

Abiding in the Hope of the Ages

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Intro: Only Two Hopes for Salvation on earth:

- Faith in the man-made fig leaves
 - Adam and Eve sowed leaves in an attempt to cover their nakedness
 - God's presence penetrated the leaves and filled them with guilt and fear
 - This faith ends in condemnation
- Faith in the God-made skins
 - Prophetic of the salvation God would provide
 - This set the Hope of the Ages in motion
 - This faith ends in eternal life
 - Vital: Only one of the two can save us

Vital: What is the hope of the ages?

- ✓ That God would save us from our sins (Forgiveness: a restored relationship)
- ✓ That God would deliver us from death (Eternal life: a restored body)
- ✓ That God would bring peace on earth (Justice: a restored world)

Today . . . Abiding in the Hope of the Ages

A. Foreshadowed Hope of the Ages

- Awaiting the Savior

B. Fulfilled Hope of the Ages

- Accepting salvation fulfilled

C. Final Hope of the Ages

- Awaiting the coming King

A. Foreshadowed Hope of the Ages

Note: Hope is only valid when the promise can be fulfilled. If the promise is never fulfilled then hope is dashed as a cruel delusion.

Example: [If the Resurrection is not real we are of all men most miserable.]

Note: Our Old Testament forefathers clung to the Hope of the Ages, although they were living in the foreshadow of the promised Savior/Messiah and not the fulfillment.

1. They Hoped in a Coming Redeemer/Savior

Job 19:25-27 (ESV) “For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth.

26 And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God,
27 whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another.
 My heart faints within me!”

Psalm 19:14 (ESV) “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.” –David

Psalm 78:32-35 (ESV) “In spite of all this, they still sinned; despite his wonders, they did not believe.

33 So he made their days vanish like a breath, and their years in terror.

34 When he killed them, they sought him; they repented and sought God earnestly.

35 They remembered that God was their rock, the Most High God their redeemer.”

➤ Your concordance is flooded with references to a Savior/Redeemer.

2. They Hoped in the Love of God

➤ Some mistakenly characterize

- Old Testament as Law
- New Testament as Love

➤ **Love is the foundation of all law**

- **Matthew 22:36-40 (ESV)** "And one of them, a lawyer, [Pharisee] asked him a question to test him.
36 'Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?'
37 And he said to him, 'You shall **love the Lord** your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.
38 This is the great and first commandment.
39 And a second is like it: You shall **love your neighbor** as yourself.
40 **On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.**"

3. History Reveals Hope-Filled Knowledge of God

- **Cain and Able**: **understood** the need to **honor God** with a **sacrifice**
- **Pharaoh in Egypt** said, "**I don't know your God.**"
 - **Egypt knew about God**, however, from their forefather **Ham**, who went south, and certainly told about God's salvation during the flood of Noah.
 - Key**: **Not knowing God** resulted from the willful rejection of truth, not the lack of revelation.
- **Israel revealed a God of Salvation** to the nations
 - **The world saw the acts of God** delivering Israel from **Egypt**
 - **The world saw the acts of God** delivering Israel from **Babylon**
 - **God has always been committed to all nations**, not just Israel

4. Their Hope is Seen Enduring under Fire

Hebrews 11:32-40 (ESV) "And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets—

33 who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

34 quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, were made strong out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight.

35 Women received back their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life.

36 Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment.

37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword.

They went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, mistreated—
38 of whom the world was not worthy— wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

39 And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised,

40 since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

Note: We are not evolving in our knowledge of God beyond our forefathers.

- They had revelation from God
- They clung to the promises of God
- They lived and died clinging to the Hope of the Ages

B. Fulfilled Hope of the Ages

➤ **Christ's Birth was Perfectly Timed by God**

Timothy 1:8-10 (ESV) “Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God,

9 who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, which he gave us in Christ Jesus **before the ages began,**

10 and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel . . .”

Galatians 4:4-5 (ESV) “But when the **fullness of time** had come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law,

5 to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

1 Corinthians 10:11 (ESV) “Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the **end of the ages** has come.”

Hebrews 9:24-26 (ESV) “For Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.

25 Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own,

26 for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the **end of the ages** to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Hebrews 1:1-2 (ESV) “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets,

2 but in these **last days** he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

1 Timothy 1:17 (ESV) “**To the King of ages**, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

➤ **Divine time** governs all that happens

- God revealed that Israel’s **Egyptian captivity** would last for **430 years** long before the captivity began
- God revealed that Israel’s **Babylonian captivity** would last **70 years** before Nebuchadnezzar enslaved her.

➤ **To wait on the Lord** is key to faith

➤ **Jesus’ birth** was directly timed by God

C. **Final Hope of the Ages**

➤ Today believers look back to the fulfillment of salvation

1 Corinthians 15:50-58 (ESV) “I tell you this, brothers: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

51 Behold! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed.

53 For this perishable body must put on the imperishable, and this mortal body must put on immortality.

54 When the perishable puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written:

"Death is swallowed up in victory."

55 "O death, where is your victory?
O death, where is your sting?"

56 The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.

57 But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

- **One thing is common between all the ages:** Believers suffer for their faith, and even are martyred.

Call to Action

- On the Night of Christ's Birth we saw . . .
 - A divine plan of salvation set forth from ages past that the Old Testament forefathers gave their lives to see fulfilled
 - The salvation of the ages completed in perfect time
 - The launch into the coming ages
 - The rapture of the church—of which we are a part

The coming of the Messiah to reign

Will we prove as faithful to the coming of Christ to reign as our forefathers were faithful to the coming of Christ to save?