

## HOPE

To wish for a particular event that one considers possible.

To expect with confidence.

A desire with expectation of obtainment or fulfillment.

A feeling for something to happen,

accompanied by the expectation that it may occur.

A confident expectation for something good in the future.

A general feeling that some desire will be fulfilled.

Hope is a positive emotion: we don't hope for bad things, at least not bad for us - we might want our sports competition to fail, but that is so ours can win.

Some people talk about hope as only a possibility, and in terms of gambling or warfare, that is a reality - hope does not mean 100% certainty of outcome.

However, we don't usually grasp a failing proposition for long; it is literally a waste of time and effort, so we abandon that and switch to something else, but we almost always have some kind of hope (or several hopes) in our lives.

If our future is only depressing (like the Israelites in Egypt or the slaves in the American southeast) with no expectation of something better in life or having no joy, then (by definition) we have no hope. This is a reverse way to understand the meaning of hope - knowing what it is not.

The desired outcome is for something better than what we have now: either literally for us, or for someone or something that we care about.

To hope meaningfully may require change to our present situation, so that we can achieve our desired fulfillment. Part of that change is planning, based on what we know will work, and what will not work; in other words, we need to take lessons from the past - either our past or someone else's past. And THAT can be emotionally dangerous - recalling the past brings risk of nostalgia (a sentimental yearning to return to an earlier time remembered as happier or more pleasant, or a former place evoking happy memories; a longing to experience again a former happy time). Yes, nostalgia is a risk, not a reward.

Is it just me, or is "hope" beginning to sound complex?

Recalling the past may reveal errors in judgment - wrongdoing - sin. What is the action for mistakes? The first chapters of Leviticus give us examples, and the first chapters of 1 John give us directions.

Acknowledge it to God, and confess it in the confidence of someone qualified (in Leviticus, before a priest at the temple; or in 1 John 1:6 - 2:6, before someone trustworthy from your support group).

*Leviticus 1:4*

He is to lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, so that it will be accepted for him to make atonement on his behalf.

(He confesses his sin over the sacrifice that is taking his place.)

*Leviticus 4:35b*

So the kohen shall make atonement for him over the sin that he committed - and he will be forgiven.

*Leviticus 5:18*

He is to bring to the kohen a ram without blemish from of the flock, according to your value, as a trespass offering. Then the kohen is to make atonement for him over the sin that he committed unknowingly - and he will be forgiven.

*1 John 1:6-2:6*

If we say we have fellowship with Him and keep walking in the darkness, we are lying and do not practice the truth.

But if we walk in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of His Son Yeshua purifies us from all sin.

If we say we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

My children, I am writing these things to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an Intercessor with the Father - the righteous Messiah Yeshua. He is the atonement for our sins, and not only for our sins but also for the whole world.

Now we know that we have come to know Him by this - if we obey His commandments. The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not obey His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

But whoever obeys His word, in him the love of God is truly made perfect. We know that we are in Him by this - whoever claims to abide in Him must walk just as He walked.

What does this have to do with hope?

The ultimate hope is to be with God, to be in heaven, in His presence.

What must we do now, to achieve that?

The best plan is to be sinless - not very likely.

The next best thing is to confess and repent (for forgiveness) and to do whatever it takes to avoid that same mistake.

Also, do not recall the same mistake from the past and ask for forgiveness again - you already did that. Just don't do it again.

Focus on your present situation to achieve your hope.

*Psalms 103:12*

As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

*Jeremiah 31:33*

No longer will each teach his neighbor or each his brother, saying: 'Know YHVH,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest. it is a declaration of YHVH. "For I will forgive their iniquity, their sin I will remember no more."

*2 Peter 1:5-10*

Now for this very reason, making every effort, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly love; and to brotherly love, love. For if these qualities are in you and increasing, they keep you from becoming idle and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Yeshua the Messiah. But anyone who lacks these qualities is blind - nearsighted because he has forgotten his cleansing from past sins. Therefore, brothers and sisters, make all the more effort to make your calling and election certain - for if you keep doing these things, you will never stumble.

One source of hope for the future is the prophecies God gave us. Prophecy actually means simply proclaiming whatever God gives you to proclaim.

In our culture, though, we usually also assume prophecy has some element of foretelling the future. and that is not wrong, it's just incomplete.

*Romans 15:4*

For whatever was written before was written for our instruction, so that through patience and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

*Psalms 42:6*

Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why are you murmuring within me? Hope in God, for I will yet praise Him, for the salvation of His presence.

We must continually study God's word (which comes from His Spirit) so that we can know and maybe understand his commands. Then we work at obeying God's commands, so our lives will be in synch with His plans and goals for us and for all those persons in our lives. By obeying, we are following in steps Messiah wanted for us. When we are in His path, then BY DEFINITION our desires will be the desires He wants for us, and thus we CAN claim His promises, but ONLY when we are actually in His paths.

The promise of petition only works when our request literally comes from His plans.

*John 14:13-15*

And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it. If you love Me, you will obey My commandments.

*Matthew 18:19-20*

Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst.

To do something on behalf of another person - to do something in the name of that person - you must first have the consent of that person and next have the authority to act in the name of that person. As a representative of that person, you must do everything exactly like that person would. Delegation of authority does not mean relinquishment of that authority. Our hope of answered prayers depends on our dependability of obedience. Yes, God sometimes makes our hopes a reality even though we are not walking in His will, but I wouldn't count on that.

For me, Abraham has stories of trust and faith in God because Abraham had hope - he believed something better was in his future. God gave him promises, so Abraham's belief in those promises became his hope, and acting on that hope became commitment, and that commitment brought results in Abraham's life. Was he perfect? No. He stumbled several times that we know about.

Abraham repented and corrected his course in life.

*Genesis 12:1-3,7-8*

Then YHVH said to Abram, "Get going out from your land, and from your relatives, and from your father's house, to the land that I will show you. My heart's desire is to make you into a great nation, to bless you, to make your name great so that you may be a blessing. My desire is to bless those who bless you, but whoever curses you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.

Then YHVH appeared to Abram, and said, "I will give this land to your seed." So there he built an altar to YHVH, who had appeared to him. From there he moved to the mountain to the east of Beth-El and erected his tent (with Beth-El to the west and Ai to the east). There he built an altar to YHVH and called on the Name of YHVH.

Some years pass, and Abraham's nephew Lot moved to Sodom. Both families were wealthy, but Abraham remained in the country (not the city). Two groups of kings in the area fought, and one group overcame the other and made the other serve (tribute) for 12 years - the losing group included the king of Sodom. They rebelled in the 13<sup>th</sup> year, and in the 14<sup>th</sup> year battles resumed, and Sodom again was in the losing group. This time the winners deported the losers, so that included Lot. Lot's hope was not looking good. Abraham rescued them, and gave a tithe of the spoils to the king/priest of Salem. God honored Abraham in his rescue efforts, and family (Lot) was part of Abraham's hope.

This became the hope of Abraham - a family and descendants.

*Genesis 15:1,4-10,13-18*

After these things the word of YHVH came to Abram in a vision saying, "Do not fear, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward." Then behold, the word of YHVH came to him saying, "This one will not be your heir, but in fact, one who will come from your own body will be your heir. He took him outside and said, "Look up now, at the sky, and count the stars - if you are able to count them." Then He said to him, "So shall your seed be." Then he believed in YHVH and He reckoned it to him as righteousness. Then He said to him, "I am YHVH who brought you out from Ur of the Chaldeans, in order to give you this land to inherit it." So he said, "Adonai YHVH, how will I know that I will inherit it?" Then He said to him, "Bring Me a three year old young cow, a three year old she-goat, a three year old ram, a turtle-dove and a young bird." So he brought all these to Him and cut them in half, and put each piece opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds. Then He said to Abram, "Know for certain that your seed will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and they will be enslaved and oppressed 400 years. But I am going to judge the nation that they will serve. Afterward they will go out with many possessions. But you, you will come to your fathers in peace. You will be buried at a good old age. Then in the fourth generation they will return here - for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete." When the sun set and it became dark, behold, there was a smoking oven and a fiery torch that passed between these pieces. On that day YHVH cut a covenant with Abram, saying, "I give this land to your seed, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates River."

Sometimes our hope is shattered, and we get a new hope - the story of Hagar. Hagar was an Egyptian servant girl that Abraham and Sarah acquired during a trip to Egypt that was not proscribed by God, but honored anyway.

*Genesis 16:6-14*

Abram said to Sarai, "Look! Your slave-girl is in your hand. Do to her what is good in your eyes." So Sarai afflicted her, and she fled from her presence. Then the angel of YHVH found her by the spring of water in the wilderness, next to the spring on the way to Shur. He said, "Hagar, Sarai's slave-girl, where have you come from and where are you going?" She said, "I am fleeing from the presence of my mistress Sarai." The angel of YHVH said, "Return to your mistress and humble yourself under her hand." Then the angel of YHVH said to her, "I will bountifully multiply your seed, and they will be too many to count." Then the angel of YHVH said to her, "Behold, you are pregnant and about to bear a son, and you shall name him Ishmael - for YHVH has heard your affliction. He will be a wild donkey of a man. His hand will

be against everyone, and everyone's hand against him, and away from all his brothers will he dwell. So she called YHWH who was speaking to her, "You are the God who sees me." For she said, "Would I have gone here indeed looking for Him who looks after me?" That is why the well is named, the Well of the Living One Who Sees Me. (Behold, it is between Kadesh and Bered.)

Why Abraham and his family? To show that hope was always a principal component of the life of a believer and follower of YHWH.

Be sure you have the right hope, and then keep it - don't lose it through disobedience. When you stumble, acknowledge your misdirection, get up, face the correct direction, and get moving again to accomplish that for which you hope.