

Bible Student's Notebook

The Herald of His Grace

Presenting every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Volume XI Issue 264

Glorying in Expectation

by – Don Bast

he meaning of the word "hope" has degenerated into a desire for something which we have no real reason to expect. However, this Greek word in question (elpizō, verb; elpis, noun), which the Authorized Version usually translates merely as "hope," speaks of God as the One on Whom we "rely" (II Corinthians 1:10; I Timothy 4:10; CV), in Whom we put our "trust" (AV).

Therefore, when speaking of something in the future, the *Concordant Version* translates the verb form of this word as "expect," and the noun form as "expectation." In the *Keyword Concordance*, then, "expectation" is defined as "a sure and certain hope."

Thus, in relying on the living God (I Timothy 4:10), our Savior, "Who does not lie," Whose "promises" are "before times eonian," we stand today, in all devoutness, "in expectation of life eonian" (c.f. Titus 1:1-2).

Most people will concur that there is nothing sure about these troubling times in which we live. The cares of this life can be overwhelming, and the future, at times, can look downright depressing. How blessed we are, as the children of God, to have a steadfast anchor, a most precious and glorious expectation in the midst of widespread uncertainty.

Our expectation is one of the most powerful things to consider because of the effect that it has upon our life if we get a glimpse of it. – A.E. Knoch

As great as our expectation is, my concern is that unless we really get a glimpse of it, and it becomes an active, living reality in our hearts, we will find little, if any, consolation in it. A vague and abstract concept of the "hereafter" will have little effect on our lives.

This enlightenment can come from God's Word alone, and only then through enlightenment of the eyes of our heart (*c.f.* Ephesians 1:18) – the core of our spiritual being. There, we can behold the glory of what lies ahead for us,

Not with words taught by human wisdom, but with those taught by the Spirit, matching spiritual blessings with spiritual words. Now the soulish man is not receiving those things which are of the spirit of God, for they are stupidity to him, and he is not able to know them, seeing that they are spiritually examined (I Corinthians 2:13-14).²

At first glance, this whole matter may appear as a great paradox. On the one hand we are asserting that we possess this great treasure, yet on the other hand we are saying we don't really have it yet, nor can we actually perceive it now, since,

... expectation, being observed, is not expectation, for what anyone is observing, why is he expecting it also? (Romans 8:24).

As we explore what God has declared regarding our expectation, our prayer must be,

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may be giving [us] a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the realisation of Him, the eyes of [our] heart having been enlightened, for [us] to perceive what is the expectation of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of the enjoyment of His allotment among the saints (Ephesians 1:17-18).

Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture is taken from the Concordant Literal New Testament.

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- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the church, the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Romans 11:13);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13);
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:
 - total forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14);
 - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6);
 - adult sonship position (Galatians 4).

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Sequel ... (continued from page 2453)

Once we get a glimpse of this expectation of our calling, and take the time to meditate on what our heart beholds, it will have a powerful effect on our life.

The wisdom we are praying for is not the wisdom of this world,

Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the discusser of this eon? Does not God make stupid the wisdom of this world? For since, in fact, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom knew not God. God delights, through the stupidity of the heralding, to save those who are believing (I Corinthians 1:20-21).

Instead, we are praying for a realization of,

... God's wisdom in a secret, wisdom which has been concealed, which God designates before – before the eons, for our glory, which not one of the chief men of this eon knows, for if they know, they would not crucify the Lord of glory. But, according as it is written, That which the {eye did not perceive}, and the ear did not hear, and to which the heart of man did not ascend – whatever God makes ready for those who are loving Him. Yet to us God reveals them through His spirit, for the spirit is searching all, even the depths of God (I Corinthians 2:7-10).

WHAT HAS GOD MADE READY FOR US?

First and foremost, it is *the resurrection* of the dead and the snatching away that we anticipate. Our faith is grounded on Him Who roused Jesus our Lord from among the dead (*c.f.* Romans 4:24).

Now, if Christ has not been roused, vain is your faith – you are still in your sins! Consequently those also, who are put to repose in Christ, perished. If we are having an {expectation in Christ} in this life only, more forlorn than all men are we. Yet now Christ has been roused from among the dead, the Firstfruit of those who are reposing. For since, in fact, through a man came death, through a Man, also, comes the resurrection of the dead. For even as, in Adam, all are dying, thus also, in Christ, shall all be vivified. Yet each in his own class: the Firstfruit, Christ; thereupon those who are Christ's in His presence (I Corinthians 15:17-23).

Christ is risen, indeed, and has been received up into glory (c.f. I Timothy 3:16).

The next company awaiting this most magnificent occurrence is the ecclesia, which is the body of Christ. We are not looking to the stars for signs of His coming, nor do we require any prophecies to be fulfilled before He comes for us. No man knows the day or hour. Therefore, we make no claims as to the imminence of Christ's appearing for us. Instead, we are simply relying on,

The living and true God, and ... [are] waiting for His Son out of the heavens, Whom He rouses from among the dead, Jesus, our Rescuer out of the coming indignation (I Thessalonians 1:10).

Accordingly, we are persuaded that,

... the Lord Himself will be descending from heaven with a shout of command, with the voice of the Chief Messenger, and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ shall be rising first. Thereupon we, the living who are surviving, shall at the same time be snatched away together with them in clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. And thus shall we always be together with the Lord. So that, console one another with these words (I Thessalonians 4:16-18).

Likewise, in the conclusion of this present eon, those among the nation of Israel and related saints of old who are "deemed worthy to happen upon ... [the coming] eon and the resurrection from among the dead (Luke 20:35), will also be vivified in Christ's presence. This will occur in the era appointed unto them, as those who themselves "are [also among] *Christ's*" own people just as surely as ourselves (I Corinthians 15:23; *c.f.* Romans 16:7; Matthew 24:13,14,21; Daniel 12:1-13).

The trumpet is an instrument of celebration and praise, and its sound will awaken in each one of us the most transcendent worship possible. The trumpet is also used to assemble to battle; and the battle being announced is one of a guaranteed and eminent victory. This will finally occur at

... the consummation, whenever [Christ] may be giving up the kingdom to His God and Father, whenever He should be nullifying all sovereignty and all authority and power. For He must be reigning until he should be placing all His en-



emies under His feet. The last enemy is being abolished: death (I Corinthians 15:24-26).

Finally, then,

whenever all may be subjected to [God], then the Son Himself also shall be subjected to Him Who subjects all to Him, that God may be All in all (I Corinthians 15:28).

What joy should fill our hearts as we anticipate this most-glorious event. It was the joy lying before Jesus, the Inaugurator and Perfecter of faith, that gave Him the courage and faith to endure the cross, despising the shame (c.f. Hebrews 12:2). Was it His Own resurrection alone that He had in mind, or was it not as well the unveiling of the sons of God (c.f. Romans 8:19)? Indeed, is He not, even now, longing for the same thing we are?

He has been listening to the children of God crying "Abba Father" for many years! Time and again He has heard the desperate plea "Come Lord Jesus!" He, more than anyone, must feel the entire creation groaning and travailing, awaiting the unveiling of the sons of God. It is no wonder, then, that when He comes, it will be with a shout!

As in a musical opera, the anticipation of a mighty crescendo is heightening, all through the universe, and when it finally explodes over the airwaves it will wake the dead in Christ. We are not told what Christ will shout in that day. When He called Lazarus from the tomb all He cried was "Lazarus! Hither! Out!" (John 11:43). Whatever the words, we know, they will produce the sweetest sound ever heard. I have a notion that we will be shouting also, as we ascend from the earth soaring through the Adversary's territory (c.f. Ephesians 2:2) on our way home.

A.E. Knoch wrote,

If we are faithful to God we will find but little in this life, and we will look forward to resurrection-life in Christ. Apart from resurrection, we should be the most pitiable of all mankind. We are the foolish, the ignoble in the flesh, and without this expectation we are a sad lot.³

It was surely not Brother Knoch's intention to make us feel guilty about the few pleasures in this life that we may enjoy.

3. Unsearchable Riches, volume 65, page 85.

No doubt his intent was rather to suggest the only reason we can enjoy our family and friends, music and nature, etc., as we do is because of the understanding we have of God's love and purpose for us, which includes resurrection life in Christ and the deliverance it will bring for all. Compared to this "sure and certain hope," everything else in this life is vanity indeed.

LONGING TO BE HOME

God has placed in each one of His children a deep longing for something greater than what we can touch or see here on earth.

For we are aware that, if our terrestrial tabernacle house should be demolished, we have a building of God, a house not made by hands, eonian, in the heavens. For in this also we are groaning, longing to be dressed in our habitation which is out of heaven, if so be that, being dressed also, we shall not be found naked. For we also, who are in the tabernacle, are groaning, being burdened, on which we are not wanting to be stripped, but to be dressed, that the mortal may be swallowed up by life. Now He Who produces us for this same longing is God, Who is also giving us the earnest of the spirit. Being, then, courageous always, and aware that, being at home in the body, we are away from home from the Lord (for by faith are we walking, not by perception), yet we are encouraged, and are delighting rather to be away from home out of the body and to be at home with the Lord (II Corinthians 5:1-8).

All through history God's chosen ones have been aware of the fact that they were strangers in a foreign land. The writer of the book of Hebrews when referring to that "vast ... cloud of witnesses" (Hebrews 12:1), wrote these words:

In faith died all these, not being requited with the promises, but perceiving them ahead and saluting them, and avowing that they are strangers and expatriates on the earth. For those who are saying such things are disclosing that they are seeking for a country of their own. And, if, indeed, they remembered that from which they came out, they might have had occasion to go back. Yet now they are craving a better, that is, a celestial; wherefore God is not ashamed of them, to be invoked as their God, for He makes ready

for them a city ... And these all, being testified to through faith, are not requited with the promise of God concerning us (the looking forward is to something better), that, apart from us, they may not be perfected" (Hebrews 11:13-16, 39-40).

The homeland for which we are craving is,

... our realm ... inherent in the heavens out of which we are awaiting a Savior also, the Lord, Jesus Christ, Who will transfigure the body of our humiliation, to conform it to the body of His glory in accord with the operation which enables Him even to subject all to Himself (Philippians 3:20-21).

This is where our lot was cast, and this is where we belong. It is there, in the heavens that we have a permanent and actual possession.

For the members of the body of Christ who died long ago, Christ's appearing for them will seem like only the passing of a moment's time. This is because they had fallen asleep in the Lord. Their next conscious thought, then, subsequent to their death will be the sound of Christ's own trumpet:

For He will be trumpeting, and the dead will be roused incorruptible, and we shall be changed (I Corinthians 15:52).

At this time our Lord Jesus Christ.

alone has immortality, making {His home in light inaccessible}, Whom not one of mankind perceived nor can be perceiving (I Timothy 6:14, 16).

These feeble bodies which are prone to decay and sin are not equipped to dwell in the splendor of our celestial home. Therefore, whether we are alive or are asleep in the grave, when the trumpet sounds,

... we all shall be changed, in an instant, in the twinkle of an eye ... For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality. Now, whenever this corruptible should be putting on incorruption, and this mortal should be putting on immortality, then shall come to pass the word which is written, Swallowed up was Death by Victory. Where, O Death, is your victory? Where, O Death, is your sting? Now the sting of Death is sin, yet the power of sin is the law. Now thanks be to God, Who is giving

us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ. So that, my beloved brethren become settled, unmovable, superabounding in the work of the Lord always, being aware that your toil is not for naught in the Lord (I Corinthian 15:51, 53-58).

After Paul's lengthy explanation about our resurrection and vivification, we read two little hinge words, in the last verse of the chapter, words that can be easily overlooked. He says, "So that...", in other words, Because of this glorious revelation, of which I have just been speaking –

So that [or, therefore] become settled, unmovable, superabounding in the work of the Lord always, being aware that your toil is not for naught in the Lord (I Corinthians 15:58).

It is on the basis of apprehending what God has prepared for us that we can become settled and unmovable now.

"Settle," is defined as "... to set in place firmly and comfortably ... to take up permanent residence."

Thus, in spirit, we can be firmly established and comfortable in our celestial homeland.

... God, being rich in mercy, because of His vast love with which He loves us ... vivifies us together in Christ (in grace are you saved!) and rouses us together and seats us together among the celestials, in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:4-6).

What a privilege and honor to get a glimpse of our celestial allotment.

... By revelation the secret is made known to [Paul] ... the secret of the Christ, which, in other generations, is not made known to the sons of humanity as it was now revealed to His holy apostles and prophets: in spirit the nations are to be joint enjoyers of an allotment ... (Ephesians 3:3-6).

GOD IS FAITHFUL

We cannot earn, nor in anyway qualify to be partakers of Christ's celestial allotment; for God,

Saved us and called us with a holy calling, not in accord with our acts, but in accord with His

^{4.} Webster's New World Dictionary, New York (Warner Books, 1983), pages 545.

Own purpose and the grace which is given to us in Christ Jesus before times eonian (II Timothy 1:9).

Neither will God change His mind about choosing us and designating us beforehand for glory (c.f. Romans 8:28-30), even if we should deem our high calling above in Christ something commonplace or even if it should become a matter of neglect.

For God did not appoint us to indignation, but to the procuring of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, Who died for our sakes, that, whether we may be watching or drowsing, we should be living at the same time together with Him (I Thessalonians 5:9-10).

Why then does Paul entreat us, and that in so many ways, to walk *worthily* of the calling with which we were called (*c.f.* Ephesians 4:1)? Paul knew that even though our expectation is guaranteed, "becoming settled" is not.

All, whatsoever you may be doing, work from the soul, as to the Lord and not to men, Being aware that from the Lord you will be getting the compensation of the enjoyment of an allotment (Colossians 3:23-24).

Enjoying our allotment and becoming settled is a powerful reward set before us right now. Let us not be content with the cheap imitation either of "fatalism" or "apathy"; these are not rewards from The Lord, but mere reflections of human confusion and disinterest.

Are you not aware that those racing in a stadium are, indeed, all racing, yet one is obtaining the prize? Thus be racing that you may be grasping it. Now every contender is controlling himself in all things; they, indeed, then, that they may be obtaining a corruptible wreath, yet we an incorruptible (I Corinthians 9:24-25).

Paul continues this theme in the next chapter of First Corinthians by telling us why God was not pleased with the children of Israel, and how He punished them. He then warns us that,

All this befalls them typically. Yet it was written for our admonition, to whom the consummations of the eons have attained. So that let him who is supposing he stands beware that he should not be falling. No trial has taken you except what is human. Now, faithful is God, Who will not be leaving you to be tried above what you are able, but, together with the trial, will be making the sequel also, to enable you to undergo it (I Corinthians 10:11-13).

This passage is addressed to those who seem to be standing; or rather, in any case, to those who suppose themselves to be so doing. "Standing" speaks of maintaining an upright position. Therefore, even when we think we are standing firm in the faith we need to "beware, lest we fall." We need to take time to "try ourselves, if we are in the faith; test ourselves" (II Corinthians 13:5).

Because of our lofty position in Christ, we are not exempted from "the fiery arrows of the wicked one." It is for this very reason that we will be a target! Therefore, let us be "taking up the large shield of faith, by which we will be able to extinguish all such flaming missiles" (Ephesians 6:16). How we thank God, that He is faithful, and that He won't allow us to be tried above what we are able.

Understanding I Corinthians 10:13 will be most helpful; hence this passage warrants a close examination. Let us start by breaking it down and looking at its key aspects:

- 1. Trials are common to all humans.
- 2. Trials are for the purpose of testing or probing us.
- 3. God is faithful, and He will not be leaving you to be tried above what you are "able": which is to say, that for which we will "have sufficient resources for the end in view."⁵
- 4. *Together* with the trial, God will *also* be making the "sequel" thereunto.
- 5. The sequel will enable you to undergo the testing. Our knowledge that every trial that "takes us" will have its own "sequel" (*ekbasis*, OUT-STEPPING; *i.e.*, "issue or result"), will enable us to undergo every trial, each one that we are called upon to endure. ⁶
- 6. Notice the word "together." Together with the

^{5.} Keyword Concordance, page 5.

^{6.} Keyword Concordance, page 265.

trial, God will be making the sequel also at the same time.

Sequel is defined as:

- something that follows; anything subsequent or succeeding
- 2. a literary work, film etc., complete in itself but continuing a story begun in an earlier work, film, etc. ⁷

This is to say that God will not only be making the trial, but "that which follows" the trial as well, its "sequel," once we are graced to step out of it, and are therefore no longer in it. God makes both our trials as well as their sequels; and, He makes them "together." That is, He makes them in such a way that they are not only intimately connected or conjoined, but in such a way that each is essential to the other.

The sequel of most significance to our every trial, of course, is nothing less than that of which we have been speaking, namely our happy expectation. Our expectation is the continuing and most important part of the story of our lives; and it will not begin until we are snatched away to meet the Lord in the air and enter our allotment among the celestials. Logically speaking, and from the human perspective, this could happen very soon or long after we are in the grave.

What did Paul mean when he said, "together with the trial He will make the sequel also"? Furthermore, how does the sequel help now if it is something that follows much later?

OUR PRIMARY TRIAL AND ITS SEQUEL

It is true that we often enjoy present-day sequels to many of our present-day trials. While these may afford us considerable relief and happiness, such relief and happiness is necessarily short-lived, simply because our lives themselves are of short duration. Indeed, in cases where even today we may enjoy deliverance from a certain trial, very often it is not long before a new trial arrives to takes its place. Besides, by no means do all of our present-day trials enjoy a present-day sequel; instead, many must await Christ's appearing, and "the deliverance of our body," which is appointed solely for that day (c.f. Romans 8:23; c.f. Philippians 3:20-21).

It is very helpful to know that our every trial will enjoy its sequel. Indeed, our daily life as a whole is a great "trial," one which is full of dangers and uncertainties, one in which many of its individual trials never receive a sequel, and one which, in any case, ends in death. Therefore, the principal sequel to any and all of our trials can only be the resurrection, immortality, incorruption, vivification and conformation to the image of God's Son, which He has promised us in the oncoming eons (c.f. I Corinthians 15:22; 43; 53; Romans 8:29).

Our primary "trial," then, is this very life itself, which, for all the good it may contain, must characteristically be termed, "an experience of evil," one which God "has given to the sons of humanity to humble them by it" (Ecclesiastes 1:13). Our primary "sequel," then, as well, is our glorious life to come, in which God will "be displaying the transcendent riches of His grace in His kindness to us in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:7).

THE EARNEST OF THE SPIRIT

Let us note carefully the following two passages in which the word "earnest" appears.

Now He Who is confirming us together with you in Christ, and anoints us, is God, Who also seals us and is giving the earnest of the spirit in our hearts (II Corinthians 1:21-22).

In whom on believing also, you are {sealed with} the holy spirit of promise which is an earnest of the enjoyment of our allotment, to the deliverance of that which has been procured for the laud of His glory! (Ephesians 1:14).

An "earnest" is "a pledge in kind," "something given or done as an indication or assurance of what is to come: [a] token."

Upon believing, we are sealed with the holy spirit of promise (Ephesians 1:13). It is a pledge that, in due time, we will enjoy the whole of all that God has promised us. It is true that in the case of God's blessings upon us, the earnest is but a tiny fraction of that which is to follow. Still, no stronger assurance can be given that the installment will be followed by all that is needed to perfect the transaction than the glorious earnest which we presently enjoy.¹⁰

^{7.} Webster's New World Dictionary, New York (Warner Books, 1983) page 1224.

^{8.} Keyword Concordance, page 85.

^{9.} Webster's New World Dictionary, New York (Warner Books, 1983) page 426.

^{10.} Adapted from A.E. Knoch, *Unsearchable Riches*, volume 50, page 27.

This spirit is called a promissory spirit. We are blessed with every spiritual blessing, but we receive them in installments of spirit. The Scriptures promise all blessings of this kind to those who have the earnest. We do not rely on our energy, our faithfulness or our success for further installments. We rely on the faithfulness of God and the merits of His Christ, so that the lowest, the most ignorant and disobedient need only the earnest in order to be sure of all.

We pray for this glorious sequel and anticipate our total deliverance. In the meantime, together with the trial, we enjoy the earnest of our sequel which is a stepping out, in spirit, even now, and thereby we are able to bear the pain of the trial. So we endure the trial in the flesh, and exit in spirit, both at the same time, together!

We may be glorying in expectation of the glory of God. Yet not only so, but we may be glorying also in afflictions, having perceived that affliction is producing endurance, yet endurance testedness, yet testedness expectation (Romans 5:2-4).

Wherefore we are not despondent, but even if our outward man is decaying, nevertheless that within us is being renewed day by day. For the momentary lightness of our affliction is producing for us a transcendently transcendent eonian, burden of glory at our not noting what is being observed, but what is not being observed, for what is being observed is temporary, yet what is not being observed is eonian (II Corinthians 4:16-18).

It is actually our afflictions, here and now, that are producing for us an *eonian* burden of glory by causing us to long for, and apprehend our expectation! As we learn to be disposed to that which is above, to that which is not being observed, our afflictions will seem light and momentary, in comparison (*c.f.* II Corinthians 4:17).

We have a glorious expectation, a secret that was hidden for generations, not a subordinate place in the earthly kingdom but a pre-eminent place in His celestial domains.

Thus we get a glimpse of,

The transcendent greatness of His power for us who are believing, in accord with the operation of the might of His strength, which is operative in the Christ, rousing Him from among the dead and seating Him at His right hand {among the celestials}, up over every sovereignty and authority and power and lordship, and every name that is named, not only in this eon, but also in that which is pending: and subjects all under His feet, and gives Him, as Head over all, {to the ecclesia} which is His body, {the complement} of the One completing the all in all (Ephesians 1:19-23).

How could anyone, no matter how great, deserve being the complement of Christ, the One Whose place is up over the entire universe? We are to be the ruling class among the celestials, the whole universe will be marveling at us as we are put on display as objects of God's achievement.

There is nothing that we can compare with the glory and esteem that we will receive. That God would deem to let us serve Him just a little while on this earth is a privilege which none of us can claim to deserve, and an honor far too great; but that which has been reserved for us in the celestials, no heart of man has ever ascended unto.

We do not look for luxury or magnificent mansions, but rather to be the means of making others happy. Our blessings, then, are indeed in heavenly places, but more than that; they are among celestial beings. The highest blessing does not consist in being in a place, however glorious it may be, but rather in a position of beneficence toward others. We will be blessed in order to be a blessing to others.

What will it be like to be perfectly equipped with inexhaustible supplies of power and grace, and to fare forth into the celestial realms as an ambassador of peace to proclaim the evangel of God's limitless love to the celestials of the starry spheres? This will be happiness and heaven.¹¹

Now may the God of expectation be filling you with all joy and peace in believing, for you to be superabounding in expectation, in the power of the holy spirit (Romans 15:13).

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^{11.} Adapted from A.E.Knoch, *Unsearchable Riches*, volume 63, page 111.