

Hope Which Enters Within the Veil

“Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.”
—*Hebrews 6:19*

TRUE HOPE IS A COMBI-nation of desire and assurance. One might desire something very earnestly, but if there were no assurance of ever obtaining it, he would have no basis for true hope. On the other hand, one might

know for certain that some tragedy was coming into his life, but because he would have no desire for it, it would be improper to use the word hope in connection therewith. We desire that for which we hope, and we hope for it because of being assured from reliable sources that our desire is to be realized.

So it is with the hope of the footstep followers of Jesus. Their hope is to be with the Lord, see him as he is, share his glory as his joint-heir, and be a partaker of the divine nature. (John 17:24; I John 3:2; Rom. 8:17; II Pet. 1:4) As human beings, we are

made to live on the earth. By nature, we are satisfied to have it that way, and do not inherently desire heavenly things. Heavenly desires, therefore, must be developed within us, and God does this for us by the power and influence of his Holy Spirit through the precious promises of his Word.

Even so, our desire for heavenly things is not based on actual knowledge of what they are like, for they are quite beyond human comprehension. The Apostle John speaks of this, saying, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be." (I John 3:2) That is, we cannot fully grasp the height of glory and nature to which we are called. Of one thing we are certain, however, as John continues, "We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

Of Jesus it is written that since his resurrection he is the "express image" of his Father, and we are to be like him. (Heb. 1:3) Jesus said to his disciples, and to us, "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go ... I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:2,3) Later, Jesus prayed for the fulfillment of this promise, saying, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me." (John 17:24) The declaration that we are to see Jesus as he is, not as he was while in the flesh, proves that we will be like him. Such promises as these are just some of the unshakeable foundations of our hope.

In his prayer, Jesus said that the glory which the Father had given to him, he had given to his disciples. (vs. 22) At that time, the heavenly glory had

been given to Jesus only by promise. He did not actually receive it until after his resurrection, and he gave it to his disciples, and through them to us, in the same manner. It was a glorious legacy from the Father to him, and by promise he was sharing that assurance of hope with his followers.

The Apostle Paul speaks of rejoicing “in hope of the glory of God.” He also uses the expression “heirs of God.” We are “heirs of God” because, as Paul continues, we are “joint-heirs with Christ.” (Rom. 5:2; 8:17) We read these promises and they give us a firm foundation for our hope, yet we still have only a limited comprehension of what they actually mean. What is implied in the thought of rejoicing “in hope of the glory of God?” What do we know about God’s glory? Indeed, our reason helps us to grasp some things concerning his glory, but how far short our conceptions of divine glory must come!

We know something of God’s wisdom and power, for we see these attributes on display all around us, day and night. Everything created reminds us of them. Through his Word we have learned still more about God’s wisdom and power. We see the infinite wisdom of God exhibited through his plan of redemption for a lost race. We see his almighty power displayed in the resurrection of Jesus and in the “first resurrection” of his faithful footstep followers. We know it will be manifested still further when “all that are in the graves ... shall come forth,” and throughout the “times of restitution of all things.”—I Cor. 15:20-23; Rev. 20:6; John 5:28,29; Acts 3:20,21

The Bible also reveals God’s justice and love. He “so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten

Son” to be man’s Redeemer. At the same time, the requirements of his divine justice were satisfied. By one perfect man, Adam, who fell from his perfection, sin and death came into the world. Likewise, one perfect man, Jesus, who maintained his perfection, provided a corresponding price, or ransom, to offset Adam’s transgression and afford the opportunity for life to the sin-sick and dying race. (John 3:16; Rom. 5:18,19; I Tim. 2:5,6) To the extent that our finite minds—fallen and imperfect as they are—can understand the operation of these attributes of God’s character in connection with his plan, it helps us to grasp the idea of his glory.

There is another element of God’s glory, however, of which we know very little. That is the glory of his divine nature. If faithful, we are to partake of this glory also. Peter wrote that we have been given “exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature.” (II Pet. 1:4) In brief, if we are faithful now in applying the principles of divine righteousness to the development of a holy character as set forth in God’s Word, we will be granted a share in his power and his wisdom. We will also be able to administer divine justice and love, for not only will we come to understand these attributes of his character fully, but they will become a very part of us. Thus, we will be made partakers of the divine nature—immortality.

“WITHIN THE VEIL”

As we have noted, it is impossible for our finite minds to grasp with any degree of fullness all that is involved in our glorious hope. However, in addition

to the many revealing and faith-strengthening promises that are recorded in the Bible, God has also furnished illustrations to help us understand to some extent the magnitude of the thought. One of these is suggested in our opening text. Here the apostle declares that our hope is an "anchor," and "entereth into that within the veil."

The reference here is to Israel's Tabernacle in the wilderness. As the apostle reminds us, the inside of the tabernacle proper was separated into two compartments by a "veil." The compartment beyond this veil was called the Most Holy, or the "Holiest of all." (Heb. 9:2,3) The apostle further explains that the Most Holy was a figure or illustration of "heaven itself." (vs. 24) Hence, when in our text he speaks of our hope as being an anchor which enters within the veil, it is another reminder that our hope is a heavenly one.

It is well to remember in this connection, however, that the Israelites as a whole did not have the privilege of going into the Most Holy of the Tabernacle. Indeed, Paul says that into the Most Holy "went the high priest alone once each year." This was in connection with the Day of Atonement sacrifices, when he sprinkled the blood of atonement upon the mercy seat. (vs. 7) The use of the most holy was very limited.

The apostle speaks of our hope entering "within the veil," where Jesus our forerunner has already entered, having been made a "high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." (Heb. 6:19,20) This in itself reveals the height of glory to which we are called. It indicates that this hope is not shown in the camp of Israel, but by the priestly class. Indeed,

our hope is to be part of the Melchisedec priesthood, and share with Christ Jesus in the priestly work of blessing the people when the “better sacrifices” of the present Gospel Age are finished.—Heb. 9:23

This is quite in harmony with Peter’s statement that we are a “holy priesthood,” and that our present responsibility as priests is to offer sacrifices. Continuing, he informs us that faithfulness in our present sacrificial work qualifies us as part of “a royal priesthood.” (I Pet. 2:5,9) No wonder Paul describes God’s invitation to such glory as a “heavenly calling,” and explains that the “High Priest of our profession” is Christ Jesus. (Heb. 3:1) We should be inspired with such a prospect! Let us remember, however, that one of the important conditions attached to this heavenly calling is that we must sacrifice at the present time.—Rom. 12:1; Heb. 13:15,16

THE FURNITURE OF THE MOST HOLY

There was only one article of furniture in the Most Holy of the Tabernacle, but it was a very important one. Paul describes it as the “ark of the covenant,” which, he says, was overlaid with gold, “wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat.” (Heb. 9:4,5) Inasmuch as our hope is centered in the “Holiest of all,” it is evident that the Lord intended everything therein to foreshadow various aspects of that for which we hope.

THE GOLDEN POT OF MANNA

God provided “manna” for the Israelites to eat during their forty years of wandering in the wilderness. By this manna they were kept alive. It was

necessary that the Israelites gather it each day, except that on the sixth day of each week they were to gather a double portion. This was in order that they would not have to work on the Sabbath day. In the Lord's providence the manna that fell on the sixth day would keep fresh an additional day.—Exod. 16:11-32

Jesus referred to this arrangement and spoke of the manna as being an illustration of himself, saying that he was the true bread which came down from heaven, and that anyone availing himself of this heavenly provision could live forever. (John 6:32-35,49-51) So it will be that during the "times of restitution of all things" the entire human race will be given the opportunity of accepting God's provision of life through Jesus. (Acts 3:20,21) They will live forever, but only if they continue to partake of the life-giving provisions made for them, just as the Israelites needed to gather and eat the literal manna every day.

However, there was a small portion of the manna provided to the Israelites which did not corrupt. This portion, by God's instructions, was gathered and placed in a "golden pot" in the ark of the covenant in the Most Holy of the Tabernacle. (Exod. 16:33,34; Heb. 9:4) This manna did not need to be replenished, for by divine power it was kept from corrupting. There is an allusion to the significance of this golden pot of manna in the promise the Lord made to the church in Pergamos, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna." (Rev. 2:17) This is a promise which all faithful followers of the Master can apply to themselves.

Of Jesus it is written that he brought “life and immortality to light through the gospel.” (II Tim. 1:10) If, as the Scriptures indicate, the manna in the wilderness was a picture of the “life,” though it be mortal, which mankind will be able to obtain through Christ, then it is logical to conclude that the manna which was placed in the golden pot and did not corrupt prefigured “immortality.” Thus, the hopes of perfect mortal life, or that of immortality, have been brought to our understanding “through the gospel.”

Jesus explained that his Heavenly Father was immortal, having life within himself—that is, life independent of all outside sources or sustenance—and that he would give this same type of life to his Son. (John 5:26) Jesus, having been given immortality at his resurrection, shares this reward with his followers—those who prove themselves “faithful unto death”—when they are resurrected. (Rom. 2:6,7; Rev. 2:10) How beautifully this highest of all planes of life was illustrated by the manna that was kept in the golden pot. It did not need to be renewed, and even the vessel in which it was kept, being of gold, also foreshadowed the divine nature. What a blessed hope it is that entereth into that which is within the veil!

AARON'S ROD THAT BUDED

Another article that was stored in the ark of the covenant was Aaron's rod that budded. The story of this rod starts with the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram against the leadership of Moses and Aaron. The Lord destroyed these rebels with their families and sympathizers. Afterward there

was considerable murmuring among the Israelites. They still were not satisfied fully that the Levitical tribe, of which Aaron was the head, should be the exclusive servants in religious matters.—Num. 16:1-50

God instructed Moses to have the head of each of the twelve tribes bring his rod, and that all twelve rods were to be laid up in the Tabernacle. The Lord explained that he would indicate his choice by whichever one of these rods budded. “It came to pass, that on the morrow Moses went into the Tabernacle of witness; and, behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds.”—Num. 17:1-8

Then the Lord instructed Moses to take this rod into the Tabernacle where it was to be kept as a testimony against those who rebelled. (vs. 10) Thus Aaron’s rod that budded prefigured the fact that the true church, with Christ as its head, is God’s choice, his elect company, a “chosen generation.” (I Pet. 2:9) All whose hope enters into that which is within the veil have been called by the Heavenly Father and are “elect according to the foreknowledge of God.”—I Pet. 1:2

In the exercise of his foreknowledge, God ordained that each one who qualifies to be a part of this elect class must be “conformed to the image of his Son.” (Rom. 8:29) It is not an arbitrary choice, but one that is based upon the meeting of certain conditions, and those requirements are that we become copies of God’s dear Son. This thought was well illustrated in the case of Aaron’s rod. His rod was chosen because it brought forth buds, and flowers, and fruit.

It may have been this illustration that Jesus had in mind when he used the expression, “By their fruits ye shall know them.” (Matt. 7:20) Christians who bear the fruits of righteousness will certainly be known by God and blessed by him. They are his called and elect ones, yet it remains for each of us, “by patient continuance in well doing,” to make our “calling and election sure.” (Rom. 2:7; II Pet. 1:10) It is an inspiration for us to know that our hope which enters within the veil includes the blessed assurance that God has chosen us for this high position of sharing with Christ in priestly service for the blessing of the world of mankind in his coming kingdom.

THE TABLES OF THE LAW

The tables of the law given to Moses by God were also kept in the ark of the covenant, which means that they likewise foreshadowed something important pertaining to the development of the spiritual priesthood. (Deut. 10:2-5) These tables contained the Ten Commandments—the epitome of God’s law given to the nation of Israel. God explained that these tables of the law were given to Moses in order that he might teach the people.—Exod. 24:12

In II Corinthians 3:3, Paul speaks of the work of the Holy Spirit, explaining that it writes the “epistle of Christ” in the “tables of the heart.” He contrasts this with the writing of Israel’s law on “tables of stone.” In verse 6 the apostle shows that we are made “able ministers” of the New Covenant, as Moses was a servant of the Law Covenant. It seems clear that the apostle wants us to understand that these “able ministers” bear the same relationship

to Christ in connection with the New Covenant as the tables of stone did toward Moses in connection with the Law Covenant.

The Lord explained to Moses, as we have seen, that those tables of the law were given to him that he might teach the people. So the church, in association with Christ Jesus, are to be used by him to teach the people in the coming Messianic kingdom. Telling of him and about the grace of God manifested through him, these will testify to all that life is available through accepting Christ and obeying the laws of the New Covenant—the laws of the kingdom.

The circumstances under which the literal tables of stone were inscribed with the law of God are most interesting and revealing. Moses had been in the mount forty days and forty nights. When he came down, he saw the golden calf that the Israelites had caused Aaron to make. In his anger, Moses threw down the two tables of the law, destroying them. (Exod. 32:15-19) Later, Moses was again called to come up to the mount with two new tables of stone, upon which the Lord again wrote his law.

Concerning this second writing of the law by God, we read: “Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone. And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by

no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation."—Exod. 34:4-7

One who is acquainted with God's plan can readily see that the various characteristics of his glory mentioned in the above passage are all revealed through his Word of truth. In other words, God's glory is shown to us by a knowledge and appreciation of his plans and purposes. His law, being inscribed on the tables of stone while his glory was being proclaimed, finds a counterpart in the experiences of true Christians, for it is God's law, written and working in our hearts, that gives evidence of God's mercy and grace, and thus shows his glory.

In keeping with this illustration we might say that throughout the entire Gospel Age the church has been with her Lord, symbolically speaking, in the "mount." They have been obscured and largely unknown to the world. All the while, the ministry of God's law has been preparing them for their future glorious position, when they will reign with Christ in glory, and as ministers of reconciliation, will share with him in his work as "mediator of the new covenant."—Heb. 12:24

When Moses came down from the mount there was a glory on his countenance. However, that glory, the apostle explains, was to be "done away." Our hope, based on the "ministration of the spirit," is the "glory that excelleth." (II Cor. 3:7-11) Paul also declares, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." (Col. 3:4) What a glorious hope, the "glory that excelleth," and which enters within the veil, is ours.

THE MERCY SEAT AND CHERUBIM

The cover on the ark of the covenant was called the mercy seat. It was a solid slab of gold, from which arose two cherubim. These faced each other, looking in toward, and down upon, the mercy seat itself. Between these cherubim, and upon the mercy seat, God spoke his commandments to the children of Israel, appearing in the form of a cloud of glory.—Exod. 25:17-22; 40:35; Lev. 16:2; Heb. 9:5

There are four key attributes which make up God's glorious character—wisdom, justice, love, and power. Since the promise is that we are to partake of the glory of God, and because our hope enters into that within the veil, it is not unreasonable to suppose that in this cloud of glory, above the ark of the covenant, we have a representation of God's wisdom. It is divine wisdom which encompasses and directs all of God's actions as well as his other character qualities. His attribute of justice seems well illustrated by the mercy seat. It was here that the blood of the bullock was sprinkled on the Day of Atonement, picturing the satisfaction of divine justice in order that God's favor might be extended to those for whom atonement had been made.—Lev. 16:11-14

The two cherubim illustrate well God's attributes of love and power. As they looked down upon the mercy seat they seem to suggest the idea of waiting until the blood had been sprinkled before starting out to carry the blessings of atonement to the people. God's power and love will indeed be the agencies by which the atonement accomplished by the blood of Christ will be speeded to a sin-cursed and dying world, in God's due time.—Jude 1:25; I John 4:7-10

It is God's infinite wisdom by which all the glorious attributes of his character are working together for the eventual blessing of the people. In like manner, it was by the appearance of the cloud of glory that the cherubim could see, symbolically speaking, when the blood was sprinkled on the mercy seat, and hence would know when it was time to begin their mission of blessing. Thus is shown the harmony of every aspect of God's glorious character in the carrying out of his plans and purposes for mankind.

The apostle says that the faithful church will partake of this wondrous glory: "We rejoice in hope of the glory of God." (Rom. 5:2) If we draw near to the Lord now, and allow the influence of his Spirit to transform us more and more into his likeness, and not become weary in well doing, but continue faithful even unto death, we will be raised into his likeness in the "first resurrection." Truly, our hope of glory "entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus."—Heb. 6:19,20 ■