

## Hope an Anchor of the Soul

“But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner. For God [is] not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, [in that] you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, “Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.” And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation [is] for them an end of all dispute. Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed [it] by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it [is] impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before [us]. This [hope] we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence [behind] the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, [even] Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.” (Hebrews 6:9-20 NKJV)

Sometimes hope is confused with faith. They are very similar terms, but they are not synonymous. The Scriptures differentiate between the two by saying, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (Hebrews 11:1 NKJV)

Faith is that quality that believes something to be true. Hope is the expectation that something will come to pass. Maintaining this distinction makes Hebrews 11:1 intelligible. We hope for something that we cannot see, but faith gives substance or reality to that for which we hope.

An example might help to make this clearer. An athlete may hope to improve his running time by a few seconds. After several tries, he discovers that he is not improving, and so he no longer hopes to improve. Another athlete hires the best running coach he can find. His coach tells him things that will help him to run faster if he will practice them diligently. He also makes several tries without any improvement. However, he believes his coach and continues to try. The first athlete has no faith that what he is doing will make him any faster so he has no hope and quits trying. The second athlete has faith in his coach so even though there is no immediate improvement his hope is sustained by his belief that the methods he has been taught will eventually make him faster, and on he presses.

Our hope is sustained by our faith in Christ. We may have great confidence in the promises made to us because they were made by the Most High God who cannot lie. This hope, like the runner trusting his coach, causes us to remain steadfast in our walk to the end of our lives.

It is no small thing for which we hope. To stand in the presence of God in our resurrected bodies without shame or fear beholding His glory will be greater than our minds can now image. How do we know that? We know that because God has told us in His Word. His Word makes it substantial.

## False Hope Are Based on False Foundations

This brings us to a warning. While hope based on the solid foundation of God's Word is an anchor to the soul. A hope based on a false assumption is shipwreck for the soul. These false assumptions may present themselves in different ways.

First, there are self-righteous works. "And in vain they worship Me, Teaching [as] doctrines the commandments of men." (Mark 7:7 NKJV) This should not be dismissed too easily.

Many probably equate going to church as a guarantee that they are saved. I know one person who believed she was a Christian simply because she was an American. You say that is ridiculous. Well, you need to remember that the blindness people have is both natural and supernatural. It is natural in that all men are born blind to the truth. One has to be born again to see the kingdom of God (John 3:3). It is also supernatural blindness to them "whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them." (2 Corinthians 4:4 NKJV)

Second, there is incomplete repentance. You may have great confidence in a reformed lifestyle. Yet your repentance may have only been legal repentance. Legal repentance is reformation based on the fear of judgment. This may lead to evangelical repentance, but sometimes it stops short. The determining factor is the Spirit of God.

The key sign of evangelical repentance is godly sorrow. "For godly sorrow produces repentance [leading] to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death." (2 Corinthians 7:10 NKJV)

Third, there is presumption. This is hope based on the goodness of God and a one-time confession. A person presumes that God is obligated to save them just because they prayed a prayer. It should be obvious from the first two false foundations that this one stands to reason. God is not a giant vending machine into which you may cast a prayer and demand a treat. Salvation comes by grace as John declared; "Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1:13 NKJV)

Therefore, make sure your hope is based on the Word of God and a genuine confession. It would be a tragedy to live your whole life hoping for heaven and find out that your hope was built on the sand. Examine yourself to see if you are in the faith (2 Cor. 13:5). Have the right foundation, and you will have an anchor for your soul.