

Moments *for* You

Volume 57, Number 3

Theme: Hope



JESUS CHRIST OUR HOPE

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope” (1 Timothy 1:1).

Paul did not always acknowledge Jesus as Lord, or as his hope. Looking back on those days he speaks of himself as the chief of sinners who thought he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus. He persecuted the church of God, and when Stephen, the first martyr, was stoned to death, the witnesses laid down their clothes at his feet (Acts 7:58). He was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious (1 Timothy 1:13).

At the same time he advanced in his own religion, and so far as he knew, he kept the commandments of God (Galatians 1:13,14). He was self-righteous and hated the gospel of the grace of God, which is always the case with those who are endeavoring to please God by their own goodness and works. What caused the change in his life? What caused the self-righteous Pharisee, who loved his religion and hated the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and all who belonged to Him, to change so dramatically?

He saw himself in the presence of God! He found out that he was a sinner and that his own works could not save him. The only way of true blessing for anyone is to find just what he is in the presence of God—a lost, helpless, hell-deserving sinner—then to confess his sins in true repentance and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. He who does that finds forgiveness of sins, new birth, eternal life, an inheritance in heaven, everlasting security in God our Savior, and a blessed hope

in our Lord Jesus Christ. “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief” (1 Timothy 1:15).

Now Paul bowed at the blessed feet of our Lord Jesus Christ, and owned Him as his Lord and his God. With Mary, the mother of Jesus, Paul owned Him as “God my Saviour” (Luke 1:47). With Thomas, he could say, “My Lord and my God” (John 20:28). To Titus he could write of Him as “God our Saviour” (Titus 2:10,13).

Through all his trials, Paul’s eye was fixed upon the Lord Jesus Christ, his hope. Amid all the hopelessness and despair of these trying days, is the Lord Jesus Christ your hope? Not some creed or religious profession, but the one bright star of cheering light shining out in this world’s midnight darkness.

LIVING HOPE

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3). Christ died for our sins, He was buried, but He arose again the third day for our justification. He now sits at the right hand of God, where He ever liveth to make intercession for us, and from where He shall come to receive us unto Himself, that where He is, there we may be also.

This is what differentiates Christianity from every religion in the world. Every other religion is just a system of dead works, or of moral teachings and philosophies, propounded by a teacher who is now dead. Christianity is a vital relationship with a living

Person, our Lord Jesus Christ, on the throne of God. We have a living hope because the Lord Jesus laid down His life for us on the cross, and after completing the work of our redemption, took it up again, now no more to die. All who believe on Him are united to our Living Head, in everlasting relationship. "Because I live," He says, "ye shall live also" (John 14:19). The living Lord Jesus, on the throne of God, is the evidence that our sins, which were laid on Him, are forever put away and that the life we have in Him is everlasting.

SURE HOPE

Our hope in the Lord Jesus Christ is not only a living hope, but it is also sure and steadfast. It rests not upon some failing foundation on earth, but its foundation is within the veil, even in heaven itself, where the Lord Jesus has entered for us, and so we have this hope as an anchor of the soul (Hebrews 6:17-20). Things on earth change, decay, and pass away, but the things in heaven are eternal. We see the Lord Jesus, who went to the cross to bear our sins and God's judgment due to us, crowned with glory and honor and seated on the throne of God. There is our security. There is our peace. There is our hope.

When we see our Forerunner there, we understand His words in John 5:24: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." Seeing Him on the throne of God enables us also to realize the force of John 10:27,28: "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand."

BLESSED HOPE

The living Christ has gone before us into the glory, but we look for Him to come again and take us to be with Himself there. Blessed hope! "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:11-14). It is for His coming glory we look. It is for His coming we wait. It is Himself who is our blessed hope. We do not look for death. We look for Him.

And He may come today. Perhaps today the sorrows and trials and pains and disappointments and failures and sins of our pilgrimage way, may be ended by His awakening shout as He calls the sleeping saints from their graves and takes us all up instantly to meet Him in the air (1 Thessalonians 4:13-17; 1 Corinthians 15:51,52). Then we shall be forever with Him and like Him (1 John 3:2,3).

In solemn contrast to the living, sure, and blessed hope of the child of God who is saved by faith in Christ, is the awful condition of those who will not trust Him. Ephesians 2:12 tells us, "Ye were without Christ ... having no hope, and without God in the world." Solemn word of God! All who are without Jesus Christ as their Savior are without hope, without God!

May we be faithful and earnest in pointing men to the only Savior and hope, while we await His coming, the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ—our hope!

—F. L. French, adapted.

OUR GREAT HOPE

What was the first message delivered by the ascended and glorified Lord Jesus? Moments after the cloud of glory carried Him out of their sight, the enraptured silence of the disciples of Christ was broken by the voice of two men in white apparel, saying, “this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11). On swift wing, from the very gates of the glory into which the Lord had entered, they had come, bringing the message that **the Lord is coming back again.**

This announcement was made before the Holy Ghost came to indwell the disciples to lead them into all those blessed truths that were afterwards revealed, and before one word was preached by them to the multitudes of sinful men. This fact should arrest the attention and lay hold of the soul of the Christian with great power, for it proves how tremendously important the second coming is to the Lord, and how He intended that it should have the first place in the thoughts of those upon the earth who love Him.

Fast-forward sixty years, and the last of those beloved men whose ears heard that first message from the Lord in glory was about to depart. But before he closed his service on earth the Revelation of things to come was given to him, and the last words of it from the Lord, closing up the Holy Scriptures, were a confirmation of that first announcement: “**Surely I come quickly**” (Revelation 22:20).

Yes, the first and last words from the Lord in the glory to His servants on earth were about His coming again. One of the strangest things in the history of the church is that this

hope of the Lord’s return was a lost hope for centuries, and that these words spoken by the Lord in the fullness of His love for His own, to cheer them during His absence, have been so little treasured and understood.

To be effective, the truth of the Lord’s coming must be more than a doctrine in the head—it must be a hope in the heart. “Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure” (1 John 3:3). For this to happen, Christ must be the supreme object of our affections. “What think ye of Christ?” is still the great test of our walk with God, and the measure of our rightness with regard to this and every other spiritual truth.

We have seen a young bride-to-be sailing to join her husband for the couple’s wedding. As the port of destination came into view, she stood on the deck, and with binoculars eagerly scanned for the face of the one who possessed her heart. The hope of meeting him who was to be her husband was a great reality to her because she loved him and knew that he loved her.

It is here that the church on earth has failed. Other things instead of Christ have filled her heart, and she has left her first love, and so has ceased to long and look for her Lord. But the Spirit of God is still here to make the love of Christ a reality to all who long after Him. And the Lord Himself makes a wonderful appeal to the affections of His saints in the closing chapter of Revelation when He says, “I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star” (Revelation 22:16). He intends that the heart should be awakened by this presentation of Himself, and that in unison with the Spirit the bride shall say, “Come.” —J. T. Mawson, adapted.

MORE THAN “HOPE SO”

The cynical editor and writer H. L. Mencken once defined hope as “a pathological belief in the occurrence of the impossible.” But that definition does not agree with the New Testament meaning of the word. True Christian hope is more than “hope so.” It is confident assurance of future glory and blessing.

Hope is found throughout the Scriptures. An Old Testament believer called God “the hope of Israel” (Jeremiah 14:8). A New Testament believer affirms that Jesus Christ is his hope (1 Timothy 1:1; and see Colossians 1:27). The unsaved sinner is “without hope” (Ephesians 2:12), and if he dies without Christ, he will be hopeless forever.

Peter is preeminently the apostle of hope, as Paul is the apostle of faith, and John of love. In 1 Peter he writes that believers have a “living hope” because we trust a living Christ (1:3). This hope enables us to keep our minds under control and “hope to the end” (1:13) for the return of Jesus Christ. We must not be ashamed of our hope but ready to explain it and defend it (3:15).

This confident hope gives us the encouragement and enablement we need for daily living. It does not put us in a rocking chair where we complacently await the return of Jesus Christ. Instead, it keeps us going when the burdens are heavy and the battles are hard. Hope is not a sedative; it is a shot of adrenaline, a blood transfusion. Like an anchor, our hope in Christ stabilizes us in the storms of life (Hebrews 6:18,19); but unlike an anchor, our hope moves us forward, it does not hold us back.

—Condensed from *Be Hopeful* by Warren W. Wiersbe.

A BOY’S HOPE

I believe there is a heaven. One day, when I was a little boy in western North Carolina, I carved an inscription on one of the bricks of the old-fashioned chimney of my home. It read, “Heaven I hope to win.” I had been told at home and in the little country church and at Sunday school about a beautiful city. They had read *Pilgrim’s Progress* to me, and I had made up my mind to head heavenward.

Not long ago, I visited that old spot where the plain little house and the old chimney still stand. I searched for that inscription on the worn old brick, and to my delight I found it. Carved over half a century ago, most of it had been erased by the rains and the snows and the steady erosion of heat and cold. But I could still make out clearly two words—heaven and hope.

I, too, have stood the gales, the summers, the winters of all those years, but the ravages of life’s seasons have not removed the hope of heaven from my heart. It is imbedded there more securely than my boyish fingers ever carved it into that old brick. The infidels have blown their blast, and Bible critics even in pulpits and seminary chairs have tried to dim that hope. But it burns brighter than ever before.

When I wrote that inscription, most of my loved ones were living here. Now most of them have taken up their residence over there. But best of all, I have my Savior’s word about it: “In My Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you” (John 14:2). That settles it. If it weren’t true, He would let us know. And on that rock I stand.

—Vance Havner

HOPE AND SERVICE

“Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven” (1 Thessalonians 1:9,10).

The Christian’s hope is not an advanced subject which is only to be understood or achieved through years of experience. Rather, it is part of the Gospel, something to be known and enjoyed from the very beginning. The Colossian believers heard of “the hope which is laid up for you in heaven” when they heard “the word of the truth of the Gospel” (Colossians 1:5). Likewise, the Thessalonians were still babes in Christ when Paul wrote his first letter to them, every chapter of which speaks of the coming of the Lord. There were *details* of His coming about which they needed further instruction, but the *fact* of His coming again was known to them from the hour of their conversion.

In the more recent history of the church, the coming of the Lord—the proper hope of the Christian—was largely ignored or relegated to a future so hazy and far distant that it excited little influence as a hope. Now it occupies a prominent place in the minds of most evangelical Christians, and has for many decades been preached with increasing conviction and clearness. The danger with us, then, is that we may hold the coming of the Lord as an item in our *theology* without it being a hope, potent to influence our *lives*.

We earnestly ask for close attention to this point and for an honest spirit of self-examination and self-judgment. We challenge especially every Christian young man or young woman as to whether they are “like unto men that wait for their lord” (Luke 12:36). Are you shaping your course through the world in view of

the day of Christ’s appearing, or are you conforming to the world’s ways and spirit, and seeking your own things rather than the things of your Master, the Lord Jesus Christ?

It has been said that God has more to do *in* us than *by* us. Let us then test ourselves about the work of God in us. Brother or sister in Christ, is the hope burning brightly in your soul? Faith gives you an object that instantly sets your course across this world. Love delivers you from a self-centered existence, and sets you at the happy task of laboring for Christ’s glory and the good of others. Hope steadies your soul, and nerves you with the absolute certainty of final victory and glory.

When hope burns brightly, the service of God is diligently pursued. It has been supposed by some that the hope of the coming of the Lord is an unpractical and visionary thing, that those whose hearts are filled with it are thereby left idly standing and “gazing up into heaven” like the “men of Galilee” (Acts 1:11). It is possible, no doubt, to misuse the Christian hope; we may hold the doctrine of the second advent and at the same time we may be very active in the pursuit of earthly pleasure. But if His coming holds our hearts as a burning and shining hope, it will be far otherwise: we shall be diligent servants of God.

Shall we close by once more testing ourselves? What is the aim and purpose of my life? We are all serving *something* or *somebody*. Am I serving the living and true God or my own ease and convenience, my own whims and pleasures? Is the truth of the second advent of Christ to me a mere doctrine, a matter of theology, or is it a bright, an inspiring, and a compelling HOPE?

—Adapted from “The Hope, and its Effects” by F. B. Hole.

OUR SURE HOPE

Konrad Adenour, former chancellor of West Germany, said, “If Jesus Christ is alive, then there is hope for the world. If not, I don’t see the slightest glimmer of hope on the horizon.” Then he added, “I believe Christ’s resurrection to be one of the best-attested facts of history.”

Christ’s resurrection and ours go together. So reasoned the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 15. And if Christ didn’t rise from the grave, what’s left? Empty preaching (v. 14), false witnesses (v. 15), a futile faith (v. 17), unforgiven sins (v. 17), no life after death (v. 18), and hopelessness (v. 19).

But Christ did rise from the grave. Paul asserted the proof for the resurrection in verses 1 through 11, listing many credible witnesses who saw the risen Lord: Peter (v. 5), 500 people (v. 6), all the apostles (v. 7), and Paul himself (v. 8).

When the Greek philosopher Socrates lay dying, his friends asked, “Shall we live again?” He could only say, “I hope so.” In contrast, the night before author and explorer Sir Walter Raleigh was beheaded, he wrote in his Bible, “From this earth, this grave, this dust, my God shall raise me up.”

If we trust in Christ as our Savior, we won’t say, “I hope so” about our own resurrection. Jesus’ resurrection gives us a sure hope.

—Dennis J. De Haan, *Our Daily Bread*.

EVER-LIVING HOPE

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Peter 1:3).

In Christ, God has given us an ever-living hope. The word “hope,”

as used here, does not mean desire or expectation. It is not that of the student who *hopes* he will pass a test. It means *confidence*. It is the hope that banishes all doubt and uncertainty. The believer never needs to be distressed by fears if Christ is his ever-living hope. The writer of Hebrews speaks of this “hope” as an “anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast” (6:19). It does not rest upon the fleeting philosophies of men, but is imbedded in the solid rock of Jesus Christ, who is “the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Hebrews 13:8).

Strengthened by such eternal confidence in Christ, no believer should experience the slightest worry since everything should be laid in confidence at the feet of our Lord. David could say, “The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?” (Psalm 118:6). Even amidst the sorrows of death, he could assuredly say, “Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me” (Psalm 23:4).

Should the death of loved ones leave us distraught, our hopes destroyed? Ah, no. In Christ, the ever-living hope, we have a light to guide us through the darkest valley, even death itself. “The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?” (Psalm 27:1).

How often these precious promises are read, yet never appropriated. We may trust God completely, because what He has promised, He will perform. If Christ is your hope, you may rely upon His Word with full assurance that He will not fail. We cannot always trust the word of others, but God’s Word will never fail.

—Condensed from *Living Peacefully* by J. Allen Blair.

THE FRUITS OF HOPE

Joy—“Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ ... and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” *Romans 5:1,2*

Courage—“Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed.” *Romans 5:3-5*

Salvation—“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?” *Romans 8:24*

Patience—“If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.” *Romans 8:25*

Assurance—“Hope we have as an anchor of the soul.” *Hebrews 6:19*

Purity—“Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself.” *1 John 3:3*

Fruitfulness—“Blessed is the man ... whose hope the LORD is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her

leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.” *Jeremiah 17:7,8*

Watchfulness—“I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in His word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning.” *Psalms 130:5,6*

Comfort—“Sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.... The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout ... and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them.... Wherefore comfort one another with these words.” *1 Thessalonians 4:13-18*

Tranquility—“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.” *Psalms 42:11*

Readiness—“Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you.” *1 Peter 3:15*

THE ANCHOR OF HOPE

For centuries, anchors have been a symbol of hope. This emblem was especially significant to the early persecuted church. Many etchings of anchors were discovered in the catacombs of Rome, where Christians held their meetings in hiding. Threatened with death because of their faith, these committed Christians used the anchor as a disguised cross and as a marker to guide the way to their secret meetings. Located beneath the ancient city, 600 miles of these tomb-like burial chambers served as a place of refuge during perilous times of persecution. Thus, the anchor—found even on some tombstones today—has become the symbol of guaranteed hope for the eternal security of true Christians.

—June Hunt

