

“There Is One Hope”

The third of the “seven ones” is “*one hope.*” When Paul showed Corinthians a “*most excellent way,*” he contrasted passing things (tongues, prophecies, etc.) with things which abide: faith hope and love (1 Cor. 12:31; 13:13). A familiar definition of hope is “*desire plus expectation.*” Agreeing with this are Paul’s words from Romans 8:24: “*For in hope were we saved ... but hope that is seen is not hope: for who hopeth for that which he seeth?*” It is imperative that we know what our hope is since we are “*saved in hope.*” Paul prayed that Ephesians might know what was the hope of their calling (Eph. 1:18).

We are told by Peter that God hath “*begotten us again unto a living hope*” (1 Pet. 1:3). This hope is “*the hope of Israel*” and that which the twelve tribes earnestly sought to obtain (Acts 28:20; 26:7). The hope of Christians is laid up in heaven from which hope we must not be moved away (Col. 1:5; 23). Hope is the anchor of our souls, a hope both sure and steadfast (Heb. 6:19). If we do not know what our hope is, how can it be an anchor for our souls? What is our hope? Consider first, what our hope is not. Our hope is not ...

For a second chance after death. Death closes the door on any reversals of one’s destiny at the time of death. “*It is appointed unto man once to die, and after this the judgment*” (Heb. 9:27). The rich man learned, to his dismay, that a great chasm lay between him in agony and those at rest in Abraham’s bosom. Seeking relief from his misery, he asked Abraham to allow Lazarus to just touch water to his tongue. He was told that none could cross that chasm, no matter whichever side they were on (Lk. 16:26). We will be judged according to deeds done in our bodies (2 Cor. 5:10). Wherever the tree falls, there shall it lay (Eccl. 11:3).

A glorified earth to dwell in. Peter assures us that at the word of God, the heavens and earth will be destroyed; burned up (2 Pet. 3:10-12). Yes, we look for new heavens and a new earth, but this new heavens and new earth describe the heavenly city God has prepared for His own (Rev. 21:1f). According to John, at the judgment the present heavens and earth will flee away from the face of Him who sits on the throne and there will be found no place for them (Rev. 20:11).

A future, earthly reign of Christ. Christ is now reigning for He is now King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 17:14). When Christ comes, all the dead will be raised, both wicked and righteous (Jn. 5:28). That day will be the last day: the day in which all will pass to their eternal rewards (Jn. 6:44, Mt. 25:31-46).

So what is our hope? Paul told Titus he was, "*In hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before times eternal*" (Tit. 1:3). This hope will be realized at Christ's second coming when we are raised from the dead, "*looking for the blessed hope and appearing of our great God*" (Tit. 2:13). Eternal life comes after the resurrection but is not just eternal existence (the wicked will have that); it will be a state of joy and bliss (Mt. 25:46).

Because we have such a hope we should remember that we can forfeit it. Ancient Israel forfeited their hope of entering Canaan and they serve as warning to us that we can forfeit eternal life (Heb. 4:1, 11). We are urged "*and we desire that each one of you may show the same diligence of hope even to the end: that ye be not sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience, inherit the promises*" (Heb. 6:11f).

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