’re told that there will be no more death in this place in another passage, in Isaiah 25. In Isaiah 25:6-9, we’re told of a feast for all those who come to this new creation,

⁵ See 34:16; 35:10; 43:1-9; among other passages.

⁶ Other passages include Isaiah 2:2-5; 4:2-6. Both speak of Zion in a way that describes it as the center of the world and a Most Holy Place. Isaiah 32:14-20 shows that when the Spirit is poured out, what was once wilderness will become a new Eden, a fruitful field, a place of righteousness and peace.

⁷ Rev. 21:15-16 shows that the new Jerusalem will be cube-shaped, like the Most Holy Place.

which is described as a mountain. In the Bible, it's typical for several different passages to describe the same reality in different terms. These passages present different perspectives on the same reality, so that we get a fuller picture. Isaiah 25:6-9 give us perhaps the best news of all regarding this new creation.

- ⁶ On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine,
of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.
- ⁷ And he will swallow up on this mountain
the covering that is cast over all peoples,
the veil that is spread over all nations.
- ⁸ He will swallow up death forever;
and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces,
and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth,
for the LORD has spoken.
- ⁹ It will be said on that day,
“Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us.
This is the LORD; we have waited for him;
let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

This is such a beautiful passage. God will prepare a feast for his people—people of all nations. And there God will swallow up death, which has been a covering, or a veil, that has been spread out over all people. Death hangs over us like a shroud. It looms on the horizon. We all know it will come to each one of us someday. Yet God will destroy it. He will devour it. Death will be swallowed up forever. If that's true, how much more will all our disappointments, our heartaches, and all the other mundane tragedies be swallowed up? God will wipe away our tears. He will comfort us. He will save those who have waited for him. The prophets promise that those who trusted in God, through they die, will be raised from the dead to live in this new creation.⁸

So God promised through his prophets a new King and a new creation. He also promised a new covenant. Isaiah calls this a “covenant of peace” (54:10) and “an everlasting covenant” (55:3). To better understand what this new covenant is, we'll have to look at Jeremiah 31. As we're turning there, let me remind us of what a covenant is. A covenant is basically a way that God relates to his people. The covenant sets forth the terms of God's relationship with his people. God made a covenant with Abraham: he would bless the whole world through Abraham, but he required obedience, in the form of circumcision. The “old” covenant that God made with Israel at Mount Sinai promised blessings *if* the Israelites would obey. The covenant made with

⁸ Ezek. 37:1-14 and Dan. 12:2 promise a future resurrection.

David promised a king from David's line who would rule forever, but this king had to be obedient. These covenants required a faithful human partner, one who could relate to God properly by obeying. But the problem with people in this world of brokenness is that they don't obey God. No, they *can't* obey. But God promised that he would forgive their sins, he would write his law on their hearts, and they all would know God. We see this in Jeremiah 31:31-34:

³¹ "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, ³² not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. ³³ For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴ And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

This covenant that God will make with his people won't be like the old one, which he made at Sinai after he took his people out of Egypt. Apparently it won't be like the old one because it won't be broken. God was their husband, and they were his bride, but they broke that covenant, and God sent them off with a divorce certificate (Isa. 50:1), metaphorically speaking. But now God will write his law on his people's hearts, not on tablets of stone. Each person who belongs to this new covenant community will know God. And he will forgive their sin.

Now, we know that Jesus inaugurated this new covenant when he died on the cross. At the Last Supper, on the eve of his death, he said, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood" (Luke 22:20). People who belong to the new covenant are those who know the Lord. They have a relationship with Jesus. They trust him, they love him, they submit to him in obedience. Those people have been forgiven of their sins because Jesus paid for them. Those people have the Holy Spirit inside of them. The Holy Spirit writes God's law on their hearts, and causes them to obey.

Ezekiel 36:25-27 is another passage that describes the new covenant. It says something similar: God will forgive the sins of his people, and he will give them the Holy Spirit, which will cause them to obey.

²⁵ I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. ²⁶ And I will give you a

new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

The new covenant takes care of what is broken in us. It changes us from the inside out. God gives us new hearts when we receive the Holy Spirit. Before we have the Holy Spirit at work within us, we can't even see the kingdom of God. That's what Jesus says in John 3:3. But when we have the Spirit, we are changed. We become new creations, and we come under the new King, Jesus.

The reason that there can be a new covenant, and the reason there can be a new creation, is that Jesus is the new King. He is the child who was born, the Prince of Peace. He is the one who is the true covenant partner with God. He is the only one who obeys God perfectly. He fulfills all the covenants. He is obedient for us. His perfect obedience, his righteousness, is credited to those who have a relationship with him. And we can be forgiven of our sins because Jesus paid for them. Isaiah 53:4-6 says this,

- ⁴ Surely he has borne our griefs
and carried our sorrows;
yet we esteemed him stricken,
smitten by God, and afflicted.
- ⁵ But he was pierced for our transgressions;
he was crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace,
and with his wounds we are healed.
- ⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have turned—every one—to his own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

If you read all of Isaiah 53, you can see that it is clearly about Jesus. It describes someone who dies for the sins of his people; who had done nothing wrong, yet whose punishment for the sins of his people brings peace; who causes his people to be accounted righteous; who intercedes for his people.

Because Jesus died for our sins, we can be forgiven. Because he was perfect in every way, we can be considered righteous in God's eyes. This is the great exchange. It's amazing, really. We get what we don't deserve and can't earn—Jesus' perfect status—and he took on what he didn't deserve—punishment for our sin.

What's also interesting is that Isaiah was written roughly 700 years before Jesus was born. We have proof that it already existed before Jesus walked this earth, because Isaiah was part of the documents found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. These scrolls were discovered beginning in 1947, but they are very old. Among the scrolls was a more or less complete copy of Isaiah. This scroll has been dated to the third or second century BC.⁹ In other words, that copy of Isaiah was written at least one hundred years before Jesus was born. That evidence, combined with the excellent evidence we have for the truth of the Gospels,¹⁰ shows us that what Jesus did was prophesied in advance. In Isaiah, long before Jesus was born, we are told that child who is also God would be born, and he would die for the sins of his people.

Jesus is the King, he is the one through whom God made the new covenant, and he is now preparing a place for us (John 14:2-3). One day, when he returns, he will bring that place down from heaven. He will make all things new (Rev. 21:1-7).

But not everyone will be a part of God's kingdom. Not everyone will live in the true Promised Land. Not everyone is part of the new covenant. Only those who willingly make Jesus their King will participate in these promises.

Just this past week, I saw news that the Vatican had released a document that said Catholics shouldn't try to convert Jews to Christianity.¹¹ This document isn't official Catholic doctrine—it's not a "magisterial document"—but it's intended to advance discussion of the topic of evangelizing Jews. Among other things, the document says, "From the Christian confession that there can be only one path to salvation, however, it does not in any way follow that the Jews are excluded from God's salvation because they do not believe in Jesus Christ as the Messiah of Israel and the Son of God."¹² This is absolutely wrong. Some people think that Jews need to be

⁹ The Digital Dead Sea Scrolls, <http://dss.collections.imj.org.il/isaiah>.

¹⁰ See my sermon, "How Can We Know Jesus," preached on December 14, 2014, <http://wbcommunity.org/jesus>. Also, see the article, "Why We Can Trust the New Testament," <http://wbcommunity.org/can-trust-new-testament>.

¹¹ Gaia Pianigiani, "Vatican Says Catholics Should Not Try to Convert Jews," *New York Times*, December 10, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/11/world/europe/vatican-says-catholics-should-not-try-to-convert-jews.html>.

¹² The document, "The Gifts and Calling of God are irrevocable," can be read here:

<http://www.news.va/en/news/vatican-issues-new-document-on-christian-jewish-di>. The document also says, "In concrete terms this means that the Catholic Church neither conducts nor supports any specific institutional mission work directed towards Jews. While there is a principled rejection of an institutional Jewish mission, Christians are nonetheless called to bear witness to their faith in Jesus Christ also to Jews, although they should do so in a humble and sensitive manner, acknowledging that Jews are bearers of God's Word, and particularly in view of the great tragedy of the Shoah." The Catholic Church is rightly ashamed of past persecution of Jews. Yet the wrong treatment of Jews in the past does not nullify the need to evangelize them in the present. That the document says Christians should not and should bear witness to Jews is typical of the Catholic Church's ambiguous views on salvation since the Second Vatican Council.

in the land of Israel. But that misses the point. Jews don't need to be in that land. That's not the true Promised Land, the new Jerusalem. Jews, like everyone else, need to be in Christ. Being in that land, which is part of the old creation, isn't the hope. Jesus is our hope. He is our refuge. Those who are not in Christ will not enter into the new Jerusalem, which is the new creation, the true Promised Land. This is the land that Abraham was promised, the land that Paul calls "the world" (Rom. 4:13), the land the author of Hebrews calls "the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God" (Heb. 11:10).

For those of us who are in Christ, we're not yet in the new creation. Jesus' kingdom hasn't been consummated. A couple of weeks ago I said that the kingdom of God is "God's people in God's place under God's rule."¹³ Jesus rules in heaven now, and he will rule on earth in the future. He rules his people now, and he's in charge of the whole earth now, but the whole earth doesn't know it yet. Not everyone recognizes his reign right now. But one day they will. We are made into new creations now (2 Cor. 5:17), but we are changed from the inside out. Our inner selves are being renewed though our outer selves are wasting away (2 Cor. 4:16). We still get sick and die. We still struggle with sin. We live in this age, but belong to the next one. And when that age comes, we won't sin, and we'll never get sick and die.

All of this means we live in the in-between times. That's what Advent is about. We look back to Jesus' first coming and we look ahead to his second coming. We can experience a relationship with God now, but we don't see God now. We're not yet home. Yet we know the new creation is coming. And that gives us hope. And hope is a powerful thing. When we know that something better is coming, we can get through bleak times. We can survive.

Knowing that Paradise is coming in the future helps us endure the present. And until that time, there will be no utopia on earth. There will be no paradise until that day. There will no perfect human ruler—no perfect president. There will be no perfect world. There will be no better covenant. But Jesus, the perfect ruler, the maker of the new creation, and mediator of the new covenant, will return. I don't know when that will be, but it's coming. And that give us hope.

Until that time, hang on. Keep following Christ. And if you haven't bowed your knee to Jesus, if you haven't found refuge in him, I urge you to do so today. If you know people who

¹³ Graeme Goldsworthy, *Gospel and Kingdom*, in *The Goldsworthy Trio* (Milton Keynes, UK: Paternoster, 2000), 54.

don't yet know Jesus, urge them to do the same. There will come a time when it's too late. Jesus is our best hope, our true hope, our only hope. And he's coming.