Blessed Hope Part 2

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THE BELIEVER'S BLESSED HOPE

PART 2

STABILIZING EFFECT OF THE BLESSED HOPE

Our Hope is Stable
for it is built upon the Solid Rock

My Hope is Built — Play "The Solid Rock"

My **hope** is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness.
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly trust in Jesus' Name.

Refrain

On Christ the solid Rock I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

When darkness seems to hide His face,
I rest on His unchanging grace.
In every high and stormy gale,
My anchor holds within the veil.

His oath, His covenant, His blood,
Support me in the whelming flood.
When all around my soul gives way,
He then is all my **Hope** and Stay.

When He shall come with trumpet sound,
Oh may I then in Him be found.
Dressed in His righteousness alone,
Faultless to stand before the throne.

THE BLESSED HOPE
a lasting HOPE
eternal life
Titus 1:2+

"in the **hope** of eternal life which God Who cannot lie promised long ages ago (cp Titus 3:7+)

Why is this hope so certain?

SANCTIFYING EFFECT OF THE BLESSED HOPE

If you are a genuine believer and yet you are feeling a bit "hopeless" in your present circumstances, may the Holy Spirit, your Helper, your Comforter minister to you as you meditate on the passages in this study of the Believer's Blessed Hope (See also The Reward of the Saints and study on 2Cor 5:10+)

Our **hope** isn't just **theological**; it's **ethical** -- it has behavioral consequences. If I believe Christ is coming again and that I will stand before His judgment (**bema**) seat, this truth will (or certainly should) transform my thinking and make a difference in the way I conduct my life. Paul said there is a crown of righteousness laid up in the future for all who "**all who have loved His appearing**" (2Ti 4:8+). Paul teaches that if we truly love the Second Coming we will do something about it and that this love will affect our life.

Thomas Brooks said...

> A man full of hope will be full of action.

As the Puritan **William Gurnall** wrote...

> The nearer to heaven in hopes, the farther from earth in desires. (Amen! or Oh my!)

PURIFYING ASPECT OF
THE BLESSED HOPE
1 John 3:1-3

See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. 2 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. 3 And everyone who has this **hope fixed** on Him purifies (hagiazo = cleanses from moral defilement; present tense = calls for this to be the saints habitual practice or "lifestyle" - not

Because "God, Who cannot lie promised long ages ago". GOD is incapable of lying. Does this truth not encourage us?...the truth that one day these bodies of corruption will be glorified, wholly perfected experientially in Christ's own righteousness, even as we are now positionally in Christ.

Matthew Henry said it well...

> The ground of our hope is Christ in the world, but the evidence of our hope is Christ in the heart.

John MacArthur explains that...

> The hope of eternal life is the believer's deepest longing for that which is affirmed and unalterably guaranteed by God's own Word. (cf Jn 6:37-40)

1 Thess 4:13-18

> **OUR BLESSED HOPE**
> **Caught up in THE COMFORTING TRUTH of "the Rapture"**

> But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, so that you will not grieve as do the rest who have no **hope**. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be **caught up** (harpazo) (Latin = Rapere > Rapture) together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord Therefore comfort one another with these words. (**notes** 1Th 4:13; 14; 15; 16; 17; 18)

While some of philosophers such as Socrates sought to prove happiness after death the pagan world had no word of assurance.

William Barclay comments on this **hopelessness** that enveloped the ancient world writing that...

> In face of death the pagan world stood in despair. They met it with grim resignation and bleak **hopelessness**.
>
> Aeschylus wrote, "Once a man dies there is no resurrection."
>
> Theocritus wrote, "There is **hope** for those who are alive, but those who have died are **without hope**."
>
> Catullus wrote, "When once our brief light sets, there is one perpetual night through which we must sleep

On pagan tombstones we find grim epitaphs carved with sad words like...

I was not
I became
I am not
I care not

> perfect but ever pursuing holiness and separation from the world and the flesh) himself, just as He is pure." (Cf 1John 2:28) (See notes 1John 3:1 1John 3:2 1John 3:3)

God established our hope initially by making us His sons (by faith we became "children of God" cf Jn 1:12-13). (1Jn 3:1-note) And He promises to fulfill this hope by making us like His Son for...when He (Jesus) appears, we will be like Him (1John 3:2-note).

> See sermons on 1Jn 2:28-3:3 by Dr John MacArthur. (Theology of Hope, Purifying Hope 1, Purifying Hope 2)

Writing to the saints in the church at Corinth Paul gave a similar exhortation. Notice that although the word "hope" is not used, the "promises" of God constitute a part of the believer's hope (absolute assurance of future good). Paul writes

> Having these promises (just described in 2Cor 6:16, 17, 18), beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (2Cor 7:1-note)

And so believers can say "I have been saved (justification), I am being saved (sanctification), and I am going to be saved (glorification). (For more discussion see Three Tenses of Salvation) It will to be more than wonderful someday. IN the meantime if we truly believe that Jesus is coming again and that we are going to be like Him, this great truth (**HOPE**) should motivate us to live a pure life down here.

> **When hope animates us**
> **there is a vigour in the whole body.**
> -- John Calvin

There is no greater incentive for holy living than recalling to mind (meditating upon cf Joshua 1:8-note) this **purifying hope** for as Proverbs reminds us "as a man thinks in his mind so he is" (Pr 23:7). We behave the way we do, because we believe a certain way. If we are hearers of this truth about purifying hope and not doers, we are making a choice to delude ourselves (James 1:22-note)

J. Vernon McGee says

> Today we see a lot of careless, slipshod living, but also a great emphasis on prophecy. I hear people say, "Oh, I'm waiting for the Lord to come!" Brother, my question is not whether you are **looking** for the Lord to come, but how are you **living** down here? How you live down here determines whether or not you are **really looking** for the Lord to come. (**Listen** to Dr McGee's comments on Mp3 - 1 John 3:2-3)

It has been well said that...

> If you are expecting and **hope** to be like Jesus Christ yonder, you will be trying your best to be like Him here." (however not through self effort but by relying on sanctifying grace and the Holy Spirit by Whom we are putting to death the deeds of the flesh, cp Ro 8:13+)

In stark contrast we find that the book of Acts glows with the specific **hope** of bodily resurrection (Acts 2:26; 23:6; 24:15; 26:6, 7). What a comforting **hope** is the bodily resurrection of the dead (saint) and the rapture of the saints.

Someone has well said that

Goodbyes are the law of earth.
Reunions are the law of heaven.

And so in the bleakest times saints can have the brightest hope. [See Torrey's Topic **Resurrection** with >70 Scriptures]

UNION with Christ here,
means REUNION with loved ones over There!

A believing soldier said,

> When I die do not sound taps over my grave, but reveille, the morning call, the summons to rise.

One summer a church camp staff staged an elaborate **rapture** while the camp director was off the grounds. When he returned, everybody was missing, clothing was on the ground as though people had "passed through" it, a motorboat was circling on the lake without pilot or passengers, and everything in the kitchen was functioning without a cook. A carefully timed phone call from town ("Hey, what's happening? Everybody's missing over here!") only added to the effect. "I've got to admit," said the director,

> "it really shook me for a minute."

Just think of what disturbing effect this comforting event for saints will have on a lost world! So let us comfort one another with this blessed hope instead of arguing over when it's going to occur.

The Grace of Hope

In Ps 119:81-note, the psalmist writes...

> My soul faints for Your salvation,
>
> but I **hope** (yachal - ponder the 19 great uses in Psalms) in Your Word.

The psalmist was a man who was fainting and yet what choice did he make? He turned to God. His source of **hope** was God's Word of Truth. Spurgeon explains that the psalmist...

> felt that salvation would come, for God cannot break His promise, nor disappoint the **hope** which His own word has excited: yea, the fulfilment of His word is near at hand when our **hope** is firm and our desire fervent. **Hope** alone can keep the soul from fainting by using the smelling bottle of the promise. Yet **hope** does not quench desire for a speedy answer to prayer; it increases our importunity, for it both stimulates ardour and sustains the heart under delays. To faint for salvation, and to be kept from utterly failing by the **hope** of it, is the frequent experience of the Christian man. We are "faint yet pursuing" **hope** sustains when desire exhausts. While the grace of desire throws us down, the **grace of hope** lifts us up again.

See sermon by **John MacArthur** on 1Jn 2:28-3:3 entitled The Purifying Hope, Pt 2 (The Purifying Hope, Pt 3)

F B Meyer gives the following illustration of the purifying effect of hope writing that...

> A young friend of mine once asked me if I would try to see her lover, as my train stopped at a wayside station in a far-distant western State. It was a dark night when we arrived, and a hurried conversation took place on the steps of the great Pullman car. I found that amid the many temptations of a rancher's life, this young fellow was holding on to purity and truth. He said that he had very infrequent opportunities of attending any religious services, but that the letters which came from the old country had been his sheet anchor. I understood what he meant. He realized the strong drift of circumstances, but to be loved by a sweet pure girl, who made him the object of her incessant prayer, and to receive her inspiring letters, kept him from yielding to the evil which enveloped him as an atmosphere; the thought that before long he might claim her as his bride helped to purify and steady his life. So the expectation of being with, and like Christ, should be to us as a sheet-anchor, who bear His Name. To see Christ face to face, to be with Him in unbroken fellowship, and to be like Him--this is the threefold destiny of every Christian soul. But how little can we imagine our future life! We strive to penetrate the dense veil of mist in vain--what the resurrection body will be like; what the converse with holy beings will amount to; what ministry may be assigned to us--we know not what we shall be, but "we know that we shall be like Him"--and it is enough! All that we have ever dreamed and hoped for will find its flower and fruitage in that glad summer time. PRAYER: O God, it is my earnest desire that I may not only live, but grow: grow in grace, and in the knowledge of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. May I grow in patience and fortitude of soul, in humility and zeal, in spirituality and a heavenly disposition of mind. AMEN. (from Our Daily Walk, Sept 20)"

Lehman Strauss...

> Every Christian I have ever known, who believed in the Lord's Return and who gave serious thought to His Coming, also made serious preparation for it. Paul's exhortation on the

Beloved, if you **hope** in circumstances, you will be disappointed, because they change. The psalmist **hoped** in the God's unchanging Word and trusted in God's faithfulness, and God comforted him. The psalmist clung to the comfort, **hope** and faithfulness of God. He surely experienced the revival he later prayed for asking God to...

> **Revive** (Imperative - command) me according to Your lovingkindness (Ps 119:88). (See Spurgeon's encouraging note)

Surely God answered with a breath of fresh, heavenly air and revived him. Thank God for His faithfulness. If you are having a rough day, remember that you can depend on Him. He is your God of **Hope** and all Comfort (2Cor 1:3), and He is ever faithful to His promises. As you submit to His truth on hope, He will give you the reviving power you need to rise above your circumstances and continue. Your **hope** lies not within yourself or with your circumstances. Look to the Lord and obey His Word. Then look ahead with confidence to your future hope, for God's promises are sure and His Word is true.

Marvin Vincent emphasizes how our blessed hope should motivate thanksgiving...

> The Christian is suspended between blessings received and blessings hoped for, so he should always give thanks.

Steadfastness
THE BLESSED HOPE
provides a
solid foundation
1Thes 1:3

> We give thanks to God always for all of you making mention of you in our prayers constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and **steadfastness** (hupomone) of **hope** in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father" (1Th 1:3-note) (Piper-Fruit of Hope: Endurance)

What is the "root" or source of their hope?

Their hope was **in** (in the sphere of) their **Lord Jesus Christ**, firmly built on "nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness". And what is the supernatural **fruit** of this hope in their Lord Jesus Christ? Clearly in context, the fruit is **steadfastness** or **endurance** which is the Spirit empowered quality in a saint to bear up triumphantly in the face of **much tribulation** (**thlipsis**) (1Th 1:6-note) and **sufferings** (1Th 2:14-note). In other words, if something happens in your life that is difficult or disappointing and you make the choice (enabled by the "Spirit of grace" = His name in Heb 10:29-note) to look with the eyes of faith (2Co 5:7-note, 2Co 4:18-note) to Christ and His power and sufficiency and you refuse to give in to complaining or bitterness, then your faith perseveres. The Thessalonian saints' **hope in the Lord Jesus Christ** brought forth this fragrant fruit of steadfastness which enabled them to bear up under their many trials and tribulations. Furthermore, when Christians live with an expectant hope, their lifestyle will give clear evidence of the blessed hope emphasizes this matter of purity (Titus 2:11-14). Peter likewise linked Christ's Second Coming with a challenge to moral cleanliness (2Pe 3:10-14). This blessed hope is an incentive to patience (Jas 5:7-8), sincerity (Phil 1:10), charitableness (1Cor 4:5), and considerate-ness (Phil 4:5Amplified). Nothing could possibly have a more sanctifying effect on the behavior of a child of God than the thought of the imminent Return of our Lord Jesus Christ. Heart occupation with the Savior's Return is a strong force in weaning Christians away from the world. "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.... Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Mt 24:42, 44).

LOOKING FOR
the blessed hope OF THE
appearing of the glory of Christ
Titus 2:11-13

> For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the **blessed hope** and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus" (see **notes** Titus 2:11; 12; 13)

Persistently looking for (present tense = habitually or as one's lifestyle) for Christ will (or certainly should) motivate one to live **passionately** (sensibly, righteously and godly) for Him in this present age.

See the following Cross References on **looking for the LORD** especially godly **Simeon** (Lk 2:25+) and **Anna** the prophetess (Lk 2:38+) (both of whom are undoubtedly part of the Jewish **remnant** who believe in the Messiah and are saved by grace) where the same Greek verb is used for **looking for** as in Titus 2:13.

See also **Joseph of Arimathea** Mk 15:43, **Paul** in Acts 24:15 , and the exhortation in Jude 1:21 ...

GODWARD LOOKING...
MOTIVATES GODLY LIVING!

THE BLESSED HOPE:
GOD IN US
the HOPE of glory
Colossians 1:27+

> (To NT believers) God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the **hope** of glory.

Our absolute assurance of future glory, free of sin, pain, tears, etc, is guaranteed because Christ is in us.

Remember that in his letter to the Ephesians Paul reminded the Gentile believers that in their unsaved state they...

> were separate from Christ and had **no hope** (Ep 2:12-+)

genuineness of their salvation, which Paul was celebrating with the giving of thanks (1Th 1:2-note)

John Calvin said that...

> Hope is the foundation of patience.

If you have genuine Biblical hope (not "I hope so") and you really embrace this truth, it will be a stabilizing force when people and/or circumstances come into your life and challenge your patience. (See this "golden thread" of **hope** Paul outlines in Romans 5 = **hope** > **tribulations** > **perseverance** > **proven character** and back to **hope** which does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit Who was given to us! (See **notes** on Ro 5:1-2; 5:3; 5:4-5)

What was the truth about the Lord Jesus Christ on which they based their **endurance producing hope**? Paul gives us the answer in this same chapter writing that now as believers they were

> **waiting** (present tense = expectant waiting was their lifestyle) for His Son from heaven, Whom He raised from the dead (~"a living hope"-1Pe 1:3 note), that is Jesus, Who **rescues** (delivers) us from the **wrath** to come. (1Th 1:10-note)

In context, the **steadfastness of hope** of the afflicted Thessalonian saints reflected their certainty that Jesus would return and deliver them from the coming wrath described in Revelation 6-19:21-note. (See **Rapture**; see **Second Coming**)

It is noteworthy, that the truth of Christ's **imminent** return to rapture His bride the Church is such an important plank in the scaffolding of a believer's life of hope that Paul alludes to it at the end of every chapter of First Thessalonians! This repetition clearly underscores the encouraging and stabilizing effect of the hope of our Lord's return. (As noted elsewhere this also may explain why about 1 in 20 verses in the NT refer either directly or indirectly to the **Second Coming**).

One might wonder why the new believers at Thessalonica were experiencing tribulation? Paul explains that they had

> turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God (1Th 1:9-note) (cp 2Ti 3:12-note where Paul says that all those who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus **will be** [it's a "promise"] persecuted!)

So these former dead idol worshippers were now living God worshippers, and as such they were "swimming against the current" of the pagan, godless society in the first century. Yet despite affliction, they continued to manifest "sheer dogged endurance." (Phillips) To reiterate, these saints were anchored in the truth of the blessed hope of Christ's imminent return (See article by John Walvoord). They were looking for Him, which translated into their living for Him.

> Dear set apart one, for what or Whom are you looking? It is a basic spiritual principle that for what (or for Whom) you are looking will radically effect what or Who you are living for. If **but now** in Christ they were...
>
> **sealed** in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise Who is given as a **pledge** of our inheritance. (Eph 1:13, 14+)

The indwelling Spirit of Christ is God's "down payment" or "earnest money" as it were, by which our faithful God guarantees our future glory (cp 2Co 1:22)

THE BLESSED HOPE OF
THE COMING GLORY OF GOD
Romans 5:1-5

> Therefore (because of the truth in Ro 4:25+) having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand (perfect tense = speaks of the permanence of our standing!); and we exult in **hope** of the glory of God. And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance (hupomone); and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, **hope**; and **hope** does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us." (see **notes** Romans 5:1; 5:2; 5:3; 5:4; 5:5)

The believer's ultimate destiny is to share in the **glory of God** (Ro 8:29, 30+; Php 3:20, 21+) (John 17:22 2Cor 3:18+; 1John 3:1, 2- notes v1 v2) and that **hope** will be realized because Christ Himself has secured it (1Ti 1:1).

Without the certain promises of the Word of God, the believer would have **no basis for hope** (Ro 15:4note; Eph 2:12-note)

No God, no hope.
Know God, know hope.

THE BLESSED HOPE
OF FUTURE GRACE
1 Peter 1:13-16+

> Therefore, gird your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, **fix your hope** (aorist imperative - Do this Now! It conveys sense of urgency) completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY." (See **notes** 1 Peter 1:13; 14; 15; 16) (Sermon by Piper)

Hope in **HEAVENLY GRACE**
motivates and empowers
a life of holiness
in our **EARTHLY RACE**.

Like the OT saints, we all will encounter hurt and uncertain tomorrows. We may suffer and experience tragedy, and yet we can face the future expectantly. We may have to wait a while for the full experience of the future grace that God promises. Joshua's parting words were originally given to Israel but in

you are looking for Christ, you will be living for Christ.

Romans 8:24, 25

In this passage we again see the **stabilizing effect of hope**...

> And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. For in **hope** we have been saved (past tense salvation = justification), but **hope** that is seen is not **hope**; for why does one also **hope** for what he sees? **25** But if we **hope** for what we do not see (this refers to our future tense salvation = glorification = "redemption of our bodies" - saved finally from sin's presence and pleasure!), with **perseverance** (hupomone) (steadfastness) we **wait eagerly** (apekdechomai) for it. (Ro 8:23-note, Ro 8:24, 25-note) (**Related resource**: **Three Tenses of Salvation**)

This passage begs the question - Are you waiting eagerly for your glorification in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye? If not then meditate frequently (a discipline greatly aided by Memorizing His Word) on the Biblical passages on hope and the Spirit will renew your mind and strengthen your heart to retain a "future focus".

Rejoice in glorious hope!
Our Lord the Judge shall come
And take His servants up
to their eternal home.
We soon shall hear th' archangel's voice;
The trump of God shall sound, rejoice!

Lift up your heart, lift up your voice!
Rejoice, again I say, rejoice!
Sing Charles Wesley's great hymn

Christian hope is a confident expectation that God will do what He says, but it is still something that will not be "seen" until the final day. That is why **faith** and **hope** are so intimately intertwined. What Paul is saying is that because believers now have this sure hope, they are "empowered" or enabled to wait for it with perseverance or steadfastness. **In short, future hope fosters present patience!**

Listen to how the **New Jerusalem Bible** renders Romans 8:25...

> having this hope for what we cannot yet see, we are able (**Ed note**: we have supernatural power/ability) to wait for it with persevering confidence.

Hope is the foundation, while **perseverance** is the result of the firm foundation.

> Hope means expectancy when things are otherwise hopeless. (Chesterton)

> Hope teaches endurance and an eager anticipation of that which will become reality. (Simon J. Kistemaker)

William Newell explains that...

principle apply as well to NT believers for as he testified

> not one word of all the good words which the LORD your God has spoken concerning us has failed. All have been fulfilled. Not one of them has failed. (Joshua 23:14+)

> Not one of the good promises which the LORD had made to the house of Israel failed; all came to pass. (Joshua 21:45+)

God is fully committed to everyone who places their faith in Him. But in the meantime, Peter commands us to **fix our hope** in full confidence that Jesus is coming again with grace for His people. **Have you fixed your hope on this certainty?** Such a mindset can radically impact your reaction to current events and/or uncomfortable/uncontrollable circumstances.

Peter's text also clearly associates what we fix our hope on with how we conduct ourselves in this life. Before we came to Christ, we set our hope (really our "hope so") on the things of the world and our conduct reflected that creed. Peter commands believers as new creatures in Christ (who have the mind of Christ) to hope fully in the revelation of the grace of God and exhibit a conduct reflecting this "future grace" mindset.

FUTURE GRACE
Should motivate & empower
A HOLY RACE

THE BLESSED HOPE...
fixed on the Living God
Motivates Godly Living
1 Timothy 4:7-11

> **Have nothing to do** (present imperative + a negative = stop doing this, implying they were) with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, **discipline** (**gumnazo**) (present imperative = make this your lifestyle, the habit of your new life in Christ) yourself for the purpose of **godliness 8** for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is **profitable** for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come. **9** It is a trustworthy statement deserving full acceptance. **10** For it is for this we **labor** (kopiao = to point of exhaustion; present tense = continually) and **strive**, (agonizomai = labor fervently; present tense = continually) because we have **fixed** **our** **hope** on the living God, Who is the Savior of all men, especially of believers. 11 **Prescribe** (present imperative = command to do this continually) and **teach** (present imperative) these things (See **notes** 1Timothy 4:7-8; 4:9-11)

If there is a **motivation** for bodily discipline (and there is), there is also a **motivation** for disciplining one's self for the purpose of godliness. And in context Paul says believers have **set their hope** on the living God and that the certainty of future glory and eternal reward motivates one to be willing to labor to the point of exhaustion and agonize with the output of strenuous effort, for the goal of "present" and "eternal" godliness. The reward for bodily discipline is temporal but godliness "holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come." In other words, the

hope is expecting something better! The very fact that we have not seen it realized as yet, begets within us that grace which is so precious to God - **patience**. But note, it is not patience in the abstract that is set forth here: but **patient waiting** for the coming liberty of the glory of the children of God. (Romans Verse by Verse)

And so as believers, we can experience steadfastness in the midst of life's trials because we know ("we have a sure hope") Christ is coming again and He will deliver us from the wrath to come and will consummate our salvation (For more discussion of past, present and future tense salvation see Three Tenses of Salvation)

Hoping is disciplined waiting. (Hoffman)

A. T. Robertson defines steadfastness as...

patience marked by **hope** ...inspired by **hope** ...and sustained by **hope** in spite of delays and set-backs

God's good promises put
a rainbow of hope in every cloud and
a "pillow of grace" in every bed of affliction!

Hope has a thick skin and will endure many a blow; it will put on patience as a vestment, it will wade through a sea of blood, it will endure all things if it be of the right kind, for the joy that is set before it. Hence patience is called "patience of **hope**," because it is **hope** that makes the soul exercise patience and long-suffering under the **cross**, until the time comes to enjoy the **crown**. (John Bunyan)

THE BLESSED HOPE
worth boasting about
Romans 5:1-5

Therefore (because of the truth in Ro 4:25-note) having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through Whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand (perfect tense = speaks of the permanence of our standing!); and we **exult (boast)** in **hope** of the glory of God. And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, **hope**; and **hope** does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us." (see **notes** Ro 5:1-2; 5:3; 5:4-5) (Piper-Our Hope: The Glory of God) (Is there any hope?)

PAST

Peace (eirene) **with God** takes care of the **past**: God no longer holds our sins against us.

PRESENT

Access (prosagoge) by faith into this grace in which we stand" takes care of the **present**: we can come to Him at any time for the help we need (And frankly we need help **continually** future profit is not just a ***maybe*** but is our sure hope, our absolute assurance that God will do good to us in the future. Which so great a salvation portrayed before our eyes let us...

work out our salvation with fear and trembling knowing that it is God (the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ) Who is at work (continually) in us, both to will (He gives us the desire) and to work (He gives us the power) for His good pleasure. (See notes Philippians 2:12, Philippians 2:13)

May God cause us to continually grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and the "blessed hope" of His appearing and may this transforming, renewing truth affect all our temporal earthly activities. (cp 2 Peter 3:18-note)

THE BLESSED HOPE...
fixed on the Living God
Motivates Godly Living
Romans 8:23-25-note

And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, **waiting eagerly for** our **adoption** as sons the **redemption** of our body. **24** (note) For in **hope** we have been **saved**, but **hope** that is seen is not **hope**; for who **hopes** for what he already sees? **25** But if we hope for what we do not see, with **perseverance** we **wait eagerly for** it. (Click sermon by John Piper)

What is our blessed hope in these verses?
(look again if you didn't see it).

What are we eagerly waiting for?

Adoption as sons equates with the **redemption** of our earthly physical bodies. Saints have been redeemed (past tense when we were justified by faith eg Ro 3:24 [note], Titus 2:14 [note], et al) but here Paul refers to the hope of an "unseen" aspect of our "redemption".

Redemption in Paul's day meant a price was paid to set captives or prisoners free. In an analogous way, in spiritual terms, all men are born in sin (in Adam) and as such are born captive to **Sin** and enslavement to Satan (He 2:15-note). Christ's death on the Cross and the shedding of His precious blood satisfied the wrath of God against sin and thus fully paid the price of redemption. When one is saved by grace through faith, Christ's "price of redemption" is credited to our spiritual account (imputation) and we are set free from **Sin** and Satan. In short, we are redeemed. But this is just the first phase of the believer's **redemption**, for we still live in bodies of sin which possess the fallen **flesh** nature (the evil disposition irrevocably opposed to God) and thus we find ourselves involved in a spiritual conflict (see notes on flesh versus Spirit - Gal 5:17-note). In Romans 8:23-25, Paul describes an unseen hope, which is the second and final phase of the believer's redemption. Our hope (absolute assurance of future good) is that one day we will be liberated from these physical bodies and the old flesh nature that so often drags us down. This future aspect of redemption is essentially synonymous with glorification.

because we are continually tempted/tested. **We need to learn to "cry out"** and He will come running to our aid - see notes on this beautiful picture in Heb 2:18-note).

FUTURE

"We **exult** in hope of the glory of God" takes care of the **future**: one day we shall share in His glory, in glorified bodies free from the presence and pleasure of sin, in perfect communion with our Father forever. (cf 2Cor 4:16-note, 2Cor 4:17-note, 2Cor 4:18-note) This **sure hope** like an anchor to a boat in "troubled waters" should serve to **stabilize our faith** when tribulations roll over us like billowing waves. At those times, we need to make the choice to recall to our mind the sure promises of God which "For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God". (2Cor 1:20KJV) or as Joshua testified to Israel with some of his last words "not one word of all the good words which the LORD your God spoke concerning you has failed." (Josh 23:14). **Do you believe this Word of Truth? Is your "boat" about to be driven into the reefs? Then cast out your anchor of hope, based upon the sure Word of the "non-lying" God** (Titus 1:2, Nu 23:19).

THE BLESSED HOPE
the HELMET of protection
THE HOPE of salvation
Colossians 1:4-5- note

Paul writes to the saints at Colossae

> we heard of your **faith** in Christ Jesus and the **love** which you have for all the saints because of the **hope** laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the **Gospel**,

The Greek word for **laid up** (apokeimai) means to put something away for safekeeping (same word in 2Ti 4:8-note).

How much more safe could our "hope" be than with God in heaven?

This passing earth may (will) totter and shake (it is 2011 and the global economy is shaking!) but our hope is certain (unlike the Stock Market!) and our hearts can be stabilized for we know that our eternal treasure is safely stored away

> where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal (Mt 6:18-note, Mt 6:19, 20-note).

Although Ps 16:11-note does not use the word hope, it does depict the future joy which is reserved for us...

> Thou will make known to me the path of life. In Thy presence is fulness of joy (~our blessed hope!). In Thy right hand there are pleasures forever. (Now that's a hope worth waiting for!)

Peter explains that because of our **living hope** we are promised

> an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven (1Pe 1:3, 4-note)

Observe also that in **Colossians 1:4-5**, the **fruit of Christian**

How would this hope of future, final redemption have a sanctifying effect on us now? Hope in future redemption gives **perseverance** (see notes Ro 5:1; 5:2; 5:3) which in turn "**develops strength of character in us**" (Ro 5:4NLT-note) and this comes around full circle and undergirds **hope**! In other words as our character is tested and becomes strengthened, our hope is strengthened for we know that we are genuine believers. As an aside, when one "interrupts" this cycle by committing sins (and not confessing and repenting), such a person's hope is often perceived by themselves as less certain (it is still certain in God's eyes, but not in the wayward believer's mind). The result of this mindset is that one can even begin to question their "hope" of eternal security (although some individuals falsely teach that a believer can lose their salvation, the Bible clearly teaches that genuine believers are eternally secure and are forever new creations in Christ.). When we walk worthy of our calling, one aspect of which is our future redemption, our "proven character" buttresses our hope and assures us of the certainty of our future glorification. One word of caution is that if a person is continually in a state of uncertainty about their eternal security, it is at least possible that they might have good reason to be.

For example, **Paul** warned the Corinthians...

> Examine and test and evaluate your own selves to see whether you are holding to your faith and showing the proper fruits of it. Test and prove yourselves. Do you not yourselves realize and know [thoroughly by an ever-increasing experience] that Jesus Christ is in you—unless you are [counterfeits] disapproved on trial and rejected? (2Corinthians 13:5-note, Amplified)

> Test yourselves to discover whether you are true believers: put your own selves under examination. Or do you not know that Jesus Christ is within you, unless you are insincere? (2Co 13:5-note, Weymouth Paraphrase)

No one is hopeless
whose hope is in God.

The secret of coping
Is hoping in God
(Devotional)

THE BLESSED HOPE
Other Believers
1Thes 2:19; 20-note

> For who is our **hope** or joy or crown of exultation? Is it not even you, in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming? 20 For you are our glory and joy (cp Ro 15:16-note)

This **hope** should cause us to desire to share our faith as the Spirit leads (and empowers - Acts 1:8) and circumstances are providentially provided. Remember that witnesses are watching us, and will be less interested in what we say, if our conduct does not support our creed! (Mt 5:14, 15, 16-note)

THE BLESSED HOPE
laid up in heaven

hope is **love** for the saints. **John Piper** explains "*if you ask how a distant future benefit causes love in the present, the answer is that the hope laid up for us in heaven inspires hope and confidence and freedom in the present. The link between the objective hope laid up in heaven and the active love for the saints on the earth is the subjective experience of hope welling up in our hearts.*" (Sermon).

THE BLESSED HOPE
the HELMET of protection
THE HOPE of salvation
1Thes 5:8, 9, 10, 11

> But since we are of the day, let us be sober, having put on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet, the **hope (certainty) of salvation**. 9 For (term of explanation) God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, 10 who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep, we will live together with Him. 11 Therefore encourage one another and build up one another, just as you also are doing. (1Th 5:8-**note**, 1Th 5:9-11-**note**) (**For sermons by John MacArthur on "Night People, Day People"** 1Th 5:8a or 1Th 5:8b)

Hope is a sturdy helmet that protects the mind. The unsaved fix their minds on the things of this world, while dedicated believers set their attention on things above (See notes Col 3:1; Col 3:2). Paul is not saying that you are to **"hope"** that you'll be saved but is referring to the **hope** that salvation gives. Unsaved people are **without hope** (Ep 2:12-note). This helps explain why they live as they do and say things like "you only go around once so grab for all the gusto you can!" or that famous saying...

"Eat, drink, and be merry,
for tomorrow we die!"

In addition to the stabilizing effect of this truth Paul desires that those on the road to ultimate salvation (click for study of future tense salvation) should behave differently (in context **encouraging** and **building one another up**) from those on the road to destruction (see next column - Sanctifying Effect of Hope)

Hiebert...

> The nature of this "**hope**" is at once defined as the hope "**of salvation**." This objective genitive denotes that the hope is directed toward salvation, the future eschatological deliverance of believers at the parousia. It is the antithesis of the wrath mentioned in the next verse. It is this hope of the future consummation of our salvation that "lifts up the head toward heaven, and wards off all the power of the blows inflicted by Satan and this world." While we believers already know the blessed experience of salvation from the bondage of sin, we are eagerly awaiting the coming consummation of our salvation with the return of the Savior who will climax our salvation with the glorification of our bodies (Ro 8:23-note; Phil. 3:21-note)...It also encourages the believer to resist the enervating influences of the present evil age. It makes the

Colossians 1:5 -note

> Paul writes the saints at Colossae that they have a "**hope laid up in heaven**".

One result of this personal hope laid up for each saint should be a willingness to sacrifice present gratification on "the altar of the future" (cf Moses "looking to the reward" - He 11:24, 25, 26-note, Heb 11:27-note), a sacrifice that runs contrary to our old **flesh** nature (inherited from Adam). It follows that saints should be motivated to live for eternity and not for this present world for it and even its lusts are passing away (1John 2:17-note). To reiterate, what you are looking for will radically impact what you are living for!

Saints need to get serious and to live in the light of eternity, knowing that our citizenship is in heaven (Php 3:20-note). Like Paul, we need to set aside our personal agenda, obey God's will and discipline ourselves for the incorruptible crown who will be given to all who love His appearing (cp 2Ti 4:8-note).

Like **Jim Elliot,** missionary (and martyr) to the Auca Indians, we must realize that

He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose

Amy Carmichael missionary to India had a similar thought in mind when she wrote:

Only one life; 'twill soon be past;
Only what's done for God will last.

Compare to **1 Peter 1:3, 1:4** (note) a living hope (**see discussion of living hope in Blessed Hope, part 1**)... an inheritance which is **imperishable** and **undefiled** and **will not fade away** reserved in heaven for you

N T **hope** has not only an **objective content** but also a **subjective impact**. When we fix our eyes on the future that God has in store for us, we by His grace and His Spirit's enablement begin to taste the wonders of His transforming, sanctifying power.

BIBLICAL HOPE...

> Gives us a reason to live for tomorrow not today

WHEN are you living for?

> **Hebrews 13:14** (note) For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come.

BIBLICAL HOPE...

> Helps hold temporal treasures lightly knowing we have eternal treasure

WHAT are you living for?

BIBLICAL HOPE...

> is founded on realities (truths) that are unaffected by conditions in this world.

dangers and trials of this earthly life seem light and endurable (Ro 8:18-note).

THE BLESSED HOPE
AN ANCHORING HOPE
Hebrews 6:18, 19, 20

> in order that by two **unchangeable** things, in which it is impossible for God to lie we may have strong encouragement we who have fled for refuge in laying hold of the **hope** set before us. 19 This **hope** we have as an anchor of the soul, ***a hope*** both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, 20 where Jesus has entered as a **forerunner** for us having become a High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. (He 6:18-note, He 6:19, 20-note)

Related Resources...

- The Unseen Keel
- Ray Stedman Dealing with Doubt
- The Sun will Shine Again

In the time that the NT was written the **anchor** was often used as a symbol of **hope**.

The words **sure and steadfast** are important. The first describes the anchor as firmly settled on the ocean bottom. The second describes the quality of the anchor's construction. This anchor will not tear from insubstantial moorings, nor will it break because of internal flaws.

When we live with biblical hope, we have an anchored life. We are held steady in the midst of any storm. As a ship is safe when at anchor, our life is secured by **hope** which binds us to Christ, our great High Priest who has entered the sanctuary. Stated another way, what an **anchor** is to a ship, **hope** is to the soul. They both stabilize whatever needs to be held steady amidst the storms in life. Every Christian has been given a secure anchor in the person of Christ...

We have an anchor that keeps the soul
Steadfast and sure while the billows roll,
Fastened to the Rock which cannot move,
Grounded firm and deep in the Savior's love.
--Owens

The world hopes for the best,
but Jesus Christ offers the best hope.
(J W While)

We see this same **fear fighting fruit of hope** in Job 11 where we read...

> You will have courage (confidence, a sense of security, live without fear) because you will have hope. You will be protected and will rest in safety. (Job 11:18)

Job's strong sense of security is based on his genuine hope. **Are you dreading the future?** Job was right there with you and yet his anchor called **hope** would inspire him to anticipate the future with joy and to look about with confidence. "*Like a sheep lying*

HOW should this affect our attitude when in the midst of various trials and afflictions?

REMEMBER BELIEVERS HAVE A FUTURE and A HOPE...for as the writer of Hebrews says...

> **Hebrews 12:28** (note) Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; **12:29** for our God is a consuming fire.

Living with "anxious" (in a positive sense) longing and anticipation of our blessed hope of Christ's return motivates us to live sensibly, godly, righteously in this present age (Titus 2:12-note).

Biblical hope focuses attention on God and fills us with eager expectation. Those who learn to hope in a biblical way will be much less likely to be overwhelmed by disappointment and more likely to be filled with patience, encouragement, and zeal for the glory of the Lord.

The sanctifying effect of Hope should motivate the child of God to be as diligent in keeping himself or herself "pure" as the **ermine** who lives in the forests of northern Europe. This little animal is highly prized for his snow-white fur in winter. He instinctively protects his white coat against anything that would soil it. Fur hunters take advantage of this unusual trait of the ermine. They don't set a snare to catch him but instead they find his home usually in a cleft of a rock or in a hollow tree. They smear the entrance with grime. Then the hunters set the dogs loose to chase the ermine. The frightened animal naturally flees toward home but refuses to enter because of the grease on the entry. Rather than soil his white coat, he is trapped by the dogs and captured while preserving his purity. For the ermine, purity is more precious than life.

Warren Wiersbe gives this exhortation...

> It would be good for us to examine our hearts to see if we are ready to meet the Lord. One mark of a true Christian is his eager looking for the coming of Jesus Christ (1Th 1:10-note). As we grow in the Lord, we not only look for His appearing, but we love His appearing (2Ti 4:8-note). Because we have this hope in Him, we keep our lives pure so that we may not be ashamed at His coming (1John 2:28–1Jn 3:1, 2, 3).

Robert Murray McCheyne, the godly Presbyterian preacher, used to ask people:

> "Do you think Jesus Christ will return today?"

Most of them would reply,

> "No, not today."

Then **McCheyne** would say,

> "Then, my friend, you had better be ready; for He is coming at such an hour as ye think not" (Lk 12:40).

peacefully in a pasture guarded by a shepherd, Job will then be able to lie down and rest without any fear that someone will terrify him." (Hartley, NICOT)

THE BLESSED HOPE
waiting for Jehovah --
new strength
Isaiah 40:31-note

> Yet those who **wait** (**HOPE**) for the LORD will gain **new strength**. They will mount up with wings like eagles. They will run and not get tired. They will walk and not become weary. (see in depth commentary)

The Hebrew verb **wait** is derived from a root word meaning to wait for or look for with eager expectation and thus incorporates the ideas of hope and confidence.

Waiting with steadfast endurance is ultimately an expression of one's trust or faith. It is walking by faith, not by sight. It is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not yet seen. This attitude manifests itself by enduring patiently in **confident hope** that God will decisively act for the salvation of his people (eg, Jacob facing death expresses His hope in the Messiah in Gen 49:18 confidently declaring "For Thy salvation [Yeshuah = related to word that speaks of the "Deliverer" Jesus] I wait [qavah = Piel stem = intensively, intentionally - to wait for or to hope = depending on and ordering activities around a future event], O LORD".)

The picture of the Hebrew phrase "gain new strength" is that of making an exchange.

What is the "exchange"
which Isaiah is describing?

Those who wait for or hope for God, will exchange His **strength** for their **weakness**, the same principle that Paul came to learn after entreating the Lord three times to remove the thorn from his side! 2Cor 12:9,10 (note v9; v10). He learned Christ's power was perfected in his weakness. As he said in Philippians, he learned the secret that he could do all things through Christ Who strengthened him. (Php 4:12,13-see notes Ph 4:12; 13)

In summary, Biblical hope has a strengthening effect.

THE BLESSED HOPE:
A SOUL STABILIZING SERMON...
PREACH HOPE TO YOUR SOUL
Psalm 42:5-6

> Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? **Hope** in God, for I shall again praise Him For the help of His presence. 6 O my God, my soul is in despair within me. Therefore I remember Thee from the land of the Jordan, And the peaks of Hermon, from Mount Mizar." (Click notes by C H Spurgeon on Ps 42:5-note, 42:6-note) (Devotional by F B Meyer) (Devotional Finding New Hope; Finding Hope)

When should we "preach"

If you expect, and expecting, hope to be like Jesus Christ yonder, you will be trying your best to be like Him here.

Let us pray for one another that the Biblical truth about HOPE will motivate, inspire and empower us all...

> to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus (see **note** Titus 2:13)

As **David** the man after God's own heart commanded...

> **Be of good courage** (command), and He shall strengthen your heart, all ye that **hope** in the LORD. (Ps 31:24-note)

Spurgeon commenting on **Psalm 31:24** writes...

> **Be of good courage**. Keep up your spirit, let no craven thoughts blanch your cheek. Fear weakens, courage strengthens. Victory waits upon the banners of the brave.
>
> **And he shall strengthen your heart**. Power from on high shall be given in the most effectual manner by administering force to the fountain of vitality. So far from leaving us, the Lord will draw very near to us in our adversity, and put His own power into us.
>
> **All ye that hope in the Lord.** Every one of you, lift up your heads and sing for joy of heart. God is faithful, and does not fail even His little children who do but hope, wherefore then should we be afraid?
>
> **Be of good courage.** Christian courage may thus be described. It is the undaunted audacity of a sanctified heart in adventuring upon difficulties and undergoing hardships for a good cause upon the call of God.

HOPE ON

Hope on, hope on, O troubled heart;
If doubts and fears o'ertake thee,
Remember this—the Lord hath said,
He never will forsake thee;
Then murmur not, still bear thy lot,
Nor yield to care or sorrow;
Be sure the clouds that frown today
Will break in smiles tomorrow.

Hope on, hope on, though dark and deep
The shadows gather o'er thee;
Be not dismayed; thy Saviour holds
The Lamp of life before thee;
And if He will that thou today
Shouldst tread the vale of sorrow,
Be not afraid, but trust and wait;
The sun will shine tomorrow.

Hope on, hope on, go bravely forth
Through trial and temptation,

the blessed hope to our soul?

Read Psalm 42:5-6 again.

Hope in God does not mean, cross your fingers and hope it comes to pass. And it does not mean that God might work for his servant. It means to be confident that God will! Be strong in God! Be courageous in God!

Commenting on Psalm 42:5 **Spurgeon** directs us to...

> Note well that the main **hope** and chief desire of David rests in the **smile of God**. His face is what he seeks and **hopes** to see, and this will recover his low spirits, this will put to scorn his laughing enemies, this will restore to him all the joys of those holy and happy days around which memory lingers. This is grand cheer. This verse, like the singing of Paul and Silas, looses chains and shakes prison walls. He who can use such heroic language in his gloomy hours will surely conquer. In the **garden of hope** grow the laurels for future victories, the roses of coming joy, the lilies of approaching peace.

Warren Wiersbe writes...

> You have a secure future in Jesus Christ. The best is yet to come. **Hope in God** and start praising Him. The psalmist said, **I shall yet praise Him.** But don't wait! Start praising Him now. I've discovered that when I get discouraged, the best thing to do is praise the Lord immediately. Praise is the greatest medicine for a broken heart. The psalmist praised God for **the help of His countenance**. No matter how you feel or whatever your circumstances, if you'll look to the face of God, you'll discover that He's smiling on you. How do you cope with discouragement? Certainly, if it is caused by guilt from unconfessed sin, you need to repent and ask forgiveness. Generally, the cure for being down is to **hope** in God and praise Him. Your **hope** in Him is well founded, for He is ever faithful to His Word. Are you discouraged? You may not be able to change your circumstances, but you can praise God. (Psalm 42:1-11 Are You Down?).

Preach to your soul a sermon about the full assurance of **hope** until the end (Heb 6:11-note)!

As **Piper** says "Learn to preach to yourself rather than listen to yourself" (Desiring God)...."Hope in God!—Trust in what God will be for you in the future. A day of praise is coming. The presence of the Lord will be all the help you need. And he has promised to be with us forever" (Future Grace)

Hope is the absolute assurance of a future good and is God's medicine for a soul in **despair**. The Greek or Septuagint - LXX translation of Psalm 42:5 uses the Greek word meaning very sad, deeply grieved or afflicted beyond measure.

Let's look at the derivation of the English words **despair** and **disturbed**.

Despair is from Latin **de** + **sperare** - hope. Together these root words convey the literal meaning of "no hope" or of "utter hopelessness"

Directed by the word of truth,
So full of consolation;
There is a calm for ev'ry storm,
A joy for ev'ry sorrow,
A night from which the soul shall wake
To hail an endless morrow.
--German Melody, 14th Century

Vance Havner has the following advice regarding the **return of the Lord**...

The early Christians looked for His return. Preparation was accompanied by expectation. It is true that Jesus did not return during their lifetime, but no one is mistaken when he lives as though He might come anytime. It is always proper to live, looking for that blessed hope, and remembering that unto them that look for Him, He shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation. These believers [early Christians] lived in the light of the Lord's return.

What good does it do to speak much of His appearing? Well, for one thing, ". . . every man that hath this **hope** in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1John 3:3-note), and we are sadly in need of cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. That is what revival means and surely we need revival.

Also, when men love His appearing and look for Him, they make good witnesses, missionaries, and evangelists. All one needs to do to prove that is to check the list of God's servants who have been most greatly used as ambassadors of Christ and fishers of men.

It is indeed a strange and sinister silence that has fallen over so much of the church today, that so many who name the name of Christ speak not a word of His return.

We can understand why the world is dumb because it is also blinded by the gods of this age to all the revelation of God; but remember that David's greatest worry, in the passage with which we started, was that his own kinsmen of Judah should be the last to welcome him. Have you noticed the words he used? "Ye are my brethren, my bones and my flesh" (2Sa 19:10). Does not that remind you of another verse, "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" (Ep 5:30-note).

If it grieved David that his kinsmen in the flesh should be so slow to speak of his return, what must our Lord think of us, the members of His body the church, when we speak not a word to welcome Him again? May God loosen the strings of our tongues and make us all members of His reception committee!

During the Thirty Years' War in the 17th century, German pastor Paul Gerhardt and his family were forced to flee from their home. One night as they stayed in a small village inn, homeless and afraid, his wife broke down and cried openly in despair. To comfort her, Gerhardt reminded her of Scripture promises about God's provision and keeping. Then, going out to the garden to be alone, he too broke down and wept. He felt he had come to his

Disturbed is translated in the Lxx by the Greek word which means to be continually thrown into utter confusion, greatly vexed or profoundly disturbed.

Put the meanings of these two words together and you get a glimpse into David's mental/emotional state. And yet there is a "way of escape" and it is to preach hope to your soul.

When we lose hope, we lose joy in the present because we have no confidence for the future. Many of us have been in hospital rooms when the surgeon has walked in and said to a patient's loved ones, "I'm sorry. We did the best we could. There is no hope." The faces of the loved ones fall. Sadness fills the room. We live on hope which springs eternal in the human breast. But for God's children hope is more than a feeling down inside. Instead, it is a firm confidence that God is in control, and for that reason we have nothing to fear. **Have you ever preached a Biblical "hope" to your soul**? In one sense, that is ultimately what this entire study on hope is about - that we might be equipped with the Biblical teaching on hope. Thus equipped we can better "preach" to our soul and can better bear one another's burdens.

The anticipation of heaven (our hope) has been described as "the oxygen of the human soul."

Job Understood

Job understood the value of the spiritual principle of **preaching to his own soul** for even in the midst of his affliction and lack of understanding about the "why" of his situation, he knew His God and thus was able to confidently cry out...

> Though He slay me, I will **hope** (yachal - to wait, to tarry, to hope - which is in the Piel stem can express an "intensive" or "intentional" action) in Him. Nevertheless I will argue (as one reasons in a legal case) my ways before Him. (Job 13:15)

Job makes a decision of his will, not based on the way he feels, but on his confidence in God to "preach to his soul" that he would wait eagerly and expectantly for a future event. From other declarations, we see that Job understood the **hope of the resurrection** (read Job 14:14; Job 19:25, 26), and thus he knew the afflictions would pass. And yet the reality is that he is still "in the now" and this truth does not keep him from discussing his present state with God.

Beloved, are you experiencing despair? Have you ever considered "preaching hope" to your soul? This is not "magic" (but it is supernatural!) nor "self effort", but is a casting (cp Ps 55:22+) of one's self upon the shoulders of the Almighty One, **El Shaddai**, the God of all comfort. How? One suggestion is to consider reading through and meditating on (pondering, interrogating, musing) the Psalms listed below which all use one of the Hebrew words for hope. Man lives by every Word that proceeds from the mouth of God so come to His table with a tender heart that trembles at His word and eat His words, "chewing the glorious, life giving cud", allowing the Spirit to renew your mind and to transform your thinking from glory to darkest hour.

Soon afterward, Gerhardt felt the burden lifted and sensed anew the Lord's presence. Taking his pen, he wrote a hymn that has brought comfort to many.

Give to the Winds Thy Fears

> Give to the winds thy fears;
> **Hope**, and be undismayed;
> God hears thy sighs and counts thy tears;
> God shall lift up thy head.
>
> Through waves and clouds and storms,
> He gently clears thy way;
> Wait thou His time; so shall this night
> Soon end in joyous day.

It is often in our darkest times that God makes His presence known most clearly. He uses our sufferings and troubles to show us that He is our only Source of strength. And when we see this truth, like Pastor Gerhardt, we receive new **hope**. Are you facing a great trial? Take heart.

Put yourself in God's hands.
Wait for His timing.
He will give you a "song in the night."

Don't Lose the Upward Look - He who testifies to these things says, "**Surely I am coming quickly**" (Revelation 22:20-note).

The great preacher **F. B. Meyer** once asked **D. L. Moody**,

> "What is the secret of your success?"

Moody replied,

> "For many years I have never given an address without the consciousness that the Lord may come before I have finished."

This may well explain the intensity of his service and the zeal of his ministry for Christ.

One of the most encouraging teachings in the Bible is that of the Lord's return to earth. Three times Rev 22:1-21 repeats this promise. As God was about to close the pages of divine revelation, He called attention to this grand theme, announcing in the words of Christ Himself, "Surely I am coming quickly." The last words of our Lord before leaving this earth twenty centuries ago remind us that He is coming back for us. With such a forceful assurance closing the canon of Scripture, we can have this hope continually in our hearts. The expectation of seeing our Savior, being like Him, and being with Him for eternity should prompt us, as it did Moody, to serve the Lord.

In this sinful world it's easy to lose our upward look. Yet we must keep the hope of Christ's return burning in our hearts. The apostle Paul talked about this when he said...

> For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord

glory.

When trouble seeks to rob your very breath,
When tragedy hits hard and steals your days,
Recall that Christ endured the sting of death;
He gives us hope, and merits all our praise.
--Gustafson

the POWER OF RECALLING
THE BLESSED HOPE
TO one's MIND
Lamentations 3

The Context: Jerusalem lay in ruins. God's glorious Temple ravaged and defiled. Thus it is not surprising that Jeremiah found himself weak, hopeless (Lam 3:18), soul sick, afflicted, bitter and bowed down (Lam 3:18, 19, 20). Is there any "balm in Gilead" for one in so great a despair and depression? Yes there is always hope in Jehovah. (Reason To Hope) (Hope In The Sad Times)

What was the "balm" of Gilead
for Jeremiah's lament?

This I recall to my mind (heart), therefore I have**hope**. (Lam 3:21)

What (Who) does
Jeremiah "recall"?

Lam 3:22 The LORD'S lovingkindnesses (PLURAL) indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail 23 They are new every morning. Great is Thy faithfulness. (cf Ps 130:7) 24 Jehovah is my portion, says my soul, therefore I have **hope** in Him 25 Jehovah is good to those who **wait for** (**hope in**) Him to the person who seeks Him. 26 It is good that he waits silently (which speaks of a trust in Him) for the salvation of the Jehovah (See a similar "antidote" for despair in Jer 31:15-17) (See Spurgeon's sermon on Lam 3:21 Memory—the Handmaid of Hope)

Jeremiah made a definite choice of his will to shift his focus from himself and his circumstances to the glorious unfailing **attributes** of God. **Is this not still the way of escape out of despair and hopelessness created by circumstances that would otherwise overwhelm us** (cf 1Co 10:13-note 2Co 4:16-18-note Ro 8:18-note Jas 1:2, 3, 4-note 1Pe 1:6, 7-note)?

George Matheson commenting on Lam 3 writes...

> What a singular combination--**hope** and quiet waiting! It is like a union of poetry and prose. Does it not seem an incongruous mixture of sentiments! We associate **hope** with impulse; quiet waiting is surely the want of impulse! **Hope** is a state of flight; waiting implies repose. **Hope** is the soul on the wing; waiting is the soul in the nest. **Hope** is the eagerness of expectancy; waiting is a condition of placid calm. Is not that a strange union of feelings to put into one breast! No; it is a sublimely

> Jesus Christ; Who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. (see note Philippians 3:20)

The hope of Jesus' last words "Surely I am coming quickly" should motivate us all to lives of sacrificial service. -- P R Van Gorder

The hope of glorification
keeps before us the need of purification.

DEFEND YOUR
BLESSED HOPE
1 Peter 3:14, 15-note

"But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the **hope** that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence" (MAKE A CASE FOR YOUR HOPE 1 Peter 3:13-16) (Sermons from Piper Make a Case for your Hope 1 Peter 3:13-16 or Christ is hallowed in us when we hope in hiim 1 Peter 3:13-17)

Although in context this well known verse applies primarily to times when Christians are being persecuted because of their faith the verse is also applicable to everyday life. The consciousness of the presence of the Lord Christ should impart a holy boldness and inspire the believer to witness a good confession. When Jesus Christ is Lord of our lives, crises becomes opportunities for witnessing, being sure first that your life backs up your witness. And remember we are to be witnesses giving evidence of our blessed hope, not prosecuting attorneys trying to win an argument!

Beloved, the fact that we have such a great, sure hope should make us bold to defend such a "**blessed hope**!"...

> Having therefore such a **hope**, we use great **boldness in our speech** and are not as Moses, who used to put a veil over his face that the sons of Israel might not look intently at the end of what was fading away. (2 Co 3:12, 13-note)

GREAT HOPE
PRODUCES
GREAT BOLDNESS!

John Piper challenges our lackadaisical attitude toward sharing our belief in this great hope...

> If you are not bold in your witness, if you are not courageous and risk-taking in your ventures of righteousness, if you are not open and straightforward in your speech, it may be that your **hope** is defective (**Ed**:

> happy marriage--the happiest conceivable. **There is no test of hope like quiet waiting. If you want to measure the strength of a man's hope, you must measure the quietness of his waiting.** Our **hope** is never so weak as when we are excited.

Charles Spurgeon aptly noted that...

> Any man can sing in the daylight. When wealth rolls in abundance around him, any man can praise the God who gives a plentiful harvest . . . It is easy to sing when we can read the notes by daylight; but the one who is skillful sings from his heart. No man can make a song in the night of his soul. He may attempt it, but he will find that a song in the night must be divinely inspired.

Keep in mind that although **hope** has a stabilizing effect on our soul, it is possible for one's hope in Christ to be **destabilized** (examples below) especially when one puts their trust (hope) in other things, usually things which are seen.

For example, compare Colossians 1:23 (note); 1Ti 6:17, Heb 6:11, 12 (note), 1Pe 1:13 (note), which warn us not to waver in regard to hope, not to fix our hope on riches, to be diligent and not sluggish, and to **fix our hope** (aorist imperative ~ an urgent command to do this now) completely on our future grace. It follows then that we need to nurture this precious plant called **hope** by frequent "watering" with the Word, Scripture **Memorization**, Biblical **Meditation**, prayer (notes) and prompt obedience (see obedience of faith) to the truth in order that we might

> **Grow** (word study) (present imperative = command to keep growing - we never outgrow the need to grow in the infinite riches in Christ) in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen (2Pe 3:18-note cf 1Pe 2:1, 2, 3, -notes 1 Peter 2:1, 2:2; 2:3)

To emphasize the need we all have for daily intake of the Word, remember that **loss of hope** (with varying degrees of destabilization, despair, depression, disillusionment) is the lot of all mankind. Scripture teaches us that even some of God's most anointed have fallen into the tenacious grip of **hopelessness and despair**.

Elijah after a great victory over the idolatrous priests of Baal and Jezebel's threat to kill him, lost hope and pleaded with God to take his life (1Ki 19:4).

Study similar examples of loss of hope in the lives of **Moses** (Nu 11:15), **Jeremiah** (Jer 20:18, La 3:18, 19, 20), **Job** (Job 6:8, 9),

> Beloved that is the purpose of these pages on "**Blessed Hope**" - that you might be lifted up from the "slough of despond" of this world and equipped to fight the good fight of faith). Perhaps you are hoping in the wrong things to make your future happy. Perhaps you have never really thought seriously about the relationship between the strength of your hope and the boldness of your service to Christ....Paul's **hope** is that God has now undertaken to fulfill his ancient promise to take out the heart of stone, to write his law on soft hearts of flesh (Jer 31:33) and put his Spirit within them and cause them to walk in his statutes (Ezek 36:27)....It is the hope of a victorious gospel...The gospel will accomplish all that it is sent to do. It will not come back empty any more than the Word of God can fall to the ground.... the opposite of boldness is fear or timidity....Boldness overcame the fear of suffering persecution....another aspect of boldness is the courage of being unashamed...the third aspect of NT boldness is direct, open, frank, straightforward, forthright, plain speech concerning the things of God. When a bold person speaks, people know what he means; his cards are on the table; he doesn't seek to protect himself with obscurities or subtleties or euphemisms or generalities. (**Fruit of Hope**)

Make us Thy mountaineers
We would not linger on the lower slope,
Fill us afresh with hope,
O God of hope
-Amy Carmichael

By the enabling power of the Holy Spirit and in the Name of our returning Redeemer, may our Father give us daily the heart attitude of Isaiah...

And I will **wait** (Hebrew ~ hope) for Jehovah
Who is hiding His face from the house of Jacob;
I will even look eagerly for Him.
(Isaiah 8:17)

See article by Dr Walvoord on The Hope of the Early Church

Jonah (Jonah 4:3, 8).

Loss of hope is a reality every person may experience regardless of their level of spiritual maturity. And so it behooves all believers to continually go back to God's Word to remind our soul of the ultimate Source of hope found in Christ alone (1Ti 1:1). (Consider studying the **Psalms** below which speak of hope, waiting patiently, looking expectantly)

John Newton author of "Amazing Grace" wrote a friend this encouragement

> May the prospect of this **BLESSED HOPE** set before us revive our fainting spirits, and make us willing to endure hardships as good soldiers of Jesus Christ! Here we must often sow in tears, but there we shall reap in joy, and all tears shall be wiped from our eyes for ever.

Your hope for the future is founded on the immutable character of God and the precious and magnificent promises in God's Word. **Do you have confidence in the future?** Make a mental list of His provision on your behalf during the past year--answered prayers, met needs and other blessings. God's faithfulness in keeping His promises in the past gives you confident hope for the future

This glorious hope revives our courage for the way,
When each in expectation lives and longs to see the day
When from sorrow, toil, pain and sin, we shall be free,
And perfect love and joy shall reign throughout all eternity -
-John Fawcett .

How are the frequent Christian "triad" of faith and hope and love related?

"But now abide faith, **hope**, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." (1Corinthians 13:13)

W H Thomas Griffith has this interesting analysis of the great "triumvirate" of faith, hope and love writing that...:

> Faith rests on the past, love works in the present, and hope presses toward the future; or, faith looks backward and upward, love looks outward, and hope looks forward. These three constitute the true, complete Christian life and not one of them should be omitted or slighted. We are only too apt to emphasize faith and love and forget hope but, inasmuch as hope is invariably connected with the coming of the Lord, "that blessed hope" (Titus 2:13-note), it is a vital part of our Christian life. Faith accepts, hope expects; faith appropriates, hope anticipates; faith receives, hope realizes; faith is always and only concerned with the past and present, hope is always and only concerned with the future. We know that faith comes by hearing; we shall find that hope comes by experience. Faith is concerned with a person who promises, hope with the thing promised; and faith is the root of which hope is a fruit."

Hope stabilizes because hope causes you to praise God and praising God causing you to hope...

As for me I will always have **hope**. I will praise you more and more. (Ps 71:14)	
The Blessed Hope — **Definition** — Click Here to go to column #1	The Blessed Hope — **Source Of** — Click Here to go to this column #2

The Unseen Keel

Read: Luke 8:22-25 | Bible in a Year: Deuteronomy 32-34; Mark 15:26-47

This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast. —Hebrews 6:19

The president of Gordon College, R. Judson Carlberg, was driving along the ocean near his home in Massachusetts when he saw two stately 17th-century sailing ships. They were replicas that were built for a movie being filmed nearby.

“The breeze was stiff,” Carlberg reported, “straining the rigging and the crews. Yet each ship stayed the course and didn’t capsize.” He explained the secret of their stability. “Beneath the waterline each had a deep, heavy keel—a part you don’t see.” The keel was essential for keeping the vessel steady in rough weather.

What is it that holds us steady when fierce winds are blowing across life’s sea? What keeps us from capsizing when we are under stress and tension? What enables us to sail on, despite the strain? It’s the stabilizing keel of faith in our sovereign God. It’s our unseen relationship with Christ. As He commanded the wind and the waves on the Sea of Galilee, He also controls the storms and squalls of life that threaten to sink us or drive us off course. Our faith in Christ is an “anchor of the soul” (Heb. 6:19) that can keep us from ultimate shipwreck. By Vernon Grounds (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Do you have that unseen keel of faith?

We have an anchor that keeps the soul
Steadfast and sure while the billows roll,
Fastened to the Rock which cannot move,
Grounded firm and deep in the Savior's love.
Owens

Faith in Christ will keep us steady
in the stormy sea of change.

Is There Any Hope? - "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus according to the commandment of God our Savior, and of Christ Jesus, who is our hope" (1 Timothy 1:1)

On December 17, 1927, a submarine sank off Provincetown, Massachusetts, and forty crewmen died. In the failed rescue attempt, one diver heard a trapped sailor tap out a pathetic question in Morse code:

"Is there any hope?"

The disciples must have been asking the same question at their last meal with Jesus. The One they loved the most was going away to a place where they could not immediately follow.

Although packing His bags to leave, He promised to return for them. When they least expected it, He would walk up the front path, climb the porch steps, and knock boldly on the door. Jesus told His disciples to feed on that hope because He was the hope for years to come.

This hope became a major theme of the New Testament. In essence, Paul pictured Christians skydiving in reverse, free falling upward through the clouds, reaching out their hands to His, and floating into eternity (1 Thessalonians 4:17). Peter proclaimed a sure hope because of Christ's resurrection (1 Peter 1:3) and challenged everyone to be ready to give a reason for that hope (1 Peter 3:15).

Until Jesus returns we have a message for those sleepwalking on trails that lead to a hopeless end. We on the other road—the one of endless hope—must awaken them with our shouts of joy,

"He is the Christ. He is coming again. He is our hope!"

Finding Hope

Why are you cast down, O my soul? . . . Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him. —Psalm 42:5

Today's Scripture: Psalm 42:1-11

A study conducted by researchers at the University of Minnesota found that almost 15 percent of American teenagers felt it was "highly likely" that they would die before their 35th birthday. Those with this pessimistic outlook were more likely to engage in reckless behavior. Dr. Iris Borowsky, author of the study published in Pediatrics magazine, said: "These youth may take risks because they feel hopeless and figure that not much is at stake."

No one is immune to feelings of despair. The Psalms express repeated pleas for help when life seems dark. "Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him for the help of His presence" (Ps. 42:5 NASB). In a defiant step of faith, the psalmist tells himself not to forget about God, who will never forsake him.

Curtis Almquist has written: "Hope is fueled by the presence of God. . . . [It] is also fueled by the future of God in our lives." We can say with the psalmist, "I shall yet praise Him" (v.5).

No follower of Christ should feel reluctant to seek counsel for depression. Nor should we feel that faith and prayer are too simplistic to help. There is always hope in God! By: David C. McCasland (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved).

Reflect & Pray

My sheep I know, they are My own,
I leave them not in trials alone;
I will be with them to the end,
Their Hope, their Joy, their dearest Friend.
—Anon.

Hope for the Christian is a certainty—
because its basis is Christ.

Hope In The Sad Times

Read: Lamentations 3:19-33 | Bible in a Year: Psalms 84-86; Romans 12

It is good that one should hope and wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord. —Lamentations 3:26

Sadness and sorrow are life's great equalizers. They affect us all, in varying degrees.

Sometimes entire countries suffer. In 1994 we were horrified by the massive sorrow in Rwanda and Bosnia. And we are all touched by smaller-scale tragedies: accidents, illnesses, family breakups, financial woes. Regardless of our own optimistic tendencies, sorrow visits all of us.

But there's another side to this. No matter how tragic our lives may be, no matter if we are given to depression and despair rather than happiness and joy, we are never left hopeless.

That's because life is not a string of accidental circumstances. Life has a spiritual dimension that can always be buoyed by God's love, mercy, and grace.

Look, for example, at Lamentations 3. Drenched as this passage is in the misery of the people of Jerusalem, there is hope. Amid the details of wholesale slaughter and devastation as the city was overrun, the author inserted mankind's best hope for a reason to go on: God's great love. To counter the affliction and sadness, the writer spoke of God's compassion, His faithfulness, His goodness, and His salvation (vv.22-26).

It's remarkable! No matter what we might be suffering, we can be sure that God will never leave us hopeless. By Dave Branon (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved).

When trouble seeks to rob your very breath,
When tragedy hits hard and steals your days,
Recall that Christ endured the sting of death;
He gives us hope, and merits all our praise.

—Gustafson

No one is hopeless whose hope is in God.

Reason To Hope

Read: Lamentations 3:19-26 | Bible in a Year: Leviticus 14; Matthew 26:51-75

The Lord is good to those who wait for Him. —Lamentations 3:25

Sorrow was gripping the hearts of the citizens of Jerusalem (Lam. 1). The glorious city was in ruins and the people were facing exile. God's majestic Zion had fallen to the Babylonians.

The destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC was the result of God's judgment on an unrepentant people. Because we too can find ourselves wondering how to return to fellowship with God after failing Him, the lessons learned by those downcast citizens are worth heeding.

For the defeated people of the Holy City—and for us—the hope of restoration is given in Lamentations 3. It begins, "This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope" (Lamentations 3:21).

We have hope because of God's character, which is marked by these traits: His mercy and compassion (Lamentations 3:22), faithfulness (Lamentations 3:23), goodness (Lamentations 3:25), and salvation (Lamentations 3:26).

Although we cannot understand completely the sadness of the displaced Jerusalemites, we do know how empty life becomes when our sin cuts us off from fellowship with God. Yet we can be restored because He will forgive us when we repent of our sin. His compassions are "new every morning" (Lamentations 3:23). He alone gives the refreshment of hope, and therefore we too can proclaim, "Great is Your faithfulness." Dave Branon (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved).

We're thankful, Lord, that when we fall
We can begin anew
If humbly we confess our sin,
Then turn and follow You.
—Sper

No one is hopeless whose hope is in God.

Finding New Hope

Read: 1 Kings 19:1-18

Why are you cast down, O my soul? . . . Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him. —Psalm 42:5

A woman who was widowed for the second time felt the loss deeply. She saw little reason to go on living.

One day she got into the car with her young grandson. After securing him properly, she started the car without fastening her own seatbelt. When the 5-year-old politely pointed this out to her, she told him she didn't care about her safety because she wanted to go to Jesus and Grandpa. The boy replied, "But Grandma, then you would leave me!"

God used this youngster to bring to her the realization that He still had service for her to perform, and that her situation was not as hopeless as it seemed to be.

During almost 50 years of ministry, I've seen many despairing people come to the place where they felt there was no way out. Like Elijah, they wanted to die (1 Ki. 19:4). God sustained them, however, and showed them that He still had work for them to do. They discovered that the situation was not as dark as they had thought and that God had a reason for them to go on living.

Don't give in to despair! Remind yourself of God's goodness and love. Talk to Him. He will meet your needs. He'll lead you in paths of love and light and joy where you will find new hope. By Herbert Vander Lugt (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved).

Beyond the losses of this life
That cause us to despair,
New hope is born within our hearts

Because our God is there.
—DJD

No one is hopeless whose hope is in God.

No Hopeless Situation for God - "That in my flesh I shall see God, whom … my eyes shall behold" (Job 19:26).

Children of God can rise above every trouble and trial of life if they anticipate the glories of heaven and the joy of being there with the Savior.

I received a letter from a severely handicapped man who possessed the sense of victory that comes from a forward look of faith. He had survived a long, delicate cranial operation, but he suffered some brain damage, partial blindness, some deafness, and mild paralysis. In addition, he spent several months on dialysis after both kidneys failed. He went through an unsuccessful transplant operation and endured another period of dialysis before receiving a replacement kidney. He admitted that he felt pretty low at times, but he didn't stay down in the dumps. He fully believes that God has a loving purpose in everything He allows, and he said he was looking forward to the glorified body awaiting him. He closed his letter by saying,

> "I can live with my problems because I know all of these things are preparing me for heaven."

In Job 19 we read not only Job's bitter lament but also his beautiful expression of hope. He bewailed his loneliness, for in addition to losing his health and wealth he had lost his sons and daughters and all his friends had abandoned him. Even little children would have nothing to do with him. Yet he found consolation. Deep within, he believed that on the other side of death he would see God as His Friend and Savior. With that hope he could triumph over everything—and so can we. —H. V. Lugt (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved).

No one is hopeless whose hope is in God.

The Son Will Shine Again - This hope we have as an anchor of the soul (Hebrews 6:19).

A newsboy, thinly clad and drenched by the soaking rain, stood shivering in a doorway one cold day in November. To get a little warmth, he would hold one bare foot against his leg for a moment and then the other. Every few minutes he would cry out,

> "Morning paper! Morning paper!"

A man who was well protected by his coat and umbrella stopped to buy the early edition. Noting the boy's discomfort, he said,

> "This kind of weather is pretty hard on you, isn't it?"

Looking up with a smile, the youngster replied,

> "I don't mind too much, Mister. The sun will shine again."

Chilling winds of adversity and gray skies of a sinful environment easily discourage us. But we can count on better days because we know God is working in our lives. This hope is called an "anchor of the soul," and the Bible says that it abides (1 Cor 13:13) and does not disappoint (Ro 5:5). It promises righteousness (Gal. 5:5), eternal life (Titus 1:2), and the return of Jesus (Titus 2:13). It is a "living hope," founded on the resurrection of Jesus from the dead (1 Pet. 1:3).

When circumstances get out of control and pressures threaten to overwhelm us, we know that Jesus died for us, is working in us, and will never leave us. We can hold fast to God's promises and patiently endure. The "anchor of hope" will hold us firm. —D. J De Haan (Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

It is always darkest just before dawn.

Renew Your Mind With God's "Songs of Hope"

Read through these passages from the Psalms (Songs) that use various Hebrew words for **hope** asking the Spirit to illuminate your heart and mind and soul to the truths hidden like precious jewels and pure gold in the passages. Take your time and walk slowly through these passages, even as you would stroll leisurely through a beautiful garden like the famous **Butchart Gardens** in Victoria, British Columbia lest you miss some of the spectacular scenery. And even as you would with those gardens, come back to the songs (psalms) often, for even as each season yields new blooms to behold, so too the living Word yields new riches to feed your soul. Each Psalm has a note that links to Spurgeon's meditation on the passage, but let me encourage you first to ponder the

passage on your own (eg, by interrogating with the 5W'S & H), taking time to read it in your own Bible for the **context** (which is "king" in interpretation) before you go to Spurgeon's devotional comments. Allow the Spirit to speak to you through the powerful Words of truth and life in these Songs. Consider writing your thoughts in a notebook for future recall and refreshment.

> **Comment**: Notice that these Hebrew words (Qavah; Yachal; Tiqvah; Towcheleth) are translated **hope** in English because they invite one to look ahead eagerly with confident expectation, a discipline which calls for one to exhibit **patience** (a waiting upon the Lord), reminding us that the **fulfillment of hope** lies in the future. In the Old Testament, the **object** of **hope** was not as fully developed as in the progressive revelation in the New Testament.

Hebrew verb Yachal

Psalm 31:24 Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who **hope** in the LORD. (Spurgeon's Note)

Psalm 33:18 Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, on those who **hope** for His lovingkindness, (**Why** should we hope in the Lord?) (Spurgeon's Note)

Psalm 33:22 Let Thy lovingkindness, O LORD, be upon us, according as we have **hoped** in Thee. (Spurgeon's Note)

Psalm 38:15 For I **hope** in Thee, O LORD; Thou wilt answer, O Lord my God. (Spurgeon's Note)

Psalm 42:5 Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? **Hope** in God, for I shall again praise Him For the help of His presence.

> **Comment**: **When** should we hope in the Lord? **How**? **Why**? (Spurgeon's Note)

Psalm 42:11 Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? **Hope** in God, for I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance, and my God. (Spurgeon's Note)

Psalm 43:5 Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why are you disturbed within me? **Hope** in God, for I shall again praise Him, The help of my countenance, and my God. (Spurgeon's Note)

Psalm 69:3 I am weary with my crying; my throat is parched; My eyes fail while I **wait** for my God. (Spurgeon's Note)

Psalm 71:14 But as for me, I will **hope** continually, and will praise Thee yet more and more.

What is integrally associated with hoping? **What** would happen to our praise if we continually hoped in God? (Spurgeon's Note)

Psalm 119:43 And do not take the word of truth utterly out of my mouth, for I **wait** for Thine ordinances. (Spurgeon's Note)

Psalm 119:49 Remember the word to Thy servant, In which Thou hast made me **hope**.

> **Comment**: **What** does this say even about our own intrinsic ability to hope? (Spurgeon's Note)

Psalm 119:74 May those who fear Thee see me and be glad, because I **wait** for Thy word. (Spurgeon's Note)

Psalm 119:81 My soul languishes for Thy salvation; I **wait** for Thy word. (Spurgeon's Note)

Psalm 119:114 Thou art my hiding place and my shield; I **wait** for Thy word.

> **Comment**: Considering the context, **why** does he wait for the Lord? (Spurgeon's Note)

Psalm 119:147 I rise before dawn and cry for help; I **wait** for Thy words. (Spurgeon's Note)

Psalm 130:5 I wait for the LORD, my soul does **wait** (qavah), and in His word do I **hope** (yachal). (Spurgeon's Note)

Psalm 130:7 O Israel, **hope** in the LORD; for with the LORD there is lovingkindness, and with Him is abundant redemption. (Spurgeon's Note)

Psalm 131:3 O Israel, **hope** in the LORD from this time forth and forever. (Spurgeon's Note)

Psalm 147:11 The LORD favors those who fear Him, those who **wait** for His lovingkindness. (Spurgeon's Note)

Yachal Also Used In...

Lamentations 3:21 This I recall to my mind, therefore I have **hope**.

Lamentations 3:24 "The LORD is my portion (share, inheritance, allotment, reward, possession)," says my soul, "Therefore I have

hope in Him."

Micah 7:7 But as for me, I will watch expectantly for the LORD; I will **wait** (expectantly) for the God of my salvation (yesha related to yeshua - which in turn is related to our word "Jesus"). My God will hear me.

Hebrew verb Qavah

Psalm 25:3 Indeed, none of those who **wait** (**NIV** = hope) for Thee will be ashamed; Those who deal treacherously without cause will be ashamed. (Spurgeon's Note)

Psalm 25:5 Lead me in Thy truth and teach me, for Thou art the God of my salvation; For Thee I **wait** all the day. (**NIV** = my hope is in you all day long.) (Spurgeon's Note)

Psalm 25:21 Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I **wait** for Thee. (**NIV** = because my hope is in you.) (Spurgeon's Note)

Psalm 27:14 Wait for the LORD (**NJB** = Put your hope in Yahweh); Be strong, and let your heart take courage; Yes, **wait** for the LORD. (Spurgeon's Note)

Psalm 37:9 For evildoers will be cut off, but those who **wait** for (**NIV** = hope in) the LORD, they will inherit the land. (Spurgeon's Note)

Psalm 37:34 Wait for the LORD (NJB = Put your hope in Yahweh), and keep His way, and He will exalt you to inherit the land; When the wicked are cut off, you will see it. (Spurgeon's Note)

Psalm 39:7 "And now, Lord, for what do I **wait** (**NJB** = hope)? My **hope** (**towcheleth**) is in Thee. (Spurgeon's Note)

Psalm 40:1 For the choir director. A Psalm of David. I **Waited patiently** (and expectantly) for the LORD; and He inclined to me, and heard my cry. (Spurgeon's Note)

Psalm 52:9 I will give Thee thanks forever, because Thou hast done it, and I will **wait on** (**Amplified** = I will wait on, hope in and expect in) Thy name, for it is good, in the presence of Thy godly ones. (Spurgeon's Note)

Psalm 69:6 May those who **wait for** (**Amplified** = who wait and hope and look for) Thee not be ashamed through me, O Lord God of hosts; May those who seek Thee not be dishonored through me, O God of Israel, (Spurgeon's Note)

Qavah Also Used In...

Lamentations 3:25 The LORD is good to those who **wait** (hopefully and expectantly) for Him, To the person who seeks Him.

Hosea 12:6 Therefore, return to your God, Observe kindness and justice, And wait (hopefully and expectantly) for your God continually.

Hebrew noun Tiqvah

Psalm 62:5 My soul, wait in silence for God only, for my **hope** is from Him. (Spurgeon's Note)

Psalm 71:5 For Thou art my **hope**; O Lord God, Thou art my confidence from my youth. (Spurgeon's Note)

Tiqvah Also Used In...

Proverbs 10:28 The **hope** of the righteous is gladness, but the expectation of the wicked perishes.

Proverbs 23:18 Surely there is a future, and your **hope** will not be cut off.

Jeremiah 29:11 'For I know the plans that I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a **hope**.