

A Christian's Hope

By
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"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." 1 Peter 1:3 NKJV

Now when I speak of hope, I'm not talking about a hope of wishful desires. The hope of a Christian is concrete expectation on a sure and solid foundation. When Adam and Eve first sinned, this world was cursed. God said cursed is the ground, and out of the ground came thorns and thistles. Women, in throes of labor pains, would deliver children. Though Sin had changed our world, the worst curse is that it left us to die hopeless and without God. But God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. In Ecclesiastes 7:2 it says, "Better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for that is the end of all men; and the living will take it to heart." (NKJV) We are reminded that unless the Lord comes first, one day we too shall lie in repose before our loved ones. Today, by God's Providence and Grace, we have an opportunity to be reminded of the greatest gift offered to mankind, and that is a victory over death. "O Death, where is your sting, O Hades, where is your victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 15:55-57 NKJV) We are graced with that victory, when we come to God on His terms and obey that form of doctrine that is able to deliver our souls. (Romans 6:17) Therefore, when we read of the Second Coming, we can be comforted

with the hope that we will rise again having overcome sin and death through Jesus Himself.

Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18, "But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. For this we declare to you by a word from the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord. Therefore encourage one another with these words." (ESV)

What about you who are here today? Do you have the hope a Christian has? You just heard of the story of Jesus, how He came to this world to die for us. Do you believe this to be true or had you considered it fiction up to this point? If doubts exist and hold you back, I plead with you to study the evidence and know without any doubt that Jesus of Nazareth, is the only true Savior. If you do believe, have you confessed that faith? In Romans 10:9, 10, we read, "because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved." (ESV) But belief and confession is not all, in Acts 17:30 it says, "God now commands all men everywhere to repent." To repent is to change and no longer practice those things which are contrary to God. And the final step to being our faithful walk is baptism. We must be immersed into water to be washed by the Blood of Christ. You see, it's not a matter of

what washes our sins away, for we agree that it is the Blood of Christ that can only wash us, but the question that we all here must answer is when does the Blood wash us? The answers are found in Acts 2:38, "Repent and each and everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus for the remission of your sins." (NKJV) And Again in Acts 22:16, where Paul was told by Ananias, "Why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling upon the name of the Lord." (ESV)

And if you want to learn more about these things, please come seek someone here to sit down with and study together. But until then, never forget, when we come to God on His terms, He is eager, just, and willing to forgive us of our sins so we too can have the victory. We are promised that if we remain faithful to Him unto death, we will receive the crown of life. (Revelation 2:10)