

**Subject: *Straight Talk about Christian Hope***

**Scripture: *1 John 2:28-3:3***

This passage revolves around Christ's return (2:28; 3:2). John refers to it as "this hope." The issue is not *if* He will appear, but *when* He will appear. We are living in the constant hope of His return. Before we get to the specifics of these verses, I feel that we ought to look at this whole idea of Christian hope. The word hope is one of three main virtues of the Christian life. 1 Corinthians 13:13 mentions three main virtues as faith, hope, and love. Much is said and written about faith and love, but not so much about hope.

Hope is like turning on a light in the dark. Hope brings joy into sadness, strength into despair, and life into death. Our hope is tied to the return of Christ. The Bible calls this a purifying hope (3:3) and a blessed hope (Tit. 2:13). It is a living hope because we have a risen, living Lord. This hope is an anchor for the soul both sure and steadfast. Yet sadly many people don't have any real hope. For the world, hope is a wish for something better but not grounded on God's promises. Some people have a false sense of hope based on pleasure, entertainment, money, relationships, or a man-centered desire for a better future. Some have false hope in religion. The Bible speaks of those with false hope or no hope at all:

- **Job 8:13** *So are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite's hope shall perish.*
- **Job 27:8** *For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?*
- **Job 31:24** *If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, Thou art my confidence.*
- **Proverbs 10:28** *The hope of the righteous shall be gladness: but the expectation of the wicked shall perish.*
- **Ephesians 2:12** *That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.*

One thing that sets believers apart from the world is the hope we have. It is not a wish or positive thinking. It is real hope guaranteed by the Lord, and it is not limited to this life.

- **1 Corinthians 15:19** *If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. If our hope is tied only to this world and this life, we are to be pitied.*

Being saved has present blessings, but nothing to be compared to the ultimate blessings we will have in the future when Christ comes and our salvation is complete. We are now forgiven, but we still have the ongoing battle with the world, the flesh, and the devil. One day that battle will be over. One day we will have perfect glorified bodies to go along with our redeemed souls. This is our blessed hope, our glorious hope. The Bible has much to say about hope. I suppose we could call it "hope-ology."

**1. Our hope is rooted in the one true, unchanging God**

- **Psalms 43:5** *Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.*
- **Psalms 78:7** *That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments.*
- **Romans 15:13** *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. Do you ever call Him that?*
- **Titus 1:2** *In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began. Our hope of eternal life is based on the eternal God who cannot lie.*
- **Hebrews 6:19** *Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil. What could be a more sure and steadfast anchor of hope to the soul than one that rests in Christ and His perfect sacrifice?*

## **2. Our hope is a gift of grace**

It is not something we could ever earn or deserve. It is a gracious gift from God.

- **2 Thessalonians 2:16** *Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,*

## **3. Our hope is revealed in the Scriptures**

The Bible is full of God's promises. Our hope comes from God by grace and it is dispensed to us in the Scriptures. Someone said there are three kinds of people in the world: those who are afraid; those who don't know enough to be afraid; and those who know their Bibles.

- **Romans 15:4** *For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*
- **1 Thessalonians 4:18** *Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*
- **Psalms 119:81** *My soul fainteth for thy salvation: but I hope in thy word.*

## **4. Our hope is reasonable and defensible**

Christian hope is not pie-in-the-sky thinking. It is hope based on the reliable Word of God and the trustworthy God of the Word. It is reasonable because it comes from God's Word. That's why I love to teach the Bible. I love to give you a solid foundation for faith and hope.

- **1 Peter 3:15** *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.*

## **5. Our hope is guaranteed by Christ's resurrection**

Because it is a fact that Jesus rose from the dead, we have eternal life and real hope for the future. Jesus said: "Because I live, you will live also."

- **1 Peter 1:3** *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively (living) hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

## **6. Our hope is confirmed in us by the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is the divine seal and pledge that what God started in us He will finish.

- **Romans 15:13** *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.* The Holy Spirit gives us the desire to look forward to and press on with a heavenly anticipation of what God has in store for us.

## **7. Our hope defends us from Satan's attacks**

The Bible says that hope is a key part of the spiritual armor we must wear to stand against our sworn enemy in this invisible war. Much has been said of Israel's iron dome of protection from incoming Hamas rocket attacks. God gives us hope as a protection, a defense.

- **1 Thessalonians 5:8** *But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.* Satan attacks us through doubt and discouragement, but we counter him with hope.

## **8. Our hope is strengthened through trials**

Trials and suffering don't separate us from God, but they only strengthen us and sharpen our focus on the hope of Christ's return and our heavenly home.

- **Romans 8:38-39**<sup>38</sup> *For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,*<sup>39</sup> *Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Paul was persuaded by the hope in his soul.

## **9. Our hope is the source of joy and blessing**

No matter what happens in this life, God is the same and His promises are still the same.

- **Psalms 146:5** *Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God:*
- **Habakkuk 3:17-18**<sup>17</sup> *Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls:*<sup>18</sup> *Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation.*

## **10. Our hope removes the fear of death**

As saved people, we know that we have broken God's law and we know the consequences of breaking God's law. But at the moment of our salvation we received forgiveness and a new standing before God. We no longer fear death. Our hope removes the ultimate sting of death.

- *1 Corinthians 15:55-57* <sup>55</sup> *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?*  
<sup>56</sup> *The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.* <sup>57</sup> *But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

### **11. Our hope will be realized when Christ returns**

His return will fulfill all that we have looked for and longed for, including a glorified body to go along with our glorified soul. This is the blessed hope. This is the hope that causes us to purify ourselves. This hope purifies us and it verifies that we are real believers. We are not at home in this world. We're living for another world. Next time we will look carefully at what John wrote about the hope of Christ's return and how it affects the way we live here and now.

Do you have the hope we have been talking about?

Do you have the sure hope that Jesus is your Lord and Savior and He is coming back one day?

If He were to come today would you meet Him with confidence or shame?