

Why Misguided 'Hope' Is Preparing the World for the Antichrist

Of all the exhortations in the Word of God that Paul is inspired to write, there is one which should be precious to every saint in these closing days of the church age. He says in 1 Corinthians 16:13-14: "Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. Let all that you do be done with love."

Although the word "hope" is not used in the passage above, it is clear that in order to watch, to stand, to be brave and strong, we must have hope. But what exactly is biblical hope and where does my hope come from? To answer the first question, hope is an unwavering confidence in God's goodness and power to do what He says He will do because of His love for us and His faithfulness to His Word. Answering the second question adequately will take a little more time.

Many people believe hope is to be found by looking outward. Consequently, they are searching fervently for a political, economic or cultural solution to counteract the mess the world is currently in. Others believe that hope is found within and that if each person manifests enough of their inner strength, the world will overcome evil with good.

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Although such beliefs have formed the basis of countless television shows, feel-good movies and books, real and everlasting hope comes from above. As the Psalmist proclaimed in Psalm 42:5: "Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance." This abiding hope is not only reserved for a special few, but it is something that God

wants both Jew and Gentile to share in. The reason we are able to share in this common bond of hope is because Jesus didn't just come to bring hope – He is our hope. 1 Timothy 1:1 says: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the commandment of God our Saviour and the Lord Jesus Christ, our hope."



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As natural disasters, wars, rumours of wars and diseases continue to cause great distress amongst the nations, people are searching for some type of hope that will comfort them in life and in death. The problem is, they continue their frantic search by looking inward and outward instead of upward. This, to some degree, explains why this world is becoming ripe for the reign of the Antichrist. Many will blindly believe he is the man with a plan who is going to restore hope. Not content to live by faith in Jesus Christ, many will fall for the wicked agenda of the Antichrist because they prefer to live by sight.

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In 1 Thessalonians chapter 5, one of the contrasts that Paul uses is soberness and drunkenness. Of course, when we think of being sober minded spiritually, it lends itself to being alert and living with our spiritual ears and eyes open. A sober-minded believer has a calm, rational outlook on life, grounded in the promises of God. It does not mean we are complacent – it simply means that we should not become overwhelmed when we see an increase in wars, in disease, in pestilence and in troubles, for we know these things must come to pass.

We can hear the tragic news of the day, but not lose heart. We can experience the difficulties of life, but not give up. We

know Who holds tomorrow and because we can rest assuredly on the promises of God, we can live each day calmly and obediently. There is an old saying: outlook determines outcome. For the believer, our outlook should be centred on the uplook because that reminds us that no matter what happens, our outcome is secure because we stand upon the Rock who is our hope. Psalm 62:5-6 says: "My soul, wait silently for God alone, for my expectation is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be moved. In God is my salvation and my glory; the rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God."

As we wait for that trumpet blast, let us not permit ourselves to grow weak-kneed and weary but seek the ever-present strength of the Lord, for He is our blessed hope.

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