

The Hope Set Before Us

(by Bob Pulliam)

The author of Hebrews speaks of hope as something that has been set before us. "...we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us." (Heb 6:18b) Two words are closely associated with hope in this passage. The first is consolation, and the second refuge. Hope, for us, should possess both of these attributes. Of course, such is not necessarily automatic. We must have faith before we can have hope. If I do not believe the promises of God as strongly as I should, how will I have the hope that is to be associated with them? A continual study of God's word, along with prayer, will help us in this area.

But what of the consolation and refuge of help for those who truly believe? Consolation carries the idea of comforting and encouraging. Refuge refers to a safe haven from danger or an enemy. The hope that is set before us has both of these attributes. Nowhere is this better seen than in what Paul wrote to the Romans. For example, "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us." (Rom 8:31-34). What a refuge! What a hope! To know that God stands ready to defend us against condemnation. How do I know this? It is He who justified me to begin with. Would He give His Son as a sacrifice, and then abandon the very process of redemption that He set in motion? Certainly not! Going on in the text (vv 35-39), Paul rises to the most eloquent of affirmations made regarding the love of God and our relation to it.

Should I have cause for doubts and discouragements? Perhaps on a momentary basis. With the word of God as my guide, I find that I have a savior and a refuge, and that I will live eternally with my God. That is true consolation... That is hope!