

—Matt. 5:5. "For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be."—Psa. 37:10. "Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."—Psa. 16:11. "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."—Isa. 35:10.

The Beauty of the Land

"The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir tree, the pine tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary; and I will make the place of my feet glorious."—Isa. 60:13.

"Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."—Isa. 55:13. "The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of our God."—Isa. 35:1, 2.

These scriptures teach us that there will be no desert land and our eternal home will be beautified with the most beautiful trees and flowers with all the glory of Lebanon. If we live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, we will inherit the land where all things that trouble and mar our happiness in this world will be removed. We can be joyful in that springtime of eternal day where it will still be us, to live forever in God's eternal kingdom of love and light.

What are we willing to sacrifice in order to inherit all these things?

Written by Eld. W. W. McEwen
- Ken's Radio Radio program
on W. 3. 0. B. Sunday 9:30 AM

The Reality of the Blessed Hope



THE BIBLE ADVOCATE
SALEM, W. VA., U. S. A.

Box 594
Valley Head, Ala.

THE REALITY OF THE BLESSED HOPE

“FOR the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”—Titus 2:11-14.

This blessed hope to come to us at the glorious appearing of Jesus Christ is threefold: first, eternal life; second, the resurrection from the dead; third, our eternal home.

Eternal life and immortality are conditional and depend on our being patient, continuing in well doing, and believing in Jesus, the Son of God. “To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life.”—Rom. 2:7. “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life: . . . and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life: . . . the wrath of God abideth on him.”—John 3:14-16, 36.

“If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God;

that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”—1 John 5:9-13.

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”—Rom. 6:23.

The ones who transgress against God are abiding in death and do not have eternal life. John 3:14, 15. The question arises, How can we have eternal life abiding in us while we are mortal and subject to death? We give the answer from God's Word.

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.”—1 Cor. 6:19, 20.

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.”—1 Cor. 3:16, 17.

“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace: because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. 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. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do

mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."—Rom. 8:5-14.

It was that life-giving power from God that brought again from the dead our Saviour, and the same power, if it dwells in us, will bring us again from the dead to immortality and eternal life.

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."—Jude 20, 21.

"Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."—Mark 10:28-30. It is very clear that eternal life will be given to us in the world to come through Jesus Christ and the resurrection from the dead.

Life is sweet here in this world and we like to live and have the pleasures of life here. If we get sick, we will give all our substance to doctors and hospitals to regain our health and extend our days a few more months in this world. Then how willing we should be to serve God night and day, that we might live eternally and have fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore.

The Reality of the Resurrection

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For thus we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and

remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."—I Thess. 4:13-18.

In the above text we find that the resurrection of the dead, or of the ones that sleep, will be just as real as the translation of the righteous living, and that it will take place at the coming of the Lord. Job looked forward to the reality of the resurrection at the last day, together with the men of God who lived after him.

"Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever! For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another: though my reins be consumed within me."—Job 19:23-27.

We find David's hope in the resurrection in Psa. 17:15, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."

"He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."—Isa. 25:8, 9. "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust: for thy

dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain."—Isa. 26:19-21. Here we have Isaiah's hope expressed. Next we shall find Daniel's in chapter 12:1, 2, "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

Hosea confirms the same hope in chapter 13:14, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes."

We learn further of Job's hope in chapter 33:24, 25, "Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom. His flesh shall be fresher than a child's: he shall return to the days of his youth."

Next we shall bring to your attention some scriptures pertaining to Christ's resurrection. "And the angel answered and said unto the women. Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay."—Matt. 28:5, 6. "Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted."—Vs. 16, 17.

6

"And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near and went with them.... And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread. And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have."—Luke 24:15, 33-39.

This proves conclusively that Jesus was real, not just a spirit, as some people think, and shows the absolute reality of the resurrection. Jesus' voice was even known to Mary in the dark. He was seen and known of the apostles when He appeared to them, and asked Thomas to put forth his hands and feel the nail holes. See John, 20th and 21st chapters.

Our resurrection will be just as real as that of Jesus. "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."—Phil. 3:20, 21.

The Reality of Our Eternal Home

After being resurrected in incorruption and immortality, and being real tangible beings with eternal life, we will need a real eternal home to live in.

"And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."—Gal. 3:29. Here we find that if we are in Christ, we are heirs according to the

7

promises made to Abraham, so we will seek out of the Book of Truth for a word picture of our eternal home.

"And the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him."—Gen. 12:7.

"And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seeest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever."—Gen. 13:14, 15.

"And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and of thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."—Gen. 17:7, 8.

Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee: for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father; and I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries: and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."—Gen. 26:3, 4.

"For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith."—Rom. 4:13.

Summing up these promises—God promised Abraham all these countries to the north, south, east, and the west for an everlasting possession, "Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws."—Gen. 26:5.

We know we would have to have everlasting life in order to possess land for an everlasting possession; therefore this promise is yet future. While Abraham lived he

received not so much of the land as to set his foot on.

"Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell. And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child."—Acts 7:4, 5.

When Stephen spake these words, they were dwelling in the land of Canaan, the very land that God had promised Abraham for an everlasting possession, yet God had given him no inheritance in it. This proves the promise to be still future. We are not hoping for the world in its present sin cursed condition, but like Abraham and Peter we look for the new heavens and the new earth, a heavenly country, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

"By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.... Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.... And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without

us should not be made perfect."—Heb. 11:9, 10, 12-16, 39, 40.

With this heavenly country Abraham looked for a city whose builder and maker is God. David spoke thus of that city—"There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High." Psa. 46:4. "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Selah."—Psa. 87:3. Peter construes this to be the new heavens and the new earth in 2 Peter 3:13, "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness."

We have a description of the city and the world to come in Revelation. "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."—Rev. 21:1-7.

Jesus said, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place

for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."—John 14:1-3.

The Land of Eternal Day

"He hath compassed the waters with bounds, until the day and night come to an end."—Job 26:10. When day and night come to an end, it will be eternal day with no night there.

"And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."—Rev. 21:23. "And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."—Rev. 22:5.

"Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise. The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended. Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the Lord will hasten it in his time."—Isa. 60:18-22.

In this present evil world there is violence with wasting and destruction, pain and mourning, but the people that obtain that world and the resurrection from the dead, will be all righteous. The days of their mourning will be ended; the inhabitants will no more say, I am sick; there will be no more death, pain, sorrow, or crying; but the meek shall inherit the earth and delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth."