

[Slide 1] Hope: Seeing from God's Perspective

Jer.29:10-14

Rom.4:16-18

1 John 3:1-3

Classic TV adverts (Toyota ads with Barry Crump, etc.)

- [Slide 2] One of our favorites = ASB Goldstein adverts 2000-2010
- “Flock of cows” >>> “Herd of cows” >>> “Yes, I have. Heard of chickens?”
- “**The world is changing, Goldstein**” >>> Knowles household saying...
- The **world is changing** in the first 6 months of 2020 (COVID-19) >>> handwashing, contact tracing apps, Zoom church services, etc.
- Also **personal** changes for people: encounters with illness, bereavements, job losses, financial pressures...

In this midst of this changing world, Jer.29:10-14 is for us!

- **Context:** Israel in exile in Babylon: Ps.137:1 “By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept [present situation] when we remembered Zion [what we had in the past]. There on the poplars we hung our harps...”
- [Slide 3] **But specific promise given [in midst of exile]: Jer.29:11** “I know the plans that I have for you... plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you **hope [expectation]** and a **future [end, outcome]**.”
- Change, but God is unchanging: beyond the present >>> **future hope**

God works from the perspective of this future hope:

[Slide 4] “Not what thou art, nor what thou hast been, beholdeth God with his merciful eyes, but what thou wouldst be.” (*Cloud of Unknowing*, chapter 75 = anonymous popular 14th-century manual of devotion)

3 aspects of this:

[Slide 5] **1. God sees us from the perspective of the future, rather than where we are now**

Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams' comment on this in 2017 sermon: “God sees us with the future in mind. God does not look at our present performance....”

Human perspective of linear time (like train on railway tracks with screen at front of engine >>> can see where we have been and where we are now, but cannot see the future = **incomplete picture**)

[Slide 6] **God's perspective** = eternity (like helicopter above the screen; can see past, present and future = complete picture)

• [Slide 7] **Example A:**

- ✓ Rom.4:17 God “**calls things that are not as though they were**”
- ✓ Abraham becomes “father of many nations”; name changed from **Abram** (“high father”) to **Abraham** (“father of a multitude”); but **when did this happen?**
- ✓ **Gen.17:5** “No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I **have made you a father** of many nations” (past action)
- ✓ But Isaac (the son through whom the promise would be fulfilled) not born until **Gen.21, more than a year later**
- ✓ Abraham renamed in terms of his **future**, not who he **currently was....**

• [Slide 8] **Example B:**

- ✓ Slow learner; parents thought him to be handicapped (did not begin speaking until 3½ years old); family maid nicknamed him “*der Depperte*” (“the dopey one”)

- ✓ At school, only an average student; had difficulty with maths (only achieved his university diploma in physics at age of 21 through special tutoring)
- ✓ After university, could not get job >>> becomes probationary technical expert (third class) at age of 23 in Patent Office in Berne, Switzerland
- ✓ **[Slide 9]** Who was he? **Albert Einstein!** (Name synonymous with genius)
- ✓ Einstein's place in history based on who he **became**, not who **he was as a child/young man**

God sees and deals with us in terms of what we will become, not where we are at the present...

[Slide 9]2. God sees us in terms of what we desire to be

King David called “a **man after God's own heart**” (Acts 14:23)

- Many positives (responses to Saul and Absalom)
- But King David also a **flawed, imperfect human being**:
 - ✓ Roving warlord (1 Sam.23ff): “man of blood”
 - ✓ Takes 3 wives (Michal, Abigail, Ahinoam) and 10 concubines (2 Sam.15:16)
 - ✓ But also adultery with Bathsheba (2 Sam.11:2-5)
 - ✓ Murder of Uriah (Bathsheba's husband) (2 Sam.11:6-27)
- So **why** was he a man after God's own heart?
 - ✓ **[Slide 10]Ps. 51: 10-11 (Contrition and desire for cleansing)** “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.”
 - ✓ **Ps 63:1 (Passionate thirst for God)** “O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.”

God sees and deals with King David in terms of what he desires to be...

[Slide 12]3. God's promised end/outcome for us (hope of our calling – 1 John 3:1-3)

Church History full of imperfect people and events (e.g. Crusades)

- **[Slide 13]** Billy Graham: “If you find the perfect church, don't join it – you'd spoil it”
- But despite all this: Gods' promised end/outcome for us:
 - ✓ 1 Cor.1:2 “[Paul]...to the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and **called to be holy** (saints)...”
 - ✓ **[Slide 14]** Eph. 5:25-27 “...Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, **without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.**”
 - ✓ **[Slide 15]** 1 John 3:2-3 “Now we are the children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, **we shall be like him**, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.”

God deals with us in terms of the end product, not the “work-in-progress”

God sees us from an eternal perspective:

1. From the perspective of the future (rather than where we are now)
2. In terms of what we desire to be (rather than in our present weaknesses and failures)
3. In terms of his promised end/outcome for us (that he is working out in us now)

