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When Life is Hard, You Need Hope



By Steven J. Hogan

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When a runner runs his race, he needs to know there's a reason to run the race, that it has purpose. He needs to know the race will come to an end, that it will soon be over. He needs to know that it's worth it to run the race, that he will be rewarded for his efforts. That is, a runner needs hope, which is what each and every Christian needs. To run the *"race that is set before us,"* the race God has given you, you need hope – you can't live life without it. You will get sick and suffer pain. You will have spiritual battles, personal struggles and be persecuted. You will get tired, feel defeated, be discouraged, and at times want to give up. And now there's this present crisis in our country, with all the riots, violence, destruction, anarchy, etc. In all this, you have to have hope if you are going to be able to run and win the race God has for you. Hebrews 12:1-3

How do we define hope? It's a reason to live. It's what you don't have

now but believe God will give you in the ages to come. It's expecting God to bless you in the future for your work for Him in the present. More specifically, hope is God's promise to you that you will be in heaven with Jesus, with believers, in a glorified body, and that you will be eternally rewarded. Hebrews 12:22-24

There's something else you need to know, which is that your hope as a Christian relates directly to God's promises to the Jewish people. In the Old Testament you read extensively about God's future plans for Jewish believers, and these plans relate directly to what God has in store for Christians. Specifically, there are three key promises or covenants God gave the Jewish people. There's the promise of **land**, described as the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen. 13:14-17, Psalm 105:8-11), the promise of **salvation**, called the New Covenant (Jer. 31:33-34, Psalm 98:2-3), and the promise of a **King**, which is the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam. 7:12-13, Zech. 14:9).

Literally hundreds of verses in the Old Testament further confirm and describe these promises. As you read your Bible, be looking for them, for they will give you confidence that God will do just what He promised. Sadly, many in today's churches believe God has cancelled and nullified these promises to the Jews because of their sin and unbelief, but this is just not true. God is faithful, and will be forever true to His word. Psalm 89, Matthew 24:35

As I said, many verses speak of these promises, but my favorites are Ezekiel 37:21-23, for here you see all three of them in one single passage. There's the **land** promise – *"I will gather them from every side and bring them into their own land, and I will make them one nation in the land"* (vss 21-22); there's the promise of the **King**, which we know is Jesus Christ – *"There will be one King over all of them"* (vs 22); and there's the promise of **salvation** – *"I will save them from all their sinful backsliding, and I will cleanse them. They will be My people, and I will be their God"* (vs 23). Do you see the word *"will?"* It's God's guarantee to His people that He will carry out His promises, that they will definitely

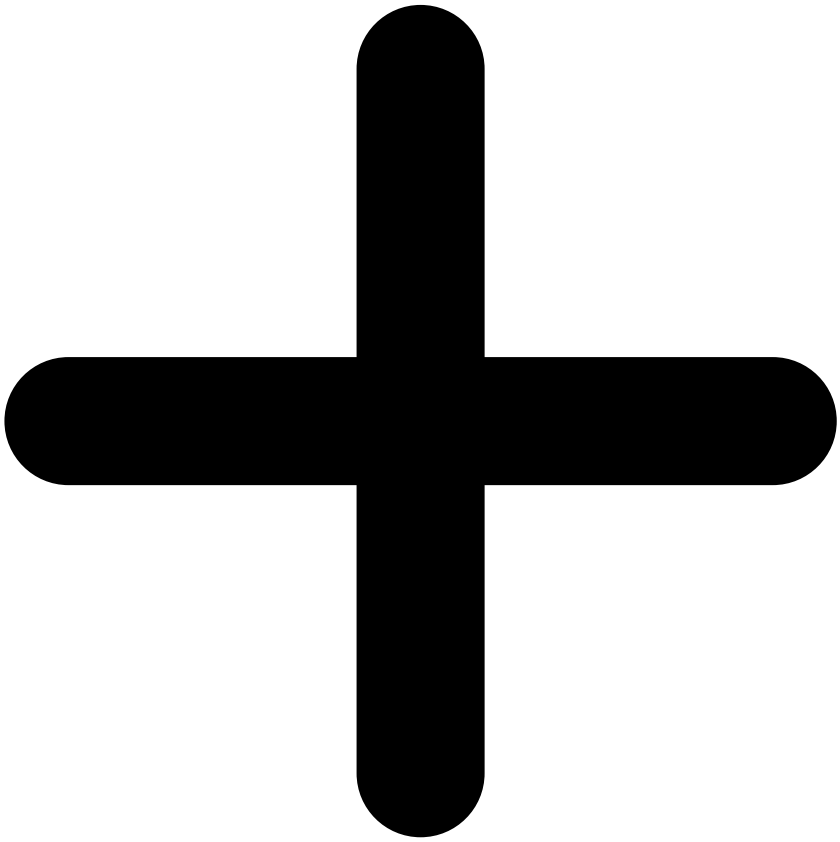
come to pass.

But how does this relate to you? First, there's **salvation**, and of course as a Christian, you have been saved. *"He saved us, not because of righteous things we have done, but because of His mercy"* (Titus 3:5). Second, there's the **land.** *"Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth"* (Matt. 5:3). This is from Psalm 37:11, which says, *"The meek will inherit the land,"* which is true for the Jews, but now is true for you as well. Third, there's the **King**, and in Rev. 19:16, we read, *"On His robe and on His thigh, He has this name written: 'King of kings and Lord of lords.'"* Jesus Christ will return as the King, and will rule perfectly over this world and, in fact, we will be reigning with Him. Revelation 5:10

The verses, in my opinion, that best connect the future of the Jewish believer with the future of the Christian, are Rom. 15:8-13. There we read that the promises God gave to the fathers (Old Testament Jews), are in conjunction with His promises to church-age Christians – *"I will give praise to Thee among the Gentiles, and I will sing to Thy name… Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people."* In the coming kingdom age, all **saved people** will be in **Jerusalem** worshiping the **King**. Psalm 47:1,6 and Psalm 48:1 also talk about this – *"O clap your hands, all **peoples**, shout to God with the voice of joy… Sing praises to our **King**… Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, in the **city of our God**, His holy mountain."*

Do you see that your hope relates directly to the hope of the Jewish people? Though we don't know all the details of our future, we do know that all God's people will be together, worshiping and serving Him. As a Christian, you need this hope, you need to know it's worth it serve the Lord and suffer for Him, that the future blessing you will receive from God far outweighs any troubles or struggles you will ever experience in this life. *"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."* Romans 15:13

P.S. Might you continue to be filled with godly hope, for you need it. Here are two posts that will increase your understanding of this wonderful hope that God wants you to have: “Your Great Hope and Most Glorious Future” and “Converging Hopes for Jewish and Gentile Believers.”



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