

Living in Hope: by Waiting, Clinging, Resting, Sheltering Matthew 24:21-22

This evening join me as Jesus describes the most hopeless moment in our planet's future; the moment when life is heading toward a complete extinction. This moment is somewhere near the end of the Tribulation. That where Jesus takes us in

*Matthew 24:21-22 For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. **22 And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened.***

Hopelessness means the place where there is no more future possible.

Hopelessness is when any hopes are extinguished and life goes out like an ember.

The dictionary tells us—

having no expectation of good or success : **DESPAIRING** **b** : not susceptible to remedy or cure **c** : incapable of redemption or improvement

2 a : giving no ground for hope : **DESPERATE** **b** : incapable of solution, management, or accomplishment : **IMPOSSIBLE**

synonym see **DESPONDENT**

- **hope·less·ness** *noun*

Jesus presents the ultimate hopeless moment for the world. A time so bad there is nothing ahead but oblivion.

In the end food will be scarce, unpoisoned water will be difficult to find, the air will be laced with death—but the worst part of this moment is that all hope will be gone.

Humans can live 40 days without food,
3 days without water,
8 minutes without air,
But only 1 second without hope!

I describe this snapshot as:

**When Christ Returns to Earth,
there are Weapons of Mass Destruction.**

Look at the ending that John recorded from exile on Patmos in Revelation 6.

“And another, a red horse, went out; and to him who sat on it, it was granted to take peace from the earth, and that men would slay one another; and a GREAT SWORD was given to him ... When the Lamb broke the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature saying, ‘Come.’ I looked, and behold, an ashen horse; and he who sat on it had the name Death; and Hades was following with him. AUTHORITY WAS GIVEN TO THEM OVER A FOURTH OF THE EARTH, to kill with sword and with famine and with pestilence and by the wild beasts of the earth.” (Rev. 6:4, 7-8)

What did Jesus advise as the best course of action for anyone who witnesses the beginning of these events as described in Matthew 24? Look at what He told us to do.

If you keep following Christ's words in Matthew 24 notice what He says in v. 29. Now turn over to Luke 21:28. This is the record of the same message The Olivet Discourse. Note what else Jesus said in verse 28. For us, for them, for anyone living in the end when the world (or their world) plunges into hopelessness...

Luke 21:28 Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near.”

When you see these things—look up

Looking up for Christ equals hope. Christ's guide to surviving the worst time ever is—look for Him. And that same method works whatever situation we may face.

Hope in the Lord who alone can give you a future and a hope! Humans can live 40 days with no food, 3 days with no water, 8 minutes with no air—but humans can't live a second without hope! What can cause God's people to lose hope?

To find out, open with me to the Old Testament book of groanings. Or would you know it as the Old Testament book of cryings, or moanings? The title is Lamentations, the wailings of a destroyed nation in ruins and death—that is what that book is titled.

The Hebrew language of the Old Testament is a rich storehouse of words which define hope. The Old Testament is filled with examples for us of what the cause and remedy is for seasons of hopelessness. There are four Hebrew words that give us valuable insights into the many ways God can make us live in hope. Let's examine these words and see how words written thousands of years ago leap right into the twenty-first century and our lives.

Lamentations 3:21-25 This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope. 22 Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. 23 They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. 24 "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I hope in Him!" 25 The Lord is good to those **who wait for Him**, To the soul who seeks Him.

This passage reminds us of the first reason God's people can lose hope. Often it is:

Waiting hope

In Lamentations 3 we find the first of these four. That first Hebrew word that God gives us is describing **WAITING HOPE**—the word is **QAVAH (6960): HOPE THAT RENEWS EXHAUSTED STRENGTH**.

Lamentations 3:25 The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, To the soul who seeks Him.

The original idea of this verb was to twist or to stretch something. It was associated with the twisting and stretching of weak strands into a strong rope. From this the word metaphorically developed into the idea of enduring under tension. This concept sprung from the fact that even a weak thread twisted together with a rope became strong. The belief grew that as we hope in the Lord's promises we are woven into His strength and strengthened to withstand the stresses of life.

Now turn with me to the most well known verse in the Bible using this special word. Isaiah 40:31. Here God gives us a great promise given by Isaiah illustrating this word:

Isaiah 40:31 But those who **wait** on the Lord Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.

The word translated *wait* in Isaiah is *qavah*. The major shade of meaning in this is "waiting in the expectant HOPE and being strengthened thereby." The margin note renders it "who HOPE in the Lord," which is more accurate. A sure hope in the future enables a person to have superhuman strength:

Isaiah 40:29-31 He gives power to the weak, And to those who have no might He increases strength. 30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, And the young men shall utterly fall, 31 But those who [HOPE in] the Lord Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.

This is exactly the same word and hope that the patriarch Jacob testified about at the end of his 147 year long life of troubles, stress, and disasters. Genesis 49:18 **I have waited for** your salvation, O Lord!

King David in writing the Psalms uses this word more frequently than any other biblical writer. This word actually was one of the keys to David's life. He recognized that his human strength was never enough to meet the stresses of life. ¹

*Psalm 25:3 **Indeed, let no one who waits** on You be ashamed; Let those be ashamed who deal treacherously without cause.* **Waiting Hope** delivers us from being ashamed of hard times.

*Psalm 25:5 Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my salvation; **On You I wait** all the day.* **Waiting Hope** makes each days troubles into a lesson from God just for us.

*Psalm 27:14 **Wait on the Lord**; Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the Lord!* **Waiting Hope** gives us the strength we need so that we do not lose heart.

*Psalm 37:9, 34 For evildoers shall be cut off; **But those who wait on the Lord**, They shall inherit the earth. 34 Wait on the Lord, And keep His way, And He shall exalt you to inherit the land; When the wicked are cut off, you shall see it.* **Waiting Hope** promises us that we have the victory through the Lord.

*Psalm 39:7 "And now, Lord, **what do I wait for?** My hope is in You.* **Waiting Hope** focuses our lives upon the Lord.

*Psalm 40:1 **I waited patiently for the Lord**; And He inclined to me, And heard my cry.* **Waiting Hope** assures us that He is hearing us.

*Psalm 130:5 **I wait for the Lord**, my soul waits, And in His word I do hope (yachal #3176 trusting hope the next word).* **Waiting Hope** draws us back into God's Word.

Lamentations 3:25 The Lord is good to those who wait for Him, To the soul who seeks Him. **Waiting Hope** invites God's blessings.

Trusting hope

The second Hebrew word that God gives us is describing **TRUSTING HOPE**--the word is **YACHAL (3176): HOPE THAT PRODUCES GREAT ENDURANCE**. Turn with me to the most well known verse in the Bible using this special word. Job 13:15.

The root idea of this word is to wait for something. It came to mean an expectant waiting under extreme pressure. The scholar R. B. Girdlestone says, "Yachal occurs several times in the Book of Job and signifies a long patient waiting."² A study of the usage of this word in the Book of Job gives the most accurate connotations. Job was a

¹ Hal Lindsey, *The Terminal Generation*. Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company: 1976, p. 92-93.

² Robert Baker Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1948), p. 104.

man going through extreme trial: he lost his great wealth, all his children, and his health-in rapid succession. He was suffering incredible and constant physical and mental pain. Yet as he thought of why God had permitted all this he says,

Job 13:15 Though He slay **me, yet will I trust** Him. Even so, I will defend my own ways before Him. [Here the word *yachal* means to keep on hoping with endurance under extreme pressure. Job's hope in the Lord enabled him to endure and be stabilized even under adverse conditions.³] **Trusting Hope** guards us from despair (remember Elijah despaired of life and wanted to die?).

Job 14:14 If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my hard service **I will wait**, Till my change comes. **Trusting Hope** anchors our souls as Hebrews 6:19 says—in Heaven.

Genesis 8:12 **So he waited** yet another seven days and sent out the dove, which did not return again to him anymore. **Trusting Hope** keeps believing even when there is no visible thing in life to see that points to a possibility of hope—just like Noah did in the ark.

Psalm 31:24 Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart, **All you who hope** in the Lord. **Trusting Hope** strengthens us.

Psalm 33:18, 22 Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear **Him, On those who hope** in His mercy, 22 Let Your mercy, O Lord, **be upon us, Just as we hope** in You. **Trusting Hope** invites God's blessings.

Psalm 38:15 For in You, O Lord, **I hope**; You will hear, O Lord my God. **Trusting Hope** assures us that God hears us.

Psalm 42:5, 11; 43:5 Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted **within me? Hope** in God, for I shall yet praise Him For the help of His countenance. 11 Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted **within me? Hope** in God; For I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God. 5 Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted **within me? Hope** in God; For I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God. **Trusting Hope** gives us a reason to go on, a reason to smile, a reason to bless others with the strength that God alone can give.

Psalm 71:14 **But I will hope** continually, And will praise You yet more and more. **Trusting Hope** opens our life to magnify the Lord.

Psalm 119:43 And take not the word of truth utterly out of my mouth, For I have **hoped in** Your ordinances. 49 Remember the word to Your servant, **Upon which You have caused me to hope**. **Trusting Hope** points us back to God's Word.

³ Hal Lindsey, *The Terminal Generation*. Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company: 1976, p. 92-93.

Psalm 119:74 Those who fear You will be glad when they see **me, Because I have hoped** in Your word. 81 My soul faints for Your salvation, But I **hope in** Your word. 114 You are my hiding place and my shield; **I hope** in Your word. 147 I rise before the dawning of the morning, And cry for help; **I hope** in Your word.

Lamentations 3:21, 24 This I recall to my mind, **Therefore I have hope**. 22 Through the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. 23 They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. 24 "The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "**Therefore I hope** in Him!" **Trusting Hope** is choosing to remember God even in the midst of our darkest hours.

Clinging hope

The third Hebrew word that God gives us is describing **CLINGING HOPE**--the word is **BATACH (982): HOPE THAT INSPIRES DEEPER TRUST**. Turn with me to the most well known verse in the Bible using this special word. Proverbs 3:5.

Proverbs 3:5 **Trust** [literally cling to] the Lord with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding;

Here **batach** is used in the sense of hope that comes from casting one's total future upon God as a little child and trusting Him for everything. This word is most often translated to trust or to have confidence in someone-usually God. But in some contexts it is definitely used to mean hope, as in the great prophetic Twenty-second Psalm. The Messiah's thoughts while suffering on the cross are predicted here⁴:

"But thou [God] art he that took me out of the womb: thou didst make me HOPE [batach] when I was upon my mother's breasts" (Psalms 22:9 KJV).

Psalm 37:3-5 **Trust in** the Lord, and do good; Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. 4 Delight yourself also in the Lord, And He shall give you the desires of your heart. 5 Commit your way to the Lord, **Trust** also in Him, And He shall bring it to pass. **Clinging Hope** assures us that God is at work.

Psalm 40:3 He has put a new song in my mouth—Praise to our God; Many will see it and fear, **And will trust** [cling to] the Lord. **Clinging Hope** puts a song in our heart that flows out of our lives in even hard times.

Psalm 56:3-4, 11 Whenever I am afraid, **I will trust** [cling to] You. 4 In God (I will praise His word), In God I **have put my trust**; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me. 11 In God **I have put my trust**; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me? . **Clinging Hope** counteracts and removes our fears.

⁴ Hal Lindsey, *The Terminal Generation*. Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company: 1976, p. 95.

Psalm 112:7 He will not be afraid of evil tidings; His heart is steadfast, **trusting** [clinging to] the Lord. **Clinging Hope** calms us whatever we have coming at us.

Sheltering hope

The final of the four Hebrew words for hope that God gives us is describing **SHELTERING HOPE**--the word is **CHASAH (2620): HOPE THAT OFFERS SECURE REFUGE**. Turn with me to the most well known verse in the Bible using this special word. Ruth 2:12.

Ruth 2:12 The Lord repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings you have come **for refuge**."

This is a beautiful word for hope. Its root meaning is "to seek shelter, refuge or protection in something or someone."⁵ It is used frequently to portray little animals taking refuge in the cleft of a rock as in Psalm 104:18 The high hills are for the wild goats; The cliffs are a refuge for the rock badgers.

Figuratively it came to be used of man's taking refuge in God from the spiritual, emotional, and physical dangers of life. On a few occasions this concept is translated HOPE. In Proverbs 14:32 this is used in a unique way: "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death" (KJV).When the one who has been declared righteous by believing in Jesus as his Savior faces death, he will have a hope that is a refuge from the uncertainty and fear presented by his own death.⁶

2 Samuel 22:3, 31 The God of my strength, **in whom I will trust**; My shield and the horn of my salvation, My stronghold and my refuge; My Savior, You save me from violence. 31 As for God, His way is perfect; The word of the Lord is proven; He is a shield **to all who trust in Him**.

Psalm 7:1 O Lord my God, **in You I put my trust**; Save me from all those who persecute me; And deliver me,

Psalm 11:1 In the Lord **I put my trust**; How can you say to my soul, "Flee as a bird to your mountain"?

Psalm 16:1 Preserve me, O God, **for in You I put my trust**.

Psalm 31:1 In You, O Lord, **I put my trust**; Let me never be ashamed; Deliver me in Your righteousness.

⁵ Brown, Driver, and Briggs, p. 875.

⁶ Hal Lindsey, *The Terminal Generation*. Old Tappan, New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company: 1976, p. 97-98.

Psalm 57:1 Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me! For my soul **trusts** in You; And in the shadow of Your wings **I will make my refuge**, Until these calamities have passed by.

Psalm 71:1 In You, O Lord, **I put my trust**; Let me never be put to shame.

Psalm 91:4 He shall cover you with His feathers, And under His wings **you shall take refuge**; His truth shall be your shield and buckler.

Proverbs 30:5 Every word of God is pure; He is a shield **to those who put their trust** in Him.