


TIME SERIES NO. 11

HOPE

**AN ABC CLASSICS
MONOGRAPH**

NO.11 HOPE

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INTRODUCTION

This monograph is No.11 in the “Time” series. As Jeremiah the beloved prophet to whom God spoke 300 times wrote for our comfort (1)“I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord...“plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future”” (Jeremiah 29.11) and again he wrote (2) ““There is hope in the end” says the Lord”” (Jeremiah 31.17).

This monograph explores the fully developed hope we have in Christ and in his return but first casts around to explore and expose the vacuous nature of the concepts of hope that keep mankind lingering on the brink of something good happening or “the happy ever after” outcome built on wishful thinking. It is the thesis of the writer that hope that is relaised is not hope and hope that deceives is a mirage. The quality of any hope is its linkage to the character of that upon which it depends. David says “Still hope in God- I will yet praise him(i.e.He will not fail).”

CONTENTS

- 1. MAN’S LAST REFUGE?**
- 2. GOD’S HIGH HOPES**
- 3. STILL HOPE IN GOD**
- 4. A JOLLY GOOD JEREMIAD**
- 5. WE HAD HOPED**
- 6. AN ANCHOR FOR THE SOUL**

7. BILL JAEGAR'S HOPE

(1) MANS LAST REFUGE

Ingersoll the profound unbeliever spoke these words at the graveside of his brother. "Life is a narrow vale between the cold and barren peaks of two eternities. We strive in vain to look beyond the height. We cry aloud and the only answer is the echo of our wailing cry. From the voiceless lips of the unreplying dead there comes no word. But in the night of death hope sees a star and listening love can hear the rustle of a wing!" This feathery notion can only leave the grave with cold comfort. Something better is demanded and something transcendent and glorious is on offer in the gospel.

UNCERTAIN RICHES - A VAIN HOPE

There is the case of the young guy who spent three weeks changing a dollar bill into dimes and back again in the hope that "somebody would make a mistake" and his effort would be rewarded. Many people have low expectations and generally achieve them. The threshold of hope should be set very high and that is why Christianity has so much going for it. It enables us to Hope in God and look for a city that has foundations whose builder and maker is God. Pip in Dickens' "Great Expectations" would seem to have been set for a marvelous future but as often happens the mysterious endowments did not materialize.

THE CHURCH INSPIRES NEW HOPE

The nature of the Christian hope was observed anciently by Aristeides the Greek writer who, writing in 125 A.D. made an interesting observation on Christian funerals. Aristeides wrote "If any righteous man among the

Christians pass from this world, they rejoice and offer thanks to God, and they escort his body with songs and thanksgiving as if he were setting out from one place to another nearby”.

NINETEENTH CENTURY GLOOM

To divert to the wider field of earlier statesmen and their lack of hope I quote William Wilberforce whose strenuous efforts for the abolition of slavery afforded hope to so many; he said “I dare not marry the future is so unsettled!”. In 1948 Lord Shaftesbury said “Nothing can save the British Empire from shipwreck” and on this he proved correct. A year later Disraeli commented “In industry, commerce and agriculture there is no hope”. All these have on the contrary gone roaring along ever since although farsighted thinkers now believe we will within decades come to the utter end of commercialism. The 19th century gloom was shared by Wellington who saw “the consummation of ruin gathering about us” and by President Buchanan of the US who spoke ten years later in 1860 saying “All hope seems to have deserted the minds of men”.

HOPE FLICKERS LOW IN THE 20TH CENTURY

In the days of the League of Nations Woodrow Wilson declared that” the League of Nations is the only hope of mankind - and how futile is that hope!”

In 1914 with the Great War the hope of peace in Europe disintegrated. With the Second World War optimism was further diminished and indeed the holocaust dealt a most terrible blow to the Jewish people despite which in 1948 the birth of the State of Israel sounded a shofar clarion that might indeed mark the slow slide to ruin of the world’s

great empires but biblically seemed prophetically set to herald the coming of the Messiah and His long awaited rule of peace on earth.

21st CENTURY OPPORTUNISTS

In defence of political pragmatism Bernard Baruch told the story of the man under a death sentence who appealed for one year during which he would teach the king's horse to fly. His hope was that either the King would die in that year or the horse might expire or indeed he himself might pass away. We encounter similar promises in the political arena when the party espousing them is not governing or is likely to lose power before the policies suggested would have any chance of being implemented.

(2) GOD'S HIGH HOPES

There is something quite fascinating to get one's head round in Romans chapter 8. Paul speaks of the present suffering as not worth thinking about. He goes on to state that the creation or the creatures await in eager anticipation the revelation of the sons of God. He adds "The creation was subjected to frustration" not of its volition but by reason of God's will who made it submit to suffering among other things in accordance with His overriding purpose to liberate us from bondage to decay and bring us into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

Thus the groans of humanity are described as "pains of childbirth" which must bring us to the time of the redemption of the body - the *απολυτρωσις* which is nothing short of the "out-redemption (Ephesians 1.14 & 4.30).

The object of it all is our “glorification” and the ultimate state is the heavenly meeting. The “vanity” of which both Solomon and Paul speak are absolutes when one looks at history but when one looks at theology purpose is everywhere rampant and victorious over suffering and sin. God’s love went deeper than the disasters of history. God’s love sent His own Son into the vortex of suffering and to redeem man. Redemption did not immediately end suffering or end frustration or vanity but it established a pathway to victory over the hopelessness for those who will log into the hope of the gospel.

(3) STILL HOPE IN GOD

A well-known hymn by Joachim Neander reads...

All my hope on God is founded;
He doth still my trust renew.
Me through change and chance He guideth,
Only good and only true
God unknown, He alone
Calls my heart to be His own.

God’s great goodness aye endureth,
Deep His wisdom passing thought:
Splendour, light and life attend Him,
Beauty springeth out of nought.
Evermore from His store
New-born worlds rise and adore.

Still from man to God eternal
Sacrifice of praise be done,
High above all praises praising
For the gift of Christ His Son.
Christ doth call

One and all:
Ye who follow shall not fall.

The Christian like the Psalmist fundamentally expresses his or her hope in song.

MY FIRST SERMON

At the invitation of a very considerate aunt Lily who cared for me during the first 6 months of my earthly life I was invited to preach my first sermon in a little mission hall. My file pages glided ever so surreptitiously off the platform in front of the audience. I cannot tell whether anyone witnessed their flight but there I was thrust on the Lord the Spirit to guide my lips and heart as I opened the scriptures at Psalm 42. The psalm is placed at the head of the second book of psalms and it has a most upbeat refrain “Why are you cast down O my soul? Why are you so disturbed within me? **Put your hope in God.**” Indeed this psalm is followed by another in a similar vein and it continues with the very same refrain “Put your hope in God”.

Now the first of these psalms is called a “*Maschil*” or a *teaching psalm*. We do well to extract its nectar and rejoice.



Impression of David praying

THE ULTIMATE CURE OF DEPRESSION PSALM 42 (WESTGATE COMMENTARY)

As the deer cries "urug, urug, urug" in desire (*Hebrew gr[]*) for the "channels" or "valley streams" of water which come from the Wadis at specific times so my soul will long for You, O God. *The future longings of the Psalmist are continual - and they are quickened by the seasons of wonderful provision which come from God. The word "to long" also means to ascend". The deer is not descending to the lowlands but rather finds streams and pools in the midst of the hills. It is in the quietness of "the hills" of separation that the singer seeks his first consolation. My soul fasts or thirsts for God in His strength, for the God of very Life itself. How long (*Hebrew ytm cognate to "adult"-so "how long till I am mature enough to enter the very presence??) till I come and I let myself appear in the presence of God? This psalm composer has for whatever reason not wanted to appear in public. Two seasons of David's life interestingly necessitated this. First when he was hounded as a deer by Saul; second, when he had sinned against God in the**

matter of Uriah. The former seems quite suited to the context of the "deer".

My tears have been my bread day and night to hear them say, "Where is your God?" *The psalmist is deeply intent on going up to the hill of the LORD. He needs more than tears for "food". But tears express penitence and love. Tears express the depth of feeling for God's presence. In lacking tears we lack a fundamental of prayer and may fail to see real streams of blessing too.*

TEARS OF SORROW LEAD TO PENIEL

Peniel is the place of "having power" or "standing as a prince with God" Jacob Moses David and many other O.T. saints confessed to the importance of this standing **In Psalm 42 David said "These things I remember and I pour out my soul (Hebrew Jpv) over me (Hebrew yf []) "Turning away from myself" or "In tears all over me" or "in utter hostility to myself" for I will serve or worship God with a multitude I will have gone softly and submissively (Hebrew hdd).** *The writer is speaking of his past reverent approach to worship to the house of God with a voice of joyful sound which in 1Kings 22.36 was the cry of homecoming and thanksgiving of the festival harp like humming throng This festival may have been the upcoming feast of tabernacles which was accompanied with much singing and dancing which in the past centred on the King's lead musical role. David's sin with Bathsheba was "when Kings' go forth to war" in the spring time. That year was a type of annus horribilis for the king.*

THE BASIC QUESTION “WHY AM I DOWNCAST?”

My soul why will you become a person who will lie low or get into the pit and become depressed? **And why will you become turbulent like a mourning harp within me? You have caused yourself to wait on God for still I will praise Him - I will praise the salvations of His face.** *The psalmist is well aware that "clinging" to the LORD in dire straits is the answer. Supposing the psalm is from the pen of David like Maskils 52-55 he would have recalled the deep experience of God's sparing his life from his earliest days when he faced Saul and was saved from Goliath. This lesson is one we can apply in our days of darkness. In Psalm 27.4 we have the evidence of how David learned to seek God's face!*

Why when he knew very well that “no man can see God's face and live”(Ex.33.20) would he seek God's face? The answer is that he has had a revelation from God in answer to prayer that he should seek the Lord just as when at an all time low Jacob sought God at Peniel. One might go further and assert that the experience of Jacob and David here relate directly to the passion of Christ and the standing that is ours because the Lord humbled Himself to bear our sin. The psalmist writes “**Hear O LORD my voice - I am calling. Show me favour. Answer me. My heart speaks with the light of an oracle, "Seek my face!" O LORD I will seek Your face! Do not hide your face** (*rts “conceal yourself”*) **or turn me away** (*Hebrew hfn “to stretch out the hand to usher away” or refuse to extend the sceptre*) **You are and have been my help. Do not let me go or forsake me** *Two battle words(Hebrew vfn “to spread the battle widely and inconclusively”- don't leave me without answer and bz[“to desert” in the fight)***O**

Strong One of my salvation(*Elohe*). **When or because my father and mother forsake me the LORD will gather me up**(*The Hebrew word is used in its military significance "agmen claudere" "to bring up the rear".*) *David as a king may have been contemplating the loss of his mother following the death of his father on whose advise and help he could have relied. The reference has poignancy for another reason - it is uncannily akin to the words of our Lord in extremis on the cross and the oracle referred to may be none other than the classic instance of Jacob's meeting with God! In the latter case the psalm moves beyond family loss and throws light on the immediate presence of God who in our extremity will not depart without leaving a blessing and investing us with new life and standing. We are also face to face with the depth of a relationship within the trinity at the point of the severest suffering of Jesus Christ when this is viewed in the light of Matthew 27.46. The psalmist David is in receipt of a profound word from God out of the Torah oracle of Genesis 32.22-30 - an oracle that also relates to the ultimate experience of Christ on the cross.*

WHEN EVENTS THREATEN TO SWAMP US
My God, my soul is brought low or depressed (*Hebrew j j v*) **within me. Because this happened or is constituted as a terrible new reality I remembered You from the land of Jordan and the Hermons - from the mount of Mizor** *The psalmist has traversed Israel from the fountains of the Jordan along its basin and right into Jeshimon. The journey that lives on in his memory. It impressed on him that the river of Jordan which descends from the peaks of Hermon flows hard by Caesarea Philippi right beneath the Lebanon foothills and fertilises*

the whole land till it arrives in the Dead Sea. This "descender" is the real source of his encouragement for from it comes the life of the tribes year on year. In a figure it stands for all God's providence and the life He gives. It is in accord with this that our Saviour asked his disciples of His identity just where this river flows into the plains below. Deer may be refreshed by streams but the singer is uplifted like the deer but not in his case by the unfailing Jordan waters but the unfailing renewal and flow of the Spirit of God.

Deep calls to deep at the noise of your cataracts. *If you have stood near the source of the Jordan or walked down to the Sultan's pool or could have witnessed its overflow in winter the sound of its strong waters would never be forgotten. Whilst far less impressive than Niagara it is the most powerful water system in Israel. All your breakers and your fountains have passed over me, This experience is one of refreshment and a welcome quenching of the drought of his soul. He may even have bathed in the cool waters. In heading for Rabbah and returning therefrom David would have pretty much followed the course of the river Jordan.*

PROBLEMS STEAL YOUR SLEEP - SO PRAY

By day the LORD continually or again and again commands His covenant love and by night His song is with me. *The singer recalls favourable days and like Jacob he comes close to God in the night. A prayer to the God of my life. The singer sang and prayed at night just like Paul and Silas. He is on the point of beginning again and rejoicing despite the occasion of his circumstances- much like the apostles. Jordan still flows, God still keeps covenant. Satan flees when he sees the weakest saint upon*

his knees!The God of Bethel still feeds his people and lifts their experience in joy and victory when He meets them at Peniel.

A VITAL QUESTION “WHY AM I DEFEATED?”

I say to God my rock, "Why am I going about in turbid mourning, squeezed or troubled by my enemy?

My body cries out, my adversary (Hebrew ררX) makes me an object of scorn by saying to me all day long, "Where is your God?" *Israel in the desert were ever fed by that “rock which followed them”. The deer treads the watersources and the hills and the dangerous flood plains where lions prowl and the psalmist experiences his own dangerous excursions through war and failure. This time the Singer is speaking to God in prayer and song just as he used to do. He is asking the LORD why he remains so downcast and so dejected by criticism. He knows it is persistent - and the spiritual taunts are the worst. Yet he sings on and either his song will swallow his grief or his sorrow will overwhelm his song. Let us see which outcome it will be.*

THE BIG QUESTION “HOW DO I OVERCOME MELANCHOLY?”

Why are you downcast my soul? Why hum like a harp within me? Take this definite step (Hebrew Performative)-hope in God for I will still praise Him-the Salvation of my countenance and my God. *The singer ends up with a bright radiant face - his song has swallowed his grief. Praise chases away every foe! In his 42nd Psalm as in the 27th and elsewhere David shows himself to be a true Israelite - a prince with God - a man who understands Peniel and in his weakness is radiant*

*and truly in touch with God. Psalms 42 and 43 belong in the same category - the 43rd finishes beautifully **Look in hope** (Hebrew 1jy meaning "to "go back and forward like sand on the seashore –so to go back time and again to God or “dance around as one enthralled”) **to God, for I shall yet praise Him** (with harp and hands lifted high)-**He who is the "salvation of my countenance" and my God.** David's facial expression was tell-tale-it reflected how his dire mood changes to glowing radiance as did that of Moses in God's presence. Whereas he has a melancholic harp in his soul in Psalm 42 in Psalm 43 he has a joyous harped melody at his fingertips in Psalm 43-he has been to the altar and he feels the cleansing and the joy of salvation in his soul. Hope in David's case can spring eternal from this source.*

(4) A JOLLY GOOD JEREMIAD

Jeremiah was a prophet who according to popular misconception did not exactly ooze hope. Jeremiah in his time was bound like every prophetic figure to be a realist. His nation were bound as the sparks fly upward to go into captivity. That captivity the Lord showed him would last for 70 years and it would be under one of the harshest regimes ever known. The final throes of his people's suffering were not so great as the holocaust or the Egyptian bondage or even the carrying away to Rome but they follow these terrible events into a fourth place of heart-wrenching suffering.

Now God spoke to Jeremiah 300 times and his relationship with God is like that of Moses-a Peniel teype devotion. As a result Jeremiah can sing as well as lament. He can say “There is hope”.

(5) WE HAD HOPED FOR MESSIAH

In Luke 24 we read of the duo who were walking home to Emmaus from Jerusalem and conversing in a quite disconsolate manner and it appears from how the Lord chided them when He drew alongside that they looked utterly downcast.

One of the grandest dreams and greatest hopes the Jewish mind ever entertained was dashed. Let me retell the story as recorded in Westgate Commentary in the 6 final “recorded events” of 72 in all that Luke records in the gospel that goes by his name as he registers the glory of the dawning of world redemption (cf.the ding-bat figure)

THE FELLOWSHIP OF CHRIST ENDS PEEVISH SULLEN WAYS EVENT! Ding bat 67

The 60 stadia walk to Emmaus begins in poor spirits as two people “come to close discussion” or in the vernacular “battle it out” *ομιλεω* concerning all these things. In this engagement of two minds and *their nicety of enquiry* Jesus drew near (*aorist*) and the power of the verb may be understood to mean “never again to walk? Were they discussing the perceived reality that Jesus would never walk or teach any more? Luke observes “Their eyes were being “mastered or seized in battle” so they did not “Know Him again or see His friendly face”(*Sophocles’ usage of one’s own mother*). Here is the fascination and power of Christ and His love besides. David believed God had this power – Psa.119.37. Christ was gradually drawing their souls-and the perceptions of the soul to Himself – challenging angry looks and melancholy.

JESUS PROPHET DYNAMIC IN DEED AND WORD EVENT †68

Cleophas said to Jesus “Are you a unique stranger or alien and don’t know the things that took place in these days? “What things?” said Jesus. They said “Concerning Jesus of Nazareth – a man mighty in deed and word-handed over by high-priests & rulers to be condemned to death”. We hoped that He is the one ready to ransom Israel (*from Rome.*) So a prophetic ministry, a criminal’s death, Israel’s hope – in the sense of the one to bring in the kingdom of God.

JESUS AUTHOR OF NEW LIFE – RISEN AS HE PROMISED †69

This is the third day drawing out since these things. But certain of our wives rising early abandoned us “*coming into a new state of being*” at the tomb-although they didn’t find the body they came saying they had seen a vision of messengers who said He was alive. Certain of those with us went and found it as the women said. Him they saw not. O foolish and slow in heart to believe all that the prophets have written. Was it not essential that Christ suffer & enter His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets he interpreted for them in the writings the things circling around Him (cf. v19)

JESUS OPENS THEIR EYES †70

“In thy light we see light” And he made as if he would have gone further as they neared the village. They pressed Him saying “Remain with us for it is toward evening – and the day is declining.” He went in to stay with them. And it happened when He had reclined with them, taking the bread He gave the blessing and breaking it He gave it to them. At that moment they saw his wounded arms cf. †68

the work of Calvary and their eyes were fully opened. They knew Him again. Why had they not known Him through the washing of the feet? Luke 24.39! The reality of the Lord's plan to go further meant He need not have performed the usual foot-washing.

JESUS THE LIFE-GIVER OF PAST DAYS AND FUTURE TIME †71

The hearts of these men burned with love *καιομενη* as Jesus talked with them. The “interpretation” of the law and the prophets and indeed the writings was clearly choice- Jesus was the messenger of God – but He had been putting the references in the “third” person – cf. v26 “The Christ”. What so deeply intrigued was (a) Jesus “chatting” *λαλεω* this is a word used by *Aristotle* and others in the context of “things personal” where considerable animation and personal involvement exists. The use of *διαανοιγω* in the Greek classics in the clinical connection of “opening a dead body” is of further interest. Christ could show the unseen purpose behind the whole bible-it was more than a “post-mortem” on the scriptures – it was followed by an entire revival of scripture and of preaching – and it gave testimony to the necessity of the sacrifice of Jesus and his subsequent resurrection. A “post-mortem” on scripture led to the immediate revival of interest in it and preaching from the Old Testament as a volume with Christ as its centre. The resurrected Christ revived the Ancient scriptures. They rose in what must have been the 12th hour v33 and returned to Jerusalem and found the eleven discontented murmuring or shouting aloud. The word *θροεω* stems from a cognate used generally of women expressing high emotion. The “shouts” or “shrieks” of the

occasion were because the Lord had appeared *φαινομαι* was associated with the stars appearing. So we understand that with the first sign of evening Jesus had in that last hour shown his faithfulness to Peter in accordance with the scriptures. The two men from Emmaus both spoke (*the chief notice of their being men*) “exegeting” the things in the way – and how He was made known to them in the “breaking” of the bread.

JESUS “THE MAN AT THE CORE OF HISTORY” †72

Christ at this very moment chose of enter and take his disciples further – into the New Testament as it were. He stood in their midst speaking quite factually “Peace to you” – because they “were gaping at each other or fluttered *πτοηθεω* thinking they weee seeing a Spirit. He then spoke heroically “Why are you a disordered army?” “What are arguments arising in your hearts – i.e. as to whether the accounts of these last two and that of Peter etc. balance?” Obviously they could not put together the facts –maybe even the time was humanly beyond the normal as to distance and travel – but not to the Lord!

This time the hands were shown and of course the Lord had not been received as a guest and traveller – so He showed his feet. He further showed his hands and invited “touch of the finest sort” *ψηλαφεω* that He might prove Himself still absolutely man with flesh and bone.

He demonstrated as in theatre v39

(a) By hands and feet

(b) By demonstrating His sense of smell and obvious continued love of fish – when they hesitated to believe for joy and wonder. “What meat have you to eat?” The use of *βρωσιμος* means **He did not wish a drink but something**

to demonstrate the use of teeth and his particular relish for fish (cf. *the beach breakfast*) and they added the “favour” of a honeycomb. He ate them before them. It seems clear that neither here or at the beach breakfast was there grace. The Lord was present in His unquestioned deity.

(1) Now He says heroically and epically “These same words I spoke to you while I was still with you – precisely “It is essential that all things that have been written in the law of Moses and in the prophets and in the psalms concerning me have been fulfilled.” Christ here emphasised *ελαλησα οτι* the tense in which He previously spoke.

(2) He further emphasised heroically and classically that it is **so exactly *οτι* written in the scriptures that the Christ “must have been raised “ and “repentance and forgiveness **must have been preached** in His name and beginning from Jerusalem”**

(3) As the one who so precisely fulfilled everything He promised the Holy Spirit to them as witnesses – i.e. ones who remembered His precision in previous briefs and saw it accurately fulfilled. They must await enduement. Thus he led them to Bethany and blessed them – and in that very act He took his station parting after fighting alongside them and bore Himself into the heavens. They worshipped Him here once – for all(*aorist*) and returned to Jerusalem with great joy and were daily in the temple praising God in the psalms and giving thanks to God – they never missed a day – praying with gratitude for the death and resurrection of Christ who said “destroy this temple and I will raise it up in three days” So Luke ends by showing us a man in the glory with all the prerogatives of God – and to this he adds his own “Amen”

(6) AN ANCHOR OF THE SOUL

The soul is very much like a ship. Our earthly life is really very vulnerable to the storms of life and to the waves of crisis and the hidden dangers that lurk like coral reefs or hidden rocks and sandbanks even in what at first face might appear peaceful places where we go.

EARLIEST BIBLICAL PRESENTATION OF OUR HOPE- HEBREWS 6 11-20

Barnabas in the N.T. Book of Hebrews says “We desire each of you to demonstrate [“study” or “speed” towards] **full assurance of hope** throughout and until the accomplishment of fruitful lives. “Full assurance of hope” leads us to what his companion **the apostle Paul** says in *1Thess1.5* –when he combines the fourfold package of certainties: the election of God, the work of the Holy Ghost, the joy of faith and the solid expectation of and patient wait for His Son from heaven. From their base of assurance the Thesslaonians publicly trumpeting out the gospel over all their nation. Later Paul accentuated the Colossian assurance as one that “walked in the circle of Christ rooted and built up and complete and buried with Christ” spelled out in lives not in the least endangered by the trap of empty popular philosophy. *Colossians 2.2*

THE PROMISE OF ABRAHAM

Abraham fled from Ur – the city of sin

Barnabas continues in Hebrews 6 to quote *Genesis 22.16-17*. He tells us that in puruit of his hope of the city of God Abraham “fled” from the Chaldees. He then tells us that afterward when Isaac was born he is given the oath on top of the promise that further strengthened his hope to the

extent that in a great act of faith he could lay his son Isaac on the altar because he believed the resurrection hope.

HE OBTAINED THE PROMISE

Barnabas words are “He fell in with” or “conversed with” the promise of atonement and life (realized later in the death of Christ) when he offered his Son and discovered the substitutionary ram at Moriah. God desired to show the unchangeable nature of His will(*literally “not a changeable opinion” or “alterable treaty”*) and mediated it by an oath(*Genesis22.17*). *There is at this point a presumed reference by the Hebrew writer to Ben Sirach 44.21. Sirach wrote Ecclesiasticus circa 280BC. Paul did not elsewhere in any other biblical connection quote Sirach who is extra-canonical to Hebrew and Reformed canons.* The Jehovah – Jireh voice at Moriah “Lay not your hand on the child” spoke of the future provision of Christ. From that moment on the cross the whole prophetic theme began to emerge clearly in prophecy and at its heart the steadfast warranty of the resurrection..

A TENABLE POSITION

The Hebrew writer continues “We have obtained tenable consolation” - like a position obtained in war not to be lost again to any enemy push.

RUNNING FOR THE ANCHOR 19

Thus when storm and peril threaten the crux is that we have a guarantee of safety and can “run for refuge”. The idea is not so much a desperate scamper for uncertain shelter but rather that like sailors we make haste to use the anchor which has been “fixed” or laid ready much as food always available. In storm when a ship is running aground all haste

is made to cast an anchor from the stern. So this steadfast warranty of Calvary and Christ within the veil is at once our only and our adequate hope of life and safety connecting us through the resurrection to our future in glory cf. *v11*

AN ANCHOR FOR THE SOUL 19-20

This anchor is cast “once for all”. It is a guarantee. The word “**guarantee**” *ασφαλῆ* in *Homer* is used exclusively of the “seat of God”. So we have the living Christ interceding for us – our place of refuge is the throne of God. This throne is steadfast the **warrant** *Βεβαιος* and **title** of our property. Behind the veil is the one through whom we are entitled to heavenly joys. Christ is there – **the first envoy** *προδρομος* of victory over sin and Satan in the warfare of the Spirit. *Hebrews 6.19 with its reference to the “Anchor” strikes a very ancient and central note of the Christian message. The anchor cut into the stonework above the garden tomb is testimony to this middle “C” of the gospel message.*

(7) BILL JAEGAR’S HOPE

From shortly after our arrival in Southport as first Pastor of the little Phoenix like church of Canning Road Chapel that arose from the embers of the old Congregational Church Mina and I met up with *Bill Jaegar*.

Bill was an old soldier of the *Kings Own Liverpool Fusiliers* and he saw active service at the Somme during the first world war. With his German ancestry he was only allowed to become a stretcher bearer so he never bore arms. From the days of suspicion his reputation soared as one of only six from his regiment that returned from the

Great War and he would take the annual Armistice day salute in Southport in the 1970's.

I invited Bill to Chapel and a week later he arrived true to his word. Long years before 1986 - indeed away back in the first decade of the 20th century he had been in the choir. Bill invited me to afternoon tea and for an important chat. During our conversation he gave his life to the Lord in his early 90's. He asked me to join him as he burned books that he no longer respected as before and year on year until his 99th year he read the bible from Genesis to Revelation. Is it at all surprising that when the Lord's call to glory came he was a man of the most sterling assurance of faith. When I visited him in the Liverpool Royal Infirmary he said he would not be long here. Even then he enjoyed a little light hearted banter and I said "Bill, what about that letter from the Queen?" He replied in his traditional way "Pastor Bob I don't mind - I'm going to see the king!" Bravo Bill. There we shall all first want to see Jesus and those who taught us to walk with God and shared our lives but there are few I look forward to meeting more than my dear little friend Bill Jaegar.

I do not tell this little story to draw attention to Bill as a man who knew it all. Bill would often ask those natural questions that we all have wondered about. "Where was Jesus before He was born?" ... "Did the Israelites really cross the Red Sea?" I would take him through what scripture revealed on issues he wanted to explore. Bill was not depending on what he knew to save his soul - he was depending on the precious substitution of Jesus Christ whose blood availed for him. Bill died at 99 2/3rds after having read the bible through till his eyes failed in the last year or so when he got his attendant nurses to read the few chapters he read each day. If you want to have hope not in

this life only but hope of that which is to come take the path Bill trod to God and when the call comes to the land that is fairer than day you will travel onwards to meet the King just as Bill did. “This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast, and which enters into that within the veil; whither the forerunner for us is entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchizadek!”(Hebrews 6 19-20).

If you ask me “What is your hope, Bob?” my answer would be “I shall see Jesus and stand in my lot at the end of the days in the city that has foundations along with all who love the Lord made real to me by the Holy Spirit through Jesus substitutionary atonement and glorious resurrection.

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesu’s blood and righteousness
I dare not trust the sweetest frame
But wholly lean on Jesu’s name.
On Christ the solid rock I stand
All other ground is sinking sand.

Willie Dohererty of the Open Air Mission stood preaching at the Derby racecourse when a heckler approached. Willie spoke of Christ the Rock. The heckler taunted him “What about the old shamrock of Ireland?” Willie responded “Christ is the solid rock - all other rocks are sham-rocks!” *David Livingstone* got it right when he said “Jesus Christ is my “living stone”. Stuart Townend and Keith Getty have endeared this great theme to the church in their lovely lyric “In Christ alone my hope is found”.

This hope alone springs eternal!

Bob the Scribbler September 15 2013