



[www.PreciousHeart.net/ti](http://www.PreciousHeart.net/ti)

**Volume 3 – 2011**

---

**Between Two Tides:  
Toward an Eschatologically Realized  
Evangelical Theology of Hope**

Andrew Esqueda  
Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA <sup>1</sup>

Introduction ..... 1  
A. Karl Barth’s Apocalyptically Realistic Doctrine of Election..... 2  
B. Eschatology Realized: Election as the Genesis of Hope ..... 4  
C. Jürgen Moltmann’s Theology of Hope: Eschatology and the Promise of God... 7  
D. Toward an Eschatologically Realized Evangelical Theology of Hope..... 9  
Pastoral Conclusion ..... 13  
Bibliography ..... 14

**Introduction**

The word “hope” has become a fairly innocuous word, at least in my lifetime, from the mid 80’s until present. It is used in the context of everyday conversations revolving around everything from school and work, to football games and music, and so forth and so on. Conversations about hope have become as nonchalant as conversations about the weather—it’s just something you do. To a detriment the term has lost its ever-provoking scandalousness. This loss has occurred because of the disjunction that has taken place between “hope” and its object, the crucified Son of God—it is a word

---

<sup>1</sup> Esqueda has a B.A., Whitworth; a M.A., Biblical Studies, Fuller Seminary; and is a Ph.D. student, Systematic Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary. See [andrewesqueda@gmail.com](mailto:andrewesqueda@gmail.com).

that has been truly secularized. The term is no longer scandalous because the scandalous nature of the cross has been removed from its identification with what we mean when we say the word “hope”. This essay sets forth to present the idea of hope, unabashedly, in all of its scandalousness. I will do so by addressing the universal scope of election, and in particular, to show that its universality is necessary for the development of an evangelical and apocalyptic theology of hope. By way of engagement with Karl Barth’s doctrine of election and Jürgen Moltmann’s theology of hope I will argue that election is apocalyptically actualistic in character, in that, it is itself a decision for the eschaton, and as a result, gives our present situation the assurance of hope. Furthermore, as election and Christian hope are teleologically apocalyptic, they are so, only in that they are foregrounded in a prior eternal decision for the suffering of the cross and the resurrection.

The first section of this paper will engage Karl Barth’s doctrine of election. I will focus strictly upon the implications that Karl Barth’s doctrine of election might have for eschatology. The second section will engage Jürgen Moltmann’s theology of hope in an attempt to ground his theology of hope in God’s decision to become human, rather than revelation, thereby making Christian hope the product of a universal and eternal decision, rather than one made in time. The last section will attempt to move with and beyond Barth and Moltmann toward what I will call an eschatologically realized evangelical theology of hope. I will conclude by offering some pastoral thoughts on Christian hope.

### **A. Karl Barth’s Apocalyptically Realistic Doctrine of Election**

This first section aims to introduce the doctrine of election by way of Karl Barth, and to suggest that it be treated in a more pronounced apocalyptic fashion.<sup>2</sup> I will begin with a brief summary of the basic features of Barth’s doctrine of election.

Karl Barth’s definition of election is quite unique, and entirely distinct from what has previously been meant by the term. Barth is not referring to the decision of God for the election or reprobation of individuals. He is referring to the election of Christ, which

consequently pronounces an election for both the Church and individuals—Christ, then, becomes the object of both election and reprobation taking them into his very being. This election is, however, entirely reliant upon a participation in the primal election of Christ.<sup>3</sup> Though individuals and the Church are indeed elect, they find their election only by way of participation, which without, the election of the Church and individuals would have no grounding. Barth called election God’s primal decision (*urentscheidung*)<sup>4</sup>—it is the beginning of all of God’s ways.<sup>5</sup> For Barth, election is God’s commissioning of Himself into *the far country* and it is an eternal decision by which God has chosen to exist in such a way from all eternity. If this is true, then, consequently, there can be no will, no freedom, and no essence above or behind the person of Jesus Christ. Christ is not simply the mirror of God’s will, freedom, and essence Christ *is* God’s will, freedom, and essence. This is God’s determination and this determination is one that by way of God’s freedom God has chosen to be known. Barth’s doctrine of election was established in an effort to fight against any and all abstractions from God’s manifestation in Jesus Christ as well as any conception of a *Deus absconditus*. The separation of God’s hiddenness and election in eternity, and God’s concrete revelation in time is ontologically overcome provided that, “God pre-temporally anticipates God’s relationship with the human creature. In that the divine Son is never not becoming the person of Jesus Christ, God is always intending a history between God and humankind.”<sup>6</sup> Barth uniquely established an inextricable link between election and revelation and thus insisted that God’s being and actions in eternity be united with God’s being and actions in time. The consequence, here, being that the cross and the resurrection are decisions made in eternity and actualized in time, they are the decisions of a God who is no longer hidden—thus, the history of salvation can be considered one of becoming.

---

<sup>3</sup> See, Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics: The doctrine of God*, Edited by Geoffrey W. Bromily and Thomas F. Torrance. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Vol. II/2. (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1957)

<sup>4</sup> Karl Barth, *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik, II/2: Die Lehre von Gott* (Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag A.G. Zollikon, 1948), 8. See also, *CD II/2*, 7-10

<sup>5</sup> Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of Reconciliation*, Vol. IV/3, 484.

<sup>6</sup> Paul Dafydd Jones, *The Humanity of Christ: Christology in Karl Barth’s Church Dogmatics* (London: T&T Clark, 2008), 190

**B. Eschatology Realized: Election as the Genesis of Hope**

Now how might Karl Barth's doctrine of election relate to eschatology? Well, Barth's doctrine of election is not overly apocalyptic—at least not at the outset. A basic understanding of his doctrine of election, especially one that is comprehended in abstraction from *Church Dogmatics vol. IV*, the Doctrine of Reconciliation, would not extract the doctrine's apocalyptic character. Barth's doctrine of election is indeed apocalyptic, and resonates with me insofar as it is, in my opinion, correct in its direction; however, Barth does not go far enough teleologically. He tends to think that the teleological goal of the election of Christ is the cross, and as a result, the resurrection and future of Christ take a backseat. The problem lies in the fact that Christ's future is collapsed into an event in time, rather than actualistically joined to a concrete event. The teleological aim of election must be the eschaton, but only insofar as the reality of the eschaton is dependent upon the cross and the resurrection—their history is one. The election of Christ is ultimately an eschatological genesis; election is not merely election for history in time, but it is election for a history of becoming—an actualized history<sup>7</sup>—one that finds its reality *in toto* in the eschaton. The eschaton, too, is in becoming, and it is realized only on the account of a truly historical crucifixion and resurrection. The resurrection is the genetic realization of the eschaton, and a sign for the actualization of our own history. Just as Christ was elected for incarnation, death, and resurrection, we too, as participants in the election of Christ, share in His election for life, death, and resurrection. There can be no complete conception of the election of the Church or the individual apart from a holistic conception of history, which on the Christian account, must find its basis in a historical Christology.

It has been a common trend as of recent to reject such a historical Christology on account of its semi-Hegelianism, but the concern is, in my opinion, quite shallow. The peril of Hegelianism lies in the collapsing of time and eternity, which leads inevitably to the dissolution of a creator-creature distinction.<sup>8</sup> This, however, is not a

---

<sup>7</sup> Karl Barth's actualistic ontology leans drastically in this direction.

<sup>8</sup> See, William Desmond, *Hegel's God: A Counterfeit Double?* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2003), 144-148

problem for the incorporation of history into a theological ontology, or a human one for that matter. A proper theological ontology must necessarily incorporate history into the doctrine of God for if it fails to do so we put God into an abstract vacuum relegated to eternity, and tiptoe on the edge of Docectism. Theology must reject the disjunction between time and eternity, between the pre-temporal, present, and last things. Theology must resurrect history to incorporate time and eternity in a way that makes them fluid. Their fluidity recognizes that there is an advancement in the life of God and the Church, an advancement that has from all eternity been decided, and never reduced to a mere function of cause and effect.<sup>9</sup> As participants in the life of Christ, our history is entirely contingent upon His, thus our existence is, also as Christ's, radically apocalyptic; Christ has a future, and as participants in His livelihood, we too find our future in Him. Our *raison d'être*, culminates in the establishment of the Kingdom of God, therefore our present reality must maintain an eschatological bend for if we fail to do so our hope finds its footstool in despair, which is ironically, according to Jürgen Moltmann, the worst of utopias.<sup>10</sup> It is so, for if our existence—and in that case, our hope for the present—has no outlook for the future, then we hope only in what is not attainable. Our Christian hope is, however, not a hope for the possible, but a hope for the inevitable, and it finds its footstool in the election of Christ, which we as humans live as participants in.

Election is the beginning of Christian hope; it is the beginning, middle, and end, and it is presently all three. It is the reality of hope in which the action is, in protology, simultaneously eschatological—it is the guarantee of a hope that is already and not yet ours through the promise of Jesus Christ. It is the election of the crucified and resurrected one, not an abstract being, but one who in history makes known the hope that was decided from all eternity to be fulfilled in the eschaton. Although Barth's doctrine of election is not emphatically apocalyptic, it is, I am sure, implicitly apocalyptic, and eschatologically realistic.<sup>11</sup> Barth's theology is entirely apocalyptic

---

<sup>9</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 50

<sup>10</sup> Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 20

<sup>11</sup> This identification is from a wonderful essay by Ingolf U. Dalferth in which he claims, and rightly so, that Barth is an "unashamed realist." Ingolf U. Dalferth, "Karl Barth's Eschatological [Footnote continued on next page ... ]

for he believed that the Christian faith is inherently apocalyptic.<sup>12</sup> As I stated above, there is an inextricable link between election and revelation, but if theology is inherently apocalyptic as Barth suggests, then there is also an inextricable link between election and eschatology. Thus, God's primal decision for the incarnation is also God's decision for an eschatological resurrection, one that embodies and carries out the purpose of God's election of Himself and the reality of our participation in that election. Barth's doctrine of election is apocalyptically teleological—that is, God's decision for time is also God's decision to redeem all things in the eschaton. Election is the genesis of the eschaton and post-election the eschaton becomes realized and moves constantly on the way to becoming.

If we maintain that election is itself apocalyptic then we can also maintain that our present realities and the turmoil of our historical existence have before the creation of the world, been intended to be remedied. There was never a time when the object of Christian hope—that being Jesus Christ—was never on His way to becoming a present reality, and our election for union with God an eschatological reality. The point being made at hand is this: that our present hope, in a bright eschatological future, was conceived through a prior eternal election making the history of God, and consequently the reality of our hope, an actualized one. Our hope follows our God whose being is in becoming, and as such, so too, is our hope. Present hope in Christ is simultaneously a future hope in the things to come; our God who as subject and object, elected Himself to be the provider and proprietor of this hope, and as universal participants in Christ election it is eternally guaranteed for us.

---

Realism" in *Karl Barth: Centenary Essays*, edited by S.W. Sykes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

<sup>12</sup> "We are here facing the fundamental challenge of Barth's theology, his assertion that there is this extraordinary reality, the risen Christ, whose presence is endlessly rich and fruitful for understanding and for all of life.' From the publication of his *Epistle to the Romans* in 1919 to the very end of his life, Barth did not waiver on this fundamental point: the reality to which theology refers is the eschatological reality of the risen Christ and the new life into which we are drawn by the Spirit." (Ingolf U. Dalferth, "Karl Barth's Eschatological Realism" in *Karl Barth: Centenary Essays*, edited by S.W. Sykes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 20-21

### C. Jürgen Moltmann's Theology of Hope: Eschatology and the Promise of God

Moltmann's *Theology of Hope* is a seminal work no doubt. However, contrary to Barth, it is eschatological to a fault. It is insofar as it fails to remember, and as a consequence, the future in which it so strongly stands for is ultimately undetermined. Barth failed to make his doctrine of election more eschatological, and Moltmann's theology of hope fails to be more protological.

Moltmann's eschatological theology of hope is, nevertheless, necessary for developing a proper Christian understanding of hope. Moltmann rightfully suggests that theologies, which find their teleology in temporal history lack in their hope for the future.<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, the history of salvation is entirely temporal. The breadth of God's goal for Christ and humanity, and ultimately the history of salvation, must extend beyond a temporally historical resurrection toward a future eternal resurrection. Moltmann, nevertheless, leaves the future too open; as if what is to be expected by way of hope is unknown. He speaks often of promise, and equates promise to the revelation event. Thus, the hope of the eschaton begins post-incarnation. The problem herein lies in the fact that pre-incarnation, and pre-temporally, the future of humanity and of God Himself was ultimately undetermined.<sup>14</sup> Moltmann is correct to suggest that promise is the root of hope, which finds its fulfillment in the eschaton, but he is wrong insofar as he grounds the promise for such hope in the event of revelation. If God is in fact undetermined at some point in God's history, then, there must be a time in which God moves from being one such thing to another—an ontological change must have occurred for there is something distinctly and ontologically different about a God whose decision for the eschaton is non-existent prior to the incarnation. Moltmann, I believe, would have done better to follow Barth more closely by locating the promise of God in the event of election, which necessarily commissions the event of revelation. The realization of the promise by way of the revelation event is only possible on account of a prior decision to be God in time—election

---

<sup>13</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 57-58

<sup>14</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 104, "Rather, the fulfillments can very well contain an element of newness and surprise over against the promise as it was received."

therefore constitutes revelation in time, and as such, there was never a time when revelation was not going to occur. We must look back before we look forward in order to maintain cohesion within our understanding of who God is. And, contrary to Barth, our gaze forward must continue beyond the historical event of the cross to a future resurrection in which all of humanity will participate in the resurrection of Christ and God will prove Himself once-and-for-all to be all in all.

The life of Christ, as Moltmann understands it, places humanity within a context that is already on its way to the reality of their own future as participants in the life and resurrection of Christ.<sup>15</sup> “In the gospel of the event of Christ this future is already present in the promises of Christ. It proclaims the present breaking in of this future, and thus *vice versa* this future announces itself in the promises of the gospel. The proclamation of Christ thus places men in the midst of an event of revelation which embraces the nearness of the coming Lord.”<sup>16</sup> Christian hope is thus announced and realized in the revelation of God, and through the promise of Christ is guaranteed. The “future of Christ” is an ontological part of the present and living Christ. Accordingly, Jesus of AD 1-30 anticipates who He is and will be in the eschaton.<sup>17</sup> If Jesus is the object and subject of Christian hope then the life of Christ, both in eternity and in time, is necessarily apocalyptic for the hope in which we abide is a hope for newness, for resurrection, and for reconciliation, all which find their reality in the eschaton. God is Himself apocalyptic for he remains always and consistently faithful to Himself, and He is himself his own decision for existence, and as such, he is himself the promise and reality of a future hope for His creation—He is not the instrument of a future hope, He is Himself the future hope. “His essence is not his absoluteness as such, but the faithfulness with which he reveals and identifies himself in the history of his promise as ‘the same’. His divinity consists in the constancy of his faithfulness, which becomes

---

<sup>15</sup> “The Christian hope for the future comes of observing a specific, unique event—that of the resurrection and appearing of Jesus Christ. The hopeful theological mind, however, can observe this event only in seeking to span the future horizon projected by this even. Hence to recognize the resurrection of Christ means to recognize in this even the future of God for the world and the future which [humanity] finds in this God and his acts.” Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 194

<sup>16</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 139

<sup>17</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 140

credible in the contradiction of judgment and grace. The word which reveals God has thus fundamentally the character of promise and is therefore eschatological in kind.”<sup>18</sup> For Moltmann, there is always a future tied to any reference to Christ for Christ is not static; He is always moving, and moving us, toward the promise of hope and redemption, and as participants in this movement we can truly hope.

#### **D. Toward an Eschatologically Realized Evangelical Theology of Hope**

Thus far we have considered Karl Barth’s doctrine of election, its apocalyptic character, and its implications for a Christologically grounded theology of hope. We have also considered Jürgen Moltmann’s theology of hope, its emphasis upon understanding the Christ event as the breaking in of the future, and as a result giving our present context a concrete and historical assurance of hope. This section, moreover, intends to move with and beyond Barth and Moltmann, taking the best of both thinkers and moving toward what I will call a universal and eschatologically realized evangelical theology of hope.

Considering the idea of Christian hope cannot be done without strict adherence to scripture. Theological and philosophical language are certainly helpful for adducing and expounding a Christian theology of hope, but if they in turn suffocate and/or supersede all reference to scripture then the theology of hope brought about by theological and philosophical exercises are indeed not Christian at all, but rather ideological and abstract. In order for hope to be truly Christian it must retrieve its scandalous character—it must in every instance be referring to the hope brought about by Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection. Our hope must retain Christ as its object and proclaim the assurance of our hope by way of participation in Him.

I can think of no better place in scripture to begin than with Ephesians 1:3-8 (NRSV),<sup>19</sup>

<sup>3</sup>Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup>just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. <sup>5</sup>He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ,

---

<sup>18</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 143

<sup>19</sup> All biblical quotations from here on out will be from the NRSV.

according to the good pleasure of his will, <sup>6</sup>to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. <sup>7</sup>In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace <sup>8</sup>that he lavished on us.

We are informed by the author of Ephesians that we have been chosen “in Christ” before the foundations of the world and that through Christ, in whom we have been chosen, we now have redemption and forgiveness. Indicating both promise and election, we have been given assurance of our redemption and by way of our election it has been fulfilled. We, according to Ephesians, already have redemption, it is already ours and not yet. Thus our hope is in the redemption we freely receive from Christ. However, the reality of our redemption is contingent upon our resurrection in Christ.<sup>20</sup> Accordingly, we may be “saved”, but our salvation is actualized on the account of our participation in the eschatological redemption of Christ. It is realized in the place in which, “He will transform the body of our humiliation that it may be conformed to the body of his glory, by the power that also enables him to make all things subject to himself” (Philippians 3:21). Our hope is a hope that is in being “made new.” It is a transformation in which the perils of this earth and the scars of our bodies will be made whole again—it is where we will finally become a new creation. Our election before the foundation of the world is always a reality, but it is realized *in toto* in the eschaton, thus embedding an apocalypticism within our very livelihood. We, as chosen ones redeemed in Christ, are ontologically future even in our present realities.

In our election for participation in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, we likewise, follow Christ toward His future, which is His return and our resurrection. Our telos is eschatologically realized, in that, our future, just as Christ’, began at the incarnation and becomes actualized in the eschaton. As Christ’ election is simultaneously

---

<sup>20</sup> See, Ephesians 2:5-6. In regards to redemption and participation in Christ, Andrew T. Lincoln says, “through their incorporation into Christ, believers, though still on earth, have been linked with the heavenly realm and already enjoy the blessings of that realm.” [Furthermore he says], “The most striking assertion of their new position is made in the anamnesis of 2.1-10 where, in contrast to their past under the control of the ruler of the realm of the air and in parallel to what has been said of Christ in 1.20, the readers can be said to have been raised up with Christ and seated with him in the heavenly realms (2.6).” Andrew T. Lincoln & A.J.M. Wedderburn, *The Theology of the Later Pauline Letters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 97

protological and eschatological, so too, is ours as participants in Him. Thus, the object, Christ, in which we place our hope has been, and always will be. It is impossible for us to hope in anything other than Christ, for the only place in which we can actually find hope has always been, and our hope for redemption and resurrection has always been intended. Hope in any other object is simply misdirected hope; hope in another object is hope in a utopia, which has no possibility of being achieved, on the other hand, hope in Christ is not a possibility, but a reality that becomes known to us in time and realized in the future. Ephesians 2:4-7 says, “<sup>4</sup>But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us <sup>5</sup>even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—<sup>6</sup>and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup>so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” Even on account of our wretchedness we have been given hope and promised the “immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.” This hope for the riches of grace and kindness of Christ is universal—it is for all, and not simply a possibility, but a reality; it is actual. It is true hope because it pervades all contexts and is not hope in a vacuum, but rather a hope in which we have already been chosen to hope in. We do not choose to hope in Christ—we, conversely, are chosen for that hope. For hope is not ours—in the sense of ownership—it is not under our control and is ungraspable independent of its free offering by Christ.

Christian hope is hope in the full redemption of creation, which will take place in the eschaton; it is assurance of our being raised up with Christ and seated with Him in the heavenly places. What must now be brought into further clarity is the scope in which hope is available. Is it for some and not others? For those who live a certain way? Or is it for all? Have we all been chosen to make Jesus Christ—his life, death, and resurrection—the object of our hope? To the latter question, I must proclaim a resounding YES! The picture of the crucifixion and resurrection is one that is undoubtedly universal in character. 1 Peter 3:18 affirms that “...Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring you to God.” All of creation, as sinners and undeserving of God’s grace, were made inheritors of such grace and given the assurance of hope

brought about by his resurrection. What God has shown us in Jesus Christ is redemption and hope, and to conceive of them apart from God's revelation in Christ is simply an abstraction. As I have previously stated, hope, and for that matter redemption, are not ours to grasp; we are redeemed and given hope by God's election of Himself to be the benefactor of such gifts, and in God's election of Himself we—that being all of creation—are chosen as participants in Christ's election. If election is universal then as a consequence so, too, is redemption. And if redemption is universal then God's election of us, in Himself, is universally efficacious—God wills for all to be saved.<sup>21</sup> If it were not so then it would certainly not be redemption at all. We were elected to hope in Christ, and subsequently, elected for redemption, which will find its ultimate fruition in the eschaton. Hope is foregrounded in the event of election by which God chose Himself for us, and us for Him. We have all been chosen to find our hope in Christ, and even if our hope is misdirected it will one day find its proper direction. Hope spurs us on toward the future, which has been commissioned by God's election. Election is apocalyptic in character because it is election for hope and one day all of creation's hope will be properly in Christ. Our election for hope and redemption is, “<sup>10</sup>so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup>and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:10-11).

This is all good news! It is not a mixed message of grace and terror—in Christ we shall not be afraid. Affirming that Christ has chosen from all eternity for us to hope in Him, and for our hope and redemption to be realized in the eschaton is truly an evangelical theology of hope. It is an affirmation that we, as believers, carry the knowledge of God's goodness and it is our missional responsibility to speak that truth to all nations. The hope of God in Christ meets us in our lowest of lows and in the depths of destruction. But, in spite of them God wills our redemption and he gives us assurance of hope through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christ's resurrection gives us hope for the future for we will one day become full

---

<sup>21</sup> 1 Timothy 2:3-6: This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself a ransom for all—this was attested at the right time.

participants in his resurrection, and our hope will be finally realized. One day all things will be made right: we will be liberated from sin and slavery, we will be healed of all pain, we will be forgiven and we will forgive, we will be reconciled to God and each other, our hope will be a reality, and we will do all of this in the name of Jesus Christ for it is by His grace that we have been saved, and it is He who is the object of our hope.

### **Pastoral Conclusion**

Throughout this essay we have engaged Karl Barth's doctrine of election, Jürgen Moltmann's theology of hope, and in an attempt to move with and beyond these two theologies I have argued for what I am calling an eschatologically realized evangelical theology of hope. Throughout my studies and ministry I have come to the conclusion that we hope in a redemption freely given by Christ that is already ours and not yet. It is elected for us prior to the creation of the world, it is ours presently, and it will be fully realized apocalyptically. And it is our evangelical mission to spread this good news and proclaim Jesus Christ as the only true object of hope.

The title of this essay seems a bit conspicuous and has eluded any and all discussion up until now. It is an ambiguous title: *Between Two Tides*, it is, however, entirely fitting for the topic of this essay. The title here alludes to my growing up as a surfer in southern California. As a teenager and into my twenties I spent a significant amount of time in the ocean. It was my goal on a daily basis to catch the best wave possible because I never knew when it would be my last. I once thought to myself that I better catch as many waves as possible because I wasn't sure if there would be surfing in heaven. The quality of waves that I was able to surf often depended on the time of day I got into the water—morning and evening were the best. They were the best because it was either high tide, which meant the waves usually had good form and were closer to shore, or it was low tide, which meant the waves were farther out, but probably bigger. Every once in a while you would get caught in a lull; the waves would have just been head high and all of a sudden there's nothing. The reason that the waves stopped was because the ocean was in-between tides—it was either moving from high to low or from low to high. Although for a period of time the waves would be non-existent, you always knew that either low or high tide was coming, and the waves would

once again be good. We currently live between two tides: between the goodness of God's decision to be God "for us" in the death and resurrection of Christ, and the eschaton in which, in Christ, we too will be redeemed and have conquered death. We live in a world of "nothingness" of evil and despair; there is war everywhere, money is the god of gods, and we have lost any and all notion of loving our neighbors as we would love ourselves. But, as we know, there is a tide coming, a tide where all things will be made right, and all things evil and unjust will be resurrected and used for the glory of God. However, while we are between tides we have a hope that maintains its relation to the scandalous character of the cross, and thereby, gives a guarantee that all things will actually be made well. Nothing sums up this essay better than the words of Julian of Norwich in which she said, "all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well."<sup>22</sup>

### Bibliography

- Barth, Karl. *Church Dogmatics: The doctrine of God*. Edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Thomas F. Torrance. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Vol. II/2. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1957.
- . *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of Reconciliation*. Edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Thomas F. Torrance. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Vol. IV/3. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1961.
- . *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of Reconciliation*. Edited by Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Thomas F. Torrance. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. Vol. IV/3. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1961.
- Dalferth, Ingolf U. "Karl Barth's Eschatological Realism" in *Karl Barth: Centenary Essays*, Edited by S.W. Sykes. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Desmond, William. *Hegel's God: A Counterfeit Double?*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2003.
- Jones, Paul Dafydd. *The Humanity of Christ: Christology in Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics*. London: T&T Clark, 2008.
- Lincoln, Andrew T. and Wedderburn, A.J.M. *The Theology of the Later Pauline Letters*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- Moltmann, Jürgen. *Theology of Hope*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993.
- Norwich, Julian of. *Revelations-Motherhood of God*. Edited and Translated by Frances Beer. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1999.

---

<sup>22</sup> Julian of Norwich, *Revelations-Motherhood of God*, edited and translated by Frances Beer (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 1999), 6



[www.PreciousHeart.net/ti](http://www.PreciousHeart.net/ti)