

A LIVING HOPE - II

1. Criticisms Of Those Who Hope For Eternal Life

A. Following delusions, blind superstition. Faith and hope are inseparable:

1. Heb 11:1 - While difficult to be precise, the general meaning is illustrated by the examples which follow:
 - a. Things not seen (hoped for): flood, ark (v 7); promised land (v 8); heavenly city (v 10, 16); child - Isaac (v 11); promises (v 13); reward (v 26); God (v 27).
 - b. God's people have always striven for things unseen, "unproven," untestable and unknowable by the senses. How then can they have "confident expectation" - hope?
 - c. By "faith", which is the substance, foundation, confidence, assurance that unseen things exist.
2. Faith rests on evidence; it is a reasoned conclusion which must be defended - I Pet 3:15.

B. People with their head in the clouds have no incentive to make this world better.

1. Ac 24:15-16 - Christians strive to have a conscience without offense.
2. I Cor 15:32 - On the contrary, it is those without hope of a resurrection who lose incentive: "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!"
3. I Jn 3:2-3 - Those who hope to see Jesus take care to purify themselves (Heb 12:14 - "holiness, without which no one will see the Lord").

C. Christians have this world in better perspective than anyone because they measure it against eternal, heavenly realities.

2. Rejoicing In Hope - Rom 5:1-5

A. Paul is now discussing the benefits of salvation through faith. Justification brings:

1. Peace with God - 5:1.
2. Rejoicing in hope of glory of God - 5:2.

B. But we also glory (rejoice) in tribulation - 5:3.

1. He does not say submit, endure, resign ourselves, gripe, complain, murmur. Any situation that brings us closer to God and strengthens our hope is cause for joy.

2. **Knowing that ...**

- a. Tribulation produces perseverance. This is endurance, bearing up under great stress. It is a stability, maturity, steadfastness that is not swayed.
 - b. Perseverance produces character. The idea is **proven** character, tried integrity. There are some things you can't learn from a book and you won't have at an early age. True character is forged in fire, under pressure.
 - c. Character produces hope. When we are tested, we become more sure of ourselves and our convictions. We also gain confidence in God when we see His word and care proven true in the midst of opposition.
- C. Hope must be stronger than the circumstances in which we will occasionally find ourselves. A proper outlook ensures that the disappointments, heartaches, failures of life will not lead to our ruin but instead make us stronger.

3. **Hope: The Anchor Of Our Soul - Heb 6:18-19**

- A. Hope is not a vague wish, a doubtful desire, an uncertain outcome. Hope is an **anchor**, sure and steadfast.
- B. The NT is filled with phrases such as "we know," "we are confident," "we believe," "I am persuaded," and other sentiments which indicate assurance.
- C. Do **YOU** confidently expect and await heaven? You should, and so should we all.
 1. Hope is the reason to keep on living and serving.
 2. Hope is the reason to be joyful when the chips are down.
 3. Hope is the incentive to make moral choices and do things that please God.