

THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE

Tit.1:2; 1Jno.2:24,25; 3:2,3

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Quotes from literary men of reputation of the past.
 - a. "It is worth a thousand pounds a year to have the habit of look-ing on the bright side of things." – Samuel Johnson (1709-84), Eng. Auth. & lexicographer.
 - b. "Hope is like the sun, which, as we journey toward it, casts the shadow of our burdens behind us." –Samuel Smiles (1812-1904) Eng. Biog.
 - c. "The world dares say no more for its device, than 'while I live, I hope'; but the children of God can add by virtue of a living hope, 'while I expire, I hope.'" – Robert Leighton (1611-84), Scottish archbishop.
2. Two quotes from the book of Proverbs adds this:
 - a. "The hope of the righteous shall be gladness: but the expectation of the wicked shall perish," Prov.10:28.
 - b. "...the righteous hath hope in his death," Prov.14:32.
3. The hope that a Christian possesses is far greater in substance than mere wishful thinking, to which the N.T. attests.
 - a. Heb.11:1 says, "Now faith is the substance (assurance, ground, confidence) of things hoped for, the evidence (conviction, test) of things not seen."
 - (1) It's the foundation, that which stands under, supports, gives substance to the things hoped for.
 - (2) That is why Christians base their hope on the substance or foundation of faith and their faith on evidence.
4. The word hope comes into comparison with such words as desire, expect, anticipate, await, look for, even trust and depend.
 - a. So we often define hope as "desire plus expectation".
 - b. Our hope is weak if these aspects of our hope are week.
 - c. All these companion words are found in various N.T. passages:

Phil.1:20 (expectation); Heb.11:16 (desire); 1Th.1:9,10 (wait for) 2Pet.3:13,14 (look for); Eph.1:12,13 (trusted).
 - d. Also, the word hope and comparable terms are used in the N.T. to contrast it with despair as Paul wrote in Eph.2:12; 1Th.4:13.

- (1) Then to the Ephesians he added, Eph.2:13.
 - (2) And to the Colossian brethren he said, Co.1:27.
5. With this, plus our texts of Tit.1:2; 1Jno.2:24,25; 3:2,3, we introduce our study of The Christian's Hope, wherein we shall examine various N.T. passages by which we shall develop the subject.

II. DISCUSSION

A. ACCORDING TO ROM.5:1-5 THE CHRISTIAN HAS A HOPE WHICH BRINGS HIM JOY AND WHICH WILL NEVER MAKE OR PUT HIM TO SHAME OR DISAPPOINT HIM.

1. Being justified by faith, having peace with God, and access into the grace of God by Jesus Christ, wherein he stands, the Christian rejoices in hope of the glory of God, a hope that maketh not ashamed, vv.1,2,5; Cf. Rom.12:12; Heb.3:6; Phil.1:20.
2. The Christian never finds this world, its bounty or its promises to be his rest or the object of his hope.
3. Rather, he has a hope:
 - a. Which is full of immortality that will not put him to shame in the day of trial.
 - b. Which enlightens his darkness and alleviates his sorrow.
 - c. That, like a helmet, guards in the day of battle.
 - d. That, like an anchor, secures in the storms of adversity.
 - e. That, like a faithful companion, travels with him through all the ups and downs of this earthly life, and reminds him of the rest that reminds for the people of God (2Th.1:6,7a).
4. The hope the Christian has does not put him to shame because, unlike that of the worldling, it has the noblest object, and unlike that of the Pharisee, it has the surest foundation, and unlike that of the antinomian, it has the clearest warrant, assurance or guarantee. Consider the three views:
 - a. The hope of the worldling will cause disappointment and shame by the insufficiency of its object – it's limited to this world.

- (1) Men have no assurance of and may never reach the object of their hope; and even if they do, they are sorely disappointed because:
 - (a) It doesn't give them the satisfaction they sought.
 - (b) What they gain does not indemnify or sufficiently reimburse them for all the sacrifices they made to obtain it.
 - (2) The hope of the Christian will never put him to shame because of the insufficiency of its object. Cf. Rom.8:16-18.
 - b. The hope of the Pharisee will disappointment and shame him because of the weakness of its foundation. Cf. Lk.18:9-14.
 - (1) The Pharisee places dependence on his own works or his own worthiness.
 - (2) He derives his encouragement from negative qualities, from comparison of himself with others and his supposed superiority of service, from the number and nature of his performances.
 - (3) Note how the Lord compared the two men and the basis of their acceptance and or rejection.
 - (4) The hope of the Christian will never disappoint or put him to shame because of the weakness of its foundation, because it's not based on his own works of worthiness.
 - c. The antinomian has no assurance or guarantee of hope and will of necessity be brought to shame and disappointment because his claim to have been released from any obligation of observing any moral law.
5. The assurance that our hope will not meet with disappointment is God's love for us, which is shed abroad in our hearts by means of the Holy Spirit, vv.5-11.
 - a. Our hearts are filled with the knowledge of God's love for us, v.5b.
 - b. That knowledge is the result of the work of the Holy Spirit through the apostles in the written word, v.5c. Cf. Jno.14,15,16; Ac.2, etc.

- c. That love and what it has done for us to give us this hope is immediately identified in vv.6-11.

B. ACCORDING TO ROM.8:24,25 THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE NOT ONLY SAVES BUT IS A SUSTAINING GRACE ENABLING HIM TO WAIT PATIENTLY.

1. The Christian waits for full redemption. In hope he waits consciously, aspiringly and expectantly.
 - a. He is an heir who has not yet entered into the possession of his inheritance or that for which he hopes.
 - b. He has been saved from the guilt of past sin. And his state of hope is the condition in which, and the instrument by which, he works out his complete salvation. Cf. Phil.2:12; Ac.14:21,22; 1Pet.4:17-19; Gal.6:9.
2. Hope is exercised in the unseen, v.24.
 - a. What we see is here before us; what we hope for is still in the future. Cf. 1Cor.13:13a.
 - b. Faith and hope are inseparable companions; where faith is, hope is nigh.
 - c. Hope is faith in the attitude of looking toward better things to come. It vividly pictures the approaching glory, and is, in a sense, "the present enjoyment of future good".
 - d. Only by faith can we "see it afar off," Heb.11:13.
3. Hope drives out despair, the foe of patience. Thus hope patiently waits, without despair, for the unseen, or the object of its hope.
 - a. Where despondency grows and flourishes, there profitable activity ceases.
 - b. There is always danger of succumbing to a weariness that comes with a long arduous journey, but hope grasps the future and draws us thereto. Cf. Gal.6:9.
 - c. The Christian in his journey is not as shipwrecked sailors, uncertain if any vessel will pass near enough to rescue them; we know that, if we wait patiently in well doing, "he that cometh will come, and will not tarry."

C. ACCORDING TO COL.1:5 THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE IS LAID UP FOR HIM IN HEAVEN.

1. Thus we learn of the character of this hope.
 - a. It's a heavenly hope.
 - b. The hope of a spiritual inheritance whose wealth never diminishes, whose splendor never fades.
2. This indicates the security of his hope.
 - a. It is "laid up (or treasured up) for you in heaven."
 - b. It is safely deposited as a precious jewel in the heavenly abode.
 - c. No pilfering hands can touch it, no breath can tarnish it, no rust can corrode it, no moth can corrupt it. Cf. Mt.6:19-21.
 - d. Earthly treasures vanish and sometimes to God's people nothing but the treasure of hope remains! But what a treasure that is! Cf. Rom.8:16-18.
3. It is secure because:
 - a. It is laid up in the country where the Father and Son dwell. And who can destroy it in such keeping? Cf. Rom.8:32-39.
 - b. It is linked to "the two immutable things" – the promise and oath of God – which are fastened within the veil by our Forerunner, even Jesus, Heb.6:19.
 - c. It is where the devil cannot come; the place to which he has no access.
 - d. It is in heaven, not on earth. And therefore free from all corruptions that the moth and rust of the world may inflict.
4. Note also the source and foundation of this hope: "whereof ye heard before (originally) in the word of the truth of the gospel"
 - a. It is by the hearing of the word of the truth we learn of our hope.
 - (1) There is no other way to learn of it. The Lord has sent us the news of salvation.
 - (2) Nature tells us nothing of a Divine hope.
 - b. This hope is based on unchangeable truth – the word of God and the promises of God therein.

- c. The Christian's hope of heaven rests, not on the discoveries or theories of human philosophy, but on the very word of God. Cf. Rom.15:4.
- d. In vain do men seek it elsewhere. Cf. Col.2:8.
- e. By the preaching of the gospel, and in no other way, this hope is made known to man.
- f. How dismal the outlook where hope is unknown!

D. ACCORDING TO COL.1:25-27 THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE IS "CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY".

1. Paul was called to be an apostle to the Gentiles to *make known* or *reveal* this long-hid mystery, i.e., 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," vv.25-27.
2. That long-hid but now revealed mystery among the Gentiles is: "Christ in you, the hope of glory".
 - a. Cf. Eph.3:1-11; Rom.1:16,17; Eph.2:11-18.
 - b. Christ in the Gentiles, the hope of glory, as well as the Jews. Both have the same hope, for there is only one hope and one Lord, not one for each. Cf. Eph.4:4-6.
 - c. "Christ in you"
 - (1) He dwells in the heart by faith, Eph.3:18.
 - (2) He lives in us, Gal.2:20.
 - (3) He is in us (2Cor.13:5) if we are not reprobates. If he is in use, then:
 - (a) We must continue to live by faith, Gal.2:20.
 - (b) We may expect to receive "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" and are "hid in him," Col.2:3.
 - (3) The grace of Christ will be sufficient against all temptation, 2Cor.12:9; Cf. 1Cor.10:13; Jas.1:12.
 - d. "Christ in you", in the heart, is "the hope of glory".
 - (1) He is expressly called "our hope," 1Tim.1:1.
 - (2) Because he has, as our Forerunner, carried the anchor of our hope within the veil.

- (3) Because his resurrection he established this hope, 1Cor.15:19,51-58; 1Pet.1:3-5.
- (4) There is no hope for man apart from Christ, 1Th.4:13-18; Heb.1:1,2; Rom.8:16-18; Ac.4:10-12; Eph.1:4.
- (5) Only the Christian, the one who is in Christ by virtue of by faith being baptized into Christ (Rom.6:3-6; Gal.3:26,27), has this hope.

E. ACCORDING TO TIT.1:2 THE CHRISTIAN’S HOPE IS THE HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE (which is the hope of the gospel, Col.1:5,23; Tit.3:4-7).

1. Christians live in hope of it because God who cannot lie promised it, Tit.1:2.
2. Christians are promised eternal life if they “let that which they have heard from the beginning abide or remain in them,” 1Jno.2:24,25; Cf. 1Jno.1:1-3; Lk.1:1-4; Ac.11:15; Ac.2:1-4; See also, Mt.7:21-23; 2Pet.1:5-11; 2Tim.4:6-8; Rev.2:10.
3. Christians are promised eternal life in the world to come, Mk.10:30; Lk.18:30.
4. Since hope is something we wait for, which as yet we don’t possess or see (for hope that is seen is not hope), then Christians, with patience, wait for the fulfillment of that promise of God, Rom.8:19-25; Tit.2:11-14.
5. Hope and life are here connected, Tit.1:1,2.
 - a. Service to God is associated with the hope of eternal life.
6. The Divine veracity is here affirmed: “God cannot lie.”
7. Divine foresight is also affirmed: “God promised before the world began,” before times eternal, “but hath in due times manifested through preaching,” Tit.1:2,3.

F. ACCORDING TO HEB.6:13-20 THE CHRISTIAN’S HOPE IS THE ANCHOR OF HIS SOUL.

1. Herein we are given assurance of it because it is based on two immutable things of God, in which it was impossible for God to lie, his promise and his oath, vv.10-18.
2. It is a “hope set before us,” which is “both sure and steadfast,” vv.18,19.

- a. There is nothing uncertain about its being available; it has been devised, planned, and provided for us by God.
 - b. It has been “set before us”, but we must “lay hold upon” it. Cf. 1Cor.15:58; 2Pet.1:5-11; Mt.6:33; Heb.6:10-12; 1Tim.6:17-19.
 - c. It is both “sure and steadfast” because of that upon which it rests – the immutability of God’s counsel, confirmed by his oath.
 - d. We need such strong consolation or encouragement because of the frequent defects of natural earthly hopes and discouragements in dealing with mere men in this earthly life.
3. The Christian has this hope which is “an anchor of the soul, which entereth into that within the veil,” where Jesus, our high priest, had entered, vv.19-20. Cf. Heb.9:24; 10:17.
- a. Thus it is like an anchor that goes into the sea – its proper place.
 - b. Its location is in heaven where it is laid up.
 - c. Imagine a ship without an anchor. Even more so a Christian without hope as an anchor of the soul on the sea of life as it sails toward eternity!

G. CONSIDER SERIOUSLY THE RESPONSIBILITY THAT HEB.10:23 ENJOINS UPON THE CHRISTIAN RELATIVE TO HIS HOPE.

- 1. V.23 says “Let us hold fast the profession (confession) of our faith (hope, ASV; ESV) without wavering (that it waver not) (for he is faithful that promised).”
- 2. Let us holdfast (keep on holding) to the hope we profess or confess.
- 3. This text invites consideration of the duties involved in the hope we profess, and of the watchfulness necessary if we are to keep faithful to it without wavering.
- 4. The profession or confession of our hope is a voluntary act; and by voluntary efforts it is to be maintained.
- 5. Holding fast without wavering involves:
 - a. Allegiance to certain revealed truths.
 - b. Submission to the living rule of Christ.

- c. Keeping of certain well-defined rules, and doing of certain carefully prescribed works of faith.
 - d. Holding fast to all these with head, heart and hand.
 - e. Recognizing the implied danger of wavering from this, called to mind here by the expression “without wavering”, or “that it waver not”.
- 6. Doing as this verse urges will effectually secure us against: persecution and temptation.
 - 7. The manner in which we must do this is without: wavering, doubting, uncertainty, timidity, dallying with temptation to apostasy. Cf. Heb.2:1; 6:11,12; 10:35-39.
 - 8. The motive or reason for and encouragement enforcing this duty: “for he is faithful that promised.” Cf. 1cor.1:9; 1Th.5:24; 2Th.3:3; 2Pet.3:9.
 - a. God’s faithfulness to all his promises should be our perpetual inspiration to faithful service, or should ensure our fidelity to our profession of hope.
 - b. This gives us the assurance we needed
 - c. All his promises are perfectly reliable, and of which we have many guarantees of their fulfillment, because they rest upon his infinite intelligence, his almighty power, and his perfect faithfulness and absolute holiness.

H. ACCORDING TO 1PET.1:3-5 CHRISTIANS HAVE A HOPE WHICH IS IDENTIFIED AS FOLLOWS:

- 1. As to the ground of that hope, it is the mercy of God who begat us to it.
- 2. As to the character of that hope:
 - a. It is a living hope.
 - b. It is a hope of life, and it is full of life, active and cheerful. Cf. Rom.12:1,2.
 - c. And it dieth not as to worldly hopes which rise, perish and die; they mock us with a deluding expectation, but end in disappointment, and leave us sad and hopeless.
 - d. “The hope of the unjust men perisheth” (Prov.11:7), often while they live, always when they die.
 - e. But “the righteous hath hope in his death” (Prov.14:32); for his hope liveth even in death.

hope.

3. As to the means by which we are begotten again into that

- a. It is according to (by, in, through) his (God's) abundant (great) mercy Christian are begotten again (born anew) unto this living hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
- b. This begettal, or this new birth, which enables us to have this hope is sometimes ascribed to subordinate, by necessary, means, i.e., to baptism (1Pet.3:21; Tit.3:4,5 – called therefore the washing or laver of regeneration); to the word of God (Jas.1:18; 1Pet.1:22,23); to the gospel (1Cor.4:15).
- c. But these subordinate, but necessary, means derive their efficacy from the mercy of God saving us by the incarnation, death, burial and resurrection of his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Cf. Rom.6:3-6; Gal.3:26-29; Col.2:12,13; 1Pet.3:21.

4. As to the object of that hope:

- a. It is the heavenly inheritance.
- b. That inheritance:
 - (1) Is incorruptible, or not corruptible.
 - (a) Here we perish; our best most prized possessions perish.
 - (b) There they die no more.
 - (2) Is undefiled.
 - (a) Here the trail of the serpent is over all things; men's hearts, lives, and conversations bear the taint of evil
 - (b) This earth has been marred by the sin of man; there is no earthly beauty, no earthly possessions, free from blemish.
 - © But the heavenly inheritance is wholly and totally pure.
 - (3) Fadeth not away.
 - (a) The lapse of time doth not affect it; for it is timeless, eternal.
 - (b) There is no old age there; rather, perpetual youth.

- © The best joys of earth fade into weariness; there is no weariness in heaven.
5. As to the place where it is located, and the certainty of that inheritance which is the object of our hope.
 - a. It is reserved in heaven for those who have this living hope, v.4b.
 - b. They are conditionally guarded unto this inheritance, their eternal salvation, vv.5,9.
 6. As to the final realization of it. That salvation is ready to be revealed in the last time, vv.5b,9; Cf. 1Pet.1:13; Heb.3:6.
 7. But Christians here and now greatly rejoice in their hope even though, if need be, being in heaviness through manifold temptations, and their faith being tried with fire, vv.6,7.

III. CONCLUSION

1. According to 1Jno.3:1-3 the Christian's hope has a great power or influence and responsibility.
 - a. It has both the power and the responsibility to purify the one who possesses it, vv.2,3; Cf. 1Pet.1:13-16; 2Cor.6:17-7:1.
 - b. Hope fits the soul for its future arena of glory.
 - c. For every state certain qualifications are requisite, if we would play a proper part therein.
 - (1) The baseball player who hopes to be selected for the All-star game can and will discipline himself and practice, practice, practice.
 - (2) The professional golfer who hopes to win the Master's can and will discipline himself and practice, practice, practice.
 - d. The Christian who has this hope can and will abstain from worldly indulgences because of his hope of more cherished longings.
 - e. He will not barter away his birthright even though faint with hunger.
 - f. The Christian's hope is a great engine of progress and reformation.
2. And according to 1Pet.3:15 the Christian must "be ready always to give a (ready) reason (or make a verbal defense) of (or for) the

hope” (that is in him), doing it “with meekness (modesty) and fear (respect).”

3. As always, our hope is deepened when it is challenged, and we are able to defend it against all questions which challenge it.
4. What do you think? Are you able to defend your hope? Are you willing? There is only one way to be able to do it –2Tim.2:15.
5. Friend, are you with or without this hope? Don’t leave this building without it! Believe and obey now!!