

# A HOPE STRONGER THAN ALL THE WORLD'S TROUBLES

## VIDEO TWO

Authentic hope sees the scale of our problems, has a broad enough vision for change, and helps us wait. And the authors of the Bible hold out this kind of hope.

In fact, the darker their circumstances, the more their hope shines. Some of the brightest hope is offered by prophets, writing in the centuries before Jesus' birth. Their nation lay trashed by their enemies – they weren't naïve to the scale of the world's problems – yet they hoped *deeply*.

The prophets' words are poetic, imaginative and – to be honest – quite challenging for readers today. The prophet Isaiah speaks, for instance, of how God will come. The effect will be that:

The wolf and the lamb will feed together,  
And the lion will eat straw like the ox,  
And dust will be my serpent's food.

Isaiah is trying to describe the indescribable – a change in nature itself. His words are supposed to break our categories. This is why he writes in poetry. For Isaiah, poetry is the only language fitting to the strangeness and wonder of new what the world will be like when God makes it new again.

At the same time, Isaiah uses familiar images too. Here's the very everyday effect on humans:

They will build houses and dwell in them;

They will plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

Put these two images together, and we see that Isaiah is imagining a world *just like ours*, only with every good thing preserved and every broken thing renewed.

There is an extraordinary breadth of vision to this hope.

Life's limits as we experience them today will be no more. New horizons will open. God will remake this world so it is without disease, discrimination, disappointment and danger.

It's the world we hope for, transformed in every detail.

As a Jew, Jesus embraced this hope as his own. And he announced that his arrival brought the arrival of this new creation hope. When the earliest Christians spread the word that Jesus had died and been raised from the dead, they portrayed it as the fulfilment of this hope - a hope we're invited to share with him.

That makes hope in Jesus different from other hopes. At times this hope sounds extraordinary. But the resurrection of Jesus says it isn't wishful thinking. It is based in history and will come about for sure.

With his own death, Jesus took our world down into death – and as he rose, he demonstrated his ability to give life. That means, with every day that passes, we are one day closer to our world being finally renewed by Jesus.

And this is why, like the best sources of hope, it helps us wait well.

After all, the ultimate hope for followers of Jesus isn't to spend eternity playing harps in the clouds. Our hope is that Jesus will return and make this world – *our* world – new.

This future hope changes how we see today.

Because Jesus will bring justice, justice matters today.

Because Jesus will bring harmony, how we treat other people matters today.

Because Jesus will renew the earth, caring for the planet matters today.

Hoping in Jesus means living for Jesus. And we show we have this authentic hope as we live for him today.