

## 8. Revelation of Hope

**Biblical material:** Ps. 34:7, 91:4, Rom. 3:26, 1 Cor. 15:51-58, Col. 1:14, 2:13, 1 Thess. 4:13-18, 1 Pet.3:18, 1 John 1:9, 2:12.

### Quotes

- Hope springs eternal in the human breast. *Alexander Pope*
- In the land of hope there is never any winter. *English Proverb*
- We can no longer look for the return of the Son of Man on the clouds of heaven or hope that the faithful will meet him in the air. *Rudolf Bultmann*
- Hope is—a prolonged protest against death. *Albert Camus*
- Hope is a good breakfast but a bad supper. *Francis Bacon*
- To reject hope is to mutilate the New Testament message of salvation in which every element is essential to the whole. *Oscar Cullmann*
- At first we hope too much, later on, not enough. *Roux*

### Questions

What's the point of hope? Is hope deceptive? How does the Bible bring hope—and what kind of hope is this? How can we be sure—what is the basis for having hope? How to explain this hope to a hopeless world without sounding peculiar and irrelevant? Biblical claims can appear outrageous—how do we make hope believable? How is hope part of the cosmic conflict?

### Discussion/ Comment

Talk to people on the street about what they hope for, and what answers do you get?

“I hope I pass my exams.” “I’m hoping to buy a new car.” “I just hope I find someone special to marry.” “My hope is to get to the top of my profession.” “I hope to be able to retire to a beautiful house in the country.”

How many would say, “I’m hoping to live forever”? “Some hope!” you may say. Immortality is perhaps the greatest dream we have. To live on, forever and ever, not having to wait for death, that terrible enemy to come and destroy us and all our hopes.

But that’s just a dream, they say. No one can live forever. Such a hope can never be true. Can it?

For what hope can this world offer? Only a doubtful, negative kind of hope that really is no hope at all. When people say “I hope so...” they’re already expecting the worst! Aristotle commented that “Hope is a waking dream” which hardly makes hope something you rely on. The Latin writer Gracian went further: “Hope is a great falsifier of the truth”; while the German philosopher Nietzsche was sure hope was totally bad: “Hope in reality is the worst of all evils, because it prolongs the torment of man.”

It’s family day on the beach. Five-year-old Paul seemed to have turned into a civil engineer: the whole area of sand around us had become a major building site of dams and castles...

“Look Daddy,” came the proud voice, “Look at all I’ve made. I hope we can come back again tomorrow! Can we, Daddy? I really hope we can...”

Next day on the beach there was nothing of that great empire to be seen. The tide had wiped away every trace. Nothing.

You should have seen Paul’s face. Surprise, confusion, disappointment—all at once.

“Where has it all gone, Daddy? I was hoping so much to make it even bigger today. I was really looking forward to it.”

So much for our human hopes. Like sandcastles on the beach, swept away without trace by the incoming tide. Hopes for achieving this or that, for making something enduring, for being powerful, famous, even worshipped. Tomorrow comes, and all these vain ambitions have vanished as completely as a beach washed clean by the surging sea.

No human hopes are worth hoping in. Promises are not worth the paper they are written on. Desires cannot last. Hopes die like fading flowers, turning to dust and ashes. For without God there is absolutely no hope.

But with God? Ah, then! He is the only hope in a world of hopelessness. So what of the Christian hope? What kind of hope are we talking about here? On what is it based?

On God himself. Can God lie? Would he ever *want* to? The vital truth is the Bible’s affirmation that “The Lord Jesus Christ...is our hope.” “On him we have set our hope.” “We have put our hope in the living God, who is the saviour of all men.” (1 Timothy 1:1; 2 Corinthians 1:10; 1 Timothy 4:10 NIV). How amazing and central this hope! Romans 8:24 even says that “We are saved by hope”! How definite and assured this hope is. If you do not have this hope, how can you face the future, how can you live in the present?

Only the hope that comes from God can give what we all need the most: confident security in the present, and the assurance of a wonderful future in God’s presence. For “we have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure” (Hebrews 6:19 NIV). What is the result? “Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold.” “We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.” “Christ in you the hope of glory.” (2 Corinthians 3:12; Romans 5:2; Colossians 1:27).

There *is* hope for this world: the blessed hope. The God of hope. The only hope!

### **Text comments**

God of deliverance and protection. (Ps. 34:7, 91:4). God the justifier. (Rom. 3:26). The wonderful promise of resurrection. (1 Cor. 15:51-58). The foundational message of hope that comforts each of us. If there was nothing else, this passage is supreme and complete—provided we want to know this Jesus who returns. (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

### **Ellen White Comments**

When the gospel is received in its purity and power, it is a cure for the maladies that originated in sin. The Sun of Righteousness arises, “with healing in His wings.” Malachi 4:2. Not all that this world bestows can heal a broken heart or impart peace of mind or remove care or banish disease. Fame, genius, talent—all are powerless to gladden the sorrowful heart or to restore the wasted life. The life of God in the soul is man’s only hope. {CH 29}

We are not to be driven to Christ. It is our part to come—to make our own choice, and come to the fountain of life. Why should we not come to Christ? for in Him our hope of eternal life is centered... The apostle Paul exhorts us to lay hold on the hope set before us in the gospel... Hope has been set before us, even the hope of eternal life. Nothing short of this blessing for us will satisfy our Redeemer; but it is our part to lay hold upon this hope by faith in Him who has promised. We may expect to suffer; for it is those who are partakers with Him in His sufferings who shall be partakers with Him in His glory. He has purchased forgiveness and immortality for the sinful, perishing souls of men; but it is our part to receive these gifts by faith. Believing in Him, we have this hope as an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast... Let us contemplate the glorious hope that is set before us, and by faith lay hold upon it. . . . {LHU 331}

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