

## HOPE AND PATIENCE

In Romans 1:20 we read *"For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."* Many in the world are confused as to whether there is or is not an almighty God that created the Universe. The inspired Paul tells us that we can see God's fingerprints everywhere. As Christians we don't just think there "may be" a God; we "know" there is a God. Faith is the corner stone on which the rest of our Spiritual house is built. Having this foundation, we can begin to build a house that will withstand all the storms of life. Paul further tells us in Romans 10:17 *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."* Once we have 1) heard the word of God, 2) believed in God and took him at His word, 3) repented of our sins, 4) publicly confessed our faith that Jesus is the Son of God, 5) and have obeyed the gospel call by being immersed in water for the remission of our sins (baptized) we are then new creatures in Christ. We are ready to begin our walk in faith. Believing in God and walking in faith after we have been added to the Lord's church gives us meaning in life. We are not tossed here and there with every new idea or philosophy of man that comes along. We are rooted and grounded in faith. A faith that believes that God exists and responds to God's will gives us hope. We have assurance or confidence where we will spend eternity. Then, when trials, temptations, and suffering come, we develop patience to cheerfully endure since we have hope or confidence in where we will spend eternity. We know in assurance that if we tough out life's hardships to the end that we will have a crown of righteousness waiting on us. In this article, we want to concentrate on the meaning of "hope" and "patience" and their relationship.

Consider the following verses in Romans as our text:

Romans 8:24-25 *"For we are saved by (in) hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."*

Romans 5:2-5 *"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."*

#### HOPE

The Greek word for "hope" used in these verses is "elpis" which means to anticipate in confidence and assurance. There is **no** element of uncertainty.

If we, as Christians, continue to walk faithfully in Christ while we live in this world we have hope (confidence, assurance) of a better place when this life is over. We will live in God's Golden City . We have confidence in our salvation. We are sure. There is no element of uncertainty. There is no "wishful thinking" that we will go to heaven but "maybe not". There is **not** the slightest doubt. We hope because we are **absolutely** sure.

#### PATIENCE

The Greek word for "patience" used in these verses is "hupomonē" which means suffering with endurance and cheerfulness.

Let us remind ourselves of some of the examples of suffering with endurance in the Bible.

**JOB.** Job feared God and shunned evil (Job 1:1). He was a righteous man. He had many blessings from God. He had wealth and a large family. God told Satan that Job was "perfect" and "upright" (Job 1:8). The Devil told God that the only reason that Job served Him was because of all of the blessings he had received from Him (Job 1:9-11). God allowed the Devil to tempt Job (Job 1:12). Job lost his wealth, family, and suffered very ill health (Job 1:13-21; 2:6-8). Job was miserable. Job endured all the misery he had to go through. The Lord blessed him for all the suffering he had to endure.

**PAUL.** Paul suffered from some type of "thorn in the flesh" or handicap (2 Cor. 12:7). He prayed to the Lord three times that it might be removed. The Lord told him in 2 Corinthians 12:9 *"...My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."* Paul's reaction is found in verse 10: *"Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."* This very determined Apostle suffered with endurance many times for the Lord. He was

beaten, went cold and hungry, went through ship wrecks, was in danger of wild animals, in danger of being robbed, sometimes he was in pain, and sometimes he was weary (2 Cor. 11:24-28). Yes, sometimes Paul was weary (2 Cor. 11:27).

JESUS CHRIST. Jesus suffered with endurance the worst pain and misery anyone could possibly go through (Mat, 16:21; Mar 8:21; Luke 9:22; Mat. 27:27-51). He did it for everyone. For very kind and decent people as well as the worst people imaginable. He did it so that we **all** may have access to His blood. He paid the ultimate price that you and I could never have paid. We have a high priest that knows what it is like to suffer the same kind of infirmities that we have to endure (Heb. 4:15).

#### THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HOPE AND PATIENCE

Earlier we read from Romans chapter 5 that we access grace by faith (obedience to the gospel). Christians "stand in grace". As a result of this "stand" we "hope in the glory of God." We live in assurance of our salvation and living eternally with God. Reading further in chapter 5 we understand, "*knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope.*" We cheerfully suffer for Christ by hope. We can go through anything that life has to offer because we are confident, we are absolutely sure of where we are going when this life is done. This doesn't mean that we are always going to be in the best of best moods. Jesus suffered and cried (John 11:35). Paul was weary. However, there was an element of cheer in their suffering. They knew if they toughed out the misery they went through, they would 1) in the instance of Jesus --- be well pleasing to God and establish the New Covenant (Matt. 3:17; Matt. 26:42; Luke 3:22) and 2) in the case of Paul --- would have a crown of righteousness laid up for him (2 Tim. 4:6-8).

J.B. Coffman, commenting on Romans 8:25, had this to say: "This verse explains how we are saved by hope, because, without hope, there could not be the patience which is required to prevent the child of God from falling into discouragement."

The connection between "hope and "patience" is simple. We believe which in turn gives us confidence or assurance (hope). In having hope we can joyfully endure (patience) all the misery we have to go through.

We can approach life after death like the inspired Paul and proclaim with vivid confidence: "*For I am now ready to be*

*offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."* (2 Tim. 4:6-8). We are to be diligent and do our part to make our calling and election sure (2 Pet. 1:5-10). Are you absolutely sure?

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## APOLOGIA

QUESTION: I understand that the Holy Spirit has given us the Bible. I also understand that this is the instrument He utilizes to bring us to conformity of the image of Christ. But does He also give personal help in understanding it? Some say that He does.

ANSWER: The doctrine mentioned above is in theological circles called the doctrine of illumination. Basically, this doctrine teaches that the Spirit speaks directly to our minds and consequently causes us to perceive the true meanings of scripture. It sets forth the idea that while God has given us the Bible, the Bible cannot be understood accurately unless the Holy Spirit provides illumination whereby it can be comprehended. In other words, the Holy Spirit speaks to us directly so that we can understand it. There are several passages often cited from which this doctrine is deduced. We will note a few:

*"But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak, for it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you."* (Matt. 10:19-20)

*"But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you."* (John 14:26)

*"But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, and the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of man except the spirit of man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the*

*things that have been freely given to us by God."* (1 Cor. 2:10-13)

Other scriptures could be given but these should suffice to illustrate the idea of illumination. Some have taken these verses to mean that the main purpose of the Spirit's indwelling is to provide to the saints comprehension of the truth.

The doctrine of illumination is not a Biblical doctrine. It is the deduction of men drawn from an incorrect analysis and interpretation of scripture. We will set forth four reasons why this doctrine is not founded upon correct interpretation of scripture.

The first difficulty we encounter is that there are individual Christians who claim to be illumined by the Spirit who have different understandings of portions of Biblical truth. Not only do we find different understanding but often opposing views of the same passages. For example the covering of 1 Corinthians 11 or the understanding of end time prophecies of Revelation. If the Holy Spirit is providing illumination of that which He has revealed, why is it that He does not lead all of us to take identically the same views? One could, we suppose, argue that those who disagree with us are not really Christians, but then we reach another problem determining which of the two parties that disagree is the real Christian and which is not! This illustrates that the doctrine of illumination faces some difficulty.

The second difficulty is that the doctrine of illumination fails to take into account that individual Christians grow in their understanding and sometimes change their views of scripture as they grow. Paul sets forth the concept of growing in understanding of truth in Hebrews 5:12-14, "*For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again, the first principle of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.*"

Here we find two classifications of Christians. Those who are in need of milk, indicating that they lack deep understanding of the things of God and those who are able to digest the strong meat of the word. If the Spirit is providing illumination, why then the difference? Would He not provide the same depth of

understanding to all who possess Him? As we look at the passage, the difference between the two is not one of illumination but of skill in handling the word. Those who are of the milk do not lack illumination; they lack understanding due to the lack of skill in handling the word. On the other hand, those who are able to digest strong meat are those who have exercised their senses and have become skillful to discern good and evil.

The third reason is that the doctrine of illumination is built upon the doctrine of universal total depravity (we are all born with sin and there is absolutely nothing we can do about it). This doctrine teaches that man is depraved to the extent that he is intellectually blind to God's truth. He cannot understand the Bible without the Holy Spirit illuminating his mind. This would require a direct operation of the Spirit upon the heart before a man can even obey the Gospel. The truth is that while the sinner's blindness is partial and willful, it is not total and inborn.

The fourth reason we reject the concept of illumination as discussed in this article is that it has no basis in scripture. The passages cited earlier have been misinterpreted and misapplied. In each of the cases the statements had reference to the apostles. They are indicative of revelation and inspiration and not general promises to all saints. As students of the Bible we must always take extreme care in interpreting passages. Many errors have crept in by a failure to take into account the basic principles of interpretation. Fundamental to correct understanding is noting such things as to whom the specific statement under study is made, as well as discerning between different dispensations, temporary versus permanent situations, and the background that under girds the passage under consideration.

While we have shown that the doctrine of illumination is not Biblical, we do not mean to imply that God does not give us help in our task of understanding the Bible. The help we receive is not a distinct work of the Spirit. God assists us through His great providence as He answers our prayers for discernment. God has not said that He will directly feed information into our minds and intellect. However, he does provide us with the means of understanding in other ways. He assists us by providing the means by which our knowledge can come from personal study. For example, He can sharpen our mental processes by providing clear guidelines for study. He can help us rid our minds of preconceived ideas and other hindrances to correct understanding. He can assist us by bringing others more

knowledgeable than ourselves into our lives to instruct us. He can help us by assisting in bringing certain facts to mind as we study.

In conclusion, God expects us to study His word. The Word is the product of the Spirit's work. The Spirit is more than capable of revealing the Word in a manner that can be understood as it is written. Illumination is not necessary now that we have the perfect and revealed Word of God.

(Note: Information contained in this answer is compiled from a section of The Faith Once for All: Bible Doctrine For Today by Jack Cottrell published by College Press Publishing Company, Joplin , Missouri .)

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## GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>DATES</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>
July 4 - 6	Chapel Hill Congregation Pell City, AL	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)
July 11 - 13	Willow Creek Congregation Auburn, AL	Paul Carter (Auburn, AL) & Lee Messer (Wedowee, AL)
July 13 - 18	Temple Hill Congregation Temple Hill, MS	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)
July 14 - 18	Owens Road Congregation Prattville, AL	J.D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
July 14 - 18	Freefield Congregation Stateline, MS	Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY)
July 18 - 20 7:00 P.M. CDST Fri. & Sat. 9:30A.M. & 4:00 P.M. on Sun.	Antioch Congregation Greenup, IL	Bill Prince, Jr. (Oxford, AL)

July  
20 - 25

Oak Grove Congregation  
Woodland, AL

Brad Prince  
(Wedowee, AL)

July  
20 - 23

Mt. Zion Congregation  
Brookhaven, MS

Sam Dick  
(Cave City, KY)

July 27  
- Aug. 1

Napoleon Congregation  
Woodland, AL

Joe Hill  
(Hager Hill, KY)

## SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

Remember last month's questions?

1. What animal's hide served as the outside covering for the tabernacle tent? BADGER AND RAM (Exo. 36:19)
2. As a token of his friendship, what did Jonathan give to David? A ROBE, ARMOR, AND A SWORD (1 Sam. 18:4)
3. Who did Nehemiah say would be excluded from the congregation of God? THE MOABITES AND AMMONITES (Neh. 13:1-2)
4. According to Luke, who had seven demons cast out of her? MARY MAGDALENE (Luke 8:2)
5. In the book of First Peter, what did Peter refer to Christ and his followers as? LIVING STONES (1 Pet. 2:4-5)