

How blessed are the “buts” we find in scripture. “But God...” And here, “but beloved...”. The believers were different than the rest of their countrymen. Their lives give witness to a change in their hearts. Things that accompany salvation. For example, their labor of love they showed toward the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Not mere ceremonial acts or ritualistic recitations but down to earth ministering to the saints. Saints? Those who are sanctified by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, set apart to Him and to His service. Those who now are holy in God’s sight. They have real needs such as food, clothing, shelter, fellowship, love and brotherly love. He encourages us to diligently persist in labor to the end. Simply doing good to fellow believers (and others) because it is a manifestation of the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, Romans 5:5. But not only that. Our good works are in the full assurance of HOPE! Later in this letter the writer states, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (11:1). This hope is an anchor for the soul, an anchor both sure (secure) and steadfast (firm). No drifting away when held by this hope.

We are urged to not be sluggish or lazy but diligent in pursuing good works, in hope. We are turned to look back and follow the example of the saints who have preceded us in faith. Particularly the Hebrew believers are referred to their ancestors “who through faith and patience inherit the promises”—distant ancestors such as Abraham and David and more recent contemporaries such as the Apostle James and Stephen. Even though their bodies remain in the grave they are presented as those who inherit the promises. The faith of these is cited to encourage the Jewish believers despite the two thousand year wait for the resurrection at the time this was written. It has now been about four thousand years since Abraham and two thousand years since Christ. Shall we become disheartened and give up hope now? Evidently Abraham hasn’t. After believing and acting upon God’s call and first promise in Mesopotamia, Genesis 12:1-4; Acts 7:2, 3; he patiently endured in his walk of faith for many years. With each additional God given test he obtained progressively greater depth and detail regarding the promise. He believed and then acted upon what he heard. His path of faith ultimately culminated in his obedient offering his beloved son Isaac. Isaac had been born through faith to parents who, humanly speaking as far as reproductive power is concerned, were dead, Romans 4:16-32. Yet without hesitation, when commanded, he offered the very one who God had specifically named as the promised seed.

Genesis 21:12 And God said unto Abraham “. . . in Isaac shall thy seed be called.

He did this in faith believing God would raise Isaac from the dead if he went through with the offering, Hebrews 11:17-19. He patiently endured the ultimate test — and received the ultimate blessing. He obtained the promise of the ages.

Genesis 22:15 And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, 16 And said, By

myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; 18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

It was of this momentous moment in Abraham’s life that the Lord Jesus testified to the Jews,

Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad, John 8:56.

Abraham lives in heaven rejoicing, awaiting the resurrection. The Lord described Abraham’s blessed presence and active role in heaven, Luke 16:19-31.

Abraham’s hope is presented to us as the prime example of the faith that we are to have and the hope we are to enjoy. He was given the promise by God Himself. And God not only gave His word but affirmed His word by an oath. How fascinating. (What condescension!) God, wanting to convey a total overwhelming assurance for faith, affirmed His immutable (unchangeable) spoken promise by an immutable oath by His Name! This promise was solid indeed, well worthy of unreserved belief. Belief that was manifested in a walk befitting it while Abraham was an alien in the land of promise. Belief manifested in an unassailable hope shown in his decisions while here. Decisions that were irrational by human reasoning but totally rational to faith. He sent his servant away on a mission to fetch a suitable bride for his beloved son Isaac. By faith he purchased a tomb for his Sarah and himself as pilgrims in the promised land. Decisions based upon faith not sight, and hope not seen. Abraham’s faith and hope is cited again later in the epistle as well as many other places in scripture.

So he obtained the promise in Isaac, who became the pledge of all the promises given, for he having been offered was received as back from the dead. Whereupon Abraham was given the matchless revelation of the Seed in whom all the promises would yet be fulfilled in a complete and full manner far beyond the implications he could have possibly perceived in his original calling by God in Mesopotamia.

Galatians 3:16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

In one sense he obtained a sure promise yet to be fulfilled. To faith it was as good as fulfilled. Abraham is now in heaven, as revealed to us by the Lord. He has in a great measure received the fulfillment of the promise. For the Promised Seed has come and been offered, and risen from among the dead as typified by Isaac being offered. And now Abraham is with Him in the glory awaiting the pending resurrection and our rapture. Yet earthly blessing still remains to be fulfilled. In the future all nations will be blessed in Him, and in particular Israel, Abraham’s natural descendants. Blessed during the Millennial reign of Christ and subsequently upon the promised New Earth.

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We also now have this promise by faith. And by faith we have seen and believed the same Promised One Abraham looked forward to and is now with. We have a hope which is not only an anchor for the soul but that enters through the veil, into the Holiest. It is a rent veil, as we shall see later in the epistle. But we do not enter as brazen trespassers. For the Forerunner has entered within the veil opening the way

for us to enter and drawing us within. By faith we have the same assurance as Abraham, the same Promised One, the same hope as an anchor for the soul, Jesus. Not just the Man of Galilee but the One God has made a High Priest. A High Priest forever. A High Priest after the order of Melchisedec. More about Him next.

By Ron Canner, February 4, 2009

In Times Like These

Words and Music by Ruth Caye Jones

In times like these you need a Savior
In times like these you need an anchor;
Be very sure, be very sure
Your anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock!

Chorus

This Rock is Jesus, Yes, He's the One;
This Rock is Jesus, the only One!
Be very sure, be very sure
Your anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock!

In times like these you need the Bible,
In times like these O be not idle;
Be very sure, be very sure
Your anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock!

65. Through the veil God bids me enter

Through the veil God bids me enter
By the new and living way;
Not in trembling hope I venture
Boldly I His call obey:
There, with Christ my God, I meet
God upon the mercy seat!

O the welcome I have found there
God in all His love made known!
O the glory that surrounds there
Those accepted in His Son!
Who can tell the depths of bliss
Spoken by the Father's kiss?

All His joy told out unhindered
Nought but Christ His eye can see!
Christ into His joy has entered,

Chorus

This Rock is Jesus, Yes, He's the One;
This Rock is Jesus, the only One!
Be very sure, be very sure
Your anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock!

In times like these I have a Savior,
In times like these I have an anchor;
I'm very sure, I'm very sure
My anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock!

Chorus

This Rock is Jesus, Yes, He's the One;
This Rock is Jesus, the only One!
Be very sure, be very sure
Your anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock!

And in Christ He welcomes me:
Would I know how dear to God?
Priceless as Christ's precious blood!

All the worth I have before Him
Is the value of the blood:
I present, when I adore Him,
Christ, the First-fruits, unto God.
Him with joy doth God behold:
Thus is my acceptance told!

Place of glory, place of blessing,
Place where God His heart displays!
All in Thee, O Christ, possessing,
Thine the voice that leads our praise!
Thine the new eternal song,
Through the ages borne along!