

Messages of Hope

And

Inspiration

A short compilation of articles on righteousness by faith in Jesus Christ

By

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Preface

“To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory...” (*Col 1:27*)

“And hope makes not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” “For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man sees, why does he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.” “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.” “Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.” “For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.” “And now abides faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.” “But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation.” (*Rom 5:5; 8:24, 25; 15:4; 15:13*) (*Gal 5:5*) (*1 Cor 13:13*) (*1 Th 5:8*)

In the heart of everyone who believes the Gospel, is hope. Faith brings hope—hope in God’s love for us, hope in His salvation.

Whatever I write about the gospel of Jesus Christ, is influenced by that hope in me,—hope that inspires me to tell about the evidences I have found in His words, which is the central core in the messages of God to humanity; God loves us.

All His messages to us bring hope in its trail. ‘I love you; repent and turn to me so I can heal you from sin. I want you to live with me forever! I want you to be happy.

Please! Let me *ble*ss you...’ is all they seem to say in all the messages God has sent to me, and to you, in His words. This gives me hope and encouragement, and strengthens the relationship between the Lord and me.

As I muse upon these messages embedded in the Word of God, often I would write the thoughts that open new perspectives—insights to me. I would write them and save them wherever I can retrieve them, and often read them again and again, to find encouragement in those hours when I feel the pressing challenges of this life.

Many die with untold sorrows and unhappiness, but very few there are that perish with unexpressed happiness and joy. I must confess that I find it difficult to keep these thoughts, and the views that have brought me so much encouragement and enlightenment, all to myself. It is a natural thing to want to share just about anything that makes one happy or joyful—no matter how small it may be—and where else can anyone find true happiness and continual joy than in that relationship with God, where there is complete trust and hope in His words?

It is my intention to share my perspectives and joys with you, and I hope that as you read, you will find and realize these blessings, as I have also found them.

“Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ...” “And every man that hath this hope in him purifies himself, even as he is pure” “That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (*Titus 2:13*) (*1 John 3:3*) (*Titus 3:7*)

Contents

Our Hope—God’s Grace—Our Probation.....	1
Our Hope.....	6
God’s Grace!.....	8
Our Probation.....	10
Go, and Sin No More!.....	13
The Command.....	14
The Accuser.....	16
Justified.....	17
How Did God Give Jesus?.....	19
Part 1.....	19
Part 2.....	24
Answers:.....	25
The Begotten.....	28
The Comforter.....	33
Part 1: I Will Not Leave You Bereaved.....	33
Preparation for the Comforter.....	37
God Comes to Us Through Christ.....	38
Part 2: That I May Dwell Among Them.....	39
Why the Mystery?.....	41
Part 3: Into His Kingdom.....	44
Part 4: Deliver us from evil.....	44
Let not your heart be troubled.....	46
Lord.....	46
Many Are Called.....	48

Our Hope—God's Grace—Our Probation

A. L. Baxter
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“**T**herefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God and not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die.” (*Romans 5:1–7*)

There is none that is good! In Matthew 19:17 and Mark 10:18 Jesus made it very clear that no one except God was good. Evidently, anywhere *good* is found it belongs to God, and originates with him. “For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.” *Eccl. 7:20*. “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, (*no good*) Christ died for us. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” (*Romans 5:8, 10—Emphasis supplied*).

Why are we evil—“no good”? Why was it even necessary for someone to die, and then live for us? In order to answer these questions, we may need to go back and examine what happened shortly after creation when sin entered the world.

In the account given in the book of Genesis chapter 3, we read the following in verses 2, 3, and 6. “And the woman said unto the serpent, we may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die...” “And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”

Here we find the very first act of transgression by mankind, and yet the only one needed to plunge him into death. “... For in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” (*Chapter 2:17 last part*) This is when the goodness of God in man departed from him. Now note what happened to Adam and Eve the moment they disobeyed God! They ran away from God; they hid themselves amongst the trees in the garden (*Chapter 3:8*). Now, they were afraid; their nature had changed; they were now seeing themselves as being naked. They lost something instantly and they felt the nakedness.

So then, sin came into the world through one man, death came as a result of sin, and death is passed on to all men because all men have sinned. (*See Romans 5:12–14.*) Before the law came to man (at Sinai), that is before it was written on tables of stone, there was sin in the world; but sin was not imputed (ascribed to, or charged to) to the world before then. In spite of this fact, death still reigned in that period, even on all that did not sin in the same manner as Adam sinned by breaking the commandment given him in the garden. Therefore, through the offence of one man, many died... (*See verse 15*).

“For all have sinned...” Sinned here is a verb used in the past tense; it is an action word not a noun. It suggests something you do. However, although it was used in the past tense, it bears a classification for “all men”, “for all have sinned...” This “all”, entails everyone born of Adam, both past, present, and future, and has a prophetic element or value. It is in the same way as Christ died for “all”, inclusive of the present, those in the past, as well as for those to be born in the future. He died for “all”. In this sense, “all have sinned” includes those of the past, the present, and the future. The most striking evidence of this is that death is passed on to all mankind, and death came as a result of sin. What we have here is cause and effect. We have sin in us, and it causes death, so without sin, there would be no death! Hence, since we have death, there must be sin.

Therefore, then, what is it in Adam that he has passed on to all, which caused all mankind to die? It must evidently be something that causes all humanity to sin because death comes as a result of sin. “... death spread to all men because of sin.” (*Rom 5:12 last part NKJV*)

So then, since sin entered the world through Adam, and he passed death on to all men, what is this thing, which he has passed on to all humanity, which carries with it death? The first thing that might come to your mind is that Adam passed on his life to all. Good thinking! It is so because humankind is just an extension of Adam. Even Eve was an extension of Adam. (*See Gen 2:21–23*) In fact, the word Adam actually means human. We were in the loins of Adam when he sinned, in the same sense that Levi paid tithes while he was in the loins of Abraham. (*“And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham; for he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.” Heb 7: 9, 10*). Therefore, whatever happened to Adam when he sinned happened to us too, for we were in him, a part of him when he sinned, and today we are extensions of him with the extensions of death and sin. **DON’T** get me wrong here! We are NOT guilty of Adam’s sin, but we are inheritors of sin and death. There is a marked difference. To be guilty of something requires conscientiousness of an act of wrong; we did not have Adam’s conscientiousness while we were in him. All are born to their own conscientiousness.

When Adam sinned, he died. A sentence of death was upon him; the circumstances of his act instantly put him on death row. All this happened before he had

any children. Our parents were already dead before they begat us. Adam was spiritually dead when he begat Cain. We were born of dead people; what does that make us? But wait! What did the scripture say causes death? *Sin*! Look at the works of Cain; he was the first child for Adam and the first to commit murder! Therefore, the answer to the question is becoming more evident—what did Adam pass on to us, which condemns, and will make all of us die, save the intervention of God; what is it called?

Maybe the apostle Paul had the same problem many of us have, finding a single word to name this thing. Therefore, in Romans chapter 7, he called this thing after its action, the verb; he called it “*Sin*”. He called it a name after its character. This is not unusual, even though it is not very popular today, people of old named people, places, and things, after their character, or some occurrences that might have been associated with the subject. For example, the phrase ‘to whore’ is verbal, but we call the one who does the act, a *whore*. Likewise, a person who is almost—always drunk—we call a *Drunk* (colloquially). The word *murah* means bitter, and so the place where the Israelites found the bitter stream during their exodus, they called *Murah*. Confusing the subject “*SIN*” with its verb ‘sin’ has caused much disagreement and dissension amongst Bible scholars in recent times. Many hold dear to the definition of 1John 3:4 “... sin is the transgression of the law”. I have no difficulty with that. We do not need to be hung up on semantics; there is no conflict here: only a misunderstanding of nominal context and grammar. Sin as a verb, is the transgression of the law, and there is no better definition for it in the Bible. But, the thing that causes all to sin, which the apostle Paul called “*SIN*”, exists in all, even in the absence of the knowledge of the law, and even in those who are ignorant of the law, even in those who existed before the giving of the written law. This is evident by the fact that all are subject to death, which *SIN* brought on humanity, even in the freshly born baby who knows no ill, or evil, or has any consciousness of doing anything wrong. Many babies have died, even shortly after birth. Those babies have done nothing wrong; they have not committed any sin, yet they die because of *SIN*.

“Well, *SIN* is personified here.” Some have said. However, Jesus came to save the world from *SIN*. The text did not say sins, but *SIN* (*singular*). “The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the *SIN* of the world...” (*John 1:29*). Well, should we think here that everyone that makes up the world has a thing called *SIN*, which Jesus Christ came to take away? The answer seems to be a straightforward resounding **yes**! Jesus did **not** come to take away the transgressions of the law (sins), not directly; He came to take away the thing that causes us to transgress the law, which is *SIN*. He came to remove the root cause rather than the effects. He went straight to the source of the problem. So, when the apostle Paul referred to be—sold under *SIN*—*SIN* that dwells in him, and, let not *SIN* have dominion over you to obey its lust—he was referring to the same *SIN* which Jesus Christ came and took away!

Contained in this thing called “*SIN*”, is the seed of death. In every child of Adam, there is this seed. Some people prefer to call this thing “the propensities of sin”, “the nature of *sin*”, or “the carnal nature”. All these phrases and definitions are fine, but the apostle Paul, under inspiration, had chosen to call it by one word: *SIN*. (See *Rom. 7:9, 11, 14, 17–23*)

At this stage, excluding what God has done for us, we are all on death row, condemned, under the sentence of death. John chapter 3:18 reads: “He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” This clearly means that, before Jesus appeared in the picture, so that men may believe in him, we were all condemned!

Death rules equally with *SIN*. In Romans chapter 5, comparing verse 14 with verse 21, we see that in verse 14, death reigned... and in verse 21, *SIN* reigned in death ... Death reigned, but *SIN* reigned in death, so death is a result or consequence of *SIN*; it manifests its ultimate self in death. Adam has passed on the seed of death, which is called *SIN*, but Jesus Christ has brought the seed of life, which is Righteousness. “For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.” (*Rom 5:17*).

(1Cor.15:45.) We receive the seed of death from Adam first through conception then birth, but to receive the seed of life everlasting we must first be conceived in faith, then the spiritual rebirth. “And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening (*life giving*) spirit.” (*1Cor.15:45—Emphasis supplied*). The first Adam gave us death through *SIN*, but to get everlasting life we must become extensions of the last Adam, Jesus Christ, through His spirit; we must be born again of Jesus Christ, the spiritual Adam.

The concept held and believed by some modern day Christians that they can get to heaven while living a lie in *SIN*, fades quickly away in the light of the clear understanding of this message. How can righteousness dwell where there is *SIN*? To believe this would equally mean that death exists where there is life. This is just as impossible as to have darkness where there is light. In Jesus Christ was life; and the life was the light of men. Light is a substance; darkness is the absence of it. Life is substance and death is the absence of it. So then, if *SIN* causes death and Righteousness brings life, how can they dwell together? 1John 3:9 tell us that he who is born of God does not sin because His seed remains in him. It is either one or the other.

In the same sense, as sin is an act, which is a result of something in mankind that is also called *SIN*, so is doing rightly an act, which is a result of something in Jesus Christ, which is Righteousness. The difference is, what we inherit from Adam our father is opposed to what Jesus inherits from His Father. We inherit death; He inherits life. If He

imparts the same life He gets from His Father to us, then this life will be our new inheritance and will save us from death. This life, which is the life of God, is the Holy spirit, and He the Father has chosen His Son, in whom also is this life, to be the channel, the one through whom we all may access this righteous eternal life. Just as in the beginning, He chose Him to create the world, so, He had chosen Him also to redeem the world. If we believe that He (God) exists and that He created the worlds through His Son Jesus, then it requires no more faith to believe that He has chosen this same Jesus to give us His eternal life. If you cannot believe that He could have given us eternal life, then you might also not believe that He created you and the entire world! However, if you do, then apply that same faith to His sacrifice, grace, and pardon to you. Yes! Praise the Lord! The only prerequisites are—we must first look upon his righteous life, and then recognize that we are indeed dead and are in need of this life, and then believe it and receive it. It is really that simple, and it requires a simple childlike faith.

God said it!

And that is good enough for me.

Our Hope

Adam passed on his nakedness—he passed on what was devoid of life, light, and the goodness and righteousness of God. What he gave us was darkness, devoid of love, and fill with selfishness, hate, covetousness, murder, fear, yeah, and SIN! However, God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet selfish, hateful, covetous, murderous, and fearful, yeah sinners, Christ died for us. For, if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. *See Romans 5:8, 10.*

“And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken (*make alive*) your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” (*Rom 8:10, 11—Emphasis supplied*)

Herein is our hope of salvation. We will find it in the grace of God through Jesus Christ. Yeah, even in the last Adam, the quickening Spirit. The doing of the last Adam is the undoing of the first. Through the transgression of Adam, the first death is passed upon all men, but by the obedience and righteousness of one man even Jesus Christ, the last Adam, the grace of God and the (*free*) gift of grace through him is abundant to all. (*See verse 18*).

Christ had to die so He could redeem us from Sin, which was causing death. So, what did He do? He took the Sin, and the death sentence that was pronounced upon all, and reconciled (made peace for) all humanity unto God. As mentioned earlier, as it was that all have sinned, and death was pronounced upon all, so in taking our place Jesus died the death that all of humanity should die. He bore the Sin of the World. (See John 1:29) Thus He made possible, a probation for all humankind; He bore the Sin of Adam and all his extensions called humanity, future, past, and present!

Nevertheless, it did not stop there! Dying to our sin, which He carried in his own body, gave Him the victory over the flesh, which further demonstrated the quality of the life He possessed by inheritance, which is the righteousness and goodness of God His Father. Having been resurrected from the dead by the Spirit of God, we have hope because the same quality of life that He lived right up until He died, He is now able to give to all; that all who believe might live the same resurrected life in him by faith. “... For we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith.” (*Gal.:5:5*).

Yes, God’s grace is sufficient for all. Every man, woman, and child, who come to him in faith, will receive this life of righteousness freely, the very seed of God available only in Christ Jesus. Our Lord has prepared a feast of life, and He welcomes all, and invites all, to receive this everlasting life through His grace. He has invited to this feast, the lame, the maimed, the blind, the rich, and the poor. “Say unto them, ‘As I live, saith

the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die...?"
(Ezek 33:11)

God's Grace!

What is grace? The Webster's New World Dictionary has several definitions; it even has a few theological.

Its seventh definition is:

- a) A period of time granted beyond the date set for the performance of an act or payment of an obligation; temporary exemption and,
- b) Favour shown by granting such a delay.

The theological, definition eight is:

- a) The unmerited love and favour of God toward mankind
- b) Divine influence acting in a person to make the person pure, morally strong, etc.
- c) The condition of a person brought to God's favour through this influence.
- d) A special virtue, gift, or help given to a person by God.

Given the definitions above, let us apply them as it relates to salvation, and in particular, Romans chapter 5, to see what we can learn about the grace God is offering to humanity. We may even bring them together, harmonize them, and get a broader picture of its meaning.

Again, let us go back to the beginning. Before Adam sinned, God warned them that in the day they shall eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they should surely die. Nevertheless, we know that this did not immediately happen to them physically, and we know now that sin placed a death sentence upon them instantly, the moment that they disobeyed God. Therefore, based on the Webster's definition (7. a), they were granted a period of time beyond the day they should have died for the payment of sin, an obligation of justice, temporarily exempting them from death; in which a favour was granted in such a delay, and (d) a gift of special virtue and help, was made available to them. Why? It is because of, (definition 8.a) the unmerited love and favour of God toward mankind. How Beautiful and Wonderful is the love and mercy of God!

But, how was God able to do this?" You may ask. "Jesus had not yet died, yet a respite was given to mankind. So, how was justice served?"

The answer lies in the foreknowledge of God, and we read about it in the revelation of Jesus Christ. However, before we do, look at the words of the greatest of all prophets, John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Messiah, "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. And looking upon Jesus as He walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!" (*John*

1:29, 36) Now let us read Revelation chapter 13, and in the last part of verse 8, "... whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." He was slain from the foundation of the world! That is, before the world was made, He was reckoned slain! As far as his Father was concerned, Jesus was as it were, already slain for man. God had already given Jesus to die as a propitiation for humankind. This sacrifice, reckoned as if it has been done, made the way for God to grant grace to humanity, so that He could give Adam, and all his children, probationary time and grace, through faith. In helping the pair to understand the nature of sin and its consequences, God killed an animal, and used the skin to cover them both, thus symbolizing that His death and resurrection, made the covering of his righteousness possible.

Our Probation

Many of us understand the meaning of the word “Parole”. The most popular meaning is the one associated with prisoners. The Webster’s New World definition (3 a) is: “the release of a prisoner whose sentence has not expired, on condition of future good behaviour. The sentence is not set aside and the individual remains under the supervision of a parole board”. On the other hand, the second definition of probation from the same dictionary is, “the suspension of a sentence of a convicted, but not yet imprisoned, on condition of good behaviour and regular reporting to a probation officer”. Which one applies to us? I would think is the latter. Adam should have died the moment he sinned, but he was granted a stay of that punishment, probation, and as God demonstrated the death of Christ to them by the sacrifice of the animal, they looked forward to, and accepted by faith, the atoning gift of the righteousness of Christ.

Although the heavenly justice system is not exactly represented by the earthly, it gives a reasonable view of what God has done for us through His grace. When Adam sinned, God placed him on probation; and every child that is born into the world He has given a life of probation because of what Jesus Christ did at Calvary.

Because Jesus died the death that Adam should have died, He has claimed the right to resurrect all, inclusive of, the repented saved sinner, and the impenitent. Jesus will resurrect the righteous to everlasting life, and the unrepentant sinners, He will resurrect to meet their just punishment for rejecting the opportunity to be saved. It will not be so much for the *Sin* they received from Adam, Christ took care of that at Calvary, but for what they did during their probation that they are judged. It will be for not believing in the only begotten Son of God, for not accepting the (*free*) gift of the righteous life of Jesus, who came to give life and life more abundantly, which render them unfit to live any longer.

Sin brings death to humanity and so, Sin must be brought to an end. There comes a time when the Almighty God of justice and patience, must decide that love, grace and long-suffering has tipped the scale of justice, and put a stop to this father of all diseases. Therefore, He has set a time of probation, in which humanity will get a fair opportunity to take advantage of the offerings of grace made available through Jesus Christ. As a result, He will finally end the lives of all the impenitent souls upon the face of the earth, who would have demonstrated by the choices they made and lived by, that they have completely rejected all the pleadings of God’s spirit, offering His mercy and grace. They will have violated their probation, and so, the sentence of death will have been unsuspended.

This principle is brought out in the parable of Jesus of the unmerciful servant, whom when his master had forgiven him of a huge debt, found a fellow servant who

owed him a small amount of money, and required him to repay in full. However, when the fellow servant could not repay him, he cast him into prison until he was able to repay. So, when this servant's master heard what he had done to his fellow, he called for him and said, "O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him." (*Matt. 18:32–34*) I always wondered how he was going to repay the debt while in prison where he would have been unable to earn.

The unrepentant is indebted to the law, which requires him to show a sinless life in harmony with its creeds, or pay with his life. Then, through the giving of Jesus, God's only begotten, he is given a probation, grace, and pardon. After the close of this probation, the unrepentant sinner finds himself in the sin trap condition that is impalpable by him, and out of which he cannot free himself.

Jesus came and died, and is risen with the keys of death and the grave. He has earned the right or authority to release everyone out of this prison, if any are willing to come out before probation closes. In the case of this parable, even though this servant's master had forgiven him and suspended his punishment, because of his actions, which followed, his punishment was un-suspended. Apparently, he was on probation, but he blew it.

Dear reader, brother, or sister of Adam, today we have the opportunity to accept life instead of death. We know not when our probation will end. Our individual probation could end before the general probation of humanity. We know not the time of the cessation of this probationary life, which we now possess. Therefore, it is befitting for you as well as for us all to accept the gift of God in Christ Jesus freely, if you will only believe. He knows that we cannot help ourselves because we are born with this thing called *SIN*, which has condemned us to die, and in this helpless state Jesus Christ sacrificed and laid down his life, even by the shameful death of the cross, in our stead and in exchange for our condemned life, He offers his pure righteous everlasting life.

If you have not yet experienced this new life, will you now accept His free offer? He is eagerly waiting for you to come to him; his arms are out-stretched to you right now. If you recognize your helplessness right now, He is able to help you. It does not matter how many times you have failed trying to do the right—trying to be righteous by your own efforts—trying to keep His laws and failed; coming to the understanding that you cannot do it while you are in Adam, with the fallen nature of *SIN* in you, is your first step towards eternal life. He is your only option to eternal life through faith in His righteousness freely offered.

If you confess to Him, all that burdens you, He will forgive and save you right now. If you do so right now, then Jesus will, in exchange for your worthless depraved

condemned life, live his righteous life in you, and save you from eternal death. You will be a new creation, born again of the spiritual Adam, Jesus Christ. The door is open unto everlasting life and Jesus is that open door, the way, the truth, and the life; and He invites you to come in and sup with Him and His Father.

End of Sample

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