

Subsequent Glories

“Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look.”

1 Peter 1:10-12

To work without the hope of immediate reward requires a special kind of person with unusual character and an altogether different outlook on life. The grace was not to be theirs, but the prophets pressed forward hoping for the subsequent glories to become a reality—things into which angels long to look. We have been blessed by those who had no possibility of being blessed by the blessings God has showered on us. Of these champions for goodness, the Hebrew writer says so eloquently, *“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—of whom the world was not worthy—wandering about in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect”* (Hebrews 11:37-40).

What inspired these heroes of faith, what spurred them on in the face of adversity, what empowered them to keep going? Hope, for only the power of hope has sufficient fuel to rocket us past harsh times. Reality is simply not what any but a very few would wish if even they really do. Questions, doubts and heartaches constantly encircle us. We long for something better. What is revealed is not expected—the sufferings of Christ and subsequent glories. Unlike the prophets, we know the news. However, the news is unexpected even though prophesied so long ago. Christ will suffer and die to bring glory. The news is unexpected in the sense that the Christ emerged into our world as completely human refusing to use his “God-ness” so he could save us. It is also unexpected in that suffering can be the cure for suffering. It is expected in that God always delivers so we know we will never be abandoned.

Our hope anchors our souls to the eternity promised by God (Hebrews 6:17-20). Our hope lies in the character and goodness of God. We know the future because we know him. What lies ahead may be out of my view, but God is not. No matter what lies ahead, I know that he will always be there. He hears, he listens, he understands and he is not silent. He may not deliver me as quickly as I would like, but he will deliver me. Living hope nurtures the soul when it seems all other means have been exhausted.

If there is anything we can learn from the prophets it ought to be this—they believed in God even when they had no hope of basking in the glories that we do. Their example of foresight—looking beyond themselves, peering into the future, and working to an end that brings subsequent glories—makes us stand in awe of the power hope gives. How can we ever pay the debt we owe these men and women let alone God? The more we know their story, the more we are inspired to make the world a far better place than it is now. Is the world a better place at our passing? Do our touch, our words and our lives heal and bring forth life or do they destroy?

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