

HOPE FOR TOMORROW

What hope do you have for tomorrow?

No thinking person today can be in any doubt that the wrong priorities driving our civilisation are responsible not only for the divisions: inequalities and conflicts of humanity but also for the destruction of our global environment. In spite of all our knowledge: science and technology, we are still killing each other. From a distance we look like a planet of homicidal lunatics. So in this crazy world - what do we put our faith in: Religious Leaders, Politicians, Global Corporations; Science and Technology? Who or What do you personally trust to make a better tomorrow for this world?

In what do you place your hope for the future?

Hope is a simple word, but it can make a world of difference.

When everything else fails, hope can be the anchor that helps us hold on and move forward, rather than letting go and giving up.

Our capacity for hope is the most significant fact of human life.

Today people are seeking for hope beyond the broken systems of human life. Recently I was at a meeting of a small liberal Christian/humanist denomination concerned that their membership had dwindled in the UK to less than 5,000 people, most of whom were over sixty years old. Interestingly that same week I had joined in with a worship service of a Christian Church in America that was attended by three to four thousand people of all ages and races. What made the difference?

It seemed to me that the small liberal Christian denomination had no message of hope to offer. Even though they spoke of faith, they had no idea what they had faith in. On the other hand, the Evangelical Church had a definite message of hope to offer because they had put their faith in something that worked and this inspired others to join them.

The fact is: Faith is only as effective as the object in which it is placed. For instance we would be foolish indeed to get on board a plane with someone at the controls who didn't know how to fly an aircraft.

There would be little or no hope of us arriving safely. Rational Hope is based on placing our faith or confidence in something proven to work. We would only commit our life and future to someone who is sensible: someone we trust and who we know really loves us and has our best interest at heart.

Most of the good things in this world have been achieved by people of faith; in particular by those who had faith in Yeshua, who we now call Jesus.

The life of Jesus was all about hope. And interestingly both hope and salvation are implicit in the name 'Yeshua', which means **'God is salvation'**. The God referred to in the Gospels is the cosmic Creator of All Life; more similar to the Great Spirit of Native Americans, than to the petty and capricious human-like gods of Greece or Rome in the times of Jesus.

Jesus walked the earth in the days of the iron might of the Roman Empire. Synchronistically Rome was also the last polytheistic empire, predicted over 500 years before by the prophet Daniel. (*See the Book of Daniel, chapter 2*.*) Rome was the best organised but most brutal empire the world had seen. It was the time of the *Pax Romana* – **the Peace of Rome**, which in all practical terms for all conquered nations meant - obey our rules and live in freedom – if you don't your freedom will be taken away!

Since the days of Rome we now have a lot more knowledge, and gadgets and amazing science and technology - but as recent events testify; we certainly don't have any more wisdom. Collectively we are still a hostile and divided species in confusion - but now on a world in the most desperate spiritual and environmental crisis in human history. It is a time that was foreseen nearly 3,000 years ago*.

Billions today no longer trust their leaders and feel both helpless and hopeless. All our current troubles are the result of us all putting our trust in the materialist constructs of political and industrial leaders driven by wrong priorities.

The priorities of Jesus and the Gospel Message are completely different.

Unlike many who came after him, Jesus was not a political or religious ruler, a rich merchant - or warlord of armies. Jesus never hurt or killed another human being. He never even wrote a book – but his life and teaching inspired millions.

The teachings and life of Jesus cut through all the religious claptrap and got right to the very heart of the human experience: right to where hope is most needed.

Jesus didn't give an explanation for pain and sorrow - he came right to where the pain was. Instead of abstract rationalizations Jesus brought Hope and healing.

As anyone who has really loved or been loved will know, no amount of cynical remarks, opposition, or abstract rationalisations can undermine the personal experience of real love. Goodness and kindness are the fruits of real Love.

The first followers of Jesus experienced something amazing: the power of real Love over death. It was as though Light had suddenly illuminated the darkness.

They had a new view of life and its meaning. The teachings of Jesus were opposed to everything the mighty Roman Empire stood for but the Jesus perspective of Love gave his followers the spiritual power to overcome both ridicule and persecution and live with Hope for Tomorrow. Not surprisingly Rome tried to wipe them out.

Considering the anti- monotheistic views of the polytheistic Roman Empire in all rational terms the handful of followers of Jesus should have simply died out or faded away. But they did not. They thrived! It was Rome that crumbled and fell to fade into the sands of time. The hope and faith in the Love of our Creator which Jesus set in motion grew and spread across the whole world. The message and resurrection of Jesus brought the power of Love over fear and real Hope for every tomorrow.

The Gospels relate how after the Last Supper Jesus and his followers went to the Garden of Gethsemane. It was there armed guards from the Temple came to arrest him for his views and his acts of healing. The Gospels described it like this:

"When his disciple's saw what was about to happen, they said, "Lord, should we fight?" Then suddenly Peter drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear. But Jesus immediately said - "Stop! No more of this foolishness. And He touched the man's ear - and healed him".

I'm afraid my first reaction, probably like most of us, would have been the same as Peter's – we must fight to defend our friend?

But this wasn't the way of Jesus – he lived according to a far greater reality.

The philosopher Voltaire once wrote:

"Every man is the creature of the age in which he lives; very few are able to raise themselves above the ideas of their times."

The life and teachings of Jesus show that he was far above the thinking of his times. In the Jesus perspective we find hope beyond all boundaries - and love beyond all limitations. Unbeknown to most it was a pivotal time for the future of humanity.

After his arrest Jesus was brought before the official representative of the Emperor Tiberius. This was Marcus Pontius Pilatus, Roman Governor of Judea.

Pilatus said to Jesus, *'I have the power to crucify you or to release you.'*

Instead of trying arguments, to endear himself to this high official and escape his fate; as most of today's politicians would have done - Jesus simply replied,

"You could have no power at all over me unless it had been given to you from Heaven."

Pilatus wasn't impressed – the fate of Jesus was sealed.

Like hundreds of thousands of other men, women and children in the times of Rome, Jesus was labelled a criminal and executed by crucifixion. The Romans were experts in torture and executions. No one survived death by crucifixion.

When Jesus died on the cross his disciples fled in fear and went into hiding. All their hopes were shattered. Where was God in all this? What on Earth had gone wrong?

They were all still in hiding when the first day of the week dawned. Only the women had hope – not that Jesus lived – but that somehow they could persuade the guards to open the tomb and let them in so they could perform the last rites according to Jewish custom. The Gospel of Luke relates what happened next:

"On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and others with them took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb."

They found the stone rolled away from the tomb but when they entered, they did not find the body of Jesus. While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. The women were afraid but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen! When they came back from the tomb, the women told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. But no one believed the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense".

It was women who first saw the empty tomb. It was the women who told the unbelieving disciples that Jesus had risen from the dead. We must never forget that it was women who were the first witnesses in the case for the resurrection.

But in those times this would have been a very foolish thing to broadcast because women had no legal status as witnesses, either under Judaic or Roman law.

The only reason the Gospel writers would have included the testimony of the women is because that is what happened. But we must not forget that neither the women nor the first disciples were *believers* in the resurrection of Jesus.

No - they were *witnesses* who knew it as an absolute certainty!

It was the certainty of those who had walked and talked with Jesus after he had risen from death, which gave them the power to remain true to what they knew - in spite of ridicule, persecution and their own deaths. They were like people who had suddenly seen daylight when everyone else was stuck underground in the darkness.

There is no denying the light of the Sun once you have seen it!

So powerful was this experience that the message of the risen Christ soon spread outwards from Jerusalem into the very heart of the Roman Empire. From there, like ripples on a pond, it flowed out in every direction: touching and changing hearts and minds - connecting people of all nations to their Creator; right down to our own times.

When Jesus stepped into human history he brought illumination and hope for the human spirit. The Light of Hope beyond all darkness. The same power of Love which raised Jesus from death will transform every life that turns towards it.

By conquering death Jesus showed that it IS possible to Save the World!

Today it is complete stupidity to trust our life and future to short term thinking politicians and profit driven global corporations! Not surprisingly millions today do not trust any of them. This dire situation is the result of a global materialist agenda that instead of hope has given us fear for the future.

Few today can deny that human systems are collapsing all over the world.

According to both the Book of Daniel and the teachings of Jesus we are living in the Last Days of the rule of greed and corruption on Earth. Events are converging. Never more than now does humanity need the saving power of Love shown in the life and teachings of Jesus. In his letter to the persecuted Christians in Rome, Paul wrote:

"For I am persuaded, that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come; nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans.8:35-39

Speaking of our times in the Book of Daniel 2: 43 it says: “....*the God of heaven will establish a kingdom which will never be destroyed...*”

For Christians this hope is referred to in the Book of Acts where it reports the ascension of Jesus into heaven. As his disciples watched him taken away up into the sky, two messengers came to them and said,

“Why do you stand gazing up into the sky? This same Jesus who has been taken back to heaven will return in the same way as you saw him go.” Acts 1: 11

There will be a climax to the drama of human history. Events are converging towards the end of the human construct of wrong priorities. A new beginning for planet Earth is coming and all who have personally experienced the reality of God’s Love in their lives can look to the future with real hope for tomorrow.

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If you have found this article of interest and want to know more there are many good Christian churches and organisations, a few to check out are:

On Freeview or Freesat: **Revelation TV - TBN UK**

Online: **Bethel Church – Hope Channel**

On Youtube - **Lee Strobel, The Case for Christ**

Youtube Music Channel - **Lucy Grimble**

Youtube Music Channel - **Beckah Shae**

Or you can simply try visiting a local church in your area.

For example: if you type **Adventist UK** into Google you will find a Church near to you. The Adventists also have online services and events.

Recommended for further reading:

LOOKING BEYOND THE MATERIALIST DELUSION by John Pickering

THE CASE FOR THE REAL JESUS by Lee Strobel

THE HEALING CODE by Alexander Loyd PhD & Ben Johnson MD

THE TRUTH ABOUT HEAVEN & EARTH by John Pickering