**Mike Hipes – Facebook Lesson, January 20, 2021**

Good afternoon!

In the Old Testament, when it was said that a “Cedar has fallen in Lebanon” it referred to a great or powerful nation or a great king whose reign came to an end, and they were told to cry! Zechariah 11:1-2 says, “Open your doors, O Lebanon, that fire may feed on your cedars! Wail, O cypress, for the cedar has fallen; because the glorious trees have been destroyed; Wail, O oaks of Bashan, for the impenetrable forest has come down!”

On Monday, I got news of a great cedar who has fallen in the kingdom of God. My dear friend Jim Condon who served in the Lord’s church left this world and has graduated to glory to claim his reward in heaven. Jim baptized me into Christ, and when Margie and I decided to get married he performed our wedding ceremony. We served together in NY, NJ as well as Russia. Jim was not only one of the most evangelistic people I have ever met, but a great man of God in many ways. He was a faithful husband and father of six faithful children. Jim was able to see things in me that I never could see in myself. He was instrumental in my becoming a full-time minister in the Lord’s church. Although he may have fallen in this perishable world, God has lifted him up to an imperishable eternal home! The great news is that all who serve our glorious Lord and Savior will also someday enter our heavenly home!

As Christians, we have the assurance of our destiny in heaven: From Revelation, three reasons why!

1. Because the Father is on the throne, and no one else is. In Revelation 4 we read, “a throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne...” v.2. “And around the throne... were those... clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads ...” These were the overcomers! (2:10-11, 3:5,3;21) All of God’s faithful. All who surround the throne say, “day and night...holy holy holy” v.8. Folks, if you think an hour a week is too long to be in worship you might have trouble with worshiping day and night in heaven! Brothers and sisters, we have the assurance of an eternal home because our Father is eternally on the throne! As our country transitions from one leader to another, the only transition that will ultimately matter is our transition to glory where God will always be enthroned! Amen?

2. Because the Lamb that was slain, but rose again and is worthy, and no one else is. In Revelation 5 we read, first of the problem: The roll in the hand of God which announces our victory is unopened! “Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?” v.2. This is followed by the solution: The Lion of Judah has come/Jesus the slain Lamb! “Stop weeping, behold the Lion, that is from the tribe of Judah...Lamb standing as if slain” 5-6. The issue is not one of willingness but worthiness! When the call went out to all in heaven and on earth and under the earth, silence filled heaven! But when the Lion of Judah stepped forward who is worthy, tears were turned to cheers! However, the Lion now appears as a slain Lamb? How is all this possible? What’s the answer? There has been a Resurrection! The next time you feel like crying as John did, remember the Lion of Judah, the slain Lamb, the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, the Deliverer, the Savior, the author of eternal life, the risen Lord! JESUS!

3. Because Satan has been defeated, and we have overcome him. In Revelation 12 we read about a war in heaven and our victory. “And there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels waging war with the dragon... the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan...the accuser of our brethren... And they (the brethren) overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their testimony, and they did not love their life even to death. For this reason, rejoice...” 7-12. If Satan can’t even take Michael, surely, he can’t take on God! Michael and his angels whip the devil out of the devil and his angels! The devil was accusing the faithful day and night, but now we may be accused but not accountable. How? Not because we are innocent but because we have been pardoned! Forgiven! How? Because of the blood of the Lamb! The text says, “for this reason rejoice”. It’s time to start celebrating! Like my dear friend Jim knows, we need to know that victory is ours in glory, and that heaven is a wonderful place, and we as faithful Christians will one day graduate to glory as well! So, we can stop the weeping and start rejoicing due to the victory we have in Jesus! Amen to that church?

In His service,

Mike