

What Saith the Scripture?

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## On the Importance of Being Hopeful Or, Hope Does Not Disappoint

"They shall not be ashamed that wait for Me"

(Isaiah 49:23).

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### Preface

All of the Saints benefit from waiting upon the LORD. "The LORD is good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him" (Lamentations 3:25). We wait upon Him, Whom our physical eyes do not see-- the "Invisible God" (Colossians 1:15). **Hope** is that expectation of Someone or something that is not seen as yet. "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). Though our Salvation is assured to us by faith, our final entrance into His Heavenly presence is not yet sight. "2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is. 3 And every man that hath this **hope** in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure" (1John 3:2-3). It is then fitting that we address the LORD Jesus as our Hope, i.e., "God our Saviour, and LORD Jesus Christ, which is our **Hope**" (1Timothy 1:1).

The death of the Saints as well as the departure of the Saints, e.g., the Pre-Tribulational Rapture, the Pre-Wrath Rapture, etc., both lay emphasis upon **hope**. "The righteous hath **hope** in his death" (Proverbs 14:32). And, "Looking for that Blessed **Hope**, and the glorious appearing of the Great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13). It should be thought no more strange that the Raptured Saints would demonstrate the same kind of expectation or **hope** that is displayed by the other Saints who have died throughout the ages. "I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in His Word do I **hope**" (Psalm 130:5). Even after Jeremiah witnessed the fall of Jerusalem, he knew still that **hope** is good. "It is good that a man should both **hope** and quietly wait for the Salvation of the LORD" (Lamentations 3:26).

### Be Not Ashamed of Being Hopeful

Whenever we begin to **hope** intently on any particular day for the LORD to accomplish the Rapture of His Watching and Waiting Church, we become heartsick when the LORD tarries the Rapture. "**Hope** deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a Tree of Life" (Proverbs 13:12). That heart sickness is a longing that the LORD will not disappoint. "5 And **hope** maketh not ashamed [literally, **hope does not disappoint**]; because the Love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Romans 5:5). *God forbid that we should ever be disappointed in our All Sufficient Saviour*, for "our sufficiency is of God" (2Corinthians 3:5). Thus, we are prone to often breathe the prayer, "Come [quickly], LORD Jesus" (Revelation 22:20).

## Hope and Desiring to Depart

**Hope** breeds a healthy interest in our own departure. Even the Apostle Paul voiced his strong desire to depart; though, he was-- thankfully-- required to stay a little while longer-- for our benefit. "23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: 24 Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you" (Philippians 1:23-24). It appears that the LORD will arrange our circumstances so that our departing will become readily apparent to ourselves. "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand" (2Timothy 4:6).

This intensity of interest to depart is good, so long as we do not neglect the other things we have been called by God to do, e.g., working to support ourselves and our families. "10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. 11 For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. 12 Now them that are such we command and exhort by our LORD Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread" (2Thessalonians 3:10-12).

## Hope and Occupying Till He Comes

How can we "occupy" (Luke 19:13) for the LORD until He comes, while we "watch" and "pray" that we "may be accounted worthy to escape all" (21:36) the events of the Tribulation Week? Only the Holy Spirit can give us the proper balance to match our individual circumstances and the lateness of the hour. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14). **Hope** will not conflict with occupying, if they both come from God. "And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all" (1Corinthians 12:6).

**To occupy is to use the opportunities that God has given us.** "14 For the Kingdom of Heaven is as a man traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. 15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey" (Matthew 25:14-15). Walk through the "great door and effectual" (1Corinthians 16:9) that is opened to you, and be not consumed with someone else's door.

**To occupy is to minister the gifts that God has given to us.** "6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; 7 Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; 8 Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness" (Romans 12:6-8). Wonderfully, our gifts will match our inclinations, for we have been instructed to "**desire** Spiritual gifts" (1Corinthians 14:1)!

**To occupy is to promote the Common Good-- evangelizing the Lost, restoring the Backslidden, edifying the Saved-- to the glory of God.** "7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. 8 For to one is given by the Spirit the Word

of Wisdom; to another the Word of Knowledge by the same Spirit; 9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; 10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: 11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will" (1Corinthians 12:7-11).

### **Hope and Watching With All Perseverance**

Watching is the condition of vigilance. "Blessed are those servants, whom the LORD when He cometh shall find **watching**: verily I say unto you, that He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them" (Luke 12:37). But, for what are we to be watching? The unequivocal answer is that we are to focus our attention upon our Master, even as any servant would pay attention to the desires and needs of an earthly employer. "Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of Our Faith" (Hebrews 12:2). When our Heavenly Master calls for us, we are to promptly respond, and not to debate His purpose or timing. "Also I heard the Voice of the LORD, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us? Then said I, Here am I; send me" (Isaiah 6:8). And, what joy it will be to obey our LORD's command, "Come up hither" (Revelation 4:1)!

Never give up! "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and **hope to the end** for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1Peter 1:13). That persevering tenacity is the Holy Spirit working in us, causing us to watch. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and **watching** thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all Saints" (Ephesians 6:18). The Spirit works in us, causing us to **hope** to the end of our earthly sojourn. "But Christ as a Son over His own house; Whose house are we, **if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end**" (Hebrews 3:6).

### **God Will Keep the Hopeful**

The Saints are like a ship anchored by **hope** to the LORD Jesus Christ. "18 That by two immutable things, in which 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: 19 Which **Hope** we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil" (Hebrews 6:18-19). While the water is stormy, our anchor holds to the One, Who "is the Rock" (Deuteronomy 32:4)-- and "that Rock [is] Christ" (1Corinthians 10:4).

God's preservation of the **hopeful** is based upon His faithfulness. Manward, we, the hopeful, must continue in faith-- no matter the seeming impossibility. "21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled... 23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the **hope** of the Gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under Heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister" (Colossians 1:21,23). Godward, it is a certainty that He will superintend us, the **hopeful**, to the end. "Faithful is He that calleth you, Who also will do it" (1Thessalonians 5:24).

Again, we who hold fast the confidence and full assurance of our **hope** to the end, are made partakers with Christ in His Heavenly abode and reward. "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end" (Hebrews 3:14). And, "we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of **hope** unto the end" (Hebrews 6:11). He will bring to pass His Word about the preservation of the **hopeful**, because He is "not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" (Numbers 23:19).

## Hope Sustains Us

But, does it pay the bills? Yes, most certainly will the LORD Jesus, the "**Hope of Glory**" (Colossians 1:27), provide for all of our needs-- physical, financial, safety, etc. "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). The very fact that the LORD Jesus laid down His life for us about 2,000 years ago, is proof enough that the Father will not withhold whatever we need to continue our walk of faith, **hope**, and love. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32).

After all, if faith and **hope** are only available for the inhabitants of Heaven, then how will the LORD ever populate Heaven, if He does not sustain us until we get there? Just consider the evidence. Our Shepherd will never let the **hopeful** go wanting. "The LORD is my Shepherd; I shall not want" (Psalm 23:1). Even when all else fails, our God will supply-- even in times of famine. "18 The LORD knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be for ever. 19 They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied" (37:18-19). Our Sun and Shield will not withhold any good thing from us when we, the **hopeful**, walk uprightly. "For the LORD God is a Sun and Shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly" (84:11).

Our Heavenly Father has wisely provided His **hopeful** ones with an infinite number of blank checks to meet every need we will encounter in this life. "14 And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us: 15 And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him" (1John 5:14-15). And, if all the Promises of God are not enough to sustain His **hopeful** ones, the LORD has promised us the privilege of sharing the Messiah's inheritance with Him, i.e., *everything* "in Heaven and in Earth" (Matthew 28:18). "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together" (Romans 8:17). We, who are "**prisoners of hope**" (Zechariah 9:12) in this life, will soon experience an even greater and unimaginable level of love poured out upon us in Heaven! "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him" (1Corinthians 2:9).

## Believe in Hope

Faith and **hope** are intertwined. If we are to be strong in faith, then we are to be strong in **hope**. Just as we are to ignore the seeming contradiction of our physical circumstances against the claims of faith, so are we to believe in **hope**, even when all is stacked against **hope**. We must only remember Abraham to see how to properly exercise **hope**. "17 (As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before Him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were. 18 Who **against hope believed in hope**, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. 19 And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sara's womb: 20 He staggered not at the Promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; 21 And being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform. 22 And therefore it was imputed to him [Abraham] for righteousness" (Romans 4:17-22).

### **Beware of Losing Your Hopefulness**

If we believe that the LORD has disappointed us, we will become embittered about trusting Him any further. "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled" (Hebrews 12:15). It is important that we expose ourselves to God fully, to allow Him to show us that "He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (11:6), Whom we **hoped** in and believed, though we "have not seen" (John 20:29).

That diligent "looking" (Hebrews 12:15) is a responsibility that we are warned to keep. "Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless" (2Peter 3:14). But, only a complete reliance upon Him will enable us to actually fulfil that responsibility. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13). So, even as **hopefulness** is our responsibility enjoined by the Scriptures, the secret of our performance of that responsibility is that we beg for God's assistance. "John answered and said, A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from Heaven" (John 3:27).

### **Conclusion**

God will not confound the **hopeful**, if that **hope** is founded upon the LORD Jesus Christ. "Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a Chief Corner Stone, Elect, Precious: and he that believeth on Him shall not be confounded" (1Peter 2:6). Though we may stumble over ourselves, He will pick us up and restore us to an Upright Walk. "For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again" (Proverbs 24:16). Our God has done and is doing all that is possible to encourage us to **KEEP ON HOPING**. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31).

Until the LORD soon calls us into His joyful presence, Maranatha!