

7. Motivated by Hope (2Q 2024 The Great Controversy)

Biblical material: 1 Thess. 4:13–18; Matt. 24:27, 30, 31; 2 Pet. 1:19–21; Dan. 8:14; Dan. 9:20–27; Ezra 7:7–13; Isa. 25:9.

Quotes

- The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon/ Turns Ashes—or it prospers; and anon,/ Like Snow upon the Desert’s dusty Face,/ Lighting a little hour or two—is gone. *Edward FitzGerald*
- I have seen the future and it doesn’t work. *Robert Fulford*
- Hope is a great falsifier of truth. *Gracian*
- More are taken in by hope than by cunning. *Marquis de Vauvenargues*
- Hope is a waking dream. *Aristotle*
- Hope is only faith in relation to the future. *L. Feuerbach*

Questions

How is hope related to the great controversy? How can we avoid the accusation of “pie-in-the-sky-by-and-by”? What examples from the past give credibility to our hope? In what ways can future hope demean the present? How do we demonstrate that we are Adventists and not Existists? Can the expression of our hope end up sounding misguided?

Bible summary

1 Thess. 4:13–18 is the hope of Jesus’ return. Matt. 24:27, 30, 31 describes the coming of the Son of Man. 2 Pet. 1:19–21 explains that prophecy is not of human origin. Dan. 8:14 relates to the cleansing of the sanctuary. In Dan. 9:20–27 Daniel pleads for deliverance for his people. Ezra 7:7–13 describes the decree to allow the Jews to return to Jerusalem. “At that time his people will say, ‘Look! This is our God; we have trusted in him and he has saved us! This is the Lord we have been looking for. Now we can be happy and celebrate the salvation he brings!’” Isa. 25:9.

Comment

Surely one of the most important aspects of the great controversy perspective is that it gives us hope for the future. While there are many other benefits, such as better understanding God’s actions in the past, to look forward to the conclusion of the great controversy is definitely a major focus.

So what of hope? What does hope mean? “I hope you’ll understand me. I hope it doesn’t rain tomorrow. I hope I’ll find a good job.” Hope in the sense of faint expectation—I would like it to be possible, it probably won’t, but I still “hope”. Is Christian hope that kind of watered-down vagueness that characterizes so much of this world’s hope?

“Hope that’s delayed makes you feel sick.” Proverbs 13:12. What is the character of our waiting? This is no idleness, but rather an active involvement in this world, while we wait for the final fulfillment of God’s promises. Usually waiting suggests inactivity, but not for the Christian. As Jesus told his hearers, “Occupy till I come.” Waiting is normally associated with delays and bad planning on somebody’s part, but here waiting is God’s opportunity to work, particularly for others and for the fulfillment of the plan of salvation.

Ours is not a society that likes to wait. We want everything immediately—from fast food to fast cars, everything has to remove the possibility of waiting. Yet we are told to wait on the Lord. Why? Instead of waiting on God, how often do we rush to action, or run away! Waiting may not always be the most comfortable, but in our relationship with God, it’s essential. For in the same way God has to wait and give time for truth to be demonstrated, so we too have to patiently wait for the eventual vindication of truth.

Our waiting is not wasted time. It is time filled with expectation, and action. It is time for our preparation, and more importantly, time to be able to share the truth with others so that they too

may become God's friends. If God is so patient with us, can't we be patient with those around us, encouraging them to discover the joy of a life-long relationship with our trustworthy God?

No human hopes are worth hoping in. Promises are not worth the paper they are written on. Desires cannot last. Hopes die like fading flowers, turning to dust and ashes. For without God there is absolutely no hope.

But with God? He is the only hope in a world of hopelessness. So what of the Christian hope? What kind of hope are we talking about here? On what is it based?

On God himself. Can God lie? Would he ever *want* to? The vital truth is the Bible's affirmation that "Christ Jesus, who is our hope." "Our hope is in the living God.." (1 Timothy 1:1; 4:10). How amazing and central is this hope! Romans 8:24 even says that "We are saved by hope"! How definite and assured this hope is. If you do not have this hope, how can you face the future, how can you live in the present?

Only the hope that comes from God can give what we all need the most: confident security in the present, and the assurance of a wonderful future in God's presence. For "This hope is our spiritual anchor—it's both certain and reliable..." (Hebrews 6:19). What is the result? "Since we have such a confident hope, we are truly bold!" "Christ living in you is the glorious hope!" "The wonderful hope of the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ." (2 Corinthians 3:12; Colossians 1:27; Titus 2:13).

While pilgrims here we journey on
In this dark vale of sin and gloom
Through tribulation, hate, and scorn,
Or through the portals of the tomb,
Till our returning King shall come
To take His exile captives home,
O! What can buoy the spirits up?
'Tis this alone—the blessed hope.
Annie R Smith.

Ellen White Comments

We are not to be driven to Christ. It is our part to come—to make our own choice, and come to the fountain of life. Why should we not come to Christ? for in Him our hope of eternal life is centered... The apostle Paul exhorts us to lay hold on the hope set before us in the gospel... Hope has been set before us, even the hope of eternal life. Nothing short of this blessing for us will satisfy our Redeemer; but it is our part to lay hold upon this hope by faith in Him who has promised. We may expect to suffer; for it is those who are partakers with Him in His sufferings who shall be partakers with Him in His glory. He has purchased forgiveness and immortality for the sinful, perishing souls of men; but it is our part to receive these gifts by faith. Believing in Him, we have this hope as an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast... Let us contemplate the glorious hope that is set before us, and by faith lay hold upon it. . . . {LHU 331 }

We see Christ, the Captain of our salvation, meeting the prince of darkness in open battle, and, single-handed, obtaining the victory in our behalf. We learn, too, that by this victory, was opened to us a door of hope, a source of strength, and that we may, as faithful soldiers, fight our own battles with the wily foe, and conquer in the name of Jesus. The powers of darkness must be met by every soul... All should understand the nature of the great controversy between Christ and Satan, and should realize that it concerns themselves. All are actors in the scene, sharers in the conflict. {RH, September 25, 1883 }

The Lord is soon coming. Talk it, pray it, believe it. Make it a part of the life. {7T 237 }