

WHERE IS OUR HOPE FOUND?

“My Hope is found in nothing less than Jesus blood and righteousness...” Some of you that have been in the Body of Christ for a while most likely remember these words that are from an old hymn we used to sing. These words came to my mind as we have experienced the recent events that have unfolded within our nation and

throughout the world. Events such as the recent presidential results within our nation; the death of Fidel Castro in Cuba; the continual terror tactics of ISIS; and the list goes on. There have been many “prophetic words” concerning the path of our nation, as well as the world, in the coming years.

For some there is a feeling of excitement and encouragement as we go forward. For others, there are feelings and thoughts of fearfulness, anxiety and great trepidation of what is in store for the future. Either one of the above scenarios can be and are very valid and real emotions - for the unbeliever. However, for the believer in Christ, or should I say the true disciple of Jesus, we must put everything that takes place within our lives, as well as everything that may surround us, into perspective – God’s perspective.

As we know our God is a “Sovereign God.” There is nothing, absolutely nothing, that takes Him by surprise. He knows the end from the beginning and the beginning from the end (Isaiah 46:10). We are told in the scriptures that His ways and thoughts are not our ways and thoughts but rather they are much higher than anything we could ever imagine or think (Isaiah 55:8, 9). We also know that in whichever nation the believer, (which includes you and I) may find ourselves placed in, it is the exact nation that God has ordained and determined for each of us to be. We also, know that we have all been born in this time period for His purposes as well. Paul explains this to those who were listening to him at his “Mars Hill” teaching in Athens as found in Acts 17:26 – “...*And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation...*”

We believe the scripture that decrees the ultimate fact concerning every nation, no matter what it may look like to us, today. Revelation 11:15 tell us what will be the final outcome for every nation, kingdom or governmental system at the appointed time that is set forth by the “Sovereign God, *“The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our God and His Christ and HE shall reign forever and ever.”* (Revelation 11:15) As we can see, God is in total control of all things. Yes, we are to pray. Yes, we are called to believe and have faith. However, the bottom line of our faith is not found within any one individual. It is not found within a nation or a particular governmental leader or system. It is not found in a great prophetic person. It is not found in any particular person who is in a church leadership position. It is not found in you or me. It is only found in the God of our salvation – Yahweh Adonai. It is only found in God the Father, Jesus the Son and Holy Spirit. Therefore, our hope must be found and deposited in only one place – the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

So what does this term “hope” really mean? Unfortunately, we have confused the word “hope” as it is found within the scriptures, with the usage of the word “hope” in our modern language. We have come to use or perceive this term “hope” as being synonymous with the word “wish.” Many times we hear these words used interchangeable. “Hoping” has now become the same connotation as “wishing.” However, this degradation of the use of the word “hope” in conjunction with the word “wish” is so very dangerous for believers if we do not grasp the true difference between the two words from a Biblical and scriptural perspective.

The use of the word “hope” as found in the Jewish scriptures concerning Yahweh, comes from the Hebrew root words, “*qavah*” pronounced “*kä·vä*,” or the Hebrew root word, “*yachal*”, pronounced “*yä·khal*.” They both have a very similar meaning. They both express the thought of having a great expectation, waiting for and looking eagerly for or towards something. The New Testament words for

“hope” as pertaining to the things of God stem from the Greek root word “*elpis*” pronounced “*el-pē’s*.” This root word of the words used in the New Testament for “hope” also has the same definition as its Hebrew counterpart. It infers not only a confident expectation but a confident **assurance** concerning that which is expressed.

Now I know that our minds immediately go to Hebrews 11:1 and that most familiar passage of scripture, “*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*” Our definition of the word “hope” used in this scripture is definitely referring to our definitions that we previously discussed. Actually, scriptural “hope” and scriptural “faith” are two sides of the same coin. As defined and used within the scriptures we can say that the words “hope” and “faith” are very much synonymous with each other.

For the purpose of our discussion, I would like to direct our attention to another scripture which I believe is just as vital to every believer as Hebrews 11:1. It is found in Colossians 1:26- 28 – “*Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory**: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus...*” Did you hear what we just read? “*...Christ in you, the **hope of glory**...*”

This scripture is exhorting that even though it may have seemed to be a “mystery” or some “hidden truth” to the Jewish people concerning salvation that would include not only the Jewish people but also to include the Gentiles, it was not some kind of “new idea” to God. It was our “Sovereign God’s” sovereign plan from the beginning that salvation would be made available to all, Jew and Gentile, male and female, through the redemptive work of His Son, Jesus, the Christ, the Messiah. He desires none to perish but for all to repent come to the saving knowledge of Jesus (2Peter 3:9) It was no mystery to Him. Remember, God is the same – yesterday, today and tomorrow. Wow!!! Imagine that!!! Paul is writing that the believer’s “hope” of eternal life is only found in and through Jesus. It is found in God’s sovereign plan unfolding the way HE has planned from the beginning to unfold it.

Another scripture I would like to draw our attention to is 1Timothy 1:1 which states, “*Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, [which is] **our hope**...*” Here again Paul writes to the believers that Jesus is “our hope.”

Peter in his first letter also encourages the believers to place and deposit their “hope” in Jesus as he writes, “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a **lively hope** by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*”

As we refer to our definition of the term “hope,” we get a better grasp of what both writers are actually saying concerning this term “hope.” The writers are not only saying that we as believers need to have a confident expectation of our destiny in and through Jesus but it also means that we are to have a **confident assurance**. When we read these scriptures as they refer to placing our “hope” in Jesus, they basically are referencing that we, as believers in Jesus, must deposit our total trust, expectations and have total assurance in Him as our Lord and Savior. This also applies to each of us as His disciples, in that we are to deposit our total trust, all our expectations and have a confident assurance that God is in total control of every situation that arises. It means that we are depositing our trust, our eager expectations and living in a confident assurance that God’s ultimate plan for His Kingdom to be established is not to be just in the “now” but also “to come.” Many times as Christians we are too focused on the “now.” I am not saying that we should put our heads in the sand and not be proactive in the things that are happening around us.

However, what I am saying is that we need to put what is happening in the “now” in the context and in perspective of God’s ultimate plan of the Kingdom that is “to come.”

The New Testament writers were encouraging the believers in their day to continue to deposit their confident expectations and assurance in the Kingdom that was to come as well as the Kingdom that was happening around them. At times, it may not have looked too positive for those early believers. They were suffering persecution, suffering and even being put to death because of their faith. That is why the writers encouraged the believers to never forget to deposit their “hope” in Jesus, who was and is their “hope of glory.” They were telling the believers that even though they were living in the “now” of what God was doing, that they should put everything that may have been happening in that “now” time within the context of it all being part of God’s ultimate plan for the Kingdom that will be coming as ushered in by the return of Jesus. They were encouraging the believers that the “now” was just temporary and that they were simply sojourners and servants in this “now” plan of God.

The reality was that they were to deposit their trust in and be confidently assured in the expectation that God’s ultimate plan of the second coming of Jesus will take place no matter how it may have looked to them or how they might have thought it was to happen. They were also to rest in the assurance and expectation that they will be spending eternity in the very presence of the Living God. Today, just as it was back with the first believers, that is our ultimate “hope of glory.” Through Jesus every believer, every true disciple of Jesus, should have a confident expectation and assurance of eternal life which is being in the presence of our God. The true disciple of Jesus is to have a confident expectation and assurance of being in a relationship of “oneness” with God, the Father and with Jesus of our God both in this present time as well as forever and ever in the Kingdom which is to come. It may not happen the way we think it will happen. Yet, we are to deposit our trust, our faith and our confident expectations in our God. We are to live with a confident assurance that our God has everything under control. His plan will come forth at the exact time. Everything has its purpose within His plan.

Therefore, our “hope,” our scriptural, Biblical “hope” as a disciple of Jesus, must never be placed in any person, government, nation, or anything, other than Jesus. Every person, every situation, every event, everything – including each of us, is all part of God’s master plan for His Kingdom purposes and plan. We must put everything in its proper context within the purposes of God. As mentioned previously, our God is a sovereign God. He is a Holy God. He is a Righteous God. He is a Just God. He is a loving, merciful God who is full of graciousness towards His people. The Lord speaks to each of us personally through Jeremiah 29:11, *“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, **to give you an expected end.**”*

We began our discussion with the words from an old hymn: “My Hope is found in nothing less than Jesus blood and righteousness.” By the way the rest of that old hymn is pretty good as well. Below is the first verse:

*“My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.
All other ground is sinking sand”*

“My Hope is Built on Nothing Less”

By Edward Mote, 1797-1874