

PARCHMENT

AND HE SAID UNTO ME, WRITE: FOR THESE WORDS ARE TRUE AND FAITHFUL.

REVELATION 21:5



Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. 2 Timothy 4:8

DO YOU LOVE THE LORD'S APPEARING?

Hope in Christ's second coming is the keynote of the Holy Scriptures and the foundation of the Advent message. The apostle Peter implores us: "gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ". 1 Peter 1:13. Here, Peter highlights the importance of diligently guarding the mind - where-with the character is formed - so that we might look with hope to Christ's soon return.

Furthermore, only a few chapters later, the apostle invites us to rejoice at our present sufferings (which are Christ's) "that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." 1 Peter 4:13. Here, Peter explains that it's our hope in "the revelation of Jesus Christ" which keeps us firm in times of adversity, knowing that the Saviour too has suffered our afflictions, and yet will return in magnificent glory to save His children by His grace. In this light, hope and faith form a chiasmic structure. We're to remain faithful, so that we might have hope, and have hope so that we might remain faithful.

For as faith produces an action, so too works hope. In 1 John 3:2-3, John elucidates our hope in Jesus' second coming, when "we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." He states that "every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." Hope purifies the believer. It allows us to "rejoice at our

present sufferings". For we know, that "as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." 1 Corinthians 2:9.

Indeed, our hope must be firmly grounded in Christ's triumphant return, looking ever upward unto His heavenly kingdom, rather than the allurements of this temporal world. Without a doubt, such strength of hope is most vividly seen in the life of the prophet Enoch.

Enoch's mind was firmly fixed on Christ, His future return and the New Jerusalem. Jude himself acknowledges this by saying: "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints". Jude 14. And from Sister White we're told: "the doctrine of Christ's coming was made known at this early date to the man who walked with God in continual communion." {RH July 31, 1888 par 1}

Furthermore, we know that Enoch is a representative of the righteous living at the end of time. Thus, Sister White states: "the godly character of this prophet is to represent the state of holiness to which the people of God must attain who expect to be translated to heaven." {RH July 31, 1888 par 1}

As men and women who claim to be the people of God, let us ask ourselves the question: does the



thought of Christ's soon return fill my heart with joy? Do I long to see the Son of God in all His glory before heaven and earth? Do the unfolding prophecies of our time signify the peace and paradise which will soon belong to the saints of God?

In *The Great Controversy*, Sister White compares the attitude of modern christians with the humble shepherds of Bethlehem. She writes:

“The proclamation of Christ's coming should now be, as when made by the angels to the shepherds of Bethlehem, good tidings of great joy. Those who really love the Saviour cannot but hail with gladness the announcement founded upon the word of God that He in whom their hopes of eternal life are centered is coming again, not to be insulted, despised, and rejected, as at His first advent, but in power and glory, to redeem His people.” {GC 339.3}

Similarly, the prophet examines the desires of those who lived during the 1844 message in dire contrast with men of today.

“With unspeakable desire those who had received the message watched for the coming of their Saviour....The sincere believers carefully examined every thought and emotion of their hearts as if upon their deathbeds and in a few hours to close their eyes upon earthly scenes.” {GC 373}

It is the “same spirit of heart searching, the same earnest, determined faith”, that was seen in the prophet Enoch and the believers of 1844, that we must cultivate today. {GC 373} To bear a faith spurred by hope, and a hope spurred by faith.

Though sadly, the prophet foretells: “there is too little prayer, too little real conviction of sin, and the lack of living faith leaves many destitute of the grace so richly provided by our Redeemer.” {GC 373} I dare say that there is also too little hope; too few that really long for the Saviour's return. On this, Sister White imparts the striking words:

“It is those who do not love the Saviour that desire Him to remain away, and there can be no more conclusive evidence that the churches have departed from God than the irritation and animosity excited by this Heaven-sent message.” {GC 339.3}

At Christ's return, every eye will see Him, and every mouth will be stopped. Is this not enough to spur you on? To the disciples, “the promise that He would come again, and also the thought that He had left them His peace, filled their hearts with joy.” {AA 33}.

I'll raise once more the question: does this promise bring you joy? Do you love the Lord's appearing, or prefer if it be post-poned?

SIX KEY QUOTES

THE PROMISE OF DELIVERANCE

In light of the blessed hope of Christ's return, let us put to memory His promises of deliverance, to uplift a weary soul by the way.

1. Psalms 37:25 *I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.*

2. Hebrews 10:35 *Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward. 36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.*

3. Psalm 37:23 *The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way. 24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand.*

4. 2 Corinthians 1:10 *Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;*

5. Matthew 5:3 *Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. 4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.*

6. 2 Corinthians 4:8 *We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9 Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; 10 Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.*