**Hope**

Many years ago, when I was working on a Master’s degree, I wrote a thesis on *hope*. It had to be scholarly, so I included many pages of bibliography. I had taken over a thousand pages of notes for it. I found that the English word “hope” translated ten words and phrases in the Hebrew Bible and seven words in the Greek New Testament. Hope came to have many meanings, from a weak desire (I hope to see you.) to the amazing promise of the resurrection of the body.

What is the meaning of the word “hope”? I listed nine different definitions of the word “hope” and one sort of “catch-all” category. Hope is excitement about the future. Hope causes us to “crane our necks” to see what comes next. Hope causes some people to writhe in agony here, waiting for what God has planned for us. So hope has many meanings. But in reference to the hope of the church, the word hope is past, present and future. I finally defined “hope” as “A *present* confidence based on a *past* event (Jesus’ resurrection) that leads us to want the *future*.” Jesus arose from the dead—beyond death—and showed himself to be alive over forty days. Our hope is based in him. He lived; so do we. He died; so will we. He arose from the dead; *so will we*. Our hope is in the resurrection of our bodies on the “other side” of death, never to die again. From Isaiah 25 and from the Book of Revelation, we have this idea: “God will wipe all tears from our eyes. He will destroy the shroud that covers all nations. He will swallow up death forever.” Here is our hope! No more death, no more sin, no more sorrow. We will one day wake up on the other side of the grave, alive forever without sin, and filled with joy. Then our hope will be fulfilled. And God will show us our inheritance.

The Apostle Paul said, “Who hopes for what he has?” Amen. We will rejoice in hope then even more than we rejoice in hope now. Our hope will be filled full of meaning. We will see God face-to-face, and according to the promise of scripture, “we will be like him.”

Jesus said, “Many will come from the east and from the west and sit at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.” We will meet the men we have studied all these years. I for one am ready for that. But above all else, we will see the One who made it all possible. We will, like the early apostles, rejoice when we see the Lord.