

# *Theme: If Christ is not Risen*

**1 Cor. 15:14**

**And if Christ be not risen, then  
is our preaching vain, and your  
faith is also vain.**

# *Theme: If Christ is not Risen*

Judaism was the only ancient religion that believed in a resurrection event [reuniting of the body and spirit]. Many believed in a reincarnation event where the personhood of a spirit would be lost in the process of being born as a new person. Other religions believed in a spiritual existence or even a spiritual transcendence [unification with the spiritual force of the universe] following death.

For other religions the Jewish belief in resurrection of the physical body was somewhat creepy as they viewed it as the reanimation of a corpse rather than a transformation of the person's very being. The Christian view of salvation comes from the Jewish belief in resurrection. We believe that Jesus Christ was the first to experience this physical resurrection God promised to humanity. But unlike the Jewish faith we believe that the resurrection is accomplished in a through Jesus Christ.

# *Theme: If Christ is not Risen*



The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is central to our Christian faith. Primarily it verifies his claim to divinity. But in addition, it provides...

- ...an anchor in the midst of doubts
- ...hope in the most hopeless of situations
- ...recognition of God's power within us
- ...a full understanding of the meaning of salvation
- ...an understanding of who Jesus really is
- ...the purpose of Christ's suffering
- ... the goal God has for all creation.

# “The Stump Of Hope”

Isaiah 6:9-13 & Romans 8:9-11

Hope is one of the most interesting aspects of human existence. We are hopeful people. But death is the end of hope in human culture. Almost all ancient cultures tried to cheat death by elaborate ritual, magic spells, belief in reincarnation or transcendence. In opposition in the Jewish faith a motif for hope appears, that of a tree stump which revives.



Life in a stump

Mar. 5, 2023

# “The Stump Of Hope”

Isaiah 6:9-13 & Romans 8:9-11

In truth all such attempts ring hollow. One of the most ancient quests for hope is the Gilgamesh Epic. The hero Gilgamesh believed he was immortal until his close friend Enkidu was killed before his eyes, despair grips his mind and sends him on a quest for immortality. He fails to obtain this and the epic ends in a note of despair.



Life in a stump

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## Isaiah 6:9-13 [ESV]

9 And he said, "Go, and say to this people: "'Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.' 10 Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed."

11 Then I said, "How long, O Lord?" And he said: "Until cities lie waste without inhabitant, and houses without people, and the land is a desolate waste, 12 and the LORD removes people far away, and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land. 13 And though a tenth remain in it, it will be burned again, like a terebinth or an oak, whose stump remains when it is felled." The holy seed is its stump.

# “The Stump Of Hope”

## Isaiah 6:9-13 & Romans 8:9-11

According to ancient Greek mythology The ancient Greek myth Pandora was the 1<sup>st</sup> woman like Eve. When I was a young teen I was charmed by the story of Pandora for after her foolish curiosity which released calamities and evils into human existence she fearfully one last time opens the chest and releases “hope”.

While the story in this form is a charming and winsome tale told by Victorian romantics, it is not the original Greek tale, Hesiod is the 1<sup>st</sup> to record it 600 years before Christ.



Pandora by F. S. Church [1842-1924]  
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# “The Stump Of Hope”

## Isaiah 6:9-13 & Romans 8:9-11

First, there was no box or chest, it was a storage jar or funeral urn. Second, Pandora is a trap created by the malicious gods who wanted to punish humanity. Third, the story does not end with hope being released but trapped in the jar by the malevolent will of Zeus or the fear and despair of Pandora.

The translation of “box” for “jar” was an error by Erasmus in the 1500s. While storage jar is possibly the intent of Hesiod, it was more likely a funeral urn. This seems clear when the story is so closely connected with disease, evil and despair.



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# “The Stump Of Hope”

Isaiah 6:9-13 & Romans 8:9-11

Our Victorian forbearers rewrote mythology to sooth their fears of death while turning to Spiritism and fairy tales to stave off their concerns about eternity.

Pandora is one such attempt to romanticize suffering and whitewash over death and suffering.



Pandora by F. S. Church [1842-1924]  
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## Job 14:7-17 [ESV]

7 "For there is hope for a tree, if it be cut down, **that it will sprout again, and that its shoots will not cease.** 8 **Though its root grow old in the earth, and its stump die in the soil,** 9 **yet at the scent of water it will bud and put out branches like a young plant.**

10 But a man dies and is laid low; man breathes his last, and where is he? 11 As waters fail from a lake and a river wastes away and dries up, 12 so a man lies down and rises not again; till the heavens are no more he will not awake or be roused out of his sleep.

## **Job 14:7-17 [ESV]**

**13 Oh that you would hide me in Sheol, that you would conceal me until your wrath be past, that you would appoint me a set time, and remember me! 14 If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my service I would wait, till my renewal should come.**

**15 You would call, and I would answer you; you would long for the work of your hands.**

**16 For then you would number my steps; you would not keep watch over my sin; 17 my transgression would be sealed up in a bag, and you would cover over my iniquity.**

# “The Stump Of Hope”

Isaiah 6:9-13 & Romans 8:9-11

In a sense the great evils and diseases of our world ending in death leave little room for hope. Despair is the result of such a view. Even in the Old Testament books of philosophy, Job and Ecclesiastes, we are confronted with a sense of hopelessness. Yet both books still testify to the hope of the resurrection that was a part of the Jewish faith



Terebinth Tree



Palestine or Kermes Oak

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# “The Stump Of Hope”

Isaiah 6:9-13 & Romans 8:9-11

Job is the first to use the

image of a stump and its  
revivication. In Job 14, he uses it  
as a picture of a desired but  
unforeseeable future hope. Even  
when he expresses confidence in  
God, he struggles with fears that  
God might forget him. For the  
Jewish people hope only had  
reality if connected with a future  
but hazy resurrection event.



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## Isaiah 61:10-11 [ESV]

9 Their offspring shall be known among the nations, and their descendants in the midst of the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge them, that they are an offspring the LORD has blessed.

10 **I will greatly rejoice in the LORD;** my soul shall exult in my God, for **he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,** as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. 11 **For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations.**

# “The Stump Of Hope”

Isaiah 6:9-13 & Romans 8:9-11

Isaiah’s prophecies are the 1<sup>st</sup> to clearly delineate the concept of the resurrection and its fulfillment found in the Messiah. This gave hope to the people of Judah. This theme begins as early as Isaiah’s call recorded in Isaiah 6. In verses 1-4, the young teenager is confronted with the glory of God. In verses 5-8, Isaiah is in despair of his own sin and failures, yet is called to be a messenger of God.



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# “The Stump Of Hope”

Isaiah 6:9-13 & Romans 8:9-11

In verses 9-12 we are face to face with the seeming hopelessness of humanity and sin. But verse 13 is a strange and wonderful verse, **it is as if Pandora’s urn is dropped and as it shatters hope is released into the world.** This is the 1<sup>st</sup> glance at the connection between the resurrection and the promised Messiah.



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# “The Stump Of Hope”

## Isaiah 6:9-13 & Romans 8:9-11

To clear them from the land they would be cut down and the land burned over in an attempt to kill the roots. But being tenacious they often revived from the stumps. In verse 13 this resurrection experience is led by the “Branch” sprung from the stump of Judah. In a burned over world where everything seems hopeless, it is the hope of Christ’s resurrection within us that propels us forward with courage to engage the world.



Terebinth Tree



Palestine or Kermes Oak

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26 And as it was commanded to leave the stump of the roots of the tree, your kingdom shall be confirmed for you from the time that you know that Heaven rules.

# “The Stump Of Hope”

Isaiah 6:9-13 & Romans 8:9-11

Daniel at least 100 years after Isaiah’s prophecy would under God’s direction offer hope to the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar as he faced the judgement of God for his arrogance. Daniel promises in his interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar’s dream that even though the king will experience judgement he will also receive grace and restoration.



Life in a stump

# “The Stump Of Hope”

Isaiah 6:9-13 & Romans 8:9-11

The stump in the vision bound by iron in the ground is held in hope. Even in though we go through tough times which are either the result of our own failures, those of others or just circumstances, there is hope of God’s grace in the present and even more importantly in the future.



Life in a stump

## Romans 8:9-11 [ESV]

9 You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

10 But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

11 If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

# “The Stump Of Hope”

Isaiah 6:9-13 & Romans 8:9-11

Paul in Romans 8 brings home to us the importance of the belief in the resurrection that drives our Christian ethic. We believe fervently in the hope of the resurrection because the Holy within us makes the resurrected Jesus Christ’s presence real in our heart. As a result this mortal life is not as important as the calling and purpose of Jesus Christ within us.



Plague Window in the St. Lawrence Eyam Parish church

Mar. 5, 2023

# “The Stump Of Hope”

## Isaiah 6:9-13 & Romans 8:9-11

In 1666 in the small village of Eyam

England this belief in Christ was tested and it propelled a community under the spiritual direction of an Anglican Rector and a Puritan preacher to make an amazing sacrificial decision that cost over ¼ of their community’s population but saved 10’s of thousands of lives.

In the fall of 1665 it became clear that Bubonic Plague had been introduced into their community through a bundle of wet cloth delivered to the local tailor from London. The tailor’s assistant by airing out the wool cloth activated the dormant fleas carrying the plague.

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Plague Window in the St. Lawrence Eyam Parish church

Mar. 5, 2023

# “The Stump Of Hope”

Isaiah 6:9-13 & Romans 8:9-11

The tailor’s family was 1<sup>st</sup> to succumb but others were infected before winter. During the winter the plague went dormant. And the community thought it was safe.

In the Spring the 1<sup>st</sup> cases appeared. Children were sent away from the village. Many like in other places affected by plague prepared to flee. But as had been experienced in previous plague events this only spread the contagion to other communities.

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Plague Window in the St. Lawrence Eyam Parish church

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## 2 Corinthians 4:13-16 [ESV]

13 Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, "I believed, and so I spoke," we also believe, and so we also speak, 14 knowing that **he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence.** 15 For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. 16 **So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day.**

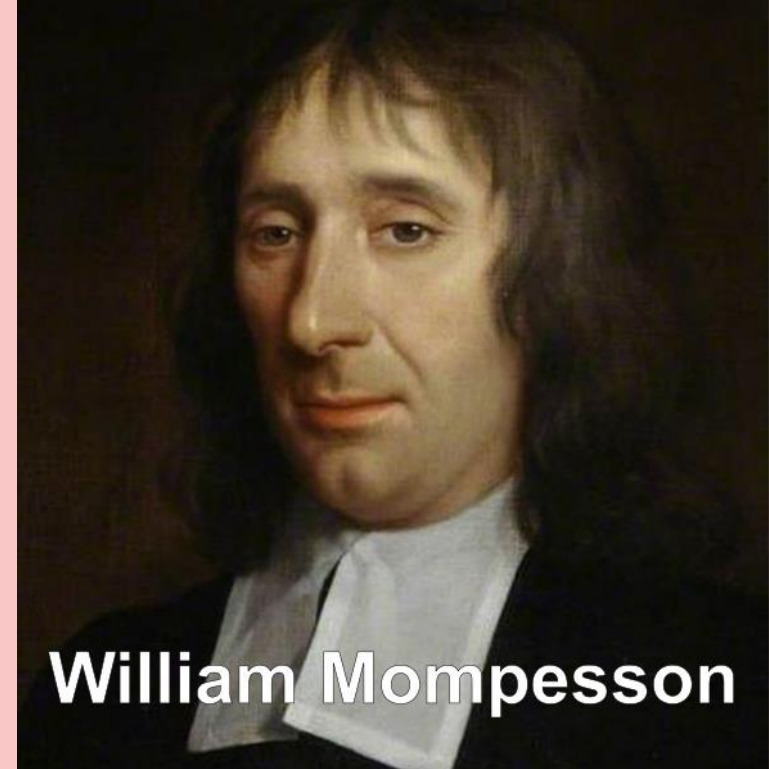
# “The Stump Of Hope”

Isaiah 6:9-13 & Romans 8:9-11

The Anglican Rector Rev. Wm.

Mompesson and the Puritan Preacher Rev. Thomas Stanley believed it was the community’s Christian duty not to spread the contagion to nearby towns and villages. They approached the magistrates of the village and in late march had a quarantine declared over the village.

Only 2 villages tried to violate the quarantine order. Rev. Mompesson lost his wife to plague and Rev. Stanley died just a few years after the plague probably due to health complications of the plague.



**William Mompesson**

Rev. Mompesson was instrumental in the quarantine decision of Eyam. His wife died of plague and his career was seriously damaged due to fear of the plague. Rev. Stanley died shortly after the plague likely due to related illnesses.

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# “The Stump Of Hope”

## Isaiah 6:9-13 & Romans 8:9-11

This quarantine lasted over a year. The death toll in the village reached a higher percentage of the town’s population than in London where the contagion had began, but the village’s faith and courage spared the nearby towns and villages for contracting the plague. By the time the plague ended 260 residents had died out of a population of 800.

What allows us to face our fears and sense of hopelessness and act with courage? It is the resurrection promised in Christ Jesus.



This boundary stone along with many others were set at ½ mile from the village. The holes drilled in the top were for vinegar which was used to purify coins used in payment for goods left by the stone. For larger shipments a station was set up by the community well outside town where money was purified in a trough set for the purpose. .

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# “The Stump Of Hope”

Isaiah 6:9-13 & Romans 8:9-11

Adam and Eve not Pandora released the disease, mayhem and hopelessness into human existence. Hope was trapped in that grave of humanity, locked within the urn until Jesus Christ split the grave and fractured the urn and released hope into our hearts through his presence. We are not hopeless.



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# “The Stump Of Hope”

Isaiah 6:9-13 & Romans 8:9-11

We sometimes feel that hope is gone but at the scent of water *[the work of the Holy Spirit]* hope revives in us. Because of Jesus the resurrection is real.

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