

The Blessed Hope

by Leon King

"You have no hope," the doctor said to the young man sitting across from him. The doctor completed his examination and had finished reading the results of the laboratory tests and scans. "You have cancer and it is very bad. It is already in its last stages and there is no cure for your disease. It is terminal. You have no hope." The young man was visibly shaken. He was distressed greatly at this horrible news. No hope? No hope? What terrible words! Yet, these words are precisely appropriate to every person who is not one of God's children. They are without God and without hope in the world. Believers, on the other hand - those who have become children of God by faith in Christ Jesus have a blessed hope. It is this hope that the writer will describe in this article.

Those born of God can, and should look for the blessed hope. It is their privilege - one that the unbelieving world knows nothing of.

*Looking for that **blessed hope**, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;*
-- Titus 2:13.

I. The believer's Hope is a Positive Hope.

Hope is usually defined as a presently held positive anticipation of something in the future, usually with pleasure. A believer who spends time thinking of what awaits him at the close of this life does so with unspeakable joy and anticipation. When a child of God thinks on his hope, it brings pleasure to his soul that cannot be put into words. Notwithstanding the fact that he cannot articulate all that he feels in his inner man, the hope is positive. God, through the New Birth, sealed the believer with the Holy

Spirit who bears witness with the spirit of the man so sealed that He is the son of God. As such - as a son of the living God - he has a hope that is positive - both sure and steadfast. It is a hope that doesn't fade away.

2. Like the unbelievers now in the world, all believers were once without hope.

There was a time before the believer's new birth that he was without hope. We all know from reading the Scriptures that God chose the nation of Israel as His own nation. God gave them his laws. The prophets were of Israel. The promises were made to Israel. But we - before we were born again were without Jesus Christ, the Messiah. We were aliens to the commonwealth of Israel. We were strangers from the covenants of promise made by God. We were without God and without hope in the world (Ephesians 2:11,12).

3. All believers can correctly say that they are saved by hope or "in" hope.

There is a positive sense in which hope saves the believer. A man with no hope has no salvation. We do not see our blessed hope, but we read of it; we hear it men of God preach about it and we are absolutely persuaded of it.

The Bible says we are "*saved by hope,*" or "*saved in hope.*" The hope of God's child is not something he sees physically, otherwise, why would he yet keep on hoping for something he sees. As the Scripture says, "*If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it..*" That hope will surely come, but we have need of patience to wait until it is fully realized.

This kind of hope - the hope that we cannot physically see acts as an anchor for our soul. God has promised that he will not change nor alter that which he has spoken. He promised refuge to the believer and confirmed it by an oath to show the unchangeableness of his counsel. Too, we know that according to God's nature, it is impossible for God to lie. So, the hope that is

laid before us is like an anchor of the soul. It keeps us steady as life comes and goes. Through the ups and downs, the heartaches and triumphs, we have a hope which fails not.

Jesus Christ, God's Son, the Lamb of God bought this hope for us with His own blood on the cross more than two thousand years ago. The Bible says that he rose from the dead and has ascended into the heavens where He sits at the right hand of the Father. From that place in the heavens, He is the great High Priest of the house of God, which is the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.

Believers has a strong consolation in Jesus, who secured their everlasting consolation and good hope. We are told to set the Lord God apart in our hearts so we can given an answer to every man who asks of the reason of the hope within us. We hasten to say that the hope is not gained by anything that we have done of ourselves. Apart from the fact, that we have been born again by the free grace of God, we have nothing to boast of. We were once under the sentence of condemnation just as all men are without the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, God's Son.

What answer can we give of this hope? We can say that He saved us by his pure grace and mercy. We were rebels against God. We had sinned - were born in sin - and lived in sin until we were encountered by the God of Heaven through the preaching of His Word. Through that Word we saw that all men are conceived and born in sin. We saw that all men, because of their sin, are under the just condemnation of a Holy God. We saw that this righteous God had chosen some of the people to receive His salvation. He wrote their names in a book called the Lamb's book of life from before the foundation of the world.

Having chosen some unto salvation, the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit agreed that Jesus Christ should be born of a virgin in Bethlehem of Judaea during the reign of Augustus Caesar. They agreed that Jesus would be just

as human as any man, yet without sin. He would also be divine - that is, God in a human body. His grand purpose in being born into the world was to die on a Roman Cross to save His people from their sins. He did exactly that!

Hanging on that cross, his head bleeding from a cruel crown of thorns, his back pouring blood from the flogging, his hands and feet oozing blood from the wounds where he was nailed to the cross, his face battered, blackened, and bruised from the cruel beatings so that he could scarcely be recognized as a man - there, in agony and shame, he hang naked and became a curse for His people while bearing all their sins in His body. He said, "It is finished," just before He dismissed His spirit to the Father. He has hung there, after living a sinless life; having been tempted in every point as we are, yet without sin - dying the just for the unjust that he might bring us to God. When He yielded up His life that day on the cross, He had paid for the sins of all His people whose names were written in the Lamb's Book of Life. He had saved His people from their sins. This is our Hope.

We are told that no man can come to the Father but by Jesus Christ. He is the way, the truth, and the life and no man comes to the Father, but by Him. There is no other name given among men whereby we must be saved other than the name of Jesus Christ. It is by Him, and through Him, that we have this blessed hope.

For the child of God, three abiding virtues follow them through life. Those virtues are faith, hope, and charity. Hope is one of them - and a very important one. It is that hope that anchors the believer through the storms and disappointments of this temporal life. What tragedy for men who have no hope - or whose hope is in this present world only.

4. Believers have a Blessed Hope.

The word blessed means happy or happier. We have a happy hope or a happier hope. A seemingly happy hope of this earth is taken away by the

horrible sadness that comes to all men through the storms of this life. Poverty, disease, murder, war, ravaging, and pillaging destroy men's hope in this world. Many times, a hope that seems happy on earth is shattered in an instant. A wife or husband dies. Children are swept away. Wealth is gone in a moment. Fire or other disaster takes our houses and goods. Thieves break in and steal what we have worked for. These things are the plight of all of us on this earth. The blessed hope is not in this present world order, but in the eternal Kingdom of God's Son. That hope revolves around Jesus Christ and His blessed forgiveness of our sins.

5. The Believer's Hope is one that Doesn't Make Ashamed.

We will never be ashamed or embarrassed by our hope. Even though tribulation comes - and it will to all of us - we can glory in it, for we are more than conquerors over it. Our Hope in Jesus Christ and the promise of everlasting life will never leave us ashamed. The tribulations that come to us simply do us good in working patience in us. Patience is a virtue that people are not born with.

We are told that we have good hope through grace (the free gift) and an everlasting consolation. Thank God, that this life is not all there is! Our consolation is everlasting. Life in this world is for a few fleeting years at most. We spend our days as a tale that is told. Life is like a vapor that appears for a little time, then vanishes. But, the consolation is forever. Forever! Just think of it. No time, as we understand time. There no end to the everlasting consolation provided to His children by Jesus Christ. This is more than enough to comfort our hearts.

The solid hope of the child of God makes him rejoice. That is, it fills him with joy and makes him "bubble over." We rejoice in hope. We cannot

rejoice in the difficulties of life and the sorrows attendant to it, but we can rejoice in our hope.

6. It is a Hope for which Believers are Looking.

Many speak about the "victorious life" in this world through Jesus Christ. Yes, we have overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and therefore we have victory. Yet the hope for which we are looking is not merely here in Christ. One of the New Testament writers said, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable."

No, it is not here, but it is centered in the resurrection from among the dead. The Christian's hope has ever been in the resurrection. And Jesus said, *"I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:"* All of the believers will not die, but all of them must be changed into a body that will be capable of living with Jesus.

That will happen at the resurrection. That is the day we are looking forward to. The Bible says that the Lord, himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God...and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be changed and caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Blessed contemplation!

7. The Believer's Hope is Not with Men of the World Which Have Their Portion in This Life.

No, our hope isn't here. Everything we see on this earth will one day be dissolved with the heavens, being on fire, will melt with fervent heat and all the works of men shall be burned up. Men are not going to carry anything out of this world in their hands. We come into the world with "clinchd fists" as an infant, and leave with "empty hands" altogether as we came. It is

marvelous to see the accomplishments of men who were created in the image of God. Man - created by an infinitely wise God.

Man - made to perpetuate himself through the seed within him. Man - with the very image of God stamped upon him. Man - who can think, plan, reason, design, and build. What great things in the sight of others. Huge dams that generate electricity to burn a million lights in cities miles away; airplanes to fly through the atmosphere speeding as many as five-hundred passengers or more to destinations far and wide; huge, comfortable air-conditioned buildings; automobiles for man's enjoyment and work. All of these things are the result of men created in the image of God. And - that's only the tip of the iceberg. Problem is, that all of these things shall perish as well as the men who have refused the truth of God. Our hope isn't in this world. The builders cannot establish good hope. The politicians cannot compromise it; the legislators cannot do it by law; the judges cannot demand it by the court; the educators cannot bring it by knowledge. The hope is in a person. That person is Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God. And that hope is in the death, burial, and resurrection of that same person in paying the sin debt for His people. Sin is the problem and sin has destroyed hope. Jesus removes the sins of all who are believing and they have good hope.

The believer's hope is in the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ. Then, all that are believing in Him will cease to hope and see him as he is. Their hope will be realized because they received the love of the truth that they might be saved.

The truth is that God created all things. The truth is that God chose some to salvation. The truth is that Jesus Christ died for those whom were chosen. The truth is that he paid for all their sins on the cross. The truth is that all who are believing on Him as the Messiah, the very Son of the Living God, and the truth of Him shall never perish. That is a blessed hope!

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