

THE HOPE

THE GOD-PROVIDED ENCOURAGEMENT, MOTIVATION

By Arlen L. Chirwood

According to I Peter 3:15, Christians are to 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.” This is called, in introductory verses to the book, “a lively [‘living’] hope”; and it is made possible through “the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1:3). Christ lives, and those “in Christ” are being called *to live, beyond resurrection, in glory with Him*.

Hope in I Peter is associated with “an inheritance” (1:4), a future “salvation” (1:5 [“the salvation of your souls”; v. 9]), and “honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (1:7; cf. 4:12, 13).

When Christ appears, Christians will appear with Him in glory; and it is different facets of this entire matter — ruling as co-heirs with Christ, realizing the salvation of their souls — concerning which Christians are exhorted *to always be ready to provide a response to anyone who asks “for a reason of the hope” which lies within*.

In Heb. 6:11, 12, the “hope” to be held by Christians is laid out in a very simple fashion: that “through faith and patience [present]” they would be able to “inherit the promises [future].”

Exercising “faith” is simply *believing that which God has to say about a matter*, resulting in the person who exercises faith acting accordingly. Hebrews chapter eleven is the great chapter on faith, toward which everything in the preceding part of the book builds: “*By faith Abel...By faith Enoch...By faith Noah...By faith Abraham...*”

Then Hebrews chapter twelve, immediately following, forms the capstone to the whole matter. The fifth and last of the five major warnings comes into view — a direct reference to the rights of the firstborn (all the warnings have to do with these rights, though viewed from different facets of the overall subject) — and Christians are exhorted to run the race set before them after such a fashion that they will one day be accorded the privilege of realizing these rights.

Exercising “patience [*lit.*, ‘patient endurance’]” has to do with the manner in which one runs the race (cf. 12:1). This is a race of the faith (I Tim. 6:12; Jude 3), to be run continuously for the entire duration of the Christian life. This is a race over the long haul — not one for sprinters, but *one for marathon runners* (though the runners may be called upon, at times, to sprint in the race). And Christians are *to properly pace themselves so that they will be able to victoriously complete the race*.

The “inheritance” lying out ahead is the object of a Christians’ *hope*; and one day realizing that which God has promised is, within the text, to be wrought *through patient endurance in the race of the faith*. “Faith” and “patient endurance” are inseparably linked after this fashion with the subject at hand — *inheriting the promises*.

Hebrews 10:23-25 presents a companion thought. In verse twenty-three, Christians are told, “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering [*lit.*, ‘Let us hold fast *the confession*

of our hope without wavering’].” And the whole idea, contextually, behind Christians assembling together today (v. 25) is to “consider one another” and “provoke [one another] unto love and to good works,” with this *hope* in view.

Christians are to assemble together *to discuss* that which lies out ahead, *pray* for one another, and *exhort* one another; and they are to do this “so much the more,” as they “see the day approaching [that coming day when their *hope* will be realized]” (vv. 24, 25).

This is “that blessed hope” in Titus 2:13, which is to be a *purifying hope*. And Christians are exhorted to “live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world,” with a view to one day realizing this hope (v. 12).

(“That blessed hope” is *not* Christ’s return per se [particularly not His return for Christians at the end of this present dispensation, as is often taught]. Rather, “that blessed hope” has to do with “the glorious appearing [*lit.*, ‘the appearing of the glory’] of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” [v. 13], a glory which will not be revealed until Christ returns at the end of the Tribulation.

The construction of the Greek text would necessitate the previous understanding of the verse. In the Greek text, “the appearing of the glory” is a further explanation and description of “that blessed hope”; also in the Greek text, in the latter part of the verse, the construction of two other parts of the verse is the same: “our Saviour Jesus Christ” is a further explanation and description of “the great God.”

With this in mind, the verse could be better translated,

“Awaiting that blessed hope, which is the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Who is Jesus Christ.”

And this “hope” surrounds the thought of Christians having a part in Christ’s glory at this time — a central teaching of the Book of Titus.)

With Confidence and Rejoicing

Christians are to hold fast the *hope* set before them after a revealed two-fold fashion — *with confidence and rejoicing* (Heb. 3:6). The word “confidence” is a translation of the Greek word, *parresia*, meaning “to be bold, courageous, open, or plain” about a matter; and the word “rejoicing” is the translation of the Greek word, *kauchema*, meaning “to take pride in something,” resulting in the person having “something to boast about.”

Parresia is used a number of times in the New Testament in the sense of being “open” or “plain” about matters, with nothing being hidden. Jesus spoke *openly* and *plainly* to His disciples and the people of Israel (Mark 8:32; John 16:29; 18:20), though, because of the nation’s rejection of Him, the day came when He “walked no more *openly* among the Jews” (John 11:54). And it was because of this same rejection that Jesus had previously begun to teach through the use of parables (Matt. 13:10-15).

Parresia is also used in the New Testament a number of times in the sense of being “bold” or “courageous” about matters. Peter and John, standing before Annas the high priest, and others, exhibited “boldness” as Peter spoke; and those hearing Peter “marvelled,” recognizing that both men exhibited these qualities *because* “they had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:5-13; cf. v. 31).

Then Paul, at the end of his epistle to the Ephesians, requested prayer on his behalf: “that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth *boldly*, to make known the mystery of the gospel” (6:19).

(Note that the thought of “openness” or “plainness” would also have to be included within the idea conveyed by “boldness” in the preceding passages [cf. II Cor. 3:12; 7:4; see also Phil. 1:20; I Tim. 3:13; Heb. 4:16].)

Then the word *kauchema* (translated “rejoicing”), or the verb form of this word (*kauchaomai*), is also used a number of times in the New Testament. The word is translated three different ways in Scripture (KJV) — “boast,” “glory [used in the sense of ‘boast’ or ‘pride’],” and “rejoice” (cf. Rom. 2:23; 4:2; 5:2; II Cor. 1:14; 5:12; 9:3).

The thought of “rejoicing” (as in Heb. 3:6; cf. Phil. 1:26; 2:16), rather than being derived from the meaning of *kauchema*, appears to be derived more from the result of what this word means. That is, *kauchema* means “to take pride in something,” resulting in the person having “something to boast about”; and “rejoicing” would emanate out of the person being placed in this position.

Thus, when a Christian is told to be “ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you,” he is to be open about the matter, he is to exhibit plainness of speech, he is to be bold and courageous as he expresses himself, and he is to take pride in the matter, for he has something to boast about.

He has been extended an invitation to ascend the throne with “the King of kings, and Lord of lords” to rule as co-heir with Him in His kingdom. He possesses the *hope* of having a part in what Scripture calls, “so great salvation” (Heb. 2:3), which is the greatest thing God has ever designed for redeemed man.

And this is what Christians are to be open and plain about. They are to tell it *exactly* as it is, regardless of what others may say or think. And they are to be bold and courageous as they tell it

as it is, knowing that they have something of *incalculable value*, something *they can boast about* (cf. Matt. 10:32, 33; II Tim. 2:10-13).

Firm unto the End

Drawing from the type, everything from the death of the firstborn in Egypt throughout every subsequent experience in which the Israelites were led, occurred for a purpose. And that purpose had to do with the goal of their calling, to be realized in the land of Canaan.

The death of the firstborn, the Red Sea passage, and the wilderness journey with all its experiences occurred with *one goal in view*. And the Israelites, within every single experience, were to keep their eyes fixed on *this one goal*.

They were to set their course straight and hold it there, not deviating; and they were to hold their course, after this fashion, “firm unto the end,” allowing them to one day realize the goal of their calling.

And this is exactly what is in view within the Christian experience. Christians, as the Israelites, possess a *hope*, which has to do with a *realization of the goal of their calling in another land*. Christians have been saved for this *purpose*; and every experience in life, beginning at the point of salvation, has *this one goal in view*.

Christians are to set their course straight and hold it there, not deviating; and they are to hold their course, after this fashion, “firm unto the end” (Heb. 3:6), allowing them to one day realize the goal of their calling.

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