

Rom 15:4 GOOD HOPE THROUGH SCRIPTURE

PRELIMS. Well in a world like our's we are all in need of having **good hope** that is truly good hope. Who can live without hope? Everyone has a hope of some kind - even if it is **false hope**. It is a very **solemn fact** that even false hope can 'keep us going'! People look forward to all kind of things which give the **joy/excitement!** Xmas; Birthdays; Holidays; World Cup; Wimbledon!!!! These things **do** keep some people going and 'getting through life'! They have **nothing else** to look forward to, nothing beyond this life!

The Bible here tells us [4] the Scriptures were written that "*we might have **hope***"! God **desires** our happiness! He wants us to have **real hope**, look: "*May the God of **hope fill** you with **all joy** and peace in believing so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may **abound in hope***" Isn't that wonderful! God wants us to **abound in joy!**

WHAT is HOPE?

Hope in the Bible is not what we know as hope today. There **no uncertainty** in the Biblical hope. We use hope after sitting an **exam** 'I hope I have passed'! Or after an **interview** 'I hope I have got the job'! That is **not** Biblical hope! Biblical hope is **full of certainty!** It is something **positive** and **definite**. It is what John called "*the confidence that we have toward Him*" [1John 5:14]

Hope is something to be **enjoyed** - without **doubting!** Doubt **spoils** everything! I know Xns who can't enjoy their salvation in X because of **doubt!** I do not find believers doubting in the Bible! "*Doubtless You are our Father*" [Isa 63:16 AV] "*We believe and are sure You are the Son of the living God*" [John 6:69 AV] God gave us the Scriptures **so that** we would be **sure** and **not doubt!** Con of Faith: 'this **certainty** is **not** a mere conjecture and probable persuasion, grounded upon a fallible hope; but an **infallible assurance**' [4:18-20]

To have hope is to be **strengthened** in faith. **Opposite** of **weakness!** It was hope that helped Abraham who "*In hope....believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations...He did not weaken in faith ...but he grew strong in his faith*" [4:18-20] When

God wanted to show His character, His unchangeable character, He swears an oath “*so that...we who have fled for refuge **might have strong encouragement** to hold fast to the **hope** set before us*”[H6:18]

To be **confused** about **God’s will** for you is one thing; to be confused about your **salvation** is another! Some people are so mixed up about faith, election, predestination, that they waver like a leaf - but **this hope** is “*a **sure and steadfast anchor** of the soul, a **hope** that enters into the **inner place** behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on **our behalf***” [Heb 6:19] An anchor is a symbol of **security**! Faith must be fixed on a sound anchor, else it is **useless**!

Sure refers to its **natural essence** of solidarity within itself - it **won’t crumble** under pressure. Steadfast refers to its **unwavering** firmness - it won’t move from its position! Some things can be good - but **mutable** - it can change from being good to not so good...mutability is a weakness, it is not a good thing. Only God is **immutable**!

What is it to ‘have’ this hope? It is simple to **have Christ**! Paul wrote of: “*Christ Jesus **our hope***”[1T1:1] and “*Christ in you, the **hope of glory***”[Col 1:27] When millionaires are after **success**, it is not the money they are after but the **glory**! The glory of **sportsmen** winning at Golf, Tennis, Football...or the glory of **political power**, or the glory attached to **business success**, is not to be considered in the **same league** as having the glory of Christ! The glory of sportsmen, etc, **passes away**! It has such a limited short duration. I remember the **excitement** in school, in the neighbourhood of **Laurie Reilly** scoring the last minute winner against England in 1952!! We boys talked about it for months on end - but it is now **all gone**! They **have** their **reward**, or as it is now, they have **HAD** their reward!

But the glory of Christ **never ends** but **increases** as time goes on! There are more people enjoying the victories of the prophets and saints in the NT now than ever before - there are more people honouring them than ever before! The more saints they meet in heaven will honour them!

In [Eph 2:12] we read about those who have **no hope**! They are said

to be “*separated from Christ...having no hope and without God in the world*”! So conversely, having hope is being in Christ! You have no real hope, if you are **out** of Christ!

FINDING THIS GREAT HOPE - FINDING CHRIST

All some people want in life is to win **£1M** in the **lottery**. I am told the chance are **million to one!** Yet people keep trying! Despite there being **so much uncertainty** in winning the lottery. There is no guarantee! **APP** But with the gospel there is a **guarantee!** “*seek and you will find*” - thats better than ‘Buy a ticket and you will very likely **not win!**’ “*You will find Me when you seek for Me with all your heart*” [**twice** Deu 4:9 + Jer 29:13] “*I did not say to the offspring of Jacob ‘Seek Me in vain’*”[Isa 45:19]

Our text tells us about the **Scriptures**. That is where you can find hope! What a wonderful book is the Bible! **No book** has **survived** such **examination/scrutiny/opposition!** People have tried for **centuries** to prove it is a **myth** - without success! People are **still finding Christ** in the Bible! The Bible has **changed** so many lives!

But there is a **warning!** Some people have great **confidence** in the **Scriptures**. They read it daily and would **never stop** - some would even **die** for it! The Scriptures are **vital** to our faith. without it we would be in **ignorance** - like heathen! God has **revealed** Himself in the Scriptures. Without it we would not know the **gospel**. Paul says “*my gospel...has now become disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations*”[Rom 16:26] But there can a **great difference** between knowing the **Scriptures** and knowing **Jesus Christ!** You can know the Scriptures really well - and yet **not know** Jesus Christ at all! We must distinguish between knowing Christ and knowing the Bible!

The **Book** itself won't save anyone. It is not the **Book** itself, it is not the printed page that saves us, it is the **Christ** that is **portrayed** and **revealed** in Scripture that saves us! The Bible **points** us to Someone and that Someone is Jesus Christ! The **Saviour of the world** is revealed in the Scriptures! The Book talks and speaks of Someone

beautiful and lovely - and unless we know that Someone, we will be lost no matter how well we knew the Bible! We are **not saved** by knowing a **Book** - we are saved by knowing the **Person** of Jesus X!

When Jesus was leaving His disciples for the last time, He did **not** say to them ‘Don’t worry that I am going away, I am going to send you a Book’! No. He said ‘Don’t worry, *“I will pray the Father and He will send you **Another Comforter/Helper** to be with you forever...even the Spirit of truth...You **know Him** for **He** dwells with you and shall be **in you**”*! [John 14:17] Some Xns have been accused of swapping a Person for a Book, ie, the Saviour for the Bible.

Now a **Person** is a **living** thing - a Book is **inanimate**! You must find that Person, that Christ that is revealed in the Book. When you find Him, you find real hope - that is why Peter says *“a **living hope** through the **resurrection** of Jesus Christ”* [1Pet 1:3]

So if you do not have Christ and you want Him - then look at this Book, pray as you read, and ask God to **reveal** to your **soul** the **Person** it talks about! If **you** keep doing that, you will find Christ!

The Apostles were great believers and glorified God more than any other group of people. Yet they **never had the Bible**. They did not carry a NT or an iPod in their pockets with the text of Scripture!! But they all had **Christ**! The Apostle had **no bible studies** - they just studied **Jesus** that looked on and remembered!!

That is why the Scriptures say *“looking unto **Jesus...consider Him**”* Heb 12:2,3] It is **not written** ‘whatever things were written were written that you might have a good knowledge of theology and truth’ but rather *“whatever was written...was written...that...you might have **hope/Christ**”* [4]! *“For I tell you that this **Scripture** must be **fulfilled in Me**: ‘And **He** was numbered with the transgressors.’ For what is written about **Me** has **its fulfillment**”*[Luke 22:37]!

After the Emmaus Road experience that Jesus *“opened their minds to **understand** the Scriptures...that the **Christ** should suffer and...rise from the dead”* It is Christ rising from the dead that saves us. Do **you agree?** Then **thank** God for the Scriptures!