

A Great Cloud of Witnesses

- Truly great servants in Hebrews 11 are our “*great cloud of witnesses.*”
- Their testimony is vital!
- If we want to be among them.
- We must see things as they saw them.
- God revealed the essence of what they testify and witness to us.

Those who were Saved before Us

*These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For they that say such things make it manifest that they are **seeking after a country of their own**. 15 And if indeed they had been mindful of that (country) from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now **they desire a better (country), that is, a heavenly**: wherefore **God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God**; for **he has prepared for them a city**. Heb 11:13-16*

Being dead ... Still Speak

- See and greet God's promises.
- They are real, eternal, fixed and absolute.
- Confess we are strangers and pilgrims on earth.
- Make it manifest we seek a country of our own.
- Don't be mindful of the country we left.
- Desire a better, that is, a heavenly country.
- God is not ashamed to be called our God
- He has prepared a city for us.

Power of God's Promises

- True faith sees God's promises as more real than all material things.
- Promises reveal eternal realities based on God's omnipotent power, foreknowledge, and veracity.
- They are the true "*reality*" more "*real*" than the temporary and transient things we call "*real*"
- Only when this is true are can they be the anchor of our soul – sure and steadfast.
- *Will your anchor hold in the storms of life when the clouds unfold their winds of strife.*

The True and Real “Reality”

- All that is seen is temporary.
- Therefore, since ***all these things will be dissolved***, what manner of persons ought you to ***be in holy conduct and godliness***, ***12 looking for and hastening*** the coming of the day of God, because of which ***the heavens will be dissolved***, being on fire, and the ***elements will melt with fervent heat?*** ***13*** Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. ***2 Peter 3:11-13***

Time is built on Swift Transition

- Over the horizon (tomorrow): No guarantees
- *Vanity of vanities, all is vanity Ecc. 1:1*
- *you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Jas. 4:14*
- Things can change so rapidly.
- Christ's second coming, unexpected death, war, illness, adversity, persecution, fires, pestilence, just over the horizon of time.
- What then is truly real and permanent?

God is Working His Eternal Purpose

- God wants His children to understand and work with Him.
- *desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth, 1Tim. 2:4*
- This mean man's salvation is more important than our comfort and prosperity. When there is a need:
- *as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: 27 They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise, as it was in the days of Lot. Lk. 17:26-30*
- As it will be in America

Trusting God

- Who could have foreseen?
- When Rome fell, and the commencement of the 1000 years of dark ages began.
- God was paving the way for a new culture that would produce multitudes of true Christians.
- Once again, going into all the world and preaching the gospel to every creature.
- When things look bleak we trust God who knows exactly what He is doing.

Present Reality – Ever Changing Vista

- Years of prosperity led to false sense of security.
- History of Genesis, Conquest, Judges & Kings reveal as go morals so goes prosperity.
- Is it different now? Think: Jeremiah & Potter
- *That which has been is what will be, That which is done is what will be done, And there is nothing new under the sun. Eccl 1:9*
- What about morals of Western Civilization? Closer to God's statutes or Sodom's?

God's Promises – Eternal

- *When we focus on them our life is fixed/stable*
- *Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though **our outward man is perishing**, yet the **inward man is being renewed day by day**. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 18 while **we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen**. For the things which are **seen are temporary**, but the things which are **not seen are eternal**. 2Cor. 4:16-18*

Faith = True Reality

- Whatever the “*light affliction,*” it is but for the moment.
- *For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Rom. 8:18-19*
- This is “*seeing the unseen*” and “*eternal.*”
- By faith, *we see the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Heb 11:1*
- **ONLY** God’s promises are real and eternal

Promises – Seeing the Unseen

- Prosperity and health, peace and comfort – all temporary.
- Since the days of Abel, those whose minds were filled “*with the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things unseen,*” were looking for the country and the city “*whose builder and maker is God!*”
- *the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*
- At some point in our lives we have to let go of the seen so we can move toward the unseen.

Peter's Confirmation

- *as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. 2Pet. 1:3-4*

It Takes Two Things

- God's Divine Power: Material Creation, Eternal Purpose, Inspired Word, Jesus' Death Purchase of the church.
- This gave us *“all things that pertain to life and godliness.”*
- Yet this isn't all! One more thing is necessary.
- *by which have been given to us His precious and exceeding great promises.*
- Both His *“divine power”* and *“precious promises”* are needed so we *“may become partakers of the divine nature,”* and *“escape the corruption that is in the world through lust.”* (2Pet. 1:2-4).

God did His Part – We have to Take It

- *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 1 Peter 1:3-5*

When God's Promises are *True Reality*

- *Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. 1 Cor 15:58*