

## Continuing to Hope in God

### 1 Peter 1:13-25

After stating what believers are, Peter starts to discuss how they should live: ...set your hope fully on the grace that....be holy in all your conduct...conduct yourselves with fear; and...love one another earnestly from a pure heart.

#### 1) The Christian is called to hope fully and perfectly on God's grace

Such hope entirely depends on faith in the bodily resurrection of Jesus (1. Pet 1:3). Can we still believe in a bodily resurrection? Also for the ancients, the resurrection was difficult to believe (Acts 17:32; Acts 26:24). So why would Christians have fabricated a resurrection story and made it central to their message, if it was such a stumbling block?

#### 2) Hope inspired by the resurrection spells the end of religion.

The concept of religion is illustrated by the story of Cain, seeking to appease God with the fruits of his own labor (Genesis 4). The saving faith of Abel condemns such efforts. He acknowledged that only an unblemished substitute can avert God's vengeance, and that therefore salvation can only come through a savior dying in our place. Such faith relies on God's free grace, from beginning to end. Sober-minded, sound theology fixes our hope for salvation on God's grace alone (cf Col 1:23). Know this hope, and never confuse it with the self-reliance of Cain. There is no transformation ("sanctification") unless our hope is set on God's grace as revealed in the gospel. Hence the vision statement of WL Lausanne.

#### 3) Resurrection hope enables us to call on God as our father

Gospel hope rejoices that we now can freely enter God's presence. Believers in Jesus are a "temple" where God dwells permanently by his own Spirit. This Spirit joins you to the community of "obedient children of God" who call on God as their Father - trusting in a loving God, gladly obeying him and his call on our lives. To believe is worship: To pray and work that renewal overcomes present imperfections until Christ returns and grace will rule every heart. Gospel hope agrees with Peter's call to obedience: Be holy as God himself is holy (v15) and: ...fearing God as an impartial judge, v17. The Christian loves and fears God -not with slavish fear, but with awe and respect, knowing that a loving father visits his disobedient children not for vengeance, but for correction. Hope in grace "as obedient children...": Even as obedient children, rely on nothing but on grace. Beware of the "older brother" syndrome in the parable of the prodigal son (Lk 15). It leads to hatred of God and of younger brothers. Cain is an older brother. Be holy because "I am the Lord who makes you holy" (Leviticus 20:7; 22:16; 22:32): Peter quotes Leviticus to show that the Christian depends on grace from beginning to end! Not even faith springs from any good spark in and of ourselves: "Through Him you believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and glorified Him, and so your faith and hope are in God" (1. Pet 1:21NIV). This is the word preached to us" to awaken in us true faith in God, able to accomplish whatever God demands of us. So may God help us to make sure that our hope is set on his grace alone from beginning to end.