



## *The Blessed Hope of the Believer*

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What is the “Blessed Hope” of the believer? We find the words “blessed hope” in Titus 2.

**For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, [every kind of person; the whole of mankind], training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting [or looking] for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, to redeem us from all lawlessness [iniquity] and to purify for Himself a people [a peculiar people] for His own possession who are zealous for good works. ESV Titus 2:11-14.**

What does love have to do with it? People go around saying they are for love while at the same time they are committing violent acts of protest and demonstrations of their intolerance (to them, the worst of sins).

Of course, a holy God doesn't come off as being too tolerant. Certainly, His holiness demands separation, setting boundaries between such things as life and death, clean and unclean, holy and unholy, what is good and what is evil. God in His Law defines what love looks like, and what it doesn't. God doesn't tolerate just anything, any kind of thinking and/or behavior. He sets the standard of love, life, and truth.

That's the thing. God gave His Law to a redeemed people, a people He redeemed. It was given as an act of love, to preserve and protect life. It was a “do this and you will live and be blessed” and “if you don't do this, you will be cursed and die” type of covenant. (Deuteronomy 28) All the people who heard Moses this one day said they would keep the covenant God initiated and established. They stood there in the hearing of the Law and said they would obey. But they had no power to do so. And the Law cannot give life; it just stands there as the Standard of Righteousness.

God, the faithful God always, kept to the words of the unilateral covenant He made. He is a covenant-keeping God.

Alongside the Law, and preceding it all the way back to the Garden, was the Promise. I call these promises the “I will” statements of God. The first promise came in the same passage as God pronounced curses for disobedience, the disobedience of Adam in breaking the covenant of works/creation/Adam. Adam's disobedience plunged humanity into the estate of sin and misery, but in the midst of the curses, God made a promise.

*And I will put enmity between you and the woman, [speaking to the serpent/Satan], and between your seed [the seed of Satan/serpent] and her seed [speaking of Christ]; it shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel. Genesis 3:15*

This was the first of many promises. The Promise found its fulfillment in Jesus Christ, the Messiah, whose life would fulfill more than 300 prophecies concerning who He is, what He would be sent here to do, and how God's grace would supply the faith needed to believe God keep His Word.

God had asked the people whom He had redeemed out of Egypt to be His demonstration people. Others around the Hebrews a/k/a the Israelites, were to know these people had been chosen by God. They were chosen, not because of anything being so fabulous about them as compared with other peoples, but because the Living God had chosen to set His love and affection and glory upon them. They were to demonstrate the glory of being so loved by their Creator/Redeemer so as to be witnesses of the Truth, proclaimers of the One True and Living God. Look at what Deuteronomy 7:6-8 says:

***<sup>6</sup>"For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. <sup>7</sup>"The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. <sup>8</sup>but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.... <http://biblehub.com/deuteronomy/7-7.htm>***

Before Jesus was sent by the Father to planet Earth, God endured again and again the pattern of rebellion bringing God's judgment, cries for mercy and a deliverer, God bringing a deliverer and enabling repentance, and God forgiving and restoring His people to Himself. So many times, the heart of a holy God churned within Him. How could He give them up? But God is a just God and His ways just and true. Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right? (Genesis 18:25)

So here's the standard of the Law and alongside runs the Promise. People trying to save themselves and merit life through Law-keeping find they have no ability to do so. All fall short of the glory of God, from the favored of God to those heathen over there. No one is righteous, no not one.

Now the wages of sin is death and everyone has this bent called iniquity, sins of the heart. All of us, me and you and all people, are in serious and total depravity, dead in trespasses and sins, unable to produce life out of our own ability (eternal life) and the Law and our "doings" won't produce this life (eternal life).

***But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, has quickened us together with Christ, (by grace you are saved), and has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. Ephesians 2:4-7.***

You see, the Holy Spirit is the Life-Producer. He is the Promise of the Father. He comes and regenerates hearts such that a person repents and believes in Jesus, believes Jesus, and believes what Jesus believes. By the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, a person is saved. (Titus 3:4-7) That's why we say that salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ alone. We have to believe the Promise. We will demonstrate that believing by putting off those things which displease God and which are contrary to His nature and ways and by putting on Christ, conforming to His moral image and bringing every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. We will find ourselves clinging to what is good [as God defines it] and hating what is evil [as God defines it] and we will hunger and thirst for the Living God, desiring Him, wanting Him.

At first, people just go around amazed. Jesus loves ME. Later on, with some growing in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, that turns to Jesus LOVES me. Then one day we get the emphasis in the right place. JESUS loves me. So it goes.

While we were enmity, Christ died for us. Jesus lived the life God requires as Creator from His creation, namely perfect, personal, perpetual obedience. Jesus died the death the Law demanded as penalty for disobedience. In doing so, by offering Himself as the Lamb of God, as the sacrifice to make atonement, Jesus overcame the curse and wrath of God through propitiation; overcame debt and liability through that sacrifice which allowed forgiveness of sin; overcame bondage to sin through redemption; overcame alienation from God through reconciliation [peace with God through the Blood of the Cross]; and overcame Satan and his kingdom by His work of destruction. And He did it all because God loved and sent His Son.

Because of the Promise, we have this blessed hope, Christ in us the hope of glory.

***And hope makes not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us. Romans 5:5***

Do not stagger at the Promise of God through unbelief, but, like Abraham (Romans 4), be strong in faith, giving glory to God. Be, by the Holy Spirit, fully persuaded that what God has promised in His Word, He is able also to perform.

For there is no greater love than the love of the One True and holy God. There is no greater love.

No, God is not tolerant the way the world wants Him to be, accepting and approving just everything. (Romans 1) But God's love is the love without a lie, pure and holy, undefiled, doing no harm, without perversion, authentic, undivided, committed, binding, bonding, merciful, infinite, and, most amazing, a covenant love.

Yes, the world needs it now, and whether you share this Good News, the Gospel, across backyard fences or across the nations of the world, do not be ashamed of it, not of the Gospel, not of confessing Christ, not of the Blood and all it represents.

As the Holy Spirit indwells a true believer, He heals. He binds up the brokenhearted. He comforts and strengthens. He is faithful. He makes a home for the lonely. He is with you and for you. Receive Him and let Him love you.