

GRACE GAZETTE

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Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Hebrews 12:12-13

OUR HOPE

*Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour,
and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope.*

I Timothy 1:1

Ever since the LORD confounded the languages of men on the Plains of Shinar at the Tower of Babel, the ease with which they can communicate has been disrupted. This is true even among those that speak the same “language” yet are from different parts of the same country. A man from Boston or New York is often quite puzzled at the speech of a man from southern Alabama or Louisiana and vice versa. Not to mention those from Canada or Maine. Yet they are all speaking the English language. So too does the usage of certain words change over the course of time, so that those from the present time find the meanings of various words to have a different application than was quite well received in the past.

I was thinking of the word, “smart” which most would presently associate with a person having a robust mental capacity. Yet in the not-too-distant past, the word was often used to describe pain or injury. Such as, “I hit my finger with a hammer which caused me to say, “that smarts””. We see this particular word used quite often in older hymns. (32 hymns in Gadsby’s Hymnal) “May all my Saviour’s love and smart, Be sweetly graven on my heart.” “Look on him, my soul, and gaze on his smart.” “Save me from sin and all its smart; O save me from my treacherous heart!”

Still other words become antiquated and are seldom if ever used, such as the word, “thrall”, which again, is often found in older hymns. “My Friend and my Portion, my Head and my All; Thou art my Salvation from guilt, sin, and thrall.” “Rejoice, and let Christ be thy song, For he is thy All and in All; He leads my soul safely along, In spite of the world, sin, or thrall.” In modern vernacular we would probably use the word “slavery” or “bondage”, rather than “thrall”.

This all comes into play whenever we read the word “hope” in the scriptures. The vast majority of the use of this word in the modern day is associated with blind desire for something to occur which one believes can only occur by chance or “luck” (as men might say). Yet when we find this word used in the scriptures, we find that it is a reliance upon that which is certain because of the basis upon which the expectation of that which is desired rests. In fact, some “blind guides” even teach their followers that if they can just “hope” for something, (which they often equate with having faith) without “doubting” then whatever it is that they hope for will be realized. So, we might define this outlook as “hope-so”, rather than “hope upon”.

It is unfortunate that many speak of the “hope” of their salvation with this “hope-so” mentality rather than the “hope” spoken of in the scriptures which is an expectation which rests in a firm FOUNDATION which cannot be overturned. Edwin Mote captured this glorious truth when he wrote, “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.” Many have only a hope-so approach to the matter of “assurance”, because their focus is upon what they see in themselves, rather than what they see in CHRIST. I have even met some who seem to believe that “doubting” the promise of GOD is a sign of true faith. This is twisted logic which is built upon a false premise and an ignorance of what the scriptures speak of as the “HOPE” of the sons of GOD.

Paul uses the word “hope” 46 times in his epistles. Only once (Phil.2:23) does he use the word mixed with some measure of doubt, and then only because he is speaking of his desire to send

Timothy to them, which he knew could be affected by circumstances beyond his control. His description of Abraham's "FAITH" is a commentary upon his normal usage of the word "hope". *"Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be."* (Rom 4:18) He is saying that humanly speaking, Abraham had no reason to expect that these things which GOD had promised could or would come to pass. He was a hundred years old and well past the normal age of having children as well as Sarah being ninety. Yet because he trusted in the GOD of the promise, he expected the promise to be fulfilled, even though he staggered at the weakness of his own flesh. *"And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness."* (Rom 4:21-22)

Many have erred in believing that it was Abraham's "act" of faith that was imputed to him for righteousness. It was not his "act" of faith, but rather HIS "OBJECT" of faith that became his "RIGHTEOUSNESS." This is the same confession that Paul made when he said, *"I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."* (2Tim 1:12) *"That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil."* (Heb 6:18-19)

In writing to Timothy, Paul plainly declares who the HOPE of the sons of GOD is. *"The LORD JESUS CHRIST—our HOPE."*

CHRIST has been the HOPE of the sons of GOD in all ages past. Even as we saw with Abraham who gave answer to Isaac's question. *"And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering."* (Gen 22:8). Job confessed; *"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me."* (Job 19:25-27)

CHRIST is the HOPE of the sons of GOD in the present time. *"behold, **now** is the accepted time; behold, **now** is the day of salvation."* (2Cor 6:2) *"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea."* (Psa 46:1-2) The justification of the sons of GOD is the grounds of their rejoicing **now**. *"Rejoicing in hope."* (Rom 12:12) *"Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand,(i.e. presently) and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."* (Rom 5:1-2) The BASIS of our HOPE for the future rests upon the same BASIS in the present time. *"For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."* (Rom 8:24-25)

CHRIST is the HOPE of the sons of GOD in the future. *"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept."* (1Cor 15:19-20) If a man is without HOPE in the present time, then he has no basis upon which to have a HOPE in the ages to come. *"My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation: he is my defence; I shall not be moved. In God is my salvation and my glory: the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God."* (Psa 62:5-7) Because we rest in CHRIST as our HOPE and EXCEEDING GREAT REWARD, (see Gen 15:1) we expect that HE shall preserve us in the ages to come. *"According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."* (Php 1:20-21)

Though we may often find little evidence in ourselves that we are the sons of GOD, yet in CHRIST we have HOPE. *"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."* (Titus 2:13) *"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."* (Rom 15:13) mam