

## ACPC Topical Bible Studies: Topical Series

### 2. Hope: 1 Peter 3:15

#### *Background;*

In the Bible many important words are used over and over again. One such word is “hope”. In English the dictionary says that hope is: 1. “A feeling of expectation and desire for a particular thing to happen”. 2. “A person or thing that may help or save someone”. (His only hope is surgery.) 3. “Grounds for believing that something good may happen”. In old English, hope had the sense of “trust” or have confidence” in someone. In the Bible, 1 Peter 1: 3 and 1 Peter 3:15 are key verses. Last year we studied Ruth. In *Ruth 1:11-15*, there is no hope. Ruth needs to marry Naomi’s son. However, her sons have died. It was not physically possible for Naomi to have another child, and especially a boy for Ruth to marry. Even if she could, by the time that the boy had grown up, Ruth would be too old to marry him. “Hope” here is not only impossible, it is ridiculous. So what can be done? Ruth and Naomi stay together and “hope against hope” anyway. The key to hope here is in verses 16 to 18. What is the nature of the hope in these verses? Do you remember what happened?

#### *Notes*

1. “Conscience” is related to the word “science”. We feel that what we are doing is well thought-out, and factually and personally the right thing to do.

#### *Verses and Questions about “hope”: 1 Peter 1: 3-5.*

- What does this verse tell us about hope? Where does our hope come from? What is it based on and what do we look forward to? Why should we hope?
- What questions do people ask about the “reason for our hope”? What is a good “conscience”?
- There are many “hopeless situations” in the world today. What should we believe and do?
- Can we sometimes give people “false hope”, when there really is no hope (eg, someone dying of disease)? What hope can we give?
- Atheists sometimes say that our hope in heaven is like “(Georgie) Pie in the Sky when we Die”. What do they mean? How can we say that our hope is real and assured?

#### *A couple of Comments and Questions*

In *Revelation 22:17*, hope is a firm promise that is assured and will not be taken from us. The Holy Spirit and Jesus both offer us the “water of life”, that which is most essential. However, such hope is not given to those who sit and wait, the couch-potatoes, but to those who get up and claim the reward, their hope. What are the things (our hopes) that we individually and as Church know is God’s will for us (and God “hopes” that we will fulfil his wish and gift) that we **must** do? What is the next step for us? We do have hope. What do we have to do to claim the hope that is in Jesus Christ?

*The Book of Proverbs 13:12* says “Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.” If we know that God wants us to do something, and we delay, then we miss out on his blessing and also suffer from the lack of fulfilment. If we know that God calls us to fulfil a hope or a desire, then we must first make sure that this is from God’s will. If it **is** God’s will and his gift to us, then we should not delay in setting out to fulfil that dream. He will help us achieve this. But we must trust, have confidence and not delay. Some people have wanted to do something all their lives, but for whatever reason, never do it. What is the result? What does this say to us? When we have achieved a lifelong desire, how do we feel?

