

Faith Inherits

When you inherit something it is passed down from an ancestor and you have legal right to possess it. Terah took his family from Ur "to enter the land of Canaan" (Ge 11:31). After he died "the Lord said to Abram, 'Go forth from your country . . . to the land which I will show you'" (12:1). He also said, "'I will make you a great nation'" (:2). "By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance" (Heb 11:8). Then he was told, "'Your reward will be very great'" (Ge 15:1). But he didn't see how it was possible because his only heir was his head servant (:2). God replied, "'One who shall come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir'" (:4). Then God directed him, "'Count the stars, if you are able to count them . . . so shall your descendants be'" (5). Consequently Abram "believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness" (:6). "God has granted [the inheritance] to Abraham by means of a promise" (Gal 3:18). God said "'I have made you the father of a multitude of nations'" (Ge 17:5) which took the form of a covenant. God said, "'This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male shall be circumcised'" (:10). It was a "sign of the covenant" (:11), and without it, a person "'has broken My covenant'" (:14). God then said, "'I will give you and your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God'" (:8).

In order to accomplish this it would have to be a miracle, but that would prove that only God could do it. When the "Lord appeared to Abram" (Ge 17:1) he said, "'Indeed I will give you a son by her . . . and she shall be a mother of nations'" (:16). "By faith even Sarah herself received

ability to conceive . . . since she considered Him faithful who had promised" (Heb 11:11). God told Abram, "You shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him for an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him" (Ge 17:19). Furthermore, God said, "I have chosen him . . . in order that the Lord may bring upon Abraham what He has spoken about him" (18:19). They sang, "Thou wilt bring them and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance, . . . Thy dwelling" (Ex 15:17). This was Mount Zion in the Promised Land where the temple was later built. Joshua was told by Moses, "Go with this people into the land which the Lord has sworn to their fathers to give them, and you shall give it to them as an inheritance" (Dt 31:7).

Your Inheritance

In the garden God told the serpent that Eve's seed would bruise him on the head, and his would bruise hers on the heel (Ge 3:15). This was what the future had in store. He also foretold to Abram that his descendants would be "strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years" (15:13). Through God's planning and action "we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will" (Eph 1:11). God brought Israel "out of Egypt with a mighty hand" (Dt 9:26). He told Israel, "I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and . . . redeem you with an outstretched arm" (Ex 6:6). "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us" (Gal 3:13). Moses prayed, "Do not destroy your people, even Your inheritance, whom You have redeemed through Your greatness" (Dt 9:26). God had adopted Israel. "They are Your people, even Your inheritance" (:29). "The Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the allotment of His inheritance" (32:9).

God's plan began long ago since "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world" (Eph 1:4). "The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham" (Gal 3:8). This understanding "in other generations was not made known to the sons of men" (Eph 3:5). "For ages [it] has been hidden in God who created all things" (:9). "He predestined us . . . according to the kind intention of His will" (1:5) and made it "known to us . . . according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him" (:9). It is the "manifold wisdom of God . . . in accordance with the eternal purpose" (3:10-11). It is an all-encompassing plan. It is a "view to the redemption of God's own possession" (1:14) "to bring to light what is the administration" (3:9) "suitable to the fullness of the times" (1:10). "Since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions . . . those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance" (Heb 9:15). God has "qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints" (Col 1:12). It is an "inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God" (Eph 5:5). "The reward of the inheritance . . . is the Lord Christ whom you serve" (Col 3:24). This conforms with God telling Abraham, "I am thy exceeding great reward" (Ge 15:1 KJV). It results in "that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (Eph 2:7).

Gives Eternal Life

In nature a person tries to survive. Even Jesus said, "I came that they may have life, and have it more abundantly" (Jn 10:10). Are you supposed to do anything necessary to survive? Jesus warns, "Whoever wishes to save his life will lose it" (Mt 16:25). There was a situation in Smyrna where Jesus instructed through John, "You will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life" (Rev 2:10).

This "momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison" (2Co 4:17). It depends upon your perspective. "Things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2Co 4:18). "The one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life" (Gal 6:8). "We have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2Co 5:1). So our focus should be on eternal things.

The "free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ro 6:23). "This is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life" (1Jn 2:25). "God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son" (5:11). "'This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent'" (Jn 17:3). Christ "died for sins once for all" (1Pe 3:18). "Having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation" (Heb 5:9). Therefore "'he who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life'" (Jn 3:36). Jesus cautioned the Jews, "'You think that in [the Scriptures] you have eternal life . . . [but] you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life'" (5:39-40).

Imparts Immortality

God "alone possesses immortality" (1Ti 6:16). "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Ro 5:8). He "abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (1Ti 1:10). How do you pursue and possess eternal life? "Those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life" (Ro 2:7). "Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called" (1Ti 6:12). "'He who hates his life in this world will keep it to life eternal'" (Jn 12:25). "'There is no one who has left [house, family, business] . . . for My sake and for the

gospel's sake, but that he will receive a hundred times as much now . . . and in the age to come, eternal life" (Mk 10:29-30). "The dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed . . . for this mortal must put on immortality" (1Co 15:52-53).

Eternal life is having a relationship with God. Moses spoke to God face to face. "Whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with Him, he would take off the veil until he came out" (Ex 34:34). "Whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away" (2Co 3:16). When Christ was resurrected "the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom" (Mt 27:51). It is "a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil" (Heb 6:19). "Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace" (4:16). It is a proactive decision. James said, "'Do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles'" (Ac 15:19). "Behold, now is 'the acceptable time,' behold, now is the 'day of salvation'" (2Co 6:2).

Covenant with Israel

"Adam began serving his penalty for disobedience without an end in sight. He also forfeited the rule he had been authorized to have. "You make him rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet" (Ps 8:6). Was God just going to go with the status quo? He judges sin but plans forgiveness. After the flood God told Noah, "'I establish My covenant with you'" (Ge 9:11). God initiates the covenant "'which I am making between Me and you'" (:12). There is even evidence where "'I set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a sign of a covenant between Me and the earth'" (:13). The pattern is "'I will establish My covenant between Me and you'" (Ge 9:11, 17:1, :7, :19). The covenant is also permanent, as with circumcision which will "be in your flesh" (17:13) as an "everlasting covenant" (17:7, :13,

:19). It is a personally presented obligation as when "God spoke to Noah and to his sons with him" (9:8). "God said to Abram" (15:13) and "on that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying" (:18). "The Lord appeared to Abram and said to him" (17:1). All the parties are to fulfill the covenant as God explained, "Now as for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations" (:9). There are specific promises as when God told Abram, "To your descendants I have given this land" (15:18). God would confirm it to "your descendants . . . to be God to you and to your descendants after you" (17:7). "You shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations" (:9). For God's part he said, "Sarah your wife will bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him" (:19). "I will greatly multiply your descendants" (16:10). However God also said, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years" (15:13).

God delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage citing, "You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself" (Ex 19:4). "Moses entreated the Lord his God, and said, 'O Lord, why does Your anger burn against Your people whom you have brought from the land of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand?' (32:11). God had told them, "If you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is mine" (19:5). God initiated it saying, "This month shall be the beginning of months for you" (12:2) and "You shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month, then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel is to kill it at twilight" (:6). "Moreover, they shall take some

of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses in which they eat it" (:7). This was reiterated at Mount Sinai when God called to Moses "from the mountain, saying, 'Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob'" (19:3) and that "'these are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel'" (:6).

Righteousness

Paul uses the Greek word *dikaiosyne* meaning righteousness over one hundred times in the New Testament. He applies it in a covenantal context in terms of God's promise and man's response which establishes a relationship. God "made a covenant with him [Abraham] to give him the land of the Canaanite . . . [and] to give it to his descendants" (Neh 9:8). Nehemiah states, "'You [God] found his [Abraham's] heart faithful before You'" (:7) and "'You have fulfilled Your promise, for You are righteous'" (:8). God's initiative was necessary because of Adam's disobedience. God had "commanded" (Ge 2:16) him "'from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat'" (:17). But when they disobeyed, it came to pass that they "'shall surely die'" (:17) and "the Lord God sent him out from the garden" (3:23) and man was disenfranchised from God and unable to reestablish the relationship. Therefore, "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Ro 5:8). "This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed" (3:25). "He will judge the world in righteousness . . . having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead" (Ac 17:31) "so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2Co 5:21). "If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you" (Ro 8:11). "Who has

announced this from old? . . . Is it not I, the Lord?" (Isa 45:21). "And there is no other God besides Me, a righteous God and a savior; there is none except Me" (:21). "This is His name by which He will be called, 'The Lord our righteousness'" (Jer 23:6). Let "salvation bear fruit and righteousness spring up from it. I, the Lord, have created it" (Isa 45:8). "My righteousness is near, My salvation has gone forth, and My arms will judge the peoples" (51:5). The phrase with God's arms anthropomorphically ascribes human attributes to deity. "He has clothed me with garments of salvation [and] wrapped me with a robe of righteousness" (61:10).

Abraham "believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness" (Ge 15:6). God credited his own righteousness to Abraham's account as Paul observed "not having a righteousness of my own . . . [but] the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith" (Php 3:9). "In it [the gospel] the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith" (Ro 1:17). It is for "the man whom God credits righteousness apart from works" (4:6). God chose Abraham "so that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice" (Ge 18:19) and God kept his promise "because Abraham obeyed Me and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws" (26:5). But the disobedient do "not subject themselves to the righteousness of God" (Ro 10:3), "By His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (1Co 1:30). God proceeded to deliver Israel from Egypt "so that you might know the righteous acts of the Lord" (Mic 6:5). It is "He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you" (Gal 3:5). "The Lord performs righteous deeds and judgments for all who are oppressed" (Ps 103:6). "The Lord is righteous within her; He will do no injustice" (Zep 3:5). "His work is perfect, for

all His ways are just" (Dt 32:4). They "humbled themselves and said, 'The Lord is righteous'" (2Ch 12:6). "They shall recount the righteous deeds of the Lord" (Jdg 5:11). Christ will establish his kingdom "with justice and righteousness. . . [via] the zeal of the Lord of hosts" (Isa 9:7) because "'the word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness'" (45:23) and "'My righteousness will be forever'" (51:8).

Blood of Covenant

God's purpose "now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus" (2Ti 1:10). He said "'the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve'" (Mk 10:45). Also, "'I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly'" (Jn 10:10). He "abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2Ti 1:10). "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it" (Jn 1:4-5). "He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world" (1Jn 2:2). A propitiation is the satisfaction of a judgment as if a fine had to be paid as a penalty for breaking the law. Similarly, if "blood pollutes the land [then] no expiation can be made for the land for the blood that is shed on it, except by the blood of him who shed it" (Nu 35:33). "'Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed'" (Ge 9:6). Expiation is similar to propitiation in that a price is owed to the authority that requires that a recompense be paid.

Man's offense was so serious such that if he "has committed a sin worthy of death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree" (Dt 21:22) "one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Heb 9:22). Therefore Jesus explained, "'This is My blood of the

covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins" (Mt 26:28). This covenant was anticipated, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement" (Lev 17:11). Atonement is the price paid to satisfy the penalty due from the offense of the violation. "How much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb 9:14). "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth" (Jn 17:19). "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you" (15:3).

New Covenant

Tabernacle worship signified that "the way into the holy place [had] not yet been disclosed" (Heb 9:8). It meant that sacrifices were "offered which [could] not make the worshipper perfect in conscience" (:9). But then "through His own blood, [Christ] entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (:12). He will now "cleanse your conscience from dead works" (:14) to serve God. A new covenant is therefore created "since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions" (:15). "All things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (:22). "Where a covenant is, there must be the death of the one who makes it" (:16). A covenant is a legal agreement whereby a testator writes a will making a bequest of what belongs to him to the heirs of the inheritance. Consequently "He is a mediator of a new covenant" (:15). "He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises" (8:6). "We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb

10:10). "He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified" (:14). "'You are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect'" (Mt 5:48). "'I am the Lord who sanctifies you'" (Lev 22:32). "You were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ" (1Co 6:11). Therefore "we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus" (Heb 10:19). "Let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith" (:22). "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful" (:23). "We are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preservation of the soul" (:39).

Redemption

To redeem means to get possession of something you don't own by paying for it. Perhaps ownership of something was lost and you want to regain it. There is the case where a man was "so poor . . . as to sell himself" (Lev 25:47) as a slave. Fortunately "one of his brothers may redeem him" (:48) or "if he prospers, he may redeem himself" (:49). "If a ransom is demanded of him, then he shall give for the redemption of his life whatever is demanded of him" (Ex 21:30). In man's case we had been "severed from Christ" (Gal 5:4) and "alienated and hostile in mind" (Col 1:21). "God created man in His own image" (Ge 1:27). But now Adam had "a son in his own likeness" (5:3), and due to the fall of man, this image was not equivalent to the original likeness because man's relationship with God had deteriorated. Unfortunately man was caught in a "yoke of slavery" (Gal 5:1) and "through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives" (Heb 2:15). "'We are slaves; yet in our bondage, [and] our God has not forsaken us, but has extended lovingkindness to us'" (Ez 9:9). "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Ro 5:8). Christ had to accomplish

this because "no man can by any means redeem his brother or give God a ransom for him--for the redemption of his soul is costly, and he should cease trying forever" (Ps 4:7-8). Redemption means to buy back by making payment, and in man's predicament, it pertains to freeing him from his bondage to sin. Therefore Jesus explained, "the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and give His life a ransom for many" (Mk 10:45). The payment of a ransom applies to a loosing or setting someone free, and by this, the Father through Christ is regaining possession of something that originally was his as a "redemption of God's own possession" (Eph 1:14). It is "the church of God which He purchases with His own blood" (Ac 20:28). "Without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Heb 9:22). Christ "gave Himself as a ransom for all" (1Ti 2:5) since "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself" (2Co 5:19). Someone once told me that it means everyone automatically goes to heaven. But you must appropriate what Christ has done to make it personally official.

Christ "cancelled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us; and . . . nailed it to the cross" (Col 2:14). However, "the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness" (1Co 1:18). But it is serious and not just academic. Christ "redeemed us . . . having become a curse for us" (Gal 3:13) by his crucifixion. It was from "the curse of the Law" (:13) for "forgiveness of our trespasses" (Eph 1:7). It is "redemption [for] the forgiveness of sins" (Col 1:14) and "transgressions that were committed under the first covenant" (Heb 9:15). It was to redeem us "from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers" (1Pe 1:18) and "from every lawless deed . . . [to be] zealous for good deeds" (Titus 2:14). He "rescued us from the domain of darkness" (:13) and "from the hand of our enemies" (Lk 1:74). It was a "testimony given at the proper time" (1Ti 2:6) and "displayed publicly as an atonement in His blood through

faith" (Ro 3:25). "Jesus said, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood" (1Co 11:25) "poured out for many" (Mk 14:24). Redemption has numerous important objectives. One result is that we are "justified as a gift by His grace" (Ro 3:24). It is so "we might receive the adoption as sons" (Gal 4:5) and to "receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (Heb 9:15). We have "the first fruits of the Spirit" (Ro 8:23) and are "sealed" (Eph 4:30) by the Holy Spirit. Christ to us becomes "wisdom from God, and righteousness, and sanctification" (1Co 1:30). Through Christ we "are believers in God . . . so that your faith and hope are in God" (1Pe 1:21). "Through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all" (Heb 9:12) having "purchased for God . . . men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation" (Rev 5:9). "Do you not know . . . that you are not your own?" (1Co 6:19,20). "You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men" (7:23).

Redeemed Us

Early church councils determined that Jesus was one with the Father, and as incarnated, was of the same essence as human beings. They described it as a hypostatic union. The spirit of man is mentioned in the New Testament, and on the cross, Jesus cried out, "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit" (Lk 23:46). Humans have a soul. Paul said "may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete" (1Th 5:23). In Gethsemane Jesus exclaimed, "My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death" (Mt 26:38). Hebrews explains "He had to be made like his brethren in all things" (2:16) being "tempted in all things as we are" (4:15). He shared in an existential humanity as experienced by normal people and was not given an "ideal" humanity where he would be immune from temptation. "Since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that

through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil" (2:14). He "canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us" (Col 2:14). An elder said, "'The Root of David, has overcome'" (Rev 5:5). Jesus said, "'I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and have the keys of death and of Hades'" (1:18).

When you redeem something you buy it back as if retrieving it from a pawnshop. We've all seen movies where someone is kidnapped and a ransom is demanded. There is a price for releasing a captive. Mankind has been in bondage to sin. But Jesus "became a curse for us" (Gal 3:13) and we are "bought with a price" (1Co 6:20). His "death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions" (Heb 9:15) and it is he "in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" (Col 1:14). He is the "one mediator also between God and man . . . who gave Himself as a ransom for all" (1Ti 2:5-6). We are "justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (Ro 3:24). "In Him we have redemption through His blood" (Eph 1:7). "You were not redeemed with perishable things . . . but with precious blood" (1Pe 1:19). "Through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb 9:12).

God Guaranties

God has "saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works" (2Ti 1:9). Israel didn't apprehend it because "they did not pursue it by faith, as though it were by works" (Ro 9:31). "Seeking to establish their own [righteousness], they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God" (10:3). "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him" (Eph 1:4). He called us

"according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity" (2Ti 1:9). Jesus "was foreknown before the foundation of the world" (1Pe 1:19). But don't "neglect so great a salvation" (Heb 2:3). At a banquet there was a person "not dressed in wedding clothes" (Mt 22:12). The king said, "bind him . . . and throw him into outer darkness" (:13). "Many are called but few are chosen" (:14).

What guaranty is there that you can follow through with your commitment? Paul's confidence is "that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus" (Php 1:6). It depends on God. "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal 2:20). It works because God has "sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts" (2Co 1:22) "as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession" (Eph 1:14). Because Jesus "continues forever . . . He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him" (Heb 7:24-25). "Who will separate us from the love of Christ?" (Ro 8:35). Nothing "will be able to separate us from the love of God" (:38). "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day" (Jn 6:39).

Where does the threat to a believer come from? It is because "they themselves are in the world" (17:11). Therefore Jesus asked the Father to "'keep them in Your name'" (:11). As a result, "'My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand'" (10:29). Paul was "convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day" (2Ti 1:12). Peter said we "are protected by the power of God through faith" (1Pe 1:5). Also, "your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (5:8). "But He who is born of God keeps him, and the evil one does

not touch him" (1Jn 5:18). "Greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world" (4:4).

Guaranty of Salvation

How do you know you possess salvation? "Believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead you will be saved" (Ro 10:9). "The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself" (1Jn 5:10) for "he who has the Son has the life" (:12). "Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed" (Ro 10:11) for "as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name" (Jn 1:12). "The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God" (Ro 8:16). "We have obtained an inheritance" (Eph 1:11) and are "heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ" (Ro 8:17) "with a view of the redemption of God's own possession" (Eph 1:14). He "gave us the Spirit in our hearts" (2Co 1:22) "as a pledge of our inheritance" (Eph 1:14).

How do you experientially know that you are a "new creation in Christ" (2Co 5:17). "By grace you have been saved through faith; and that it is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God" (Eph 2:8). It is "bestowed on us" (1:6) and "He has "blessed us with every spiritual blessing" (:3). "The love of God was manifested in us" (1Jn 4:9) and "God is for us" (Ro 8:31) and "intercedes for us" (:34). It is "an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you" (1Pe 1:4). "He is able to guard" (2Ti 1:12) and "perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus" (Php 1:6). You are "protected by the power of God through faith" (1Pe 1:5).

Is there a guaranty that what you believe in will be fulfilled? Abraham was "fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform" (Ro 4:21). "The

one who endures to the end will be saved" (Mk 13:13) "if we hold fast . . . until the end" (Heb 3:14). Some have commented that if there wasn't any ongoing responsibility of the believer to continue in faith then maybe God would rapture each one at the point of salvation. Calvinists believe that those "He foreknew, He also predestined" (Ro 8:29) takes away the threat of backsliding. But why would Peter warn "brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you" (2Pe 1:10). He answers "as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble" (:10). There are many scriptures you can rely on but they must experientially become a part of you. Therefore make sure you are "building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit" (Jude 20). It requires your effort to "keep yourselves in the love of God (:21). Furthermore, you must be "waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord" (:21). Anxiously means with anticipation and diligence.

Anchor of Hope

God told Abraham, "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants" (Heb 6:13). This was God's oath so that we would "inherit what has been promised" (:12). It was "an oath through the One" (7:21) who spoke to Jesus. God wanted to make his purpose very clear to the heirs" (:17). Therefore Jesus "became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him" (5:9). The author of Hebrews tells them that he is "confident of better things that accompany salvation" (6:9). Jesus accomplished this "when He offered up Himself" (7:27) and "has become the guarantee of a better covenant" (:22). Accordingly "the Lord has sworn [by an oath, saying] . . . 'Thou art a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek'" (Ps 110:4). "The word of the oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, made perfect forever" (Heb 7:28). The author of Hebrews was

concerned about those "who are ignorant and going astray" (Heb 5:2) and those who were "slow to learn" (:11). He wanted to encourage the recipients of his letter. He cites that "God wanted to make the unchanging nature of His purpose very clear" (6:17) so that they "may be greatly encouraged" (:18). "He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them" (7:25). The author acknowledges they have "fled to take hold of the hope offered to us" (6:18). There is a "better hope, through which we draw near to God" (:19). "We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure" (:19). Therefore "in order to make your hope sure" (:11) "we want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end" (:11). Also, "imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised" (:12). "If that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion for the second" (Heb 8:7). It would be "not like the covenant which I made with their fathers . . . which they broke, although I was a husband to them" (Jer 31:32). "'I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel'" (:31). "'I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people'" (:33). There is the "setting aside of a former commandment because of its weakness" (Heb 7:18). It is by way of "another priest" (:11) "according to the power of an indestructible life" (:16). It brings in "a change of law also" (:12). "He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises" (8:6). He is a "high priest" (:1) "exalted above the heavens" (7:26) who is a "minister in the sanctuary in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man" (8:2). "He abides forever [and] holds His priesthood permanently" (7:24). "'Has He said, and will not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?'" (Nu 23:19).

In Hope Believed

Christ was "a Son over His house whose house we are if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope" (Heb 3:6). The word "hope" is used several times in the book of Hebrews. Having hope means that you have an expectation that something will come to pass. It can be based on justification or reasonableness, otherwise it would be hopeless. You can even have hope in a person who you feel can accomplish what you expect. Hope can have a connotation of doubt because if what you expect seems impossible, you wouldn't say "I hope so" questioning it. Therefore "hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees?" (Ro 8:24). "But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it" (:25). There is an eager anticipation not normally there as we are "looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13). To Paul it was "according to my earnest expectation and hope" (Php 1:20).

One piece of the armor of God is the "helmet, the hope of salvation" (1Th 5:8). It protects the mind. When you get an understanding of something you reply, "I see what you mean." Seeing is a physical experience and a metaphor for mentally comprehending something. When it is established "our hope for you is firmly grounded, knowing" (2Co 1:7). It is a deliberate decision. Paul advised "instruct those who are rich in this present world not . . . to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches" (1Ti 6:17). It shows you can misplace your hope as the Jews were told it is "'Moses, in whom you have set your hope'" (Jn 5:45). The proper focus is that "we have fixed our hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men" (1Ti 4:10) and it is "He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us" (2Co 1:10).

There are attributes which include "believes all things, hopes all things" (1Co 13:7). The two are separated. Also "now faith, hope, love, abide these three" (:13). Separate words have individual meanings which sometimes need careful interpretation. Abraham is said that "in hope against hope he believed" (Ro 4:18). Both hope and believing are cited incorporating two meanings. Hope is fixing or setting your mind on a probable future result. "Against hope" (:18) means you wouldn't logically expect something to happen because the chance of it is almost zero. Abraham nonetheless hoped in it anyway and "in hope . . . he believed" (:18). These two words must have different uses or else they'd be redundant together. For instance, "we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness" (Gal 5:5). "We have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and exalt in hope of the glory of God" (Ro 5:2). Paul prayed that "the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (15:13). We "through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God" (1Pe 1:21). Abraham "believed in hope" (Ro 4:18 KJV) because he trusted in the promise "that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken" (:18).

Hope in God

The "hope of Israel" (Ac 28:20) is "the promise to which our twelve tribes hope to attain" (26:7). It is the "hope of the promise made by God to our fathers" (:6) regarding "the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago" (Titus 1:2). God has "given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace" (2Th 2:16) and we are "made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:7). "There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling" (Eph

4:4). Paul prayed "that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling" (2:12).

How do you have hope? Hoping must be directed properly. It is necessary to "hope in God" (Ac 24:15) and to "hope in Christ" (Eph 1:12) because it is "Christ Jesus, who is our hope" (1Ti 1:1). Next we are to "take hold of the hope set before us" (Heb 3:18) and then your "flesh also will live in hope" (Ac 2:26). Where is the source of hope? "In earlier times [it] was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope" (Ro 15:4). "Hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts" (5:5). "In His name the Gentiles will hope" (Mt 12:21). It is "this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col 1:27). There is a "hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel" (:5). "This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil" (Heb 6:19).

What is our position? "His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1Pe 1:3). "Everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself" (1Jn 3:3). "Show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end" (Heb 6:11). "Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1Pe 1:13). "If we have hoped in Christ in this life only, we are of all men most to be pitied" (1Co 15:19). Therefore be "steadfast in hope" (1Th 1:3) and "continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation" (Col 1:23). "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" (1Pe 3:15).

Confess your Hope

"Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful" (Heb 10:23). The Greek word for confession means to say the same thing or to agree with. Another way to look at it is to speak out of as with a public declaration. Since it is confessing your hope it is agreeing with the expectation which you have identified. That is what you "hold fast . . . without wavering" (:23). Your faith depends on that "He who promised is faithful" (:23). "The promise was approaching which God had assured Abraham" (Ac 7:17). But make sure you aren't a "double-minded man, unstable in all his ways" (Ja 1:8). If you waver you're not holding fast and you can drift away. The most important aspect of this is when "you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord" (Ro 10:9). There's a saying that you should put your mind in motion before setting your mouth in gear. But with the engine running in neutral you'll never get anywhere if you don't engage the transmission. So when you "believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (:9) and "with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation" (:10). The first part of the verse says "with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness" (:10). Its as if without the second half of the verse the process is incomplete. Some have pointed out that even though doctrine itself is truth, if its only treated mentally, it isn't alive and has to be activated before it can be used.

Jesus said that "everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My father who is in heaven" (Mt 10:32) and "also before the angels of God" (Lk 12:8). Its as if it was a requirement to speak it out

openly "before men" (Mt 10:32). But the Pharisees said "if anyone confessed Him to be Christ, he was to be put out of the synagogue" (Jn 9:22) so "they were not confessing him" (12:42). Paul advised to "fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called" (1Ti 6:12). He recognized that "you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses" (:12). So as "partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus" (Heb 3:1) who is the "great high priest who has passed through the heavens" (4:14) and the "High Priest of our confession" (3:1).

The author of Hebrews warns to hold on to the "confession of our hope" (Heb 10:23). Should the word's use be limited to just declaring, agreeing and praising? Or should its understanding be expanded to the larger context to where it is also used? If it means to audibly profess before men then when they were baptized in the Jordan River "they confessed their sins" (Mt 3:6) applies. Doctrinally "if we confess our sins He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins" (1Jn 1:9). The big picture is "your obedience to your confession of the gospel of Christ" (2Co 9:13). "The one who confesses the Son has the Father also" (1Jn 2:23) and "whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God" (4:15). "Every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (Php 2:11) and "every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God" (1Jn 4:2). In the longer perspective "all these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance" (Heb 11:13). They had "confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth" (:13).

Assurance of Hope

It is "whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end" (Heb 3:6).

"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (11:1). We can have confidence if we're assured in our faith and have a conviction of what we're convinced of. When you are assured about something you know enough of the facts about it so that you can predict its behavior. It must be logical so that you can depend on its performance. You must feel good about it to place your faith in it. In fact, "faith is the assurance of things hoped for" (Heb 11:1). If your hope in something is well-founded based on evidence and how confident you feel about it then assurance is produced which represents faith in something. It is "the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding" (Col 2:2). To understand is to know. But there is the starting point where "we were dead in our transgressions" (Eph 2:5). Then there is "the beginning of our assurance" (Heb 3:14). Next, God makes "known to us the mystery of His will" (Eph 1:9) "resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery that is, Christ Himself" (Col 2:2). It is so "you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God" (4:12). Then "we will know by this that we are of the truth, and will assure our heart before Him" (1Jn 3:19). In their desperation "men's hearts were failing them for fear . . . [of what was] coming on the earth" (Lk 21:26 KJV) and God's solution is, "'Cease striving and know that I am God'" (Ps 46:10). Scripture has been written "so that you may know that you have eternal life" (1Jn 5:13). "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent" (Jn 17:3).

God "gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life" (Jn 3:16). "I give eternal life to them" (Jn 10:28). I've heard many people ask how does one comprehend eternal life? The Father sent Christ "into the world so that we might live through Him" (1Jn 4:9). "He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him" (Heb 7:25).

"The testimony of God is this, that He has testified concerning His Son" (1Jn 5:9) and "that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son" (:11). "The one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself" (:10) and "he who has the Son has the life" (:12). Your confidence is predicated on "that you may stand perfect and fully assured" (Col 4:12). But you don't stand on what you have personally figured out all by yourself. It is "He who began a good work in you" (Php 1:6) by way of "His calling and choosing you" (2Pe 1:10). His "great mercy has caused us to be born again" (1Pe 1:3). There is deliberation to it because "whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Ro 10:13). It is "what I have entrusted to Him" (2Ti 1:12). "After listening to the message of the truth, the gospel" (Eph 1:13) "everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me" (Jn 6:45). Paul states "you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you unless you believed in vain" (1Co 15:2). It is "on the basis of faith in His name" (Ac 3:16) and a choice to "repent and return" (Ac 3:19) in "repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ" (20:21).

Purpose of Hope

Much has been instructed on hope, but how do you discern between when it is genuine or presumptuous? They might say "all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation" (2Pe 3:14) so why worry about it? However, these observers would be "strangers to the covenants of promise having no hope and without God in the world" (Eph 2:12). Therefore be "ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you" (1Pe 3:15). We "through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God" (1:21). God has "furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead" (Ac 17:31). Witnesses give their

testimony in court. There were many witnesses to Jesus' death and resurrection. God's testimony is "that He has testified concerning His Son" (1Jn 5:9) and "the one who believes in the Son of God has the testimony in himself" (:10). "If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal body" (Ro 8:11).

"After listening to the message of truth . . . having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise who is given as a pledge of our inheritance" (Eph 1:13-14). "According to His great mercy [God] has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to obtain an inheritance" (1Pe 1:3). God has "given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace" (2Th 2:16). It is "into this grace in which we stand" (Ro 5:2). Therefore "fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1Pe 1:13).

Result of Hope

We have listened and believed (Eph 1:13) and God has "made known to us the mystery . . . summing up all things in Christ" (:10). We have received the Holy Spirit as a pledge regarding the "richness of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" (:18). We have the "first fruits of the Spirit" (Ro 8:23) and "hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit" (5:5). "The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also" (8:16-17). "We have obtained an inheritance" (Eph 1:11). It is not just a future expectation depending on performance. "The one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life" (Gal 6:18). "We through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness which is faith working through love" (5:5-6). The "kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but

righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Ro 14:17).

Many years ago there was a revival in South America. Years later I read in a missionary newsletter that many were losing interest because little had developed. We, however, are expecting “the glory that is to be revealed in us” (Ro 8:18). We wait “eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God” (:19) and “the redemption of our body” (:23). “Creation itself also will be set free . . . into the freedom of the glory of the children of God” (:21). It was done “in hope” (:20) “for in hope we have been saved” (:24) and “we hope for what we do not see [and] with perseverance we wait” (:25).

Progress in Hope

Paul prayed “may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Ro 15:13). We do not set our “minds on earthly things for our citizenship is in heaven” (Php 3:19-20). We strive “teaching every man . . . so we may present every man complete in Christ” (Col 1:28). “This mystery among the Gentiles . . . is Christ in you, the hope of glory” (:27). From heaven “we eagerly wait for a Savior . . . who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exercise of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself” (Php 3:20-21). Paul professes that “for this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works through me” (Col1:29).

Once a popular solution to problem-solving was to consistently think positively to solve one. Still nowadays many think that constantly confessing faith and never relenting is the only way. But the Lord informed Gideon that they “are too many . . . for Israel would become

boastful, saying, ‘My own power has delivered me’”(Jdg 7:2). Therefore it is scriptural to depend on “Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit” (Zec 4:6).

It was the Holy Spirit “who raised Christ Jesus from the dead [who] will also give life to your mortal bodies” (Ro 8:11) and who will “transform the body” (Php 3:21). “There are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies” (1Co 15:40) and “so also is the resurrection of the dead . . . [where] it is raised an imperishable body” (:42) and “we will also bear the image of the heavenly” (:49). “This mortal must put on immortality” (:53). But consider that the five wise virgins were prepared and “went in with Him to the wedding feast” (Mt 25:10). “It has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know when He appears, we will be like Him” (1Jn 3:2). Therefore “hold fast the confession of your hope without wavering” (Heb 10:23).