

## HOPE AGAINST HOPE

**Request:** I am having a difficulty distinguishing between hope, meaning confident expectation and faith, meaning assurance. They seem to have the same meaning. Can you explain the difference?

I chose a passage that has both of the words faith (pistis) and hope (elpis) in it. This passage may help us understand the similarity as well as the difference between these two words. This passage involves the theological explanation of Abraham's faith finally embracing the hope that believes only God can fulfil His promises by grace.

We will study our lesson text by the following four homiletical points.

- **Promise of God** (4:13-17a) heir, promise not Law, **faith**, grace
- **Power of God** (4:17b) gives life to dead, calls into being that which does not exist
- **Persuasion of God** (4:18-20) **hope against hope**, without becoming weak in faith, did not waver in unbelief, grew strong in faith, giving glory to God
- **Performance of God** (4:21) being fully assured that what He had promised; He was able also to perform.

<b>This lesson will study FIVE aspects of Hope against Hope</b>
---

**1. There are three biblical ingredients to the Greek word elpis (hope): expectation, trust, and patience (Rom.8:24-25).**

In order for hope to be CONFIDENT EXPECTATION, these three ingredients are necessary.

- The expectation is to something promised in God's word that gives the believer orientation to the plan of God (Rom.4:18-19).
- The trust is directed towards what the believer can expect from the promise of God. Trust gives confident expectation to what God promised (Rom.4:16-17).
- The patience is a relaxed mental attitude that results from confident expectation while waiting for the reality of God to fulfill His promise (Rom.4:20-21). There is a word of God side and a waiting for God side to hope in the **faith cycle**.

"My soul waits in silence for God only, for my hope is from Him. He only is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold; I shall not be shaken" (Ps.62:5-6)

**2. The sovereign character of God guarantees the believer's hope in the promises of God.**

"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Rom.15:13; 1 Tim.4:10; 1 Pet.1:20-21)

**Worldly hope** has uncertainty associated with it. Here is a list of eight examples of worldly hope:

- lending money (Luke 6:34)
- business adventure (Acts 16:19)
- bribes (Acts 21:26)
- rescue (Acts 27:20)
- farming (1 Cor.9:10)
- planning trip (1 Tim.3:14)
- riches (1Tim.6:17)
- hoping in Jesus (Luke 24:21)

**Godly hope** has certainty associated with it because the sovereignty of God guarantees it. Here is a list of eight examples of Godly hope:

- hope of the resurrection (Acts 23:6; 26:6-8)
- hope of +R (Gal.5:5)
- hope of His calling (Eph.1:18; 4:4)
- hope of gospel (Col.1:23)
- hope of glory of God (Col.1:26-27)
- hope of salvation (1 Thess.5:8)
- hope of eternal life (Titus 1:2; 3:7)
- hope in God (1 Tim.5:5)

### 3. The hope of Christ was the center of the biblical plan of God (1 Tim.1:1; Col.1:5).

- Christ was the hope of Israel (John 5:45-47; Acts 28:20).
- Christ was the hope of Gentiles (Acts 23:6-8; Col.1:26-27).
- Christ is the blessed hope of the Church (Titus 2:13; 1 John 3:2-3).

“In order that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have a strong encouragement, we who have fled for refuge in laying hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil.” (Heb.6:18-19)

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a **living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” (1 Pet.1:3)

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering.” (Heb.10:23; 1 Pet.3:15-17)

“Remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, **having no hope and without God in the world.**” (Eph.2:12; 1 Thess.4:13; 1 Cor.15:19-20)

### 4. There are two spiritual sources for developing hope in the Christian Way of Life (CWL).

One spiritual source of hope is the filling ministry of indwelling Holy Spirit (1 Cor.6:19; Gal.5:16) “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Rom.15:13; Gal.5:4-5)

Another spiritual source of hope is the cycling the word of God by faith to human experiences of life: “For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus.” (Rom.15:4-5; Heb.6:11-12)

### 5. Undeserved suffering develops godly hope as a soul characteristic of the Christian.

“And hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.” (Rom.5:1-5)

The godly character that emerges from undeserved suffering is one of the “goods” that comes from it (Rom.8:28; James 1:2-4).

“According to my earnest expectation and hope, that I shall not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or death.” (Phil.1:20)

Godly hope is one of the triune components of the Christian royal honor code: “But now abides faith, hope, love, these things; but the greatest of these is love.” “Love hopes all things.” (1 Cor.13:7; 1 Thess.1:3; Col.1:4-5; 1 Thess.5:8)