

Jesus The Hope Of The World

By Everett Hardin

Christianity is the religion of hope. In its acceptance we hope to become free from the guilt and pollution of sin; in its observance we hope to be made free from the power and practice of sin; and in its reward we hope to gain freedom from the penalty and presence of sin eternally. Hope makes it possible for us to bear our burdens, resist the temptations of life, and deny ourselves ungodliness and worldly lusts. Hope enables us to nurse our sick, bury our dead, and gather up the fragments of a shattered life and build again on a solid foundation. Through hope we reach into the future and take hold of unseen realities to give strength and stability to the soul in its fight against things seen and material. By hope we reach within the veil, even into heaven itself, to lay hold upon Christ that He may live in our hearts, give us strength, courage and patience; that He may be manifest in our mortal flesh, comfort us in death, and at last receive us to glory.

Of what does this hope consist? Hope has in it the element of desire and expectation. No one can hope for that which he expects but does not desire, nor for that which he desires but does not expect.

We are charged to *“be ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear,”* I Pet. 3:15. Surely it is worthwhile to evaluate, and give a reason for the hope which we have. We trust in so doing we shall strengthen our hope, and cause others to share it with us.

The Reason for Our Hope

We have God’s promise of eternal life. God, Who *“cannot lie,”* has promised us *“eternal life,”* Tit. 1:2. Since God *“cannot lie,”* we are just as sure that He will give us eternal life as we are sure that He is God. If He cannot lie the Christian has hope of eternal life. Hope is a great gift from God, a source of power and perseverance in the face of life’s most severe trials.

The next thing upon which we may base our expectation of eternal life is God’s oath. He promised then swore that he would fulfill that promise. The Hebrew writer said, that God made a promise and then being *“willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel he confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us,”* Heb. 6:17-18. Since God swore by Himself, He is eternally obligated to keep His promise. His character is involved. His promise and His oath are just as immutable as His character is unchangeable.

The third ground of our hope is the person of Jesus Christ. Paul speaks of the *“Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope,”* I Tim. 1:1; of *“Christ in you, the hope of glory,”* Col. 1:27. The basis of our hope is the fact that He died for our sins. Our unworthiness and our inability to live with God results from our sins. Jesus died so that He might atone for our sins. He had the power to break out of death’s prison and this gives us strong encouragement to believe, when through His power, we are raised from the dead, we will be acceptable to God and will be able to live with Him forever.

How Hope is Obtained

This hope in Christ is obtained by our faith in the Lord. *“Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope,”* Rom. 15:4. This faith is based on that which God has confirmed with power. *“Which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,”* I Pet. 1:3. Our hope comes in relation to our faith in the Lord. *“Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace. Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work,”* 2 Thess. 2:16-17. So we are to *“hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing firm unto the end,”* Heb. 3:6.

The Blessings Of This Hope

It would be utterly impossible to convey all the blessings derived from hope. Our lives are affected in so many ways by the hope that we have as a child of God. But let us seek to enumerate a few of the blessings.

1. It is by this hope that we are brought unto God. *“For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God,”* Heb. 7:19. But consider the condition before this hope. *“That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world,”* Eph. 2:12. How great then is our hope in Christ.

2. By this hope we are made heirs of God. *“That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life,”* Tit. 3:7. Only such hope will lead us to comply with the conditions of His divine will through which we obtain the inheritance, Rev. 22:14.

3. We are saved by hope. *“For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for,”* Rom. 8:24? A person does not hope for what he sees — that is what he already has or experiences. If there was nothing yet to be desired or expected, there would be no hope. But we expect a glorious future. Without hope we would not endure, we would not strive. *“Hope lost, all is lost.”*

4. Hope promotes our purification before God. *“And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure,”* I John 3:3. Because God is pure, those who have this hope will purify themselves. *“Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently,”* I Peter 1:22. A steadfast hope promotes purity of life.

5. Hope becomes an anchor in this life. *“Which hope we have an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast,”* Heb. 6:19. Life is not brought to a sudden shipwreck when there is a living hope. The problems of the present will not engulf us if we have a hope of something better in the future. As long as our eyes are fastened on heaven, tempestuous winds and tossing seas will not drive us from our bearing, nor impede our spiritual progress toward our home with God!

Manifestation Of This Hope

Those who have this hope must manifest it to all. The Lord wants us to demonstrate this hope that others may be led to obedience; *“for hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts,”* Rom. 5:5. Paul said, *“Seeing we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech,”* 2 Cor. 3:12. Hope will not cower behind evasions and half truths. It will not lead to deceit in handling God’s Word. Hope will lead one to affirm: *“We renounced the hidden things of dishonesty; not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God,”* 2 Cor. 4:2. The world is in need of such demonstration of hope.

Hope is a deterrent to sin and promotes righteousness. There are people who believe in God and Christ, but have not obeyed the gospel. The things of this world occupy their thoughts; as a result heaven dims in exchange for the idea that the things of this world satisfy their need. Hope not based upon facts is mere illusion or wishful thinking. God raised Jesus up from the dead and He will raise us up. Jesus now lives, at God’s right hand, that is why there is hope. He is the only hope for a hopeless world.
