

WHAT IS OUR HOPE?

1 Peter 3:15

WHAT IS OUR HOPE?

As disciples of Jesus Christ, we have the responsibility of being able to defend our hope.

"... but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence ..." (1 Peter 3:15)

WHAT IS OUR HOPE?

While it is important for us to know how to defend certain doctrinal issues (marriage-divorce-remarriage, instrumental music in worship, giving as we've been prospered, baptism for the remission of sins, etc.), this is not what Peter is telling us in this passage.

Peter is telling Christians to be prepared to defend our hope.

How will we answer the question, "Why are you a Christian?" or "Why do you live your life believing that there is something beyond this life?"

We need to be well acquainted with our hope in order to answer questions such as these.

WHAT IS OUR HOPE?

First of all, what is "Hope"?

- According to Merriam-Webster.com:

transitive verb

1: to desire with expectation of obtainment or fulfillment

noun

1 a: desire accompanied by expectation of or belief in fulfillment

WHAT IS OUR HOPE?

Hope is both desire and expectation, not "wishful thinking." We sometimes wish for things but have no reason to expect it.

Hope is something to believe in because there is a reason to believe, a confident expectation that it is true.

Our hope is based on the belief that God fulfills His promises.

WHAT IS OUR HOPE?

Secondly, what is "my hope"?

- Accurately answering this question is the purpose of this study. The Lord expects me to be able to defend the hope that is in me.
- Throughout the Proverbs, words of wisdom are made clearer by contrasting them to their opposite, such as the rich and the poor, the wise and the fool, the worker and the lazy man.
- To better understand what is "Our Hope," let us first briefly examine what it IS NOT.

WHAT IS OUR HOPE?

It is **NOT** any earthly gain.

False Teachers Promise It!

- The "Prosperity Gospel" preachers teach that God has promised His people they will be healthy and wealthy in money and material belongings.
- They draw huge crowds by teaching this message, appealing to the greed and covetousness of their followers.
- People are deceived into believing that if one is not healthy and wealthy, he must be lacking faith.

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False Teachers Promise It!

In his book, "Your Best Life Now," Joel Osteen writes:

- "God wants to increase you financially, by giving you promotions, fresh ideas, and creativity." (page 5)
- "It's not God's lack of resources or your lack of talent that prevents you from prospering. Your own wrong thinking can keep you from God's best." (page 3)
- "God wants to give you your own house. God has made a big dream for your life." (page 35)

Osteen is teaching that if you don't have the victory (in worldly goods), it's because you don't have enough faith. This doctrine is not found in the Bible!

WHAT IS OUR HOPE?

- Some say, "God doesn't want us to be sick and poor." While that may be true, we will always have the sick and poor. God never promised us health and wealth.
- We know that God doesn't want any to perish, yet we know that many will be lost.

"The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."

(2 Peter 3:9)

"This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth." (1 Timothy 2:3-4)

WHAT IS OUR HOPE?

- Contrary to the Bible, "Prosperity Gospel" preachers teach that godliness is a means of earthly gain. This is not a new idea. Paul warned about such teaching.

"If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain."

(1 Timothy 6:3-5)

WHAT IS OUR HOPE?

- The Bible teaches that godliness itself is gain, along with contentment, contrasted with love of money.

"But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs." (1 Timothy 6:6-10)

WHAT IS OUR HOPE?

- Seeking earthly wealth is a futile pursuit. The hope of the faithful disciple of Christ is NOT in the material goods of this earth.

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

(Matthew 6:19-21)

WHAT IS OUR HOPE?

- Everything on earth is temporary.

"But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!" (2 Peter 3:10-12)

WHAT IS OUR HOPE?

- God's people seek something far more valuable than earthly wealth.

"Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth." (Colossians 3:1-2)

Our hope is NOT any earthly gain.

WHAT IS OUR HOPE?

It is NOT earthly comforts.

- Comfort and ease are the common pursuits of those in the world, and a promise made by preachers of the "prosperity gospel."
- A life of ease and comfort is not promised to Christians by God.
- Instead, as Christians, we are promised trials and persecutions.

"Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." (2 Timothy 3:12)

WHAT IS OUR HOPE?

It is NOT earthly comforts.

- Followers of Christ are to expect persecution.

"Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation. If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler; but if anyone suffers as a Christian, he is not to be ashamed, but is to glorify God in this name." (1 Peter 4:12-16)

WHAT IS OUR HOPE?

It is NOT earthly comforts.

- The apostle Paul prayed three times that his thorn in the flesh might be removed, but his request wasn't granted. Paul's comfort was found in God's grace.

"Because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me – to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He has said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.' Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me." (2 Corinthians 12:7-9)

WHAT IS OUR HOPE?

It is NOT earthly comforts.

- It is foolish thinking to pursue the comforts and ease of this life. Solomon wrote about the futility of such pursuits.

"I said to myself, 'Come now, I will test you with pleasure. So enjoy yourself.' And behold, it too was futility. I said of laughter, 'It is madness,' and of pleasure, 'What does it accomplish?' I explored with my mind how to stimulate my body with wine while my mind was guiding me wisely, and how to take hold of folly, until I could see what good there is for the sons of men to do under heaven the few years of their lives. I enlarged my works: I built houses for myself, I planted vineyards for myself; I made gardens and parks for myself and I planted in them all kinds of fruit trees; I made ponds of water for myself from which to irrigate a forest of growing trees." (Ecclesiastes 2:1-6)

WHAT IS OUR HOPE?

It is NOT earthly comforts.

- Solomon concluded such pursuits as being worthless.
"I bought male and female slaves and I had homeborn slaves. Also I possessed flocks and herds larger than all who preceded me in Jerusalem. Also, I collected for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces. I provided for myself male and female singers and the pleasures of men – many concubines. Then I became great and increased more than all who preceded me in Jerusalem. My wisdom also stood by me. All that my eyes desired I did not refuse them. I did not withhold my heart from any pleasure, for my heart was pleased because of all my labor and this was my reward for all my labor. Thus I considered all my activities which my hands had done and the labor which I had exerted, and behold all was vanity and striving after wind and there was no profit under the sun." (Ecclesiastes 2:7-11)

WHAT IS OUR HOPE?

It is NOT earthly comforts.

- Solomon recognized that all the "fruit of my labor," the comforts of this life are temporary.
"Thus I hated all the fruit of my labor for which I had labored under the sun, for I must leave it to the man who will come after me. And who knows whether he will be a wise man or a fool? Yet he will have control over all the fruit of my labor for which I have labored by acting wisely under the sun. This too is vanity. Therefore I completely despaired of all the fruit of my labor for which I had labored under the sun." (Ecclesiastes 2:18-20)

WHAT IS OUR HOPE?

It is NOT earthly comforts.

- Jesus warned about complacency in our comforts.
"And He told them a parable, saying, 'The land of a rich man was very productive. And he began reasoning to himself, saying, "What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?" Then he said, "This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.'" But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?' So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." (Luke 12:16-21)

WHAT IS OUR HOPE?

It is NOT earthly comforts.

- Our rest and our comfort is not here on earth, but we hope for the rest and comfort that is to come.
"For if Joshua had given them rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that. So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience." (Hebrews 4:8-11)

WHAT IS OUR HOPE?

It is NOT earthly comforts.

- We look forward to a greater life than anything this world can offer.
"Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. For we know that if the earthly tent which is our house is torn down, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven ..." (2 Corinthians 4:16-5:2)

WHAT IS OUR HOPE?

It is NOT forgiveness.

- Those who have obeyed the gospel do not hope for something they have already received. We do not have a "confident expectation." We enjoy forgiveness in Jesus Christ right now!
"For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it." (Romans 8:24-25)

WHAT IS OUR HOPE?

It is **NOT** forgiveness.

- By obedience and repentance, we receive forgiveness of our sins.

"Peter said to them, 'Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'"

(Acts 2:38)

*"Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray the Lord that, if possible, the intention of your heart may be forgiven you." **(Acts 8:22)***

*"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." **(1 John 1:9)***

WHAT IS OUR HOPE?

It is **NOT** forgiveness.

- We have redemption and forgiveness of our sins through the blood of Christ.

*"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace." **(Ephesians 1:7)***

*"For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures ..." **(1 Corinthians 15:3)***

WHAT IS OUR HOPE?

It is **NOT** forgiveness.

- God's promise of forgiveness is that those sins will no longer be remembered. The prophet Jeremiah prophesied of this.

"They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, declares the Lord, for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

(Jeremiah 31:34)

WHAT IS OUR HOPE?

It is **NOT** forgiveness.

- The Hebrew writer references God's promise that sins will no longer be remembered.

"For I will be merciful to their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more."

(Hebrews 8:12)

"'This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days,' says the Lord: 'I will put My laws upon their heart, and on their mind I will write them,' He then says, 'And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.'"

(Hebrews 10:16-17)

WHAT IS OUR HOPE?

It is **NOT** forgiveness.

- We did not earn God's forgiveness. It is only by the mercy of God.

*"The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever. He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us." **(Psalms 103:8-12 NKJV)***

WHAT IS OUR HOPE?

Heaven is our hope.

- Everything else is only temporary.

"If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied."

(1 Corinthians 15:19)

- We seek the eternal things.

*"... since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints; because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel ..." **(Colossians 1:4-5)***

WHAT IS OUR HOPE?

Heaven is our hope.

- Our hope is in God's promise of eternal life.

"Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness, in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago ..." **(Titus 1:1-2)**

"... He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." **(Titus 3:5-7)**

WHAT IS OUR HOPE?

Heaven is our hope.

- Our inheritance is reserved in Heaven.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you ..."

(1 Peter 1:3-4)

WHAT IS OUR HOPE?

Heaven is our hope.

- The reason for our hope is that God promised us Heaven, and God does not lie.

"... 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. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil ..."

(Hebrews 6:18-19)

"... in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago ..." **(Titus 1:2)**

WHAT IS OUR HOPE?

Heaven is our hope.

- We have a confident expectation of Heaven because God has told us how to get there.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'But the righteous man shall live by faith.'" **(Romans 1:16-17)**

"Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you. If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also." **(John 14:1-3)**

WHAT IS OUR HOPE?

Heaven is our hope.

- Our hope is Heaven because Jesus has provided us the way.

"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.'" **(John 14:6)**

"And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." **(Acts 4:12)**

The hope of Heaven can be yours if you will only obey the gospel of Jesus Christ.

HOW TO OBEY THE GOSPEL

Hear the word of God (2 Thessalonians 2:14-15; James 1:21)

Believe the gospel message (Hebrews 11:6; John 8:24)

Repent of sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30-31)

Confess Jesus Christ (Romans 10:10; Matthew 10:32-33)

Be Baptized (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:26-27; Romans 6:3-4)

Remain Obedient (Matthew 7:21; Revelation 2:10; Hebrews 3:12)