



# HOPE

THIS HOPE WE HAVE AS AN ANCHOR OF THE SOUL,  
A HOPE BOTH SURE AND STEADFAST...  
HEBREWS 6:19A

This Bible study series titled **Hope** may be downloaded and distributed free of charge. It may not be printed for resale or commercial publication.

Tom Petersburg, 2022



[www.catapultministries.org](http://www.catapultministries.org)

Unless otherwise noted, the Scripture quotations are taken from the New American Standard Bible®, Copyright © 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995, by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission. ([www.Lockman.org](http://www.Lockman.org))



# CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	PAGE 4
CHAPTER ONE <b>SCRIPTURE</b>	PAGE 6
CHAPTER TWO <b>SAVIOR</b>	PAGE 9
CHAPTER THREE <b>SALVATION</b>	PAGE 11
CHAPTER FOUR <b>SOVEREIGN GOD</b>	PAGE 14
CHAPTER FIVE <b>SECOND COMING OF CHRIST</b>	PAGE 18
CHAPTER SIX <b>STEADFASTNESS</b>	PAGE 21
<b>APPENDIX</b>	PAGE 26



## INTRODUCTION

In the small town of Vermilion, Ohio, the Inland Seas Maritime Museum displays a rich history of ships and shipping on the Great Lakes. It also records a dangerous history. In a 115-year period (1878-1993) the Great Lakes claimed over 6,000 shipwrecks and the lives of 1,166 men. Over 250 of those ships went down in Lake Erie, most of them along the shores between Detroit and Cleveland.

There is one shipwreck that stands out, surpassed in media and books only by that of the Titanic. The legend of the **Edmund Fitzgerald** remains the most famous and controversial of all shipwreck tales heard around the Great Lakes. Canadian folksinger Gordon Lightfoot inspired popular interest in this vessel with his 1976 ballad, "The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald."

The Fitzgerald was the largest ship on the Great Lakes until 1971. The 729 foot-long vessel was carrying 26K tons of iron ore when she went down in Lake Superior on November 10, 1975. She sank in just 530 feet of water near Whitefish Point, Michigan, losing the entire crew of 29 men.

The controversy surrounding the sinking of the Fitzgerald was never resolved. Speculation ranged from ineffective hatch closings to hitting unmarked shoals to being swamped by a pair of large waves.

### **The Scriptures depict the circumstances of our lives as stormy seas.**

(Psalm 107:23-31; Isaiah 25:4; 43:2) The writer of Hebrews uses the maritime imagery of an anchor to describe the security found in Jesus. It is this anchor that gives us hope to weather the storms, the doubts and the questions of life.

**19) This hope [that God keeps His promises] we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil,  
20) where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. Hebrews 6:19-20**

**Bible teacher Wayne Barber explains the imagery of an anchor in Jesus' time—**

In ancient times, when a ship would come into a harbor there would be a rock (bedrock) somewhere in the harbor to which it would be anchored. The Greek word for this rock that could hold a ship is *anchoras*. A ship would often have difficulty getting into the port, so a man would row a smaller boat into the harbor with a rope attached to the ship and anchor the ship to the rock. That man was called a *forerunner*. Once the rope was secured to the rock, men would pull the ship into the harbor where the ship was anchored.

Maritime terms are used as a parallel to aspects of the Jerusalem Temple in Jesus' day. A small inner sanctuary within the Temple was called the Holy of Holies where the Shekinah glory, the presence of God, dwelt. Only the High Priest with a sacrifice for the sins of the people could enter the Holy of Holies once a year. He entered through a veil, a heavy curtain that was about four inches thick.

Jesus is referred to as a *forerunner* who entered within the veil into the heavenly Holy of Holies and the presence of God. Just as a ship could not maneuver into the harbor on its own, neither could we gain a relationship with God on our own. Jesus' death on the cross was an acceptable sacrifice to God on our behalf. When we put our faith in Jesus, we are secured in a relationship with God.

Therefore, our hope rests in Jesus, the anchor of our souls.

When the storms come, they bring along fear, insecurity, doubt, discouragement, despair and guilt. The problem is that we often don't have a firm grip on hope. When we understand and embrace hope as the Scriptures define it, it has the potential of restoring our perspective.

### ***Hope is an encouraging word.***

Hope is one of these words we can easily skip over when reading the Scriptures. Like faith, grace, and love, Biblical hope changes a person's life. This study is designed for you to draw your own conclusions from several passages. As you read verses listed in each section, you may be surprised how often hope appears. Record some observations about hope. You may want to read the surrounding verses to grasp more of the context. Raise some questions. Ask God to show you how it applies to your daily life.

### **Throughout the study, it is helpful to keep several questions in the back of your mind—**

1. What is hope?
2. Why should I have hope?
3. How secure is it?
4. Why is the topic of hope so repetitive in the Scriptures?
5. What difference will it make in my life?
6. What happens when I lose hope, when I think things are hopeless?



## CHAPTER ONE

# SCRIPTURE

### THE CERTAINTY OF HOPE

In the English language, *hope* usually conveys a sense of doubt. We hope to live until 95. We hope it doesn't rain on vacation. We hope to get a raise this year. These things may or may not happen, but we hope they do.

The Scriptures use *hope* very differently. Biblical hope does not contain any sense of doubt. Biblical hope is most often defined as a confident expectation.

The Scriptures base hope on what Jesus has done or on the promises that God has made. Our hope is a future reality. Romans 8:25 says "...we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it."

#### Hebrews 6:13-20

**13) For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, 14) saying, "I WILL SURELY BLESS YOU AND I WILL SURELY MULTIPLY YOU." 15) And so, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise. 16) For men swear by one greater than themselves, and with them an oath given as confirmation is an end of every dispute. 17) In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, 18) so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us. 19) This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, 20) where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.**

#### There are three things in this passage that make our hope a certainty:

1. **God's person.** Because there is no one greater in the universe than God, He swore by Himself. Because of His truthfulness, He cannot lie (v18).
2. **God's purpose.** His purpose will not change (v17). God said He would bless and multiply Abraham (v14) – today there are millions of physical and spiritual descendants of Abraham in the world.
3. **God's pledge.** God made an oath (v16,17) as an assurance for those who might doubt Him. This pledge was unbreakable.

Our truthful God cannot break His promises. We have a sure and steadfast hope (expectation) that God will be present and faithful in the relationship that Jesus secured for us. Our hope is certain.

**What observations do you make about hope in these passages?**

- Psalm 38:15 \_\_\_\_\_
- Psalm 43:5 \_\_\_\_\_
- Psalm 146:5-10 \_\_\_\_\_
- Romans 5:1-5 \_\_\_\_\_
- Romans 15:4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Thess. 2:16-17 \_\_\_\_\_
- Titus 1:1-2 \_\_\_\_\_

Paul, Timothy and Silas introduced many to a saving faith in Christ in Thessalonica (Acts 17). It is estimated that they only had 1-3 months with their new converts before the local authorities ran them out of town. We assume that the Thessalonian converts continued to live under much opposition. Notice what Paul praised them for as he wrote them a letter of encouragement.

**2) We give thanks to God always for all of you, making mention of you in our prayers; 3) constantly bearing in mind your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ in the presence of our God and Father. 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3**

**Given the definition of Biblical hope, what do you think *steadfastness of hope* looks like?**

**How would a steadfast hope help the young believers in Thessalonica maintain their faith in the face of affliction or persecution?**

God says that no matter how our circumstances look, our hope in Him and His promises is secure. Yet, we often look to tangible things. We are prone to look for security in our friends, our bank account, our experience or our possessions. None of these are secure.

## **Here is where faith connects with hope—**

**Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Hebrews 11:1**

Our faith (trusting in God and His promises because of His trustworthiness) assures us that what we hope for will become a reality. Our faith gives us confidence in what we hope for. This faith enables us to live as if His promises are already a present reality, even though we cannot see them. We have hope because we trust God (faith) to complete what He has promised.

## **What is the connection between affliction, faith and hope in this passage?**

**8) For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, of our affliction which occurred in Asia, that we were burdened excessively, beyond our strength, so that we despaired even of life. 9) Indeed, we had the sentence of death within ourselves so that we would not trust in ourselves, but in God who raises the dead, 10) who rescued us from so great a danger of death, and will rescue us, He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us. 2 Corinthians 1:8-10**

Hope is vital to every believer, providing security and peace and expectation in both this life and beyond. Hope is especially critical to the younger believer who is coming to an understanding for the first time in his life that God has secured his eternity. Without it, he is vulnerable to Satan's doubts and assaults.

When our circumstances change, we tend to question God's character. As we wrestle with despair, discouragement, frustration and continuous temptation, our hope must rest in God, His unchanging character and His saving grace.

God has proven that He has been trustworthy in the past, so we trust Him. Therefore we hope in an unseen future as if it were a present reality. Faith and hope complement each other.

## **Reflection/discussion—**

- 1. What do you tend to do when things look hopeless?**
- 2. What have you looked to for security in the past, but has failed to give you hope?**
- 3. What hope do you have that has proven to be an "anchor of your soul"?**





## CHAPTER TWO

# SAVIOR

## –THE PROVISION FOR HOPE

### **What does Jesus have to do with hope in these passages?**

Ephesians 2:11-13

---

---

1 Timothy 1:1

---

1 Peter 1:17-21

---

---

1 John 5:11-13

---

---

### **As you reflect on these verses, what difference does it make in your life that you moved from having “no hope” to having “hope.”**

In Old Testament times, God instructed the High Priests of Israel to offer the blood of bulls and goats for the sins of the people. These sacrifices foreshadowed what God would eventually provide for us in Jesus the Messiah. But, the animal sacrifices only “covered” their sins, so they had to be offered again and again.

When John the Baptist saw Jesus (John 1:29), he announced, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” God had sent the complete and final sacrifice.

Hebrews 9:22 explains that there can be no forgiveness without the shedding of blood. Someone had to die. The sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross was required to make complete payment for our sins. His act of love is called substitutionary atonement—He died in our place. His payment freed those who put their faith in Him from the consequences of their sin.

## What has Jesus done that provides the basis for hope?

1 Corinthians 15:1-5 \_\_\_\_\_

Romans 5:8-10 \_\_\_\_\_

## WHEN HOPE IS UNDERMINED

### Is Jesus enough?

In attempting to undermine our hope, Satan whispers, “You need a bit more than Jesus.”

### Record what you observe about the sufficiency of Christ’s payment for believers:

Acts 4:8-12 \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrews 7:25-27 \_\_\_\_\_

Hebrews 10:10-14 \_\_\_\_\_

Paul wrote to the church in Colossae about the supremacy and all-sufficiency of Jesus:

**13) When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, 14) having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Colossians 2:13-14**

Paul explains how completely God has forgiven those who put their faith in Jesus. He says all our sins are forgiven, literally any and every sin. The phrase *cancelled the certificate of debt* was a term that referred to crimes committed in Jesus’ day. A person found guilty of charges had his offenses and sentence recorded. When the sentence was served or debt paid, the word *tetelestai* (meaning it is finished, or paid in full) was written across the certificate.

Notice Jesus’ final words on the cross in John 19:30, “It is finished.” This phrase is translated from *tetelestai*. Mission fulfilled, redemption completed, God’s wrath was appeased. In Christ, believers stand completely forgiven.

Jesus is the only one in history who made payment for our sins, and then was raised from the dead to new life. Jesus is our only hope, and complete hope for eternal life.



CHAPTER THREE  
**SALVATION**  
-THE REALIZATION OF HOPE

**Helpful definitions:**

Believe: To believe is more than simply acknowledging Jesus' being or His offer of forgiveness. To believe is a decision to trust Jesus and accept His payment for one's sins. It results in repentance (turning from our passive or active rebellion) and obedience in following Jesus as Savior and Lord.

Regeneration: At salvation, the instantaneous change from being spiritually dead to spiritually alive. It refers to the new birth, the new life, whereby we are granted eternal life.

Justification: God imputes, or credits Christ's righteousness to the person who has faith in Christ. On that basis, God justifies (declares) the believer to be righteous. God now actually sees us as holy, therefore we are able to stand before Him, qualified to spend eternity with Him in heaven.

**In the following passages, make some observations about our salvation and hope:**

John 1:12-13

---

John 3:16-18

---

Colossians 1:3-6

---

Titus 1:1-3

---

Titus 3:4-7

---

---

1 Peter 1:3-5

---

---

---

**Identify some of the words that are used in these texts pertaining to salvation and eternal life that make our hope secure. What do these words imply?**

### **33 things happened when you became a Christian—**

Most of us could easily list four or five things that happened at the point of salvation: we were redeemed, forgiven, justified, adopted, given heavenly citizenship. Lewis Sperry Chafer, founder and first president of Dallas Theological Seminary, provides a list of 33 things that were accomplished by God and revealed in the Scriptures. See the **Appendix (p. 26)** for Dr. Chafer's list.

## WHEN HOPE IS UNDERMINED

### **Have I done enough?**

In attempting to undermine our hope, Satan whispers, "You need to do more to deserve heaven. You sin too much to be acceptable to God."

Many people are left wondering if Jesus really came into their lives. Was my conversion real? Does God have "buyers' remorse"? Could some of my past sins be just too serious to be forgiven? Have I lived in a way that He is pleased with me? If we are not sure where we stand, it is hard to have hope.

It helps to define what Jesus presented in the Gospel. His offer is best summarized by "believe, repent and follow Me." Jesus' intent was not to just dispense forgiveness. He calls us into a lifelong relationship with Him, something that was impossible until the debt of our sin was paid for by His death on the cross in our place. When a person puts his faith in Jesus' payment and repents, or turns from his sinful life, Jesus justifies him by His grace, His incredible unmerited favor.

That decision of faith places us into God's family. It begins a lifelong process in which He transforms us to be more like Him as we serve Him for His glory. We still commit sins, but His Spirit is faithful to convict us and lead us to confess our sin, so that our relationship with God remains unhindered.

### **What does God say about a believer's relationship with Him in these passages?**

Romans 5:1-2 \_\_\_\_\_

Romans 8:12-17 \_\_\_\_\_

Romans 8:29-39 \_\_\_\_\_

2 Corinthians 5:21 \_\_\_\_\_

### **John gives us one of the most decisive, hope-filled passages in the New Testament:**

**9) By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. 10) In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 1 John 4:9-10 (underline added)**

Most readers may just skip over the word *propitiation*. Some may assume it is just another word used for “payment”. The meaning is too rich to substitute another word in the translation! Propitiation means satisfaction. Jesus’ payment of our debt satisfied God’s requirements of justice and wrath. Jesus’ payment is complete, and God is completely satisfied.

The skeptic may say, “Well then, I can go out and sin with abandon since I am fully and securely saved.” No, we won’t—one evidence of saving faith is a desire to follow Jesus, to obey Him and walk in continuous fellowship with Him.

Satan seeks to leverage our failures and our lingering depravity to cast doubt on the completeness of our salvation. It can lead to perfectionism, discouragement and legalism. These things can disrupt our hope. Satan deceives us to think that Jesus’ death on the cross was a big sacrifice, but we must add some things to complete the deal, especially if we have floundered along the way.

No amount of good works can overcome our depravity, or earn what God has already given us. Our debt has been paid because of God’s love and grace. Salvation is a work of God; faith and repentance are our response. God is the author of the believer’s spiritual growth, but in this He requires our effort, study and discipline.

Legalism, an attempt to earn favor with God either by our works or by keeping rules, is often confused with obedience. Legalism is an attempt to earn or deserve our salvation. Obedience is a relational issue, a desire to please God, a willingness to live as God has instructed us. But, our obedience can never earn any more grace or love or approval from God.

### **What connection does Paul make between grace, faith and works in Ephesians 2?**

**8) For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; 9) not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. 10) For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. Ephesians 2:8-10**

Philippians 1:6 tells us that God will finish the work that He has begun in us. He will not reject those who follow Him. Instead, when we drift off course, He will discipline us as a loving father does with his own children. Therefore, in Christ we live in hope, a secure anchor of our souls.

In this chapter, you have read several passages that confirm or give evidence of having a saving faith. These passages give us a secure hope. In *The First Letter to the Thessalonians*, the apostle Paul is overjoyed by the evidence that people had truly placed their faith in Christ. For further study, see the **Appendix (p. 29)**. Pastor and author John MacArthur lists 11 benchmarks of salvation.



CHAPTER FOUR  
**SOVEREIGN GOD**  
—THE SURETY OF HOPE

**Note how the apostle Paul characterizes God—**

**13) Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Romans 15:13**

Why is God called the “God of hope?” Because of His character. Our hope is as good as our Guarantor.

The Christian's hope is sound because it is founded upon the character of God and the redeeming work of His Son Jesus Christ. For this reason, Peter could call it "a living hope" (1 Peter 1:3). It is living because it rests on reality and not on fancy. It is not wishful dreaming but vital expectation with the whole might of the Most High behind it. (A.W. Tozer)

**The following passages give us a glimpse of the character of God. Make note of your observations:**

- Numbers 23:19 \_\_\_\_\_
- Isaiah 40:25-26 \_\_\_\_\_
- Isaiah 40: 27-31 \_\_\_\_\_
- Isaiah 43:10-13 \_\_\_\_\_
- Isaiah 45:5-7 \_\_\_\_\_
- Isaiah 46:9-11 \_\_\_\_\_
- Jeremiah 32:26-27 \_\_\_\_\_

**Now, pivot to what this awesome God says about you and me:**

**4) For the word of the LORD is upright, and all His work is done in faithfulness. 5) He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the lovingkindness of the LORD. 18) Behold, the eye of the LORD is on those who fear Him, on those who hope for His lovingkindness. Psalm 33:4-5,18**

## According to the Psalmist, why is God worthy of our hope?

Instead of *lovingkindness*, other translations use the word *mercies* or *steadfast love*. *Lovingkindness* comes from the Hebrew word *hesed* (or *chesed*). Used over 240 times in the Old Testament, *hesed* is one of the most important terms in Old Testament theology. Vine's Expository Dictionary explains that *hesed* has three basic meanings: strength, steadfast and love.

*Hesed* conveys God's kindness, steadfast love, grace, mercy, faithfulness and goodness. All wrapped together, it speaks of God's unchanging, generous, loyal devotion to His people.

In Psalm 103:8,11, David used the phrases "abounding in lovingkindness" and "as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His lovingkindness" to describe God's overwhelming attitude (*hesed*) toward His people. God is not indifferent, unengaged, vindictive, or distant.

**Circle the words that you think are significant in the following passage, then summarize your conclusions:**

**19) Remember my affliction and my wandering, the wormwood and bitterness. 20) Surely my soul remembers and is bowed down within me. 21) This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope. 22) The LORD's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail. 23) They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. 24) "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I have hope in Him." 25) The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, to the person who seeks Him. Lamentations 3:19-25**

## WHEN HOPE IS UNDERMINED

### Does God keep His word?

In attempting to undermine our hope, Satan whispers, "You can't always count on God. He has failed to show up in the past. You have trusted God...and look where it has gotten you."

We will trust God to the extent that we believe He is trustworthy. Therefore, our faith is dependent on how well we know His character. If we want to increase our faith, we must increase our understanding of His character as described in the Scriptures.

God had plans for all of His creation. He set the universe in motion, and continues to sustain it in order to fulfill His purposes. The Scriptures describe God as having His eye upon each one of us, orchestrating events, circumstances and relationships for our good and His glory. Neither the circumstances or the course of our lives have been accidental or haphazard. We refer to this as the *providence of God*.

## **The providence of God aligns with His attributes:**

**Sovereignty**, meaning He can do anything He wants to do.

**Omnipotence**, meaning He has unlimited power to accomplish anything He wants to do.

**Omniscience**, meaning He knows everything, every option and every outcome.

**Wise**, meaning He knows the best options, actions and results.

**Righteous**, meaning there is never error in His judgment or action.

**Loving**, meaning everything He does is motivated by His love for us.

Everything that God does in sustaining the world or orchestrating the circumstances of our lives has passed through the entire grid of His divine attributes. God is committed to move us toward spiritual maturity within His timing, His purposes and His methods. He rarely adopts our plans. Sometimes we don't see the alignment with His character, but it will bear out in eternity.

Job, the successful Old Testament character, lost everything that he valued when God gave Satan the freedom to mess with him. Much of the exchange between God, Job and his friends concerns God's character. In Job 26:7-13, Job gives us a dynamic description of God's magnificent work in creation, then in verse 14 he concludes:

**14) Behold, these are the fringes of His ways; And how faint a word we hear of Him! But His mighty thunder, who can understand?" Job 26:14**

All that we see of God's amazing work in creation, from galaxies to molecules, is just a glimpse of what He does. God's majesty and magnitude extends beyond what we can see or even imagine! Seeing just the fringes of what He has done is enough to trust Him with what we can't see.

When we see the greatness of God's power, it is obvious how easily He could give us a life of great health, wealth, success and pleasure. But, our hope for it would be false, and disappointing if it is based on illegitimate wants or desires.

Since God is more interested in us becoming wise, strong, loving, faithful servants of His Kingdom, He will design trials, difficulty, challenges, and failure in order to transform our lives for His glory and our good. Our confident hope is in His faithfulness, providence and omniscience.

Satan's design is to entice us to put our hope in the wrong things.

### **Reflection/discussion—**

- 1. When things have seemed hopeless to you, what attribute of God was called into question?**
- 2. What attributes of God are you most convinced of? Why?**
- 3. How have the passages in this chapter affected your hope, as the anchor of your soul?**



Though we only see the fringes of what God does, He invites us to a lifetime of getting to know Him better (Jeremiah 9:23-24). See the **Appendix (p. 30)** for a brief summary of God’s attributes.

**William Cowper** (1731-1800) was one of England’s greatest poets and hymn writers. He was a contemporary of John Wesley and George Whitfield, leaders of the Evangelical Revival in England. Cowper was a good friend of John Newton, the converted slave-trader who wrote “Amazing Grace.” Together they produced a hymnal (Olney Hymns) of 268 hymns.

Cowper led a difficult life—his mother died when he was six, he was sent off to boarding school and he suffered from paralyzing depression throughout his life. Yet, the despair he experienced deepened his understanding of God’s sovereign providence. Notice the imagery and perspective in Cowper’s most famous hymn:

### **God Moves in a Mysterious Way (1774)**

1. God moves in a mysterious way  
His wonders to perform;  
He plants His footsteps in the sea  
And rides upon the storm.
2. Deep in unfathomable mines  
Of never failing skill  
He treasures up His bright designs  
And works His sov’ reign will.
3. Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;  
The clouds ye so much dread  
Are big with mercy and shall break  
In blessings on your head.
4. Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,  
But trust Him for His grace;  
Behind a frowning providence  
He hides a smiling face.
5. His purposes will ripen fast,  
Unfolding every hour;  
The bud may have a bitter taste,  
But sweet will be the flow’r.
6. Blind unbelief is sure to err  
And scan His work in vain;  
God is His own interpreter,  
And He will make it plain.



## CHAPTER FIVE

# SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

### -THE ANTICIPATION OF HOPE

In the 1950's, a Johns Hopkins University scientist by the name of Curt Richter conducted a famous experiment with rats. Rats were put into buckets of water to monitor their ability to survive. Most of them lasted about 15 minutes before drowning.

In his second experiment, Richter rescued the rats from drowning when they were about to give up. They were removed from the water, dried off and given time to rest. When he put the rats back into the water, their expectation of a rescue changed everything. They swam for another 60 hours.

Curt Richter's conclusion: after the elimination of hopelessness, the rats do not die.

When we anticipate Christ's return, it drastically effects our resilience and perseverance as we follow Him. Jesus' promise to return for us fills us with hope.

It is estimated that one in every twenty-five verses in the Scriptures is related to end times. Teaching about end times is found throughout the Scriptures—Ezekiel, Zechariah, Daniel, Joel, Isaiah, Amos, Malachi, Matthew, Luke, 1 Corinthians, 1-2 Thessalonians, 2 Peter and Revelation.

The implications of Jesus' return are broad. He will return as promised, bring justice, defeat Satan, reclaim authority over the earth, keep His promises, fulfill prophecies, righteously judge and set up His kingdom.

### **What do these passages tell us about hope and the return of Christ?**

Philippians 3:20-21 \_\_\_\_\_

Titus 2:11-14 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Peter 1:13 \_\_\_\_\_

While theologians differ on their interpretation of how end times will unfold, especially the order of events, the Scriptures are clear that Jesus will return in glory. We live with hope (a confident expectation) that He is coming back.

Paul writes to Titus that while we walk righteously with God on this earth, we should be “looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus.” (Titus 2:13)

It is said that *blessed hope* refers to a hope above all other hopes that we have in God. It is the fulfillment of our redemption. In this *appearing*, Paul was referring to Jesus’ second coming, marked by His glory (Matt. 16:27) in contrast to Jesus first coming, marked by the humility of His incarnation.

Acts 17 records Paul’s initial ministry in Thessalonica during his second missionary journey. Many people turned from idols to follow Christ, but Paul’s stay was interrupted as angry city leaders sent him packing. Later, Paul sent Timothy back into the city to check on their spiritual progress.

These new Thessalonian believers were flourishing in their new faith, but some were grieving. Paul had taught them that Christ Himself would return one day in the future. Some of the new believers had since died; those remaining feared that believers who died would miss out on the blessings of Jesus’ return. Paul’s first letter to the Thessalonians was meant to clarify his teaching, bringing hope and comfort to the believers.

### **Read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

#### **Definitions:**

Sleep (4:13): a metaphor for death, commonly understood by both Jews and Gentiles in that day. It was used by Paul to emphasize the restful nature of the Christian’s physical death.

Caught up (4:17): from the Latin of this term, we get the term “Rapture.” Believers who have died will join those believers who are still living to meet the Lord in the air.

#### **What gives you greater certainty about your hope in Jesus’ return from this passage?**

The Scriptures include two purposes for teaching about end times. First, it provides hope, an expectation that Christ will fulfill His promises related to our eternity. He will never forsake His people. Second, it provides both caution and encouragement in how we ought to live for Him. The anticipation of Christ’s return will shape our perspectives and strengthen our perseverance as we trust Him through the difficulties of this earthly life.

## WHEN HOPE IS UNDERMINED

#### **What is taking so long for Jesus to come back?**

In attempting to undermine our hope, Satan whispers, “End times is just a wild myth. Life and death are only what you make of them.”

The world seems to become more dangerous and chaotic by the month, from cruelty to dissension to disasters. Why does Jesus not return immediately and put an end to it? The Bible points to signs that Jesus' return could be on the horizon, yet leaves us with caution about knowing the timing.

### **What do the Scriptures say about the timing of Christ's return?**

Matthew 24:14 \_\_\_\_\_  
Matthew 24:36,42 \_\_\_\_\_  
Romans 13:11-12 \_\_\_\_\_  
2 Thess. 2:1-12 \_\_\_\_\_  
2 Peter 3:7-9 \_\_\_\_\_

The hope of glory is future, but it is near. God has much to say about how we should live given the world's condition and the planned return of Jesus. God has allowed Satan to make earth his temporary domain, but He remains in control of our unfolding history.

In the opening chapters of Genesis, Adam and Eve enjoyed the presence of God in the Garden of Eden. When they rebelled against God, they suffered the consequences of their sin in being driven from the Garden. Page ahead to the closing chapters of Revelation. God looks forward to gathering His people from all corners of the earth, resurrecting believers who died before Jesus's second coming, and living among us for eternity.

**3) And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them. Revelation 21:1-3**

(underline added)

The last two verses in the Bible are:

**20) He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. 21) The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen. Revelation 22:20-21**

### **C. H Spurgeon offers perspective:**

When you and I have been in heaven for ten thousand years, we will look back on our time here as nothing. Our pain will seem like a pin's prick, our gain a speck, and our duration the twinkling of an eye. Even if you tarry eighty or ninety years in this exile, when you have been in heaven for a million years, the longest life will seem no greater than a thought.

We make too much of this poor life, and the fondness costs us dearly...We are to dwell throughout eternity with God. Is not that our Home? We are pilgrims because we are here for so short a space when compared with the length of time we will spend in the dear country beyond. (Beside Still Waters)



CHAPTER SIX  
**STEADFASTNESS**  
-AN UNWAVERING HOPE

**56) The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; 57) but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 58) Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not *in vain* in the Lord. 1 Corinthians 15:56-58**

Perseverance and steadfastness have a common meaning in that they both refer to persistence and determination. We speak of perseverance as enduring the pain and finishing the course, as in a race. Steadfastness is often used in relation to a person—unwavering devotion, loyalty. Our steadfast hope has our relationship with God in view.

**Make some observations about steadfastness, hope and our relationship with God:**

- Romans 5:3-5 \_\_\_\_\_
- Romans 8:18-25 \_\_\_\_\_
- 1 Timothy 4:6-10 \_\_\_\_\_
- Hebrews 10:23-24 \_\_\_\_\_
- 1 Peter 1:13-16 \_\_\_\_\_
- 1 John 3:1-3 \_\_\_\_\_

**Summarize what hope calls us to do.**

Fixing our hope on God and His promises is an everyday practice as we follow Jesus. Our deepest hopes involve the Scriptures, our Savior, salvation, the sovereignty of God and Christ's return. Hope intersects so many other aspects of our daily walk with God – relationships, marriage, family, godly kids, glorifying God, prayer, results of service, God's guidance...

Hope describes the attitude we have toward God as we seek His counsel, intervention, resolution and even rescue. He intends to build steadfastness into our hope.

# WHEN HOPE IS UNDERMINED

## **If our hope is certain, why is steadfastness such a struggle?**

In attempting to undermine our hope, Satan whispers, “God is holding out on you. If God really cared, you wouldn’t have to wait so long for some relief.”

We have all known discouragement. We wait on God for answers, for relief, for perspective. But, sometimes it just doesn’t come. We hope, but the longer we wait, the more we ache. Why does each new circumstance seem so different from previous times when we saw God intervene?

God instructs us to wait. Most of us have a hard time embracing waiting as a sensible, normal, expected part of hope. The Scriptures make it crystal clear—waiting is an indispensable part of God’s agenda. In fact, Bible translators often use the words *hope* and *wait* interchangeably in the Old Testament.

## **What do you observe about hope and waiting in these passages?**

- Psalm 27:13-14 \_\_\_\_\_
- Psalm 62:5-8 \_\_\_\_\_
- Psalm 147:11 \_\_\_\_\_
- Isaiah 40:29-31 \_\_\_\_\_
- Isaiah 64:4 \_\_\_\_\_

## **What do you conclude about waiting?**

We can often feel guilty that we don’t wait very well. Patience is rarely a natural strength. Consider David’s instruction:

**7) Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, because of the man who carries out wicked schemes. Psalm 37:7**

*Wait patiently* is translated in Psalm 37:7 from a Hebrew word that means to “twirl or writhe in pain.” It was commonly used of a woman in painful childbirth. In other words, some waiting may be better characterized by struggle than peaceful patience. God is not surprised that we will struggle as He brings things into our lives that push us beyond our past experience. Struggle has the potential of increasing our faith, because in the end we learn so much more about His character.

### **Author Jerry Bridges writes about the struggle in our lives:**

It's true, however, that oftentimes the situation at hand looms larger in our minds than the promises of God. We then find it difficult to believe the promises. In those times, I find the words of a father of a demon-possessed son encouraging: "I believe, help my unbelief" (Mark 9:24). There is a vast difference between stubborn unbelief such as was demonstrated by the people of Jesus' hometown, Nazareth (Mark 6:5-6), and the struggling faith of the son's father. God honors our struggle, and the Holy Spirit will help us. The important issue is that we seek to honor God through our faith, even though weak and faltering, rather than dishonoring Him through rank unbelief." (Respectable Sins, pp. 68-69)

### **Though hope requires some waiting, the Psalmist adds a critical perspective:**

**5) I wait for the LORD, my soul does wait, and in His word do I hope. 6) My soul waits for the LORD more than the watchman for the morning; indeed, more than the watchman for the morning. Psalm 130:5-6**

Here is the picture. The watchman was a guard on the wall of a city. In guarding the city, he waited anxiously all night for morning when danger would pass. He waited expectantly. It may have been a long night, but he knew that sunrise was surely coming.

Waiting is not hopeless resignation. It is actively holding onto God's character, because His promises are as sure as the sunrise.

### **Waiting is purposeful from God's perspective. He is up to something when we wait:**

1. We will eventually find more satisfaction in Him than in our wants and desires.
2. We will discover more about God's character, pushing our faith to new heights.
3. We will be tested to either walk in "darkness" or to "light our own fires." (Isaiah 50:10-11)
4. We will exhaust our independence. (Isaiah 41:17-20)
5. We will become more moldable before the Lord. (Job 42:1-6)
6. We will come out of the experience of waiting with new convictions.

### **Reflection/discussion**

- 1. Identify a time when you had to wait for an answer, or resolution that you were trusting God to provide.**
- 2. What did you experience in waiting?**
- 3. What did you learn about yourself, God or your spiritual life while you waited?**
- 4. How was the issue or need resolved?**

**Edward Mote** (1797–1874) was an English cabinet maker, pastor and hymn writer. Having penned over 100 hymns, “My Hope is Built On Nothing Less” is the famous hymn that best describes his hope.

### **My Hope Is Built On Nothing Less**

1 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.

Refrain:

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand:  
all other ground is sinking sand;  
all other ground is sinking sand.

2 When darkness veils his lovely face,  
I rest on his unchanging grace;  
in every high and stormy gale,  
my anchor holds within the veil. [Refrain]

3 His oath, his covenant, his blood,  
support me in the whelming flood;  
when all around my soul gives way,  
he then is all my hope and stay. [Refrain]

4 When he shall come with trumpet sound,  
O may I then in him be found:  
dressed in his righteousness alone,  
faultless to stand before the throne. [Refrain]





## **IN SUMMARY, HOPE IS THE ANCHOR OF THE SOUL FOR THOSE WHO FOLLOW JESUS.**

The Scriptures identify hope as our certain expectation.

Our Savior is God's provision for hope.

In Salvation, we have been given the realization of hope.

Our Sovereign God remains the surety of our hope.

The Second Coming of Christ prompts us to live in anticipation of our hope.

Therefore, let us remain steadfast, immovable, unwavering in our hope,  
as we abound in the work of the Lord.

**“FAITHFUL IS HE WHO CALLS YOU,  
AND HE ALSO WILL BRING IT TO PASS.”**

1 Thessalonians 5:24

**“BUT AS FOR ME,  
I WILL HOPE CONTINUALLY,  
AND WILL PRAISE YOU YET MORE AND MORE.”**

Psalms 71:14



# APPENDIX

## 33 THINGS HAPPENED WHEN YOU BECAME A CHRISTIAN

*Salvation, A Clear Doctrinal Analysis*, Lewis Sperry Chafer. Zondervan Publishing House, Copyright 1917, thirteenth printing 1978, pp. 44-48.

1. In the eternal plan of God
  - a. Foreknown (Romans 8:29; 1 Peter 1:2)
  - b. Elect (1 Thessalonians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:2; Romans 8:33; Colossians 3:12; Titus 1:1)
  - c. Predestinated (Ephesians 1:5,11; Romans 8:29,30)
  - d. Chosen (Matthew 22:14; 1 Peter 2:4)
  - e. Called (1 Thessalonians 5:24)
2. Reconciled
  - a. Reconciled by God (2 Corinthians 5:18-19; Colossians 1:20)
  - b. Reconciled to God (Romans 5:10; 2 Corinthians 5:20)
3. Redeemed
  - a. Redeemed by God (Colossians 1:14; 1 Peter 1:18; Romans 3:24)
  - b. Out of all condemnation (Romans 8:1; John 5:24; 1 Corinthians 11:32; John 3:18)
4. Related to God through a propitiation  
God is completely satisfied (1 John 2:2; Romans 3:25-26)
5. All sins covered by atoning blood  
Christ bore our sin on the cross (1 Peter 2:24; Romans 4:25)
6. Vitally joined together with Christ for judgment of the "Old Man" unto a new walk
  - a. "Crucified with Christ" (Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20)
  - b. "Dead with Christ" (Romans 6:8; 1 Peter 2:24)
  - c. "Buried with Him" (Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12)
  - d. Raised with Christ to walk by a new life principle (Romans 6:4; 8:2; Colossians 3:1)
7. Free from the Law
  - a. "Dead" (Romans 7:4)
  - b. "Delivered" (Romans 6:14; 7:6; Galatians 3:25; 2 Corinthians 3:11)
8. Children of God
  - a. "Born again" (John 1:12; 3:7; 1 Peter 1:23)
  - b. "Quickened," or made alive (Ephesians 2:1; Colossians 2:13)
  - c. "Sons of God" (1 John 3:3; 2 Corinthians 6:18; Galatians 3:26)
  - d. "A new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15; Ephesians 2:10)
  - e. "Regeneration" (Titus 3:5; John 13:10; 1 Corinthians 6:11)

9. Adopted (placed as adult sons) Romans 8:15,23
10. Acceptable to God by Jesus Christ
  - a. "Made the righteousness of God in Him" (Romans 3:22; 1 Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21; Phil. 3:9)
  - b. Sanctified positionally (1 Corinthians 1:30; 6:11)
  - c. "Perfected forever" (Hebrews 10:14)
  - d. "Made accepted in the Beloved" (Ephesians 1:6; 1 Peter 2:5)
  - e. Qualified to share in God's inheritance (Colossians 1:12)
11. Justified
 

Justified by faith (Romans 5:1; 3:24; 8:30; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Titus 3:7)
12. Forgiven all trespass
 

Redemption through His blood (Colossians 1:14; 2:13; 3:13; Ephesians 1:7; 4:32)  
 [A distinction is necessary here between the complete and abiding judicial forgiveness and the oft-repeated forgiveness within the family of God. Compare 1 John 1:9]
13. Brought near to God (Made Nigh)
 

Brought near by the blood of Christ (Ephesians 2:13)
14. Delivered from the power of darkness (Colossians 1:13; 2:13-15)
15. Translated into the Kingdom of His Son (Colossians 1:13)
16. On the Rock Christ Jesus
 

The foundation (1 Corinthians 3:11; Ephesians 2:20; 2 Corinthians 1:21)
17. A Gift From God to Christ (John 17:6, 11, 12, 20; 10:29)
18. Circumcised in Christ (Colossians 2:11; Philippians 3:3; Romans 2:29)
19. Partakers of the Holy and Royal Priesthood
  - a. "Holy Priesthood" (1 Peter 2:5)
  - b. "Royal Priesthood" (1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 1:6)
20. A Chosen Generation and a Peculiar People (1 Peter 2:9; Titus 2:14)
21. Having access to God
 

Access through Christ (Ephesians 2:18; Romans 5:2; Hebrews 4:14-16; 10:19-20)
22. Within the "much more" care of God (Romans 5:9-10)
  - a. Objects of His love (Ephesians 2:4; 5:2)
  - b. Objects of His grace
    - for salvation (Ephesians 2:8)
    - for keeping (Romans 5:2)
    - for service (Ephesians 2:7)
    - for instruction (Titus 2:12-13)
  - c. Objects of His power (Ephesians 1:19; Philippians 2:13)
  - d. Objects of His faithfulness (Hebrews 13:5; Philippians 1:6)
  - e. Objects of His peace (Colossians 3:15)
  - f. Objects of His consolation (2 Thessalonians 2:16)
  - g. Objects of His intercession (Hebrews 7:25; Romans 8:34; Hebrews 9:24)

23. His inheritance  
Riches of the glory of His inheritance (Ephesians 1:18)
24. Our inheritance  
Incorruptible, undefiled (1 Peter 1:4; Ephesians 1:14; Colossians 3:24; Hebrews 9:15)
25. A heavenly association (Ephesians 2:6)  
Partners with Christ in life (Colossians 3:4; 1 John 5:11-12. In position (Ephesians 2:6) In service (1 Cor.3:9; 2 Cor. 6:1). In suffering (2 Tim. 2:12; Phil. 1:29. In betrothal (2 Cor. 11:2; Eph 5:25f)
26. Heavenly citizens  
For our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20; Ephesians 2:19; Hebrews 12:22; Lk. 10:20)
27. Of the family and household of God  
Fellow citizens with the saints (Ephesians 2:19; 3:15; Galatians 6:10)
28. Light in the Lord (Ephesians 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:4)
29. Vitally united to the Father, Son and Spirit
  - a. "In God" (1 Thessalonians 1:1)
  - b. "In Christ" (John 14:20)
    - a member in His body (1 Corinthians 12:13)
    - a branch in the vine (John 15:5)
    - a stone in the building (Ephesians 2:19-22)
    - a sheep in His flock (John 10:27-29)
    - a part of His bride (Ephesians 5:25-27)
    - a priest of the Kingdom of Priests (1 Peter 2:5,9)
    - a saint of the "new generation" (1 Peter 2:9)
  - c. In the Spirit (Romans 8:9)
30. Blessed with the "First Fruits" and the "Earnest" of the Spirit
  - a. "Born of the Spirit" (John 3:6ff)
  - b. Baptized with the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13; 10:17)
  - c. "Indwelt by the Spirit" (1 Cor. 6:19; 2:12; Jn. 7:39; Rom. 5:5; 8:9; 2 Cor. 1:21; Gal. 4:6)
  - d. "Sealed by the Spirit" (Ephesians 4:30; 2 Corinthians 1:22)
31. Glorified  
Result of justification (Romans 8:30)
32. Complete in Him (Colossians 2:10)
33. Possessing every spiritual blessing (Ephesians 1:3)

**NOTE:** These 33 blessings ARE NOT 1) experienced, 2) progressive, 3) related to human merit, or 4) accomplished by men. But they ARE 1) accomplished by God alone, 2) eternal in character, 3) invisible, 4) known only through the Scriptures, 5) appropriated, 6) unchangeable, 7) instantaneous, and 8) simultaneous.

# SPIRITUAL BENCHMARKS OF SALVATION OBSERVED IN THE THESSALONIAN BELIEVERS

John MacArthur cites 11 spiritual benchmarks that reveal a person is chosen of God and saved by faith: (*The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1 & 2 Thessalonians*, John MacArthur, p. 13-29)

## **1:3a A faith that worked.**

Righteous deeds were being produced in their lives. Works were the result of genuine faith. Ephesians 2:8-10; 2 Corinthians 5:17.

## **1:3b A love that labored**

"We know we have passed out of death into life because we love the brethren." (1 John 3:14)  
1 Thessalonians 4:9

## **1:3c A hope that endured**

An enduring anticipation of seeing our eternal inheritance.  
Titus 2:11-13.

## **1:4 An understanding of election**

Beloved of God – we are recipients of His sovereign love, apart from any human merit or wisdom.  
John 6:37; Ephesians 1:4-6

## **1:5 A reception of the Gospel in power and the Holy Spirit**

The power of the Holy Spirit opened their eyes to see and respond. The Holy Spirit gave assurance to the preachers that the power of God was at work.

## **1:6a A genuine imitation of the Lord**

New patterns of living replaced their old sinful patterns. 1 Corinthians 11:1

## **1:6b A joyful endurance in tribulation**

Joy can be experienced in the midst of suffering. Tribulation means "intense pressure." Romans 5:1-4

## **1:7 A behavior that is exemplary**

They went from imitating Paul to being worthy of imitation. They were an example for even older believers. 2 Corinthians 8:1-5 – they gave liberally to the needy in Jerusalem.

## **1:8-9a A proclamation of the Word everywhere**

Sounded forth means "to blast forth". It is a term used of a blaring trumpet or rolling thunder, a constant sound in ever widening circles. The Gospel spread out from the city of Thessalonica.

## **1:9b A total transformation from idolatry**

They submitted to a new Master. They turned in an opposite direction. Reversal of allegiance.

## **1:10 An expectant looking for the return of Christ**

Sustained, patient, trusting, waiting. His coming will bring the fulfillment of God's promises. Rescued from the eternal wrath to come. 2 Timothy 4:8; Titus 2 :11-13.

These are benchmarks of God's chosen people. At times, believers will drift from these realities in their lives. God will draw us back to Him. Peter's charge is timeless: "Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble;" 2 Peter 1:10

## SUMMARY OF THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD

ATTRIBUTE	SCRIPTURE	DEFINITION
Self-existent	Exodus 3:14	No beginning
Self-sufficient	John 5:26	No needs
Eternal	Psalm 90:1-2	No end
Infinite	Romans 11:33	No limits
Transcendent	Isaiah 57:15	Above all
Omnipresent	Psalm 139:7-12	All-present
Omniscient	Isaiah 40:12-15	All-knowing
Omnipotent	Isaiah 40:25-28	All-powerful
Immutable	Malachi 3:6	God who cannot change
Wise	Daniel 2:20-22	God's knowledge applied to His ends
Sovereign	Isaiah 46:9,10; 45:5-9	God's ability to do whatever He wants
Faithful	Hebrews 10:23; Deut. 7:9	God always keeps His word
Holy/righteous	Isaiah 6:3; 57:15	God's perfection; absence of sin
Good	Psalm 119:68; 34:8	God's kindness, blessing towards us
Patient	Romans 2:4; 9:22-23	God's slowness to react; persistence
Loving	John 3:16; Romans 5:8	God's inclination to give of Himself
Grace	Ephesians 2:4-10	God's bestowal of unmerited favor
Mercy	Psalm 86:15	God's compassion, forgiveness
Just	Psalm 9:8,16	God's moral equity, judgment
Truth	Deut. 32:4; Jeremiah 10:10	God's absence of falseness or error

**“Every spiritual problem has its roots in either an erroneous  
 or an inadequate understanding of who God is.”**  
 (Dr. Earl Radmacher, Western Seminary)