Our Blessed Hope (Part 1)

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Preacher: Tom Holland

[0:00] There is an event that the church, and by that I mean people, Christians, refer to as the blessed hope.

! Now, not all Christians are united on that. I have a good friend of mine, staunch believer, prayer warrior, that man can pray down heaven.
But in his theology of Christ, he thinks Jesus is going to come back in a thousand years. And I said, how can that be a blessed hope if it's a thousand years out?
You know, I wanted to have something a little bit closer. So that event, though the Bible refers to it as the blessed hope, is in our day and I guess every age, surrounded in controversy and debate.
And like I said, sometimes entire denominations have rejected the concept. And imagine being told, well, your blessed hope is fiction, as some evil churches say.
[1:27] Well, imagine getting up on a Sunday morning and informing your people that the event for the centuries that has been called the blessed hope is not going to happen. Try to preach that in a Baptist church.

So what is the blessed hope? Jesus is going to return one day to this earth. Going to land, I think, on the Mount of Olives and it's going to split and there's all kinds of that.
And that is the second coming of Christ. He came the first time to Bethlehem as a baby. He's not coming back as a baby.
He's coming back on a horse of war with a sword and breathing fire. Who's he upset at? People that mistreated his church.
His bride. His bride. The second coming of Christ is written about more frequently in God's Word than the first coming of Christ.
[2:35] Why is there such controversy concerning the return of Christ? It's a wonderful promise made to the church. And again, it's so wonderful it's called the blessed hope.

The apostle Paul knew this and he wrote a letter to one of his sons in the faith, Titus. And in chapter 2, beginning in verse 11, he says this, For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men.
And let me add there, every man who believes is part of that. Instructing us that denying ungodliness and worldly desires, we should live sensibly, righteously, and godly in the present age.
Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing in glory of our great God and Savior Christ Jesus, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all lawlessness, and purify for himself a people for his own possession, zealous for good works.
Talk about every believer that would ever live on this earth. Elsewhere, in Romans, another book Paul wrote, the great chapter 8, my favorite chapter in the Bible.
[4:21] In verse 23, he wrote this, by inspiration, And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, talking about the Holy Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for our adoption as sons and the redemption of our bodies.

Now just how important was the return of Christ to the early church?
Well, let me read to you, a little lengthy, but these are the very words of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is what he says, Matthew chapter 25, beginning in verse 31, But when the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the angels with Him, He will sit on His glorious throne, and all the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them from one another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.
And He will put the sheep on His right, and the goats on His left. And then the King will say to those on His right, Come you who are blessed by My Father, inherit the kingdom, which has been prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

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For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink.
[6:25] I was a stranger, and you invited me in, naked, and you clothed me. I was sick, and you visited me. I was in prison, and you came to me.

And then the righteous will answer Him, Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink, and when do we see you a stranger, and invite you in, or naked and clothe you, and when did we see you sick or in prison, and come to you?
And the King will answer and say to them, Truly, I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to me.
Amazing passage of Scripture. The return of Christ is also referred to as the time of redemption for all who believe.
Ephesians 4.30 says this, And do not grieve the Holy Spirit by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.
[7:54] We have placed on us a seal of God, the Holy Spirit, for the day of redemption. And history records that the early church found great comfort in thoughts surrounding the second coming of Christ.

there had been a two-fold assault on the early church. They had to endure persecution, and being now 26 years on the board of directors with the voice of the martyrs, that hadn't gone away.
I promise you guys, I don't know when or where, today though, somebody was put to death because they would not deny Christ. They're in some country somewhere, and I've probably been in those countries, I've been in a lot of them, and they said, if you'll deny Christ, we'll let you go. If you don't, we're going to kill you. I can't deny my Lord. And they died. So, assault number one, persecution, sometimes even death, as is the case of Stephen, the first martyr in the church.
He was stoned to death, led by a man named Saul of Tarsus to kill him. You remember Saul, he later became Paul.
[9:32] The greatest apostle, I think. Where'd the other attack come from? That was from the rise of false teachers that were perverting the gospel of Christ and twisting the message of God's messengers.

And one of those messengers was the apostle Paul. And we have false teachers with us today. They're prevalent. They're everywhere.
See them all the time on television. I don't. I don't watch it. The following is a quote from Dr. Nathan Boussenex.
He's the dean of faculty and professor of theology at the Master Seminary that was founded by John MacArthur, who's now with the Lord.
Hard to say that. But John died last summer. He served alongside Dr. MacArthur until John was called home. He spoke at his funeral.
[10:43] Hear the words of Dr. Boussenex from his book Living a Life of Hope. The hope of Christ coming was of paramount importance for the early church.

In fact, its certainty was so real that the first century believers would greet one another with the term Maranatha.
They didn't say, hey, how you doing? They walked up and said, Maranatha. Meaning, Lord, come quickly. Maybe we ought to do that. Maranatha.
Instead of being frightened by the possibility, they clung to it as the culmination of everything they believed. Not surprisingly, the New Testament reflects this intense anticipation by referencing Jesus' return.
Whether directly or indirectly, there are passages of Scripture concerning the return of Christ in every book of the New Testament with the exception of Philemon and 3 John.
[12:05] Two of the very shortest books in the Bible. But with the exception of those two books, and those are great books, but there's a mention of the return of Christ, the second coming of Christ.

one person that recognizes how very important the doctrine of Christ's return is to the church, this will surprise you, it's Satan.
He understands how important that doctrine is to the church. most Christians who genuinely hold to the soon appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ have about them a zeal and an enthusiasm because they recognize He could come back at any moment.

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Guys, live your lives like He could be back any moment. and we will then be called on to give an account to our Master for the deeds done in the body.
Satan would love to take our attention away from the possibility of the soon appearing of our Lord and push it out several generations.
[13:38] I've told people Jesus may not be back for 5,000 years. or he may be back in the next 5 minutes. I don't know. But I feel like it's a lot closer to 5 minutes than 5,000 years.

I think we are much closer. Now, Satan has a whole crop of skeptics and his bidding.
They're called false teachers, false preachers, false converts, I suppose, who reject or minimize the promises of Christ.
Such rejecters of truth were prevalent in Peter's day just as they are in ours. They're prevalent. They're everywhere. Now, we're going to focus this evening and then we'll get into next Monday's lesson.
[14:41] We're going to be teaching 2 Peter 3, the last chapter in 2 Peter. And we're going to be reading all or parts at least of the first 10 verses.

So let me read that to you. This is now, beloved, the second letter I'm writing to you. He wrote 1 Peter also. of which I am stirring up your sincere mind by way of reminder that you should remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by the apostles.
That's the New Testament guys. The holy prophets were the Old Testament guys. knowing this, first of all, that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking.
Following after their own lusts and saying where is the promise of His coming? He promised to come back.
He hadn't done it. Why did He break that promise? That's what they're saying. Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.
[16:13] From creation to now, everything is always like it has been. For when they maintain this, it escapes their knowledge that by the word of God, the heavens existed long ago the earth was formed out of water and by water through which the world at that time was destroyed, being deluged with water.

But by His word, the present heavens and earth are being reserved not for water, for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and the destruction of ungodly men.
but do not let this one fact escape your notice, beloved, that with the Lord one day, we just celebrated January 5th, one day is like a thousand years to the Lord.
And a thousand years is like one day. The Lord is not slow about His promise as some consider slowness, but is patient toward you, not willing that any of you would perish, but for all to come to repentance.
But the day of the Lord will come like a thief in which heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed by intense heat and the earth and its works will be found out.
[17:55] So, Peter begins this last chapter of his second gospel in chapter 3 with the first thing and we'll look at this tonight, the other half next Monday night, Lord willing, but he starts by giving us arguments against the second coming.

Peter's giving these. He doesn't believe them, but he's presenting them to us. Knowing this first of all that in the last days mockers will come with their mocking.
I already read that, but I read it again. Following after their own lusts and saying, where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation.
Very important passage. in these two verses, that's three and four of chapter three, we read of three types of attacks on the church.
Three types of attacks in the last days. And by the way, if these attacks are really prevalent today, maybe that's an indication we're in the last days.
[19:28] And by the way, we are, I'll prove that to you in a little bit, from Scripture. the first attack, the first mocking, we could say, was appropriately labeled ridicule by John MacArthur.

mocking, mocking, mocking, or mockers. The second impact of the church in the last days will be widespread immorality.

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And by that, we can use a word, it's not a friendly word, but we have to use it, called lust. And I've said this many times in 40 plus years of teaching, for a man, lust is the most difficult, most horrible thing, and you know who understands that?
Madison Avenue. Do you know what I mean by Madison Avenue? Older guys do. That's where all the advertisers are headquartered that advertise across America and around the world.
And I've been to some of their places when my dad was up there with Phyllis Patrol, and we lived in that area for seven years. When I was a kid, we went there, toured some of them.
[20:59] And I'm always amazed. Make sure no women are lurking out there. That's why you see women representing some hardware store to sell a hammer and she's in a bikini.

I've been to every hardware store in town. I've never seen any woman like that. But that's how they do it. They understand the man's hot button. And the scriptures call this following after their own lusts.
And then there's a third attack attack. And it's titled, this is in honor of Mike Dersham. I try to get a big word in every time.
Uniformitarianism. Yep. Perhaps the least known of the three-prong attack, but nevertheless very important to our understanding.
now we live on the buckle of the Bible belt. And I'm glad about that. Guys, look, I spent a lot of time in Texas. I'm from Bartlesville, Oklahoma.
[22:12] I went to college in Texas. I started in law enforcement in Texas. My family came in a covered wagon to Indian Territory. Not my mom, she wasn't born yet, but my grandparents from central Texas.

It took them a year because they had to work along the way as itinerant farmers. But we're on the buckle of the Bible belt. And in this part of the country, the prevailing estetological or end times belief is solidly premillennialism.
If you're not premillennial, that's okay. Because probably the greatest premillennial was David Martin Lloyd Jones, and he wrote a book, said, the essentials, and he started out, I'm premillennial, I'm pre-trib, but those are not essentials to heaven.
You can believe other and go to heaven. But premillennialism is strong here. And in the book of Revelation, chapter 20, the Holy Spirit says there's going to be on earth a reign of Christ, Christ, by the earth, way, that's R-E-I-G-N, not R-E-I-N, Christ will reign on earth, and that will last a thousand years.
Now, that's in chapter 20. I encourage you to read it. It's in there six or seven times. And interesting, that's where we get millennial, or millennialism.
[23:50] A thousand is millennial. that means a thousand. And the teaching is that Christ is going to return to this earth with his church and set up an earthly kingdom that will last a thousand years.

And Jesus is going to be headquartered in Jerusalem. And I heard a great sermon by Derek Thomas. Some of y'all might know him. He's a great minister. Works with Ligonier.
Works with the late R.C. Sproul. Derek Thomas said, what are we going to be doing during the millennium? We're going to be here for a thousand years. And he said, well, we're going to be alive. We're going to be in resurrected bodies. And he said, where are we going to live? And he said, we're going to live in a house. And he read, I think, a passage in Isaiah that talked about that. We're going to have a house to live in. We're going to go back and forth to Jerusalem. I don't know how we're going to get there. But we're going to worship the Lord eyeball to eyeball.
[25:03] We're going to pray. We're going to have room in this house. Set aside for prayer. It's an interesting time. But Christ is going to return and set up his earthly kingdom that will last for a thousand years.

Believers will come back with him. That's called the second coming, by the way. The apostle John, the only apostle not physically martyred, he wasn't put to death for his faith, but he wrote about premillennialism around 2,000 years ago from a cave on the Isle of Patmos in the Aegean Sea.
He was in custody of the Roman Empire. The Aegean Sea is an island of rock, no trees. He lived in a cave apparently, in exile.
Maybe that's a slower death than martyrdom. At any rate, the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ came to John and said, John, go find some paper and ink because you're going to do a lot of writing.
In that cave, the apostle inspired by the Holy Spirit, inspired by the Spirit of Christ, wrote down the book of Revelation.

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[26:40] Just amazing. It's amazing. In our lifetime, or at least some of us, the concept of premillennialism really gained traction with the rise of some very respected and learned professors of Dallas Theological Seminary.

These included Dr. Charles Ryrie, Dr. John Walvert, and Dr. J. Dwight Pentecost. All of these men have now passed. They're with the Lord.
But they were staunch supporters of the premillennial model. And they wrote books about it. I got a bunch of them. But far back in time, when Peter was still alive, hadn't been crucified upside down yet, false teachers rose in the church and began mocking the very idea that the Lord was going to come back and establish a millennial reign.
So that mocking has been around for 2,000 years. And the scriptures say it will be prevalent, this mocking, in the last days.
And given the widespread rejection of the return of Christ, not only by the world, but a lot of denominations, they almost quote this, where's his appearing?
[28:23] He hadn't shown up. Well, you know what the deal is? He isn't on their schedule. I mean, if the Lord was on my schedule, he'd been here about 1980. But he wasn't on my schedule.

Aren't you glad? I've concluded we must be in the last days. And I'm not on thin ice when I say that. This is what the Holy Spirit had the Apostle John wrote down. In 1 John, one of the great books of the Bible, chapter 2, verse 18.
Children. Eknos in Greek. Children. It is the last hour. That's what the Spirit of God called it.
He said, tell them, John, they're in the last hour. But remember, an hour is not the same to the Lord and to us. But he says, they're in the last hour. And just as you have heard that Antichrist is coming, even now many Antichrists have appeared.
[29:37] And because the Antichrists are appearing on an increasing level, you can know that this is the last hour. That's Scripture. 1 John 2, verse 18.

So we're living out our lives in the last hour. divorce your mind from 60 minutes.
That's not what it's talking about. The last hour began when Jesus Christ came the first time. That's when the last hour began.
And it will end when the Lord returns to this earth in the second coming. That's when it will end. And the concept of the Lord returning has been subject to mocking.
Mockers claim, well, he never said he was coming back. Well, you better reread your Bible. Again, I appeal to inspired Scripture. John chapter 14, verses 2 and 3.
[30:49] Jesus is talking. In my Father's house are many, and it's the word dwelling places.

We want to say mansions. Let me tell you, the last thing my wife wants is a mansion to clean. They're dwelling places. They're rooms.
There's one mansion in heaven. It's the Father's mansion. And every believer is going to have a room in there. And, you know, when I lay awake at night, because my wife came to bed at one o'clock and woke me up and turned on the ceiling fan, and I can't go back to sleep, I sit and think about stuff.
What are we going to do in those rooms? There's a bedroom? Is there a library? We just have a room?
Diane told me, I want to be in your room with you. I said, no, it doesn't work that way. Not going to work that way. But we're going to be, he has a dwelling place for each of us.
[31:59] And he goes on and he says, if that were not so, this is Jesus, I would have told you. For I go to prepare a place for you.

And if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also. Now, I'm going to tell you, if I don't know anything else about Christ, he was a master carpenter.
He learned it from his dad. And he was a wonderful carpenter. and he's been working on those rooms for 2,000 years now.
They've got to be nice rooms. I have a feeling those are nice rooms. And we're going to be there and he's going to receive us because where he is, there we will be.
Now, that fits into the millennial reign because if he leaves heaven to go to Jerusalem and live for 1,000 years, we're going to be with him.
[33:05] It says, where I am, there you will be also. So, we already mentioned this widespread immorality.

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I think given the immorality of our day, if Peter came to visit, he'd say, how long have y'all been in the last days? Well, since Jesus was here 2,000 years ago.
False teachers are marked by immorality. In 2025, many high profile false teachers in America's pulpits fell when exposed.
One fell when he was caught with a teenage member of his church. He had entered his office for counseling, but he forgot he was counseling and he started molesting. And we were all saddened by the fall of Steve Lawson.
I know Steve. I met him. He didn't know me. That was hard days. Didn't have a hint of impropriety. he fell.
[34:16] fell. But there's one sign I want to mention as we close pretty soon. And this is topic of uniformitarianism.

That's how I got my big word in. Peter didn't use that word. But he alludes to it in his second book, chapter 3, verse 4.
He says, I read it before, where's the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, and here it is, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation.
creation. That's what physicists and other scientists mean by uniformitarianism. Well, the earth is the same ever since it evolved, or ever since, you know, whatever.
And the scoffers are mocking the idea that the Lord Jesus is coming back, but they use a confusing term talking about fathers falling asleep.
[35:26] Those are referenced to Old Testament patriarchs. That's a reference to dying, by the way. And Peter then says that all things continue as they were.

He's quoting the mockers from the beginning of creation. That's what scientists today call, and Dr. Sagan used it frequently, uniformitarianism.
Those who hold this see the universe not in terms of creation from God. They believe instead the universe came about as a natural system of cause and effect, and God had no role in it.
In fact, their proponents of uniformitarianism reject the idea of the existence of God. And they're fond of saying that the universe today, Tom Holland's birthday, 2026, earth, they're operating just as they did millions and billions of years ago.
Well, that's not true. I can prove it. One time there was a deal. God intervened in earth and in the universe, in the history.
[36:51] One such was the six days of creation. God did that. Uniformitarianism didn't do that. And take billions of years.

God did it in six days and I'm convinced those were 24-hour days. There's a good reason to believe that. That will not be repeated.
Let me give you another example. It would be the global flood in the days of Noah. that's not going to be repeated. How do I know that? God made a promise, didn't He?
Why do we see a rainbow every now and then? Reminds us of that promise. I'm not going to destroy the world by water. What's He going to do it with?
Fire. I'm kind of saying, give me the water. Fire. He's done this. Some scientists in Peter's day and in ours deny the promises of Scripture including the return of Christ.
[37:56] They say, what doesn't meet the smell test for my worldview? I don't care about your worldview if it's not consistent with the worldview of the Trinity. So next time, Lord willing, we're going to talk about the arguments in favor of the second coming.

That's what I'm going to do next time. Peter does not talk about the rapture. He talks about the second coming when the Lord places His feet on the earth.
And probably before this is over, and we've only got two or three more lessons, but I'm probably going to spend at least one or two times on Monday nights talking about the rapture of the church, which is all caught up in part of that, but we'll read 1 and 2 Thessalonians and some other powerful verses about that, and then link them together.
Be ready for that, but we've still got a few more lessons to go in 2 Peter chapter 3, and next time we'll get to the reasons to believe in all this and not reject it.
Thank you.

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