

THE ANCHOR OF THE SOUL

Hebrews 6:13-20

Introduction.

Christians are encouraged to "imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised" (Hebrews 6:12). There are good reasons for doing this because God's promises and purposes are sure. They were not lightly made, and God confirmed all His promises to His people. I want to look at this hope we have, as Christians today in some detail because I think that sometimes we feel hopeless. Sometimes we feel overcome by trials and temptations and we are prone to complain and wallow in discouragement.

1. The Object of Our Hope.

This is not explicitly stated in the text; but it is implied in it, and we can gather what our hope is from the argument of the writer. We may define "hope" to be "the attainment of our destiny", or even better, "the perfection of our being". In particular, our "hope" means a number of things:

(a) Freedom from sin and suffering. Christ's atoning sacrifice once for all ended man's bondage to sin. We are now free to walk in the fullness of life demanded by God. Romans 6:6 says, "For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin." Yes, in Christ, we are raised to a new level of life.

(b) Attainment of spiritual perfection. Verse one tells that, to leave behind or press on. We hope for a clearer, more correct understanding of God...we hope for a closer walk with Him. We hope for a purer heart. We hope to be more like Christ. 1 John 3:2-3 says, "Dear friends, now we are children of God and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure."

(c) Enjoyment of heavenly blessings. Jesus entered heaven as our forerunner, and we will follow Him someday! We are looking for "blessed hope" (Titus 2:13) and a "living hope" (1 Peter 1:3-5); this glorious hope is set before us as a prize. All that we do should be done with an eye to heaven and all that we have can't compare.

2. The Influence of the Christian's Hope.

This hope that we have is what keeps us strong in times of difficulty. It is clearly implied:

(a) Life is marked by storms. There are all kinds of trials, James 1:2 says there are "many trials", a phrase which means "colorful".

(b) All these trials imperil the soul. The danger is in navigating the waters of life. Trials threaten to shipwreck our faith, 1 Timothy 1:19 says, holding on to faith and a good conscience. Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith". But if we can hold on to our faith--and not let go--we will be safe.

(c) The Christian's hope, as an anchor, will help us outride the storms. Our anchor is our hope in the promises of God; promises of deliverance, promises of His abiding presence during all the storms of life. This hope enables us to say as the Psalmist did in Psalm 43:11, Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed with me? We can face anything with the knowledge that God is with us. Romans 8:31 declares, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" and Psalm 47:1 says, "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble." And so we are saved by hope.

3. The Assured Realization of the Christian's Hope.

Two things assure us of the fulfillment of our hope.

(a) The character of the anchor and the anchorage. The anchor is both steadfast and sure! Romans 5:1-5; 2 Thessalonians 2:16 says God, loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope.

(b) The presence of Jesus as our forerunner in heaven. The presence of Jesus in heaven is our guarantee of the reality of our final destination. Jesus ripped the veil that separated man from God's presence and made it possible for us to enter into the Holy of Holies for all eternity. He entered heaven as our representative and said to the repentant heart, I go to prepare a place for you (John 14:2-3). A living union with this Man, Jesus Christ is an absolute necessity to enjoy this life and the next. We cannot go at it alone. Our strength is not enough to endure the hardships of this life. We need the anchor of hope. And our hope is in Jesus Christ.

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