

KINGTON BAPTIST CHURCH ONLINE NOTICE BOARD - 22

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'Do not put your trust in men ... happy is that person whose hope is in the Lord his God' (Psalm 146.3,5)

Throughout the book of Psalms one phrase is repeated time and again in one form or another: *trust in the Lord*. Near the end of the book of Psalms, almost the last bit of counsel the book has for us is: *Don't put your trust in princes, nor in mere men, in whom there is no help*. (Psalm 146.3)

We're given a reason that explains why it's not wise to put trust in men and human governments; the reason is they are mere mortals. In contrast to this, we are told to put our trust in the Lord. Again we're given a reason: the Lord made heaven and earth, he rules over heaven and earth and keeps truth forever. The Lord is sovereign faithfulness. The contrast here is between the empty pride of man, his inability and ignorance, his changeability and unreliability, his duplicity and treachery and the sovereign power, faithfulness, loving kindness and dependability of God.

Never has this message been more important than now. As Christian people we're called to live in **hope**. *God's grace has given us eternal comfort and good hope*. (2 Thessalonians 2.16) **Hope** is our watchword, it is our banner; **hope** is our guiding light, the oxygen of praise and the force that sustains us on life's journey. Indeed there is a sense in which everything we are told in scripture is aimed and focused on this one grace, the grace of **hope**.

*For all that was written before was written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have **hope***. (Romans 15.4)

The Christian's **hope** keeps two promises in view – the promise of *glory*: the hope of heaven, of being forever with the Lord and the promise of the Kingdom of God coming among us in its fullness; as we pray: *Thy will be done, thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven*. This **hope**, of God's Kingdom coming in power on earth, was promised long ago, it is the focus of many of our Lord's parables, parables that promise the growth of the Kingdom of God: from a tiny seed to a great tree. It is the hope Daniel foresaw in Nebuchadnezzar's strange dream: a stone cut without human hands that smashed the statue of world kingdoms and grew until it filled the earth. (Daniel 2)

As we look out on this sorry world the hope of God's Kingdom coming in power and filling the earth may seem mere wishful thinking. It's not easy to sustain the **hope** that Isaiah's vision of peace will ever be fulfilled: *He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide for the people; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation and plan for war.* (Isaiah 2.4)

But Christian **hope** always has been a challenge; which is why we're told to walk by faith and not by sight. Our **hope** has been described as '*hope against hope*'. Our **hope**, the Christian's **hope**, is **hope** staring in the face of despair. It is **hope** in what cannot be seen. The Christian's **hope** is not at all about 'seeing is believing'. Our **hope** is believing without seeing!

We are saved in hope. But hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But as we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. (Romans 8.24-25)

The stability of our **hope** – *a steadfast and sure anchor for the soul* (Hebrews 6.19) – is determined by its foundation; it is not focused on man or what man can do. The security, stability and dependability of our **hope** comes from the fact that it is grounded in the Lord – '*who is able to do far more than we can ask or think*'; '*with whom nothing is too hard*', with whom '*nothing is impossible*'. Our **hope** is in Christ – or more exactly: *Christ in us is the **hope** of glory!* (Colossians 1.27)

He who is the image of the invisible God, who has the priority over all creation; by whom all things were made ... and who is before all things, by whom all things exist. That in everything he might have the pre-eminence, it pleased the Father that in him all fullness should dwell and by him to reconcile all things to himself; all things in earth and heaven. (Colossians 1.15-20)

God is not a man, that he should lie. He is not a human, that he should change his mind. Has he ever spoken and failed to act? Has he ever promised and not carried it through? (Numbers 23.18)

*May the God of **hope** fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in **hope** by the power of the Holy Spirit!* (Romans 15.13)