

Why Are we so Certain of our Hope in Jesus' Appearing?

By Jonathan Brentner, October 19, 2022

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In one sense, the characteristics that Paul wrote about in 2 Timothy 3:1-5 have been true of godless people down through the ages. Such people have always made life “perilous” for those with biblical faith. On the other hand, these characteristics have become much more prominent in our world during the past several decades and have greatly intensified during just the past few years. These attributes are a contributing factor to the dramatic increase in wickedness and lawlessness in our world. Nothing in history rivals the widespread deception that has permeated virtually every nation in the world.

As for the globalists, they continue their murderous campaign of depopulation. It’s hidden, however, from those that rely on the mainstream media as their primary source of information. I believe the word “anarchy” best describes the lawless and evil time in which we live. The elite talk of nuclear war as though it’s expected rather than dreaded. As I was thinking on these things one morning, the words of Hebrews 6:13-20 came to mind. I focused on verses 18-19 in particular: “. . . so that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to hold fast to the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain.”

As the walls of the world close in on us and threaten our wellbeing, freedoms, and perhaps even our lives in the days ahead, we know that our hope rests securely in the “steadfast anchor of our soul,” namely Jesus and His soon return for us. He is our hope!

The writer of Hebrews used Abraham as an example of someone who believed the Lord when all the evidence pointed in the opposite direction. God promised to bless and multiply the offspring of the aged Patriarch when it seemed impossible for them to have even one descendant. In spite of his age, Abraham placed his confidence in what God told him and trusted Him to fulfill His promises. Just as it was for Abraham and the first century saints, so it’s still the “two unchangeable” factors that explain why we can be so confident of our hope in these “perilous times:” 1. God’s promises, and 2. God’s character.

1. GOD’S PROMISES. Our New Testament hope in Jesus’ imminent appearing rests upon God’s unfailing Word. Just as with Abraham, we have a sure foundation for our anticipation of glory because of the promises contained in Scripture. Passages such as 1 Corinthians 15:51-55, 1 Thessalonians 4:13-5:11, John 14:2-3, Revelation 3:10-11, and Philippians 3:20-21 provide vivid pictures as well as assurances of the glory and hope that lies ahead for us as New Testament saints.

Abraham trusted God’s promises when it seemed impossible that he and Sarah could have a child. For many today, the Rapture also seems like a highly improbable event. In spite of what we cannot see, we trust the New Testament promises of Jesus’ appearing and fix our hope on the super-miraculous event that we call the Rapture. Jesus will surely rescue us and take us home to the place that He’s preparing for us (John 14:1-3).

The Bible makes it clear that we walk by faith and not by sight. This is especially true in regard to our hope in Jesus’ appearing. I believe Paul wrote Romans 8:24-25 in regard to the Rapture, which he referenced in verse 23: *For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.* Just as with Abraham and the first century saints, our hope rests secure on God’s promises.

2. GOD’S CHARACTER. I love that the writer of Hebrews adds these words in 6:18, “*in which it is impossible for God to lie.*” The hope of a future glorious kingdom for the nation of Israel rests on God’s immutable character. He does not change His mind regarding the promises that He makes. The same is true

for those of us that eagerly await Jesus' appearing; we know that the promises of glory ahead for us are certain because of God's person: He cannot lie. He cannot revoke the solemn promises He had made to us.

When writing about the future salvation and restoration of Israel, the Apostle Paul wrote these insightful words in Romans 11:29: *For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.* God cannot renege on promises He makes because His character makes it impossible for Him to do so.

In Ezekiel 36:22-38, we find a prophecy regarding the yet future restoration of the people of Israel to their Land. We see a foretaste of these promises already in the miraculous emergence of Israel as a nation and God's continuing protection of the country. However, in this text we also see that Israel's assurance of a restored kingdom not only rests on God's promises, but also on His person. In Ezekiel 36:22-23, we see that God's future over-the-top blessing of Israel does not depend upon the descendants of Jacob, but upon the Lord Himself: *"Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Lord God, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes."* (Emphasis mine)

God keeps His promises because that is who He is. It's impossible for Him to do otherwise. We might backtrack on the promises we make because of the disappointing behavior of others, but that's impossible with our Heavenly Father. For us, not only do God's promises confirm our hope in Jesus' imminent appearing, but so does the unchangeable nature on the One who gives us those assurances in Scripture. *You see, both the restoration of Israel and our future eternal glorification depend solely on God's holy character rather than the behavior of the promised recipients of the blessing (and I'm so glad that's true!).*

THE CERTAINTY OF OUR HOPE IN JESUS' APPEARING TO TAKE US HOME

The Lord will come for His church before His wrath overwhelms the earth. The certainty of this glorious anticipation rests on the promises of Scripture as well as the unchangeable nature of the One who made them. We have a sure anticipation of glory, which is why the writer of Hebrews referred to it as a hope that's both "a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain" (Hebrews 6:19).

My heart goes out to those in churches where the people never hear about...

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