



The Christian's Hope

The Christian's hope is real hope—it is a hope that is living. God causes Christians to have this hope through His great mercy: *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a **living hope** through the*

resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead ...” (1Peter 1:3). In a very real sense, hope is the keynote of Peter's first letter. John is often referred to as the apostle of love, Paul is often said to be the apostle of faith, then it might be entirely proper to speak of Peter as the apostle of hope. When Christ was raised from the dead, God truly gave the apostles a living hope, however, Peter, in his letter, uses the term “you” in the application: *“... to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for **you** ...” (1Peter 1:4).* This shows that he is considering the Christian's hope, in general.

What is meant when talking of hope? The word “hope” carries with it the idea of desire and expectation. The thing we really desire and expect to receive is the thing for which we hope. The thing which Christians desire and expect to have is a home in heaven. Christians do not have the home in heaven now—it will be revealed—*“... who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1Peter 1:5).* Paul describes that for which the Christian has hope in this way: *“Now in this hope we were saved, yet hope that is seen is not hope, because who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with patience” (Romans 8:24-25).*

Just as Peter has mentioned that there are four factors in man's salvation, now he explains that there are four factors in man's hope, also. God has a part in this: *“Blessed be the God and Father ...” (1Peter 1:3-5).* The Lord Jesus Christ has a part in this: *“... at the revelation of Jesus Christ ...” (1Peter 1:6-9).* The Spirit has a part in this: *“who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven ...” (1Peter 1:10-12).* Man has a part in this also: *“As obedient children ...” (1Peter 1:13-18,22,23).*

What is the nature of this hope? It is incorruptible; it is undefiled (1Peter 1:4). It is not tarnished in any way as is the inheritance of the wealthy and powerful of this country. It is one that does not fade away. The influences of time have no effect upon it. What an inheritance to hope for!

What is the importance of this hope? This hope is important because of the great motivation it gives. Paul, as did Peter, not only understood hope but experienced its motivation. “Brothers, I do not consider myself to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to what is ahead, I pursue as my goal the prize promised by God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus. Therefore, all who are mature should think this way” (Philippians 3:13-15; see also Acts 20:22-27; 26:4-7). This hope is important in that it is the anchor of the soul (Hebrews 6:19). This keeps Christians from being washed away with the onrushing waters of life. The words of an oft sung hymn reflect this hope:

Will your anchor hold in the storms of life,
When the clouds unfold their wings of strife?
When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain,
Will your anchor drift, or firm remain?

We have an anchor that keeps the soul,
Stedfast and sure while the billows roll,
Fastened to the Rock which cannot move,
Grounded firm and deep in the Savior's love.

What is the comfort of this hope? Another reason that hope is so important is that it is the thing that brings the most comfort in times of death (**1Thessalonians 4:13-16**). Of all the apostles, Peter was the best equipped to give a lesson on the importance of hope, for his hope had waned and then revived (**Luke 22:21**).

What is the surety of this hope? It has all the insurance of heaven behind it (**1Peter 1:3**). It has the great Redeemer behind it: *"Your heart must not be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if not, I would have told you. I am going away to prepare a place for you. If I go away and prepare a place for you, I will come back and receive you to Myself, so that where I am you may be also. You know the way to where I am going. 'Lord,' Thomas said, 'we don't know where You're going. How can we know the way? Jesus told him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me'" (**John 14:1-6**). Peter affirms that this hope is based on the word which cannot fail (**1Peter 1:22-25**).*

What hope do you have? If you have not obeyed the gospel, is it not the time to do so?