

Pleasant Valley
Church of Christ

3317 Amidon
Wichita KS 67204
(316) 838-4195
www.letjesusleadus.org

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Classes 9:30 am
Worship 10:30 am
Evening 6:00 pm

Wednesday

Classes 7:30 pm

The Pleasant Valley Church of Christ is a non-denominational group of believers who are committed to following Jesus in our attitudes, our relationships, and our worship. If you want the same thing in your life, please contact us. We'd like to help.

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations are from the New King James Version Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Wings



*"But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31)*

May 25, 2008

Looking for a better country

by David King

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them" (Heb. 11:13-16).

The hope of a better life in heaven beyond this life is a central tenet of the Christian faith. The resurrection of Christ is not merely an allegory of hope triumphing over despair, but a precursor of the resurrection that we all will experience some day. The New Testament is loaded with promises of this future paradise.

But people hardly need scriptural proof of this hope; most people instinctively believe in some version of it anyway. One compelling reason for the universality of this longing for a hereafter is the fact that this life can be so disappointing. Diseases, accidents, natural disasters, not to mention the fruits of the sins which we humans add to the picture — in the face of all this frustration, there is a natural longing in the human heart for something better, for a life that is finally and permanently free of all the troubles we deal with here. Christianity offers that hope.

Skeptics, of course, scoff at this hope. In their view, the Christian promise of a better

life following death diverts attention away from efforts to address the pressing problems of the here and now. How can we get people to tackle the issues at hand, if they have their heads in the clouds waiting for the heavenly chariots to sweep them to glory?

There are two flaws in this critique of the Christian hope. First, Christianity is not escapism. Although many believers admittedly do not honor the connection, the hope of the believer is linked to his behavior. It is precisely because the believer has this hope that he is willing to sacrifice himself for a good of others. His hope of a reward in the next life is a motivation to serve others in this life. He knows it will be worth it in the end.

Second, suppose we remove this hope from the equation; what does the skeptic offer in return? Despite our best efforts to make it otherwise, life is inherently unfair. Remove hope from their hearts, and people will quickly come to the conclusion that the sole purpose of life is to grab whatever they can while they can: "If the dead do not rise, 'let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die'" (1 Cor. 15:32). Attempting to motivate people to sacrifice "for the greater good" when there is no personal advantage is a futile task. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable" (1 Cor. 15:19).

When people live their lives looking for a better country, a heavenly one, they have a reason to live this life unselfishly. No other philosophical system can match the power of Christianity to instill that motivation.