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I-800-611-8080 / www.cgom.org
PO Box 54621, Tulsa, OK 74155-0621

Great Hope In Christ

by Ian Hufton

In the near future, multitudes of truth-believers are going to rise up out of their graves to meet Christ in the air (1 Thess 4:17). Can you mentally picture these multitudes of "dead in Christ" coming to life and being born into the Spirit realm? They have gone into the graves in different countries over thousands of years. How would you like to walk through such a crowd of people and ponder their name tags? If each one had a name, date of birth, date of death and country of origin it would make for fascinating conversations at some huge after-resurrection party. You could walk through the crowd stopping to ask how a certain person came to a knowledge of God's truth and what kind of trials they suffered prior to their death. The story telling could go on for days and days and we would be riveted to the spot until each story was told and more questions asked. How would your story be told?

THE KEY: YOUR STORY'S END

God is the master potter and each of us are clay in His hands. He works differently in each one of us to build us to full maturity and welcome us into His glorious family. The critical part of each of these "first resurrection" stories is the "last leg" of their race. Christ and the Father insist that we all endure to the end.

And ye shall be hated of all men for My name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. (Matt 10:22)

But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. (Matt 24:13)

And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution

ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. (Mark 4:17)

Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. (2 Tim 2:3)

We must remain faithful until our last breath.

SAVED BY HOPE!

For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? (Romans 8:24)

How is it that we are saved by "hope"? Hope is the "engine" that causes us to overcome the pain of "the now", in order to be there for the glory of "the future". Since we will enter the kingdom through much tribulation, we must have a powerful "hope" to keep us moving through trials (faithful to Christ) until we reach our finish line (our last breath)

Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God. (Acts 14:22)

The saints of old will be able to tell us many stories of how they held onto the hope of the kingdom and endured till their last breath -faithful to their Lord and Savior. Paul spoke to many of them directly or by his letters. Many times, he stresses the need for an unbreakable hope in God's promises.

And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust. (Acts 24:15)

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But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. (Romans 8:25)

Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; (Romans 12:12)

That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: (Eph 2:12)

If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard,... (Col 1:23)

To whom God would make known what is the riches of the Glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: (Col 1:27)

In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; (Titus 1:2)

Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious Appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; (Titus 2:13)

But Christ as a son over His own house; Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. (Heb 3:6)

And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: (Heb 6:11)

That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: (Heb 6:18)

Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure And steadfast, and which entereth into that within the Veil; (Heb 6:19)

For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in

of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God. (Heb 7:19)

Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; (1 Pet 1:13)

“IN CHRIST” MEANS WHAT?

The Scriptures tell us that only those “in Christ” at His return, will be in the first resurrection. If we do not have the spirit of Christ we are none of His. What does it mean to be “in Christ”?

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so Be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man Have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. (Romans 8:9)

We must have the spirit of Christ. What else must occur for us to be “in Christ”?

I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, And is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall Ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. (John 15:5-7)

We can be solid in hope of the first resurrection if we live every day “in Christ” and His words live “in us”. Nothing is more important than finishing the race — than being “in Christ” at our last breath. Brethren, the glory of the first resurrection is going to be mind-boggling, so go all out for Christ and His words. Nothing in this life has greater value. So, hold fast till your last breath and remember Peter’s words...

Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; (1 Pet 1:13)

(All Scripture references are KJV unless otherwise noted)

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